

An illustration of a man and a woman standing at a crossroads. The man is on the left, wearing a blue suit, and the woman is on the right, wearing a red dress. They are both looking at a large wooden signpost that has three arrows pointing in different directions: one straight ahead, one to the left, and one to the right. The background features rolling green hills, a blue sky with white clouds, and a bright yellow sun. The overall style is a textured, painterly illustration.

Educators' Response to Change in K-12 Education

▀ Factors that Impact Change Efforts

Dr. Jessica Spallino

EDUCATORS' RESPONSE TO CHANGE IN K-12 EDUCATION
FACTORS THAT IMPACT CHANGE EFFORTS

BY
JESSICA SPALLINO

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate School in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy

Major Subject: Curriculum & Instruction

New Mexico State University

Las Cruces, New Mexico

December, 2015

Copyright 2015 by Jessica Spallino

“Educators’ Response to Change in K-12 Education: Factors that Impact Change Efforts,” a dissertation prepared by Jessica Spallino in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree, Doctor of Philosophy, has been approved and accepted by the following:

Loui Reyes
Interim Dean of the Graduate School

Pierre Orelus
Chair of the Examining Committee

Date

Committee in charge:

Dr. Pierre Orelus

Dr. David Rutledge

Dr. Blanca Araujo

Dr. Mary Prentice

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to all of my family and friends who have continued to support me; to Mark for all he gives everyday, to my beautiful daughter, Isabella, who inspires me everyday and always shows tremendous kindness and patience; to my brothers and sisters, Joe, Julie, Jim, and Jon who are always there for me and undoubtedly, “the posse”, who I would not have completed this work without.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My sincere thanks and appreciation to Dr. Orelus for his continued support; Dr. Rutledge for his guidance, and Dr. Araujo and Dr. Prentice for their expertise throughout this entire process.

VITA

1995	California State University Northridge, B.A., English
2003	California State University, San Marcos, Single Subject Credential, English & Multiple Subject Credential
2011	California State University, San Marcos, M.A. & Administrative Credential, Educational Leadership
2015	New Mexico State University, PhD, Curriculum & Instruction

Professional Experiences

2003- 2005	Classroom Teacher
2003- 2011	Curriculum Coordinator/Program Manager
2011- 2014	National Account Manager, International Curriculum Company
2014- present	CEO/Co-Founder, Charter School Network

Field of Study

Major Field: Curriculum & Instruction: Change in Education

ABSTRACT

EDUCATORS' RESPONSE TO CHANGE IN K-12 EDUCATION FACTORS THAT IMPACT CHANGE EFFORTS

BY

Jessica Spallino, B.A.,

M.A. Doctor of Philosophy

New Mexico State University

Las Cruces, New Mexico, 2015

Dr. Pierre Orelus, Chair

The purpose of this study was to better understand educators' experience with change within K-12. The following research question guided this phenomenological qualitative study: How do K-12 public school educators respond to curricular change? The study also involved exploring factors that contribute to successful change and change failure. A change in curriculum at each setting was explored to better understand the significance of the change.

A hermeneutic phenomenological approach was used for this study. Through this approach, I conducted research over a two-month period at three different

educational organizations utilizing open-ended online surveys and focus groups as data gathering events. I worked with four participants who work experienced change in the curriculum content used in their school settings. Throughout the two months, each participant was be asked to share his/her experience with the change within the following three categories identified as critical within successful change implementations (Fullan, 2000, 2015): 1) leadership, 2) organizational culture, and 3) the new curriculum program.

Based on the participants survey and focus group responses, the qualitative findings included the identification of the following clusters which led to two key findings: 1) Resistance, 2) Empowerment, 3) Relationship, 4) Standards & Beliefs, and 5) Guidance. These clusters were merged into the two major key findings of this study, which were: 1) Culture and 2) Leadership.

Through further analysis I also found that one main element is critical for any change to take place at any level and that is leadership (Fullan, 2011). While culture is just as important as leadership to be present for change to be successful, all themes, clusters, and findings of this study rely on effective leadership for any of these elements to be present or for effective change to take place.

Effective and sustainable reform cannot take place without a better understanding of how humans and specifically, educators respond to change. This study provides significant insight into educator's response to change and how those reactions impact the effectiveness of change efforts.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES	ix
LIST OF FIGURES.....	x
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Purpose of the Study.....	3
Theoretical Framework	4
Self-positioning	9
Research Approach.....	12
Research Question.....	16
Significance of Study	16
Definition of Terms	18
Change.....	18
Change Paradigms.....	19
Hermeneutical Phenomenology	19
Organizational Culture	20
Phenomenological Approach	20
Summary	20
Chapter 2: Literature Review	22
Transformative Learning Theory	22
Major Influences.....	22
Three Levels of Consciousness	25
Three Learning Processes.....	26
Perspective Transformation.....	28
Change Paradigms.....	29
Rational-Structural Paradigm	31
Strategic- Systemic Paradigm	31
Change Models.....	34
First Order and Second Order Changes.....	36
Impact of Change	35
Change as Loss	38
Change Challenges Competence	41
Change Creates Confusion	39
Change Causes Conflict	42
Key Components of Successful Change	43
The Fours C's	41

Leadership	42
Organizational Culture	46
Summary	48
Chapter 3: Research Design	47
Research Question	47
Curriculum Change	47
Variety of School Programs Examined	50
Setting 1: Unified School District	51
Setting 2: Independent Charter School	51
Setting 3: Elementary School District	52
Conceptual Framework/Research Paradigm	52
Phenomenology	54
Transcendental Phenomenology	56
Hermeneutical Phenomenology	57
Research Design	59
Method	59
Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis	59
Protocol Analysis	61
Focus Groups	63
Setting	63
Participants	64
Instruments	64
Data Collection	64
Data Analysis	65
Limitations	67
Summary	68
Chapter 4: Data Analysis & Findings	70
Individual Curriculum Change Scenarios	71
Settings	71
Setting One: Unified School District	71
Setting Two: Independent Charter School	72
Setting Three: Elementary School District	73
Setting Similarities & Differences	73
Participants	74
Participant 1: Mike	75
Participant 2: Leona	78
Participant 3: Keara	80
Participant 4: Sally	83
Data Collection Method and Analysis	86
Themes	95
Theme 1- Fear	98
Theme 2- Micromanagement	102
Theme 3- Follow through	105

Theme 4- Change agent.....	107
Theme 5- Buy-in	109
Theme 6- Communication.....	112
Theme 7- Freedom	114
Theme 8- Trust	117
Theme 9- Collaboration.....	120
Theme 10- Vision	122
Summary... ..	125
Chapter 5: Clusters	127
Cluster 1- Resistance	129
Cluster 2- Empowerment.....	131
Cluster 3- Relationship	133
Cluster 4- Standards/Beliefs	136
Cluster 5- Guidance.....	138
Participants' Connection to Themes, Clusters, & identifiers.....	141
Summary	143
Chapter 6: General Discussion and Recommendations	145
Interpretation of Findings.....	145
Key Finding 1- Leadership.....	149
Key Finding 2- Culture.....	155
Limitations.....	161
Suggestions for Future Research.....	163
Conclusion.....	165

LIST OF TABLES

1. Mezirow's Ten Phases of Transformative Learning	22
2. The Influences on Mezirow's Early Transformative	23
3. Types of Organizations	71
4. Overview of Participants	74
5. Central Themes.....	98
6. Clusters and Themes Regarding Educator's Response to Change.....	130
7. Clusters, Themes, and Identifiers Regarding Educator's Response to Change.....	144
8. Key Findings Based on Clusters and Themes Regarding Educator's Response to Change.....	150

LIST OF FIGURES

1. Diagrammatic Representation of Mezirow's Revised Transformative Learning Theory...	26
2. Hermeneutic Reduction Process.....	149

Chapter One: Introduction

Change can be positive and at times necessary within educational organizations (Fullan, 2011). Due to the increase in globalization through technology, school choice, and other factors, the need to adjust our methodology and practice is critical to meet the evolving needs of student populations. Observers and participants of this change process have recognized that within schools, it is unclear how to change, exactly what to change, and how to lead the process to change (Fullan, 1991, 2011, 2015). Dysfunctional change in schools can be a significant barrier to meaningful reform as school leaders are charged with the task of finding effective ways to implement change (Evans, 1996).

Meaningful and systemic change in schools and in other institutions can be a challenging experience for all involved. Institutional change can be demanding due to what Bassett (2011) notes are visceral and biological roots to aversion to change. In understanding human resistance to change, Evans (1996) states that it is “never just the logical, but the psychological as well” (p. 31). As educational organizations continue to experience the demands of change, they also discover struggle in attempting it.

A variety of factors such as globalization and school choice have paved new paths for educating students, and these factors are applying additional demand on the need for change (Evans, 1996). My personal experience with change within K-12 education has led me to this research topic. Throughout my experience as an administrator in education, I have found change to be one of the most challenging

aspects to continuously evolving demands of serving students successfully. I have found this change to be met with fear and resistance in many instances and have found it to be a pertinent and fascinating topic in regards to school reform.

When focusing particularly on school reform and the challenges to implementing sustainable change within school systems, Evans (1996) claims that most failed attempts at innovation and change within schools were because the change did not get at “fundamental, underlying, systemic features of school life: they didn’t change the behaviors, norms, and beliefs of practitioners” (p. 5). These attempts at reform ended up merging into existing practice and the proposed change dissolved. Evans (1996) breaks change down into two orders: first and second. First-order change aims at improving the effectiveness of a current practice. These changes are usually focused on a single, incremental, and isolated implementation and do not affect the basic features of the school. On the other hand, second-order changes aim at systemic reform, seeking to modify the way an organization is structured (Watzlawick, Weakland, & Fisch, 1974, 2011). Second-order changes require modifications to beliefs and perceptions, which can be far more disrupting to one’s sense of security (Evans, 1996). In order to develop democratic educational models that are equitable and inclusive to all, change must take place within the structures of educational institutions (Fullan, 1991, 2011). Change is rarely easy, so when the challenges that come with change arise, many eventually back off and default to the way things have always been done.

Purpose of the Study

This study will explore change theories and paradigms in relation to change and examine change efforts in today's educational environments (Evans, 1996; Fullan, 1991). Additional efforts at implementing and sustaining change within schools will be explored as well as ways to assist school leaders in gaining change momentum (Evans, 1996). The better we understand change and its effect on humans, the higher the chance we can implement meaningful change in education (Evans, 1996).

Experts on educational change such as Fullan (1991, 2015), Evans (1996), and Sergiovanni (2004) provide critical analysis of the process of school change and its impact on leadership. Their contributions to change have created a new paradigm deriving from different schools of thought and strategic approaches to the development of an organization, which opposes the traditional, rational-structural model that currently dominates reform efforts (Evans, 1996). When beginning to look at change in any manner or organization, it is vital to understand the structural foundation of change. My research will look into the work of Evans (1996) and other experts on change, on structural systems within change, and focus in detail on the Transformative Learning Theory and Rational-Structural and Strategic-Systemic Paradigms to change and how they each serve change efforts in today's educational environments.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for change within educational organizations is grounded in a combination of transformative learning theory and change paradigms. Transformative learning theory first emerged in education over 35 years ago. Early influences of this theoretical framework include Kuhn (1962) on paradigms, Freire (1970) on conscientization, and Habermas (1971) on domains of learning (Kitchenham, 2008).

Transformative learning theory (Brookfield, 2000) is grounded in both humanist and constructivist perspectives. Within this theory there is an emphasis on the self and how we all have an innate potential for self discovery (Merriam & Brocket, 1997). Constructivism is derived from Piaget's (1952) and Dewey's (1938) work. Constructivism focuses on learning as a way humans create meaning from our own experiences and includes a differentiation between individual and social meaning making. According to Vygotsky (1978), during individual meaning making, meaning is made through developing viewpoints that assist in understanding life experiences whereas during social meaning making, viewpoints are developed through understandings that are culturally shared.

Both humanism and constructivism reflect North American values and beliefs that align to the traditional notion that anyone can achieve anything through hard work and overcoming obstacles. Mezirow (2003) writes:

Transformative learning is learning that transforms problematic frames of reference—sets of fixed assumptions and expectations (habits of mind,

meaning perspectives, mindsets)—to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, reflective, and emotionally able to change. Such frames of reference are better than others because they are more likely to generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action. (pp. 58-59)

Evans (1996) provides a structure for change and new paradigms within change that are emerging and allow for meaningful change within organizations. The rational-structural paradigm of change is rooted in the concept of “scientific management” (Evans, 1996, p. 32) which was established to improve industrial performance to help work become more efficient. This impactful approach accelerated the development of procedures and bureaucracies to improve productivity and ultimately transformed the traditional workplace into sites where work procedures were offered and results could be measured. A rational approach was criticized for reducing worker’s skilled crafts to rote tasks, helping to create a mechanistic model for work and education. This paradigm reflects the basic assumptions of Newtonian physics in that the “world is an ordered place in which events unfold according to casual, linear laws; everything can be understood, provided enough information is available” (Evans, 1997, p. 7). Furthermore, an organization is seen as a stable entity and that it “depends on rational, objective decision-making, quantitative measurement, and the pursuit of long-range goals” (Evans, 1997, p. 10).

The methodology utilized for innovation and change within a rational-structural paradigm is almost always a top-down approach with little participation from staff in roles other than leadership (Evans, 1996). The usual goal is to have staff go along with the implementation goal; furthermore, in order to develop a sense of ownership, the organization is required to provide explanation, persuasion, training, and incentives. If these devices are not successful, then mandates, requirements, and policies are used. Examples of this paradigm at work within education are curriculum standards, competency testing, and mandating of procedures for diagnosing and teaching students with special needs. At the district level this can often be training programs aimed at correcting teacher performance.

The second change paradigm provided by Evans (1996) is the strategic-systemic paradigm. This paradigm challenges traditional assumptions regarding stability and causality and “looks at wholes rather than parts, at patterns of change rather than static snapshots” (Senge, 1990, p. 68). This holistic approach within the strategic-systemic paradigm opposes the traditional linear view of cause and effect by highlighting that every event is both cause and effect and that no one factor can be modified without the subsequent alteration on the rest. Senge (1990, 2014) argues that by focusing on “broader, underlying systemic patterns can we solve problems effectively and develop a truly creative, self-renewing learning organization that can cope with a changing environment” (p. 42).

The strategic-systemic paradigm opposes the top-down implementation methodology of most traditional approaches to change. When change efforts are

primarily focused on formal tasks and procedures and not the critical task of altering people's beliefs, true ownership of the change does not take place, and the change is at a higher risk for resistance. Commitment building is an important element in change implementation; likewise, the organization's vision and mission is critical in pursuing shared goals (Evans, 1996). Vaill (1998) has labeled this important task as "purposing" and defines it as a "continuous stream of actions by an organization's formal leadership that induces clarity, consensus, and commitment regarding the organization's basic purposes" (p. 29). Organizations thus need to develop followership amongst its people; followership is "an active, engaged, self-managing commitment to change among those who implement it" (Evans, 1996, p. 18) and is critical in successfully implementing change.

In regard to change, Giroux (1997, 2011), Freire (1970, 1997), McLaren (1998), and Shor (1992, 2012) have made significant contributions to a concept called "radical pedagogy" (ezrawinton.com, 2013). Radical pedagogy focuses on how elements of educational organizations become politicized and offers insight into how policies and practices can and should be geared towards radical social change (Freire, 1970, 1997; Giroux, 1997, 2011; McLaren, 1998; Shor, 1992, 2012). The concept of radical pedagogy is important to note when discussing change, as it is a reaction to the impact the inflexible bureaucracy has on education. It is accepted within radical pedagogy that the "one constant in the universe is change and because education has come to be among the most important social institutions in the world, then it is very important to consider as broadly as possible the nature of education as it exists

today—as well as how it might change as we move into the future” (ezrawinton.com, 2013).

Radical pedagogy can also refer to cutting edge innovations in the field of education such as the latest theories, methods, tools, and practices that offer ways to revolutionize teaching and learning (ezrawinton.com, 2013).

Giroux’s notion of emancipatory authority can be useful when applied to assisting teachers in developing a level of independence and empowerment in order to implement change. He believes in nurturing teachers’ ability to see themselves as “transgressive intellectuals who shape curriculum content and pedagogy so that dominant ways of thinking and acting are challenged” (Scott, 2008, p.112). This will require challenging traditional structures that are operated within a top down approach and allow teachers to act more independently.

Emancipatory authority for a teacher requires that the teacher continuously critiques and rejects authorial approaches that reinforce divisions of labor and disempower not only teachers, but students as well. Giroux (1997, 2011) identifies the link between thinking and acting critically in order to transform society and highlights the danger that if “traditional forms of authority within which students have been embedded for most of their lives are undermined, the conditions for allowing students to challenge those traditional discursive and structural forms which make up the curriculum cannot be met” (p. 98).

Self-positioning

Growing up in a working class and highly liberal home, I have developed a passion for challenging traditional systems and striving for change that creates equity. My father was highly opinionated and vocal about his liberal beliefs and had little to no tolerance for anything other than a complete liberal mindset. He found himself in heated debates with anyone who would partake, including those on television. My father was a union steward almost his entire career and went to work every day for thirty-five years to fight for those he felt needed it. He was a true champion for the underdog, but could get impassioned to the point of obnoxiousness at times.

I focus on my father because he was a powerful influence in my upbringing, and much of what he believed I believe as well. I have learned a tremendous amount from him, but have developed the understanding that there may be a less emotional approach to matters of injustice and equality. Growing up in a lower middle class white family who had financial struggles never led me to believe that we were in any way privileged. I had to work for everything I had and earned anything that was given to me. I did not realize until now that having the opportunity to work was a privilege in of itself. The fact that my family was able to work hard and earn money so that we could move out of a neighborhood we did not feel safe in was a privilege.

I believe my upbringing has placed me on a non-traditional career path. Even though I have completed my Single and Multiple Subject teaching credentials and my Administrative credentials, I have never worked in a traditional school environment. I have always felt that it was too restrictive and bureaucratic for me. I tend to feel most

comfortable in an environment that allows for a more active voice in decision making from the staff, and I found just that environment in my previous job at an independent study charter school that primarily served at risk high school students. As a curriculum coordinator and then program manager, I oversaw all educational services provided to the students. This unique educational environment allowed me plenty of space and encouragement to explore different strategies to successfully serve the diverse group of students that attended the school.

As a member of the leadership team, I began to make suggestions on how to better aid the at-risk students we served, many of whom were racial minorities. I was faced with a resistance that caught me by surprise. There was a founder of the school, along with other members of the leadership team, who felt the proposed change was futile and somehow “beneath” them to modify how we were serving students that were destined to be drop-outs. The culture of the school had become one that viewed its students as lucky that we, as a school community, were even there for them. The belief seemed to be that without us there to “save” them, these at-risk minority students would be destined for failure.

My reaction to this resistance and racist response was a culmination of my father’s drive to fight for what is right and some deep feeling that I identified more with the Latino and Black at-risk students than I did with my White co-workers. Something developed in me upon this resistance that continues to motivate me in my practice and research. As the resistance amongst my co-workers grew, so did my conviction.

Every new program I implemented was met with fierce resistance from part of the leadership team. When they realized that their resistance was only motivating me more, they became so insecure, that they attempted personal attacks. This is when I realized that their resistance had nothing to do with our obligation to the students. It only had to do with their own loss of power and control. I tried to convince them of the value of the change through research of best practices and personal stories of the students, but they couldn't hear or see anything other than they had lost control of their safe and sacred space. The entire group who resisted the changes at the school left on stress and never returned.

This turned out to be the most valuable experience of my professional career. I learned about human's resistance to change and that it is "never just the logical, but the psychological as well" (Evans, 1996, p. 31). I learned that racism often operates outside of conscious or deliberate intention and that we "must understand its ubiquity in order to effectively challenge its hegemony" (Bell, 2010, p. 13). I learned that not everyone is in education to help children. I also learned that I have a deep passion for making change happen when it is evident that it is needed.

Because meaningful and systemic change in organizations can be a challenging experience for all involved. Institutional change can be demanding due to what Bassett (2011) notes are visceral and biological roots to aversion to change. In understanding human resistance to change, Evans (1996) states that it is "never just the logical, but the psychological as well" (p. 31). As educational organizations continue to experience the demands of change, they also discover struggle in

attempting it. As I continue to work in the field of education, my goal is to implement change where it is needed to more successfully serve the ever-changing students in our classrooms today. I plan on relying on fundamentals of Transformative Learning Theory to better understand the process of change for adults and apply the most current change paradigms towards educators' experience with change within K-12 education.

As these principles are applied, I plan on gaining a better understanding of educators' experience with change and also determining more effective ways to implement change considering the observation of their experience with it. My aim is to conduct qualitative research on educators' experience with change in their instructional practice in search of important observations and determinations on human response to change.

Research Approach

A phenomenological approach within a qualitative research paradigm will be used for this study. A phenomenological approach provides an understanding of a phenomenon through the perspectives of humans (Creswell, 2007). According to Merleau-Ponty (1962):

The aim of phenomenology is description of phenomena. Reduction is a process that involves suspending or bracketing the phenomena so that the 'things themselves' can be returned to. Likewise, an essence is the core meaning of an individual's experience that makes it what it is. Finally, intentionality refers to consciousness since individuals are always conscious

to something. In other words, intentionality is the total meaning of the object.

(p. 76)

Berrios (1989) claims that the term phenomenology refers to the following set of components: a) assumptions of what the world is like and how it can be known and b) strategies to manage the descriptions of the mental processes relating to such a world. The mentioned components aim to identify experiential essences that are considered higher forms of knowledge.

Within hermeneutic phenomenology, the researcher aims to generate a rich description of a phenomenon through the participant's point of view, while working towards uncovering essences (Cohen, 2001). Phenomenology accepts that there may be many possible perspectives on a specific phenomenon. Hermeneutics does not espouse a step-by-step method. The only guidelines are the recommendation for a combination of the following six research activities: "commitment to concern, establishing a stance toward the question, investigating the experience as it is lived, describing the phenomenon through writing and rewriting, and consideration of parts and whole" (Kafle, 2011, p. 12).

Hermeneutic phenomenology focuses on the lived world or human experience with it. The focus is toward "illuminating details and seemingly trivial aspects within experience that may be taken for granted in our lives, with a goal of creating meaning and achieving a sense of understanding" (Wilson & Hutchinson, 1991, p. 21).

Hermeneutic phenomenology considers the philosophies that underlie both hermeneutics and phenomenology (Van Manen, 2007). It is a "research methodology

aimed at producing rich textual descriptions of the experiencing of selected phenomena in the life world of individuals that are able to connect with the experience of all of us collectively” (Smith, 1997, p. 80). Identifying the experience of phenomena takes place by reflection and the utilization of descriptive language (Smith, 1997). Langdridge (2007) notes that within hermeneutical phenomenology, experiences can be communicated through the sharing experiences. To better understand phenomenon, we need to explore people’s shared stories of their experiences, along with specific hermeneutic methods of interpretation.

According to Van Manen (1990), phenomenology is a way of “access to the world as we experience it prereflectively” (p. 28) where a prereflective experience is how we experience the world from day to day. It is also a method for questioning that allows for gaining understanding into the meaning of phenomena and events.

Phenomenology differs from other qualitative methods that “require repetition and may involve calculation, technicization, and comparison of outcomes, trends, and the indexing of data” (Van Manen, 1990, p. 29). Phenomenology aligns less to a systematic set of procedures and allows for a variety of methodical activities, such as interviewing and observations, to gain insight into human response to phenomena.

A phenomenological approach to research on change in education is effective due to its primary goal of discovering the assumptions made by individuals and the world in which they live. The better the researcher understands one’s assumptions, the easier it may become to make correlations between reactions to change based on assumptions held. For example, if a teacher holds the assumption that 2nd grade

students always learn math concepts best after they have had lunch, what happens when an administrator institutes a change that proposes math instruction is delivered before lunch? How do we, as change agents, facilitate that change more effectively knowing that certain assumptions regarding learning math and eating lunch are made? The information on assumptions that a phenomenological research study can generate ultimately helps in making change more sustainable.

Within phenomenology, I will be utilizing a hermeneutical phenomenological approach to conduct my research. A phenomenological approach is hermeneutical when its method is taken to be interpretive, contrary to a transcendental approach, which aims to be descriptive. This perspective is apparent in the work of Heidegger who argues that all description is interpretative by nature, as every form of human awareness is based on perspective and interpretation (Van Manen, 2007).

The following systematic steps will be utilized for this research approach on the phenomenon of change: 1) data are collected from individuals who have experienced the phenomenon of change through open ended questions in an online survey and focus group interviews, 2) participants are asked broad, open ended questions, 3) data analysis is conducted by identifying key statements that give the researcher an insight into an understanding of how the participants experienced the phenomenon, 4) develop clusters of meaning from the significant statements into themes, 5) key statements and themes are used to write a synopsis the experiences of the participants, and 6) write a comprehensive description that explores the essence of the phenomenon and focuses on the experiences of the participants that are common

(Creswell, 2007). This qualitative approach can provide a description of what all participants have in common as they experience the phenomenon of change and to identify a universal essence to better understand educators' response to change.

Research Question

The following research question, and subsequent research question, will guide this phenomenological qualitative study:

How do K-12 public school educators respond to curricular change?

- What factors influence change efforts?

Educators' experience with at least one change in curriculum will be explored to gain insight on their response to change. Through a combination of written personal accounts of participants' experience with the implemented change within their schools and focus groups conducted at the end of the semester, data will be gathered to determine any commonalities amongst the participants in response to the change experienced in their schools.

Significance of Study

Change must be possible in order for educational reform to take place (Evans, 1996). Generally, the organizations that do implement innovation and change are the new and young ones. As most organizations succeed and grow, they usually become more conservative, hierarchical, and structured (Evans, 1996).

Researchers have discovered a cyclical pattern of reform movement in that they emerge every decade and then return to the background, leaving the educational organization who attempted the reform only slightly modified, generating minimal

change in the educational practices (Murphy, 1990). Nolan and Meister (2000) claim that the reason or failed attempts at significant reform is due to the “neglect of the phenomenology of change” (p. 3). Failure to understand how educators’ experience change in contrast to how it was intended provides insight to the failure of reform attempts (Fullan, 1991, 2011).

The significance of this study is to contribute to making change more possible in educational organizations. Two elements of educational organizations contribute greatly to the successful change: culture and leadership (Evans, 1996; Schein, 1992). An organization’s culture can determine the tolerance it may have for true innovation and change. Schein (1992) defines organizational culture as the following:

The deeper level of basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by members of an organization, that operate unconsciously, and that define in a basic “taken for granted” fashion an organization’s view of itself and its environment. These assumptions and beliefs are learned responses to a group’s problems of survival in the external environment and its problems of internal integration. They come to be taken for granted because they solve those problems repeatedly and reliably. (p. 12)

An organization’s culture not only has the ability to shape people’s behavior, perception, and understanding of events, but also on how people respond to changes in its environment. Culture ultimately serves as a conservative force that reflects our “human need for stability, consistency, and meaning” (Schein, 1992, p. 11); furthermore, organizations by their very nature have an aversion to unpredictability.

Authentic leadership is critical in implementing innovation and change within an organization (Schein, 1992). To transform schools, it is best if leaders generate trust, which builds confidence (Evans, 1996). Leaders who are authentic are followed, and “they are not distinguished by their techniques or styles but by their integrity and savvy” (Evans, 1996, p. 184). Most people seek a combination of genuineness and effectiveness in a leader, who also generates trust and confidence and is worth following into the uncertainties of change (Fullan, 1991, 2011, 2015).

Definition of Terms

Key terms and concepts referred to in this study on change include authentic leadership, which is a combination of genuineness and effectiveness, and is distinguished by effective techniques, integrity, and savviness (Evans, 1996). Other key terms include change, change paradigms, hermeneutical phenomenology, organizational culture, and phenomenological approach, all of which are further clarified in the following paragraphs.

Change

Change can be defined as bearing loss and investing in new ways of behaving, to move from mourning loss toward commitment, to abandon old ways and try new ones, and even develop new perceptions (Evans, 2010). This almost always needs to be accomplished through an effective leader who can model acceptance of the change and create link between old and the new, to help others let go of what they are used to so that they can move on (Evans, 2010).

Change Paradigms

Change paradigms involve two models of change based on Evans work (1997). The rational-structural paradigm of change is rooted in the concept of scientific management, which was established to improve industrial performance by improving work efficiency. This approach was criticized for reducing worker's skilled crafts to rote tasks, helping to create a mechanistic model for work and education. The strategic-systemic paradigm challenges traditional assumptions regarding stability and "looks at wholes rather than parts, at patterns of change rather than static snapshots" (Senge, 1990, p. 68). This holistic approach within the strategic-systemic paradigm opposes the traditional linear view of cause and effect by highlighting that once change can affect all of elements. Senge (1990, 2014) argues that by focusing on "broader, underlying systemic patterns can we solve problems effectively and develop a truly creative, self-renewing learning organization that can cope with a changing environment" (p. 42).

Hermeneutical Phenomenology

Hermeneutical phenomenology is an approach within phenomenology that focuses primarily on interpretation of personal accounts of experience rather than strict descriptions. Heidegger's work on hermeneutical phenomenology contributes to the notion that suspending personal opinions when describing one's narration of personal experience with a phenomenon is impossible, and the aim should be to "get beneath the subjective experience and find the genuine objective nature of the things realized by the individual" (Kafle, 2011, p. 34).

Organizational Culture

Organizational Culture is the basic beliefs that are shared by most of the members of an organization and in this case, educational organization. These attitudes and beliefs become taken for granted because they are often referred to without hesitation (Schein, 1992). An organization's culture not only has the ability to shape and influence people's behavior, perception and understanding of events, but also on how people respond to changes to their environment (Schein, 1992).

Phenomenological Approach

Phenomenological approach is to discover the overall essence of a phenomenon through participants' experience with it (Creswell, 2007). This qualitative paradigm of research is conducted through interviews, discussions, and observations.

Summary

Implementing change in any organization can be a challenging task. As research and experience show, humans and organizations have built-in responses to change that stem from biological, political, and societal forces. It requires a deep understanding of the response to change, an honest evaluation of the organization's existing culture, and an effective and bold leader to successfully lead others into change. Schein (1987) highlights a critical challenge in implementing change, noting "I have found over and over again that the acceptance of a new point of view...has much less to do with the validity of that point of view than with one's readiness to consider any alternatives whatsoever" (p. 107).

In chapter two, I will discuss various forms of research on change within education, including its roots in Transformative Learning Theory, evolving paradigms on change, and studies conducted within educational organizations on change. The review of literature will assist in better informing the Methodology prepared in chapter three in preparation for the research study on how K-12 public school educators respond to curricular change in relation to an online program implementation.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Chapter one provided an overview of the research topic of change within K-12 education and some background on the research and research approach of the study. In this chapter, the literature on change in education was reviewed. Transformative Learning Theory is a primary focus of this discussion along with change paradigms that have been defined by experts on change within education and beyond. to make correlations between theory and change within K-12 education. The aim of this comprehensive review of literature on educational change is to provide a better understanding of human reaction to change, specifically in the field of education to potentially discover solutions as to how to implement change successfully. In order to better understand educators' response to change within K-12 education, it can be effective to apply the theory of transformative learning along with proposed change paradigms and continued thought on change in education. This compilation of research and discussions on change provide a theoretical framework for change in education

Transformative Learning Theory

Kitchenham (2010) claims that transformative learning theory describes how humans learn and why they learn the way they do and is a theoretical framework in which to study human's experiences with change. The Transformative Learning Centre (2004) claims that transformative learning is a "deep, structural shift in basic premises of thought, feelings, and actions" (Mezirow, 1978, p. 45) identifies ten phases of Transformative Learning and describes them in the table below. These ten

phases are useful when applying to the process of change in education to better understand the phases teachers or other educational professionals might experience. For example, when implementing a new curriculum to replace one that teachers have been using for years, they may initially experience disorientation and then guilt or shame for having a strong reaction to the change. From there, they may reflect critically on the change and most likely turn to others going through the same process. From that point, decision needs to be made on how to move forward and be constructive with change by assigning new roles and procedures and building competence. Mezirow's ten phases in Table 1 below, describe a natural and overall constructive process with change. Some change implementations can break right at the stage of collaborating with others on working through the new change. If the change was not implemented with buy-in from the staff, and there is significant resistance, it may not make it to phase 5 and beyond where sustainability takes place.

Table 1

Mezirow's (1978a, 1978b) Ten Phases of Transformative Learning

Table 1 Mezirow's (1978a, 1978b) Ten Phases of Transformative Learning	
Phase 1	A disorienting dilemma
Phase 2	A self-examination with feelings of guilt or shame
Phase 3	A critical assessment of epistemic, sociocultural, or psychic assumptions
Phase 4	Recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared and that others have negotiated a similar change
Phase 5	Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions
Phase 6	Planning of a course of action
Phase 7	Acquisition of knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans
Phase 8	Provisional trying of new roles
Phase 9	Building of competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships
Phase 10	A reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's perspective

Major Influences

Much of Mezirow's work on Transformative Learning is influenced by Kuhn's (1962) paradigm, Freire's (1970) conscientization, and Habermas's (1971, 1984) domains of learning (Mezirow, 1978a, 1991a, 2000). Critical concepts of these theorists have influenced Mezirow's development of transformative learning theory and the prominent concepts of "disorienting dilemma, meaning schemes, meaning perspectives, perspective transformation, frame of reference, levels of learning processes, habits of mind, and critical self-reflection" (Kitchham, 2010, p. 33). An outline of his early influences on specific components of transformative learning theory is below. As with Mezirow's ten phases, these facets describe common human symptoms of change, with habit of mind and perspective transformation as the most prevalent. The goal of this research is to discover what takes place between habit of mind and perspective transformation and how that contributes to the success or failure of the implemented change. Mezirow's main influences are listed below in Table 2.

Table 2

Mezirow's (1978a, 1978b) The Influences on Mezirow's Early Transformative Learning Theory and Its Related Facets

Table 2
The Influences on Mezirow's Early Transformative Learning Theory and Its Related Facets

Influence	Transformative learning facet
Kuhn's (1962) paradigm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perspective transformation • Frame of reference • Meaning perspective • Habit of mind
Freire's (1970) conscientization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disorienting dilemma • Critical self-reflection • Habit of mind
Habermas's (1971, 1984) domains of learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning processes • Perspective transformation • Meaning scheme • Meaning perspective

Kuhn (1962) emphasized the importance of paradigms, which he articulated as “universally recognized scientific achievements that for a time provided model problems and solutions to a community of practitioners” (p. viii). Kitchenhams (2010) claims that transformative learning theory is built on habits of mind and meaning making which lead to transformation. Theory of transformation learning has itself become a paradigm through providing answers and solutions regarding adult learning and transformation.

Freire has also influenced Mezirow's (1975) initial work on transformational learning theories. Freire (1970) compared traditional educational porcesses to a “banking” method of teaching and learning, where the teacher delivers content to students who are inactive participants in a position of privilege to receive the expert knowledge from the teacher. The identified issue with this form of education is that students are reliant on the teacher to acquire any knowledge and are never given the opportunity to learn for themselves. Freire claimed that “the more students work at

storing the deposits entrusted to them, the less they develop the critical consciousness which would result from their intervention in the world as transformers of that world” (Freire, 1970, p. 60). To counter this, Freire (1970) emphasized the importance of students developing a consciousness that empowers to generate transformation. Freire (1970) defined *conscientization* as “learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions—developing a critical awareness—so that individuals can take action against the oppressive elements of reality” (p. 19).

In order to empower students within the education system, teachers need to utilize democratic practices and facilitate transformative relationships with their students, their learning, and society as a whole. (Freire, 1970). Because Freire believed that education transcends the classroom and is present in all aspects of a learner’s life, education is naturally political and creates ground for transformation (Shor & Freire, 1987, 2012). In alignment with this concept, political perspectives influence the entire approach a teacher takes, such as the topics they choose to focus on and expose students to. Interestingly on the topic of change within education, Freire (1973) notes that even teachers themselves are challenged to transform from the “instilled certainty” (p. 52) that “teaching is lecturing and that knowledge is unidirectional” (Kitchenham, 2010, p. 37). A classroom cannot be truly democratic until teachers are open to student input in order to “affirm themselves without thereby disaffirming their students” (Freire & Faundez, 1989, p. 34).

Three levels of consciousness. Freire (1973) refers to three levels of consciousness, which make up *conscientization* and lay the foundation for

educational transformation to be possible. Freire titles the lowest or first stage of consciousness growth “intransitive thought,” which occurs when people feel that change is left to destiny. Those who function at this stage believe that actions taken can’t change their life and they are left to feel little hope for the future. Freire calls the second stage, “semitransitive,” which involves some conscious choice and movement for change. During this stage each problem is addressed individually, rather than seeing the problem more comprehensively and as a societal issue. During this stage, one may rely on the strength of a leader who is seen as powerful enough to help others change, rather than making the change based on his own transformational abilities. The highest level or third stage called “critical transitivity” includes those who think holistically about the current state and decide to take action to make change possible. Those within this group possess the ability to combine critical thought with action to make for effective change in their lives. Kitchenham (2010) links the final stage of critical consciousness to Mezirow’s notions of dilemma, reflection, self-reflection on assumptions, and discourse (Mezirow, 1978a, 1978b, 1985). These stages contribute valuable insight into the different types of response to change.

Three learning processes. Mezirow (1985) identifies three learning processes: instrumental, dialogic, and self-reflective. The breakdown for each type of learning is explored in the Figure 1 below.

Figure 1
Diagrammatic Representation of Mezirow's (1985)
Revised Transformative Learning Theory

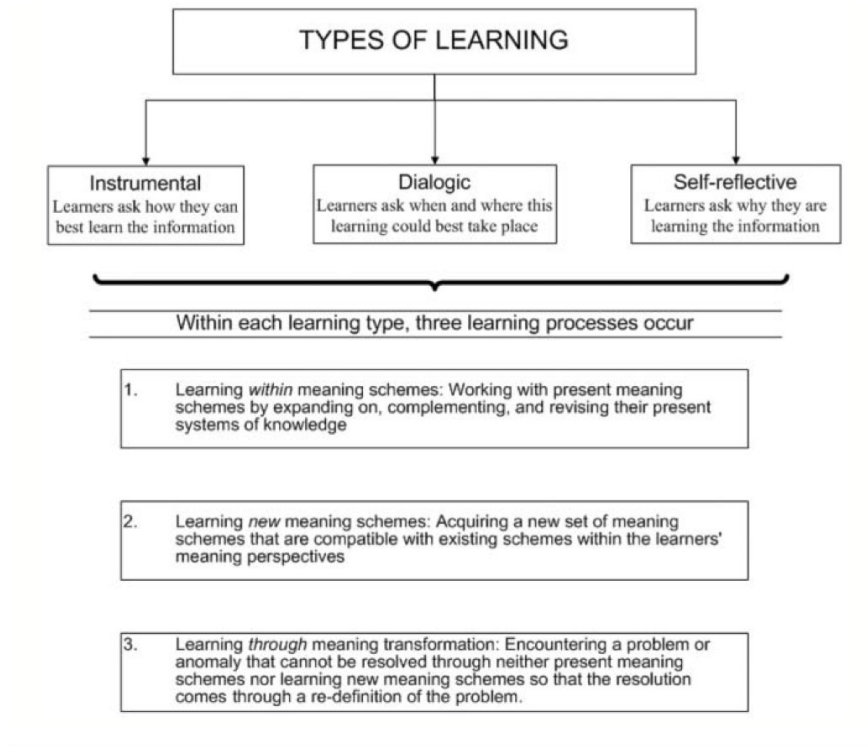


Figure 1 Diagrammatic Representation of Mezirow's (1985) Revised Transformative Learning Theory

The first learning process, which is learning within meaning schemes, pertains to learners working in familiar territory by expanding on knowledge they already have. Kitchenham (2010) provides an example of teaching in a computer lab and how it can align to the first learning process. Instrumentally, teachers can come up with a most efficient way to manage large groups of students working in a computer lab. Dialogically, teachers may inquire how to best teach technological concepts based on their teaching philosophy. Self-reflectively, teachers may take note of their experience with works best with students and use that information to prepare future

classes.

The second learning process is learning new meaning schemes that are compatible with existing scheme. Kitchenham (2010) continues with an application of this process through web-based learning. Instrumentally, teachers can attempt to try new technology, such as web page creation, without using instructions or tutorials. Dialogically, teachers can look to theories to support their new learning such as WebQuests to support their learning of web-page creation. Self-reflectively, they can develop view of themselves as knowledgeable, and maybe even experts in technology.

The third learning process within each of the three learning types is learning through meaning transformation. This process requires “becoming aware of specific assumptions (schemata, criteria, rules, or repressions) on which a distorted or incomplete meaning scheme is based and, through a reorganization of meaning, transforming it” (Mezirow, 1985, p. 23). Transformation takes place through critical self-reflection of the assumptions and beliefs one holds. Mezirow (1985) offers an example through instrumental learning, the teacher acknowledges that modifying the layout of a computer lab can help in increasing student support. Through dialogic learning, the teacher may discover that gender and age do not have an impact on technology knowledge. Through self-reflective learning, the teacher becomes a confident and technology user who is able to help other to learn. Mezirow (1985) emphasizes that only through this last process does perspective transformation take place.

Perspective transformation. According to Mezirow (1985), perspective transformation can occur in two components with each component related to meaning schemes that are always changing. One component pertains to change that can occur through a build up of transformations (Mezirow, 1985) resulting in a perspective transformation. A teacher may experience a transformation through modification in meaning schemes or “the constellation of concept, belief, judgment, and feeling which shapes a particular interpretation” (Mezirow, 1994b, p. 223). Mezirow (1985) provides the example that teachers can examine how they learned to use a keyboard and apply those same techniques to other related technological devices.

Contrarily, perspective transformation can also be “epochal...[and]...painful” (Mezirow, 1985, p. 24) as it can involve a re-evaluation of oneself. For example, teachers can become aware of their philosophy on using technology in the classroom and become aware of their change in perspective on technology. Mezirow (1991a, 1994b) argued that the key step to perspective transformation is critical self-reflection. He further claims that if a learner accommodates a new point of view without exploring the feelings that represented the original perspective, it is impossible for perspective transformation to take place. Furthermore, if a teacher was to adopt a new belief system through a top-down approach (Hord, 1992), perspective transformation is not possible.

Mezirow (1995) claims that critical reflection is the act of “intentional assessment” (p. 44) of one’s actions and reflection not only alludes to the nature and of one’s actions but also to the related circumstances. Mezirow (1995) provides three

reflection types in addition to their roles in the transformation of meaning schemes: content, process, and premise reflection (see Figure 2). Within the process of reflection, teachers ask questions (Cranton, 1994). Process reflection ignites a person to take note of actions and be aware of any other factors that need to be discovered. This form of reflection may lead to transform meaning schemes. Premise reflection requires the person to examine the larger view of his value system and could lead to transformation of a meaning perspective, rather than a meaning scheme.

In summary, learners can transform an individual meaning scheme by exploring actions or where the actions and their related factors started. It is important to note that when they consider a more global perspective, it requires deeper reflection the transformation of a series of meaning schemes (Kitchenham, 2010).

Change Paradigms

Through his work on change and change efforts, Evans (1996) has a developed a new paradigm that comes from systems thinking and strategic approaches to organizational development. His new paradigm of change called the strategic-systemic paradigm opposes the traditional rational-structural model that currently dominates reform efforts (Evans, 1996). This discussion on change paradigms offers further theoretical framework for the overall topic of change.

Rational-Structural Paradigm

The rational-structural paradigm of change is rooted in the concept of scientific management (Evans, 1996) which was established to improve industrial performance by making work more efficient. This approach amplified the

development of automation and bureaucratization, which brought significant increases to overall productivity. This ultimately generated the transformation of the factory model and the office into places where work processes were streamlined and results were measured. This approach was criticized for reducing worker's skilled crafts to rote tasks, helping to create a mechanistic model for work and education. This paradigm reflects the basic assumptions of Newtonian physics in that the "world is an ordered place in which events unfold according to casual, linear laws; everything can be understood, provided enough information is available" (Evans, 1997, p. 7).

The methodology utilized for innovation and change within a rational-structural paradigm is almost always a top-down approach, with little participation from lower staff. The usual goal is to have staff go along with the implementation goal and in order to develop a sense of ownership, the organization is required to provide explanation, persuasion, training, and incentives and if these devices aren't successful then mandates, requirements, and policies are used. Examples of this paradigm at work within education are curriculum standards and competency testing and mandating of procedures for diagnosing and teaching students with special needs. At the district level this can often be training programs aimed at correcting teacher performance.

Critics of the traditional paradigm argue that it has conceptual and practical flaws and claim that it ignores the "flux and complexity in and around organizations; it overemphasizes linearity, rationality, and formal structure; and it overlooks vital

realities of context, human psychology, and the process of change” (Evans, 1996, p. 9)”. Within attempts of school reform, a typical pattern has emerged that blames failed attempts on teachers rather than the designers of the change even though the designers are usually the cause of the failure (Evans, 1996). This observation extends into the corporate sphere where change efforts based on this traditional paradigm have failed to improve organizational performance. Peter Vaill (1989) observes that even though there has been an increase in “rationalistic analysis, design, and control of human systems” (p. 77), it is common that organizations are “mysterious, recalcitrant, intractable, unpredictable, paradoxical, absurd, and unless it’s your own ox getting gored funny” (p. 77). For effective change to take place, a new paradigm of change that acknowledges the real world of people, institutions, and change is critical.

Strategic Systemic Paradigm

Evans merges the two current perspectives on organizations of strategic management and systems theory to craft what he calls the strategic-systemic paradigm. This paradigm challenges traditional assumptions regarding stability and causality and “looks at wholes rather than parts, at patterns of change rather than static snapshots” (Senge, 1990, p. 68). This holistic approach within the strategic-systemic paradigm opposes the traditional linear view of cause and effect by emphasizing that every event is both cause and effect and always affects the rest. Senge (1990, 2014) argues that by focusing on “broader, underlying systemic patterns can we solve problems effectively and develop a truly creative, self-renewing learning organization that can cope with a changing environment” (p. 42).

The rate of both planned and unplanned change such as technological, social, economic, and political, is happening at such a fast pace that we can no longer assume the stability that is assumed by the traditional paradigm. Because change today is less incremental and has become discontinuous, strategic thinkers find chaos theory to be a better model for understanding change (Evans, 1996) in that it sees systems as not only complex but also spontaneous, idiosyncratic and most importantly, unpredictable. Vaill (1989) identifies the challenges leaders face in a climate where change is so rapid that they cannot predict long-range trends and concludes that “the very context within which organizations exist has become destabilized, so that we can no longer treat as given the most fundamental things we once took for granted” (p. 3).

Many large industrial companies don’t survive long due to the incapability to adapt to the unplanned and unpredictable change and K-12 public schools in the United States are struggling with the rate of change as well. The entire educational landscape is in flux with changes in social, economic, and political forces such as increases in non-English speaking students, poverty stricken students, tightening school budgets, technological implementations, and competitive pressures such as for-profit and charter schools. In taking a human resource perspective on the existence of an organization, the strategic-systemic paradigm identifies the gap between functional designs and formal processes and the actual behaviors of workers, which can vary (Evans, 1996).

Within this view, human nature is seen as complex and malleable and varied in two ways. For one, the personal lives and needs of staff can intrude on their performance and stifle innovation efforts. As the teacher work force ages, so does the desire or willingness to change. Secondly, staff performance is the “sheer social complexity of organizational life itself” (Evans, 1996, p. 13). While the natural order of things involves change, there is a power struggle between the fulfillment of job duties and different interest groups, and potential conflicts over status and resources. Expert on leadership and organizational development, Warren Bennis, (1989) learned as a leader that “routine work drives out non-routine work and smothers to death all creative planning, all fundamental change” and that, “make whatever grand plans you will, you may be sure the unexpected or the trivial will disturb and disrupt them” (pp. 15-16).

Strategic theorists oppose resistances to change such as long term forecasting, cause-and-effect thinking, step-by-step problem solving, and statistical measurement, devaluing judgment, intuition, decision making, and including innovation are all part of what Vaill (1989) calls a “technoholic” approach. This approach includes individuals who try to avoid uncertainty, messiness and politics of human interaction. Pitfalls to this approach include sticking to the implementation of a plan even when the assumptions that the plan was based on have changed and it focuses on how to do things rather than why to do things. Strategic planning places emphasis on the process of change rather than the blueprint and they recognize that we “frequently do not know what we’re truly after or appreciate the consequences of pursuing it until we

have already begun the effort” (Fullan, 1991, 2011, p. 5). Change is not seen as a predictable enterprise by strategic thinkers, but as a process that requires people to learn new technologies, practice new behaviors, and most importantly, adopt new beliefs (Evans, 1996).

The strategic-systemic paradigm also opposes the top-down implementation methodology of the traditional approach. When change efforts are primarily focused on formal tasks and procedures and not the critical task of altering people’s beliefs, true ownership of the change does not take place and the change is at a higher risk for resistance. Commitment building is an important element in change implementation and the organization’s vision and mission is critical in pursuing shared goals (Evans, 1996). Vaill (1989) has labeled this important task as “purposing” and defines it as “continuous stream of actions by an organization’s formal leadership that induces clarity, consensus, and commitment regarding the organization’s basic purposes” (p. 29).

Change Models

Many change models have been developed to better understand change, how it works and how humans respond to it. These models consider school change as a developmental process and not an event that individuals navigate through as they select, implement and institutionalize the use of an innovation or change.

First Order and Second Order Changes

Experiencing change is a process and involves more than teachers simply receiving an email or attending a training. Instead, it is a transition from what teachers

were familiar with to a new way of doing their job (Hall & Hord, 2006). Researchers describe change in terms of first order and second order (Burke, 2008; Evans, 2001). First order change refers to non-transformational change and is aimed to improve the efficiency of everyday operations by modifying existing structures or practices. This type of change is generally unplanned as it doesn't drastically modify the structure of the school or how teachers perform their job duties. First-order change can be linked to the concept of homeostasis, meaning that a school is continuously changing its structures, but simultaneously preserving its identity and patterns (Capra, 1997).

As opposed to first order change, second order change is planned and can be revolutionary. Second order change is systemic in nature and is aimed to alter the mission and vision of the school as well as its strategy, leadership and culture (Burke, 2008; Weick & Quinn, 1996). The task of altering a school's overall culture and structure can be an enormous and demanding task. As Senge (2000, 2014) puts it, "changing the way teachers interact means redesigning not just the formal structures of the school but the hard-to-see patterns of relationships among teachers as well as other aspects of the system including systems of knowledge" (p. 48).

Impact of Change

Research shows that the innovation adoption process or more simply stated, change, both revolutionary and evolutionary change, is often met with intense of resistance from those whom it will impact (Burke, 2008; Evans, 2001; Hall & Hord, 2006). Rogers (1962) claims that the feelings of political, ideological or basic resistance are closely related to the five adopters' categories that are evident during

any change process.

Change as Loss

Nisbet (1969) claims that humans are inherently conservative in their position towards change, and states that “the conservative bent of human behavior, the manifest desire to preserve, hold, fix, and keep stable” (p. 270). Humans tend to dislike any alteration in their daily lives, from minor things such as road detours due to highway improvements to larger aspects such as changes within the career and workplace. Peter Marris (1986) combines the psychological and sociological perspective by drawing upon a variety of studies ranging from the effects of bereavement among widows in England to the impact of slum clearance projects in America and Africa. From his studies he concludes that life depends on continuity and that change usually represents loss. In almost every significant transition observed, acceptance and adjustment prove to be far more difficult than anticipated for all involved and “whether a change is planned, unplanned, personal or professional, welcome or unwelcome; whether we take the perspective of reformers or their targets, of people or organizations, the response is characteristically ambivalent” (Marris, 1986, p. 5).

Evans (1996) emphasizes that “ambivalent” is a gentle word when describing people’s reaction to change, whether it be small or large. He furthers by arguing that just as psychotherapists have experienced with individuals, consultants with organizations, administrators with teachers, and teachers with students, any change generates a variety of feelings and understanding these feelings is what makes for

successful implementations of change. Based on Erickson's (1963) "basic trust" concept, humans have a need for a psychological security about the predictability of the world that is created through a parent's continual nurturing. Even as adults, our need for ontological security persists where we seek to maintain a level of confidence in the orderly nature of things (Starratt, 1993).

As humans, we have a need to find cause and meaning in all events; this impulse is "as necessary for survival as adaptability: and indeed adaptability itself depends upon it. For the ability to learn from experience relies on the stability of the interpretations by which we predict the patterns of events" (Marris, 1986, p. 6).

Psychologists and medical researchers have found connections between change and stress, which Marris (1986) argues is "natural, even necessary that we should avoid or reshape events that we cannot assimilate, for our adaptability depends as much on protecting our assumptions as it does on revising them" (p. 16).

There are two primary components of meaning according to Evans (1996): *understanding*, which is cognitive and is translated as "I see what you mean" and *attachment*, which is emotional and translated as "this principle matters so deeply to me". The only way we make meaning through our lives is through constructing and preserving a "coherent and predictable pattern from events and relationships and we become attached to people and even concepts as beliefs that shape our lives and work" (Evans, 1996, p. 28). Our values have emotion attached to them and when they are recognized and respected, we feel valued and when they are ignored, we feel hurt (Vaill, 1989).

When change takes place we mourn what was lost and our world stops making sense. Evans (1996) highlights four facts that about our construction of meaning, its dependence on consistency, and its vulnerability to change. First, the longer we live, the more experiences we have to connect to and the harder change becomes. Second, people generally resist structural, technical, and other innovations because our meaning of things is grounded in participant experiences that have an emotional impact. In order for people to accept proposed changes it is important for them uncover their personal meanings of the change (Marris, 1986). Third, our structure is formed within the context of our relationships with others and circumstances. We develop goals and purposes through this context, and when a change comes that does not fit within an individual's context, resistance is imminent. Fourth, an individual's context can be negative and can cling to it even more so when they are presented with change. When trying to understand people's resistance to change, it is "never just the logical we are dealing with but the psychological" (Vaill, 1989, p. 57).

When applying a change scenario specifically to education, a typical scenario can be imagined. As a principal, upon visiting classrooms and observing a teacher's instruction, you recommend to this teacher to integrate a variety of instructional practices to more actively engage learners. You view your recommendation to the teacher as a valuable gift that can help her and her students be more successful. The teacher, on the other hand, may see your suggestions as direct criticism, and that you are "casting doubt on the way I define myself my role, on the relevance of my

practice and the importance of my syllabus, both of which matter to me very personally” (Evans, 1996, p. 31). The teacher may be experiencing bereavement, and since teaching is such a personal practice, this recommendation for change can be taken very personally.

Change Challenges Competence

Change challenges people’s sense of competence and their ability to feel effective at their work place. Hoffer (1967) discovered in his studies on organizational change that “every radical adjustment is a crisis in self-esteem: we undergo a test, we have to prove ourselves. It needs inordinate self-confidence to face drastic change without inner trembling” (p. 2). Each of us constructs an occupational identity that is based on the wisdom we have accumulated and grown over the years. Change often discredits this established wisdom and challenges our identities and devalues our skills (Marris, 1986).

Evans (1996) comments on a coping mechanism that teachers often resort to when asked to change. Often a teacher may combine the request from the administrator to change and their personal need to preserve their competence and come up with a change product that does not quite hit the initial request and expectation. This can increase frustration for both the administrator and the teacher.

Change Creates Confusion

The concept that change creates confusion sounds quite logical and simplistic, but can cause further frustration and ineffectiveness when it comes to change. During a change process, people may not be clear on their new job duties, how to relate to

others, or who has been granted the authority to be in a role of decision making.

Bolman and Deal (1991) claim that the “structural benefits of clarity, predictability, and rationality are replaced with confusion, loss of control, and the belief that politics rather than policies are now governing everyday behavior” (p. 382).

Change Causes Conflict

Significant innovation can increase an already existent friction within an organization by affecting not only the roles of individuals, but also working relationships and status. It is common that staff sees change as something forced on them by administrators who are seeking to serve their own purposes. They can also feel as though the proposed changes only complicate their daily lives in the classroom (Evans, 1996). When change becomes real, less theoretical, and begin to affect staff's daily lives, conflicts may come up that complicate successful implementation. When conflict and resistance are present, losses to the innovation efforts emerge and may include termination of the new program, removal from a position, and loss of face.

Innovation can also rekindle old wounds and resentments. When an innovation is introduced into an organization that resembles a “family” from years of disagreements, hurt feelings, jealousies and betrayals, it can make matters worse. When issues exist within a school organization and feelings around those issues have permeated the school culture, it makes implementing change especially challenging. Evans (1996) claims that trying to “simply smooth away the very real differences innovation provokes is counterproductive: it neither resolves the conflicts nor

enhances innovation. It simply drives issues underground and, where they are likely to enhance divisiveness and hamper change” (p. 37).

Key Components of Successful Change

Understanding the reasons behind resistance to change and addressing concerns related to it are critical in implementing successful change (Evans, 2001). Discussions highlight change facilitators’ role in creating a culture supportive of change that can minimize resistance. Literature demonstrates the need for teachers to be engaged in the change process in order for the change to be genuinely successful (Burke, 2008; Evans, 2001; Hall & Hord, 2006).

In order to help educators invest in change, it is important that the change facilitators create a supportive environment that is conducive to change. Change facilitators should provide ample support and appropriate interventions that address resistant behaviors to change. In second order changes, the focus should be more on people and not on structures. Elmore (2004) emphasizes the need for specialized training and ongoing consultation when planning for second-order and large-scale reform.

The Fours C’s

Similarly to Elmore (2004), Wagner (2005) introduces the four Cs and how critical they can be while planning for second-order change. The four Cs include: 1) competencies- the bank of skills and knowledge that influences student learning, 2) culture of schools, 3) conditions of learning and teaching for students and adults and 4) context- the global, state and community realities within which teachers and

students live (Wagner, 2005). This approach places teachers in the center of the change efforts, but at the same time, takes into consideration the interrelationships and interdependencies of the various components of the work (Senge, 2000, 2014).

Hall and Hord (2006) encourage change facilitators to acknowledge staff concerns regarding change and allow time for adjustment. The importance to clarify the objectives of the change is also emphasized to better prepare staff for it. Additionally it is important to make connections between the change and aspects of the day-to-day work in order for the change to be meaningful to the staff (Burke, 2008).

Successful school change depends upon the attitudes and the actions of all people involved. Therefore, effective change needs to be collaborative and based on honest communication and commitment of all stakeholders (Hall & Hord, 2006). Within a school context, real change is most able to successfully take place in an environment that promotes trust and integrity (Hall & Hord, 2006; Senge, 1990, 2014). Hall and Hord (2006) emphasize the importance of the collaboration of staff in different roles within a change implementation as it builds a culture of flexibility and collaboration.

Research continuously shows that successful change takes place when support systems are in place for teachers to be successful. This takes place through a well-executed implementation that stems from authentic leadership and a strong culture. Authentic leadership and organizational culture were explored to better understand the makings of successful change.

Leadership

Leadership is critical in implementing innovation and change within an organization. To transform schools, administrators and superintendents must generate confidence and trust; furthermore, according to Evans (1996), the key to both is authenticity. Leaders who are authentic are followed, and “they are not distinguished by their techniques or styles but by their integrity and savvy” (Evans, 1996, p. 184). Most people seek a combination of genuineness and effectiveness in a leader, which makes her authentic and a credible resource who generates trust and confidence, someone worth following into the uncertainties of change.

Experience and research confirm that leadership requires aptitude within unfamiliarity and change (Drucker, 1986). A study on leaders who implemented successful change in their organizations emphasized the importance of disposition and temperament. The study also suggested that the capacity to lead originates largely from intrinsic talents and early childhood experiences (Gibbons, 1986). Evans (1996) links research on effective leaders to three practical implications: 1) Some central aspects of leadership are intrinsic and are not teachable and that not everyone has all the necessary potential, 2) Effective leaders must foster resilience. People don’t follow the timid, indecisive, and those who avoid problems, and 3) Authentic leaders build their practice based on core commitments rather than inward from a management style.

Effective leadership that can lead others into change can look very different, depending on the individual. There are many ways to effectively lead others into change successfully. Research has shown that effective change facilitators fulfilled all

four of the following roles within their schools: 1) resource provider, 2) instructional expert, 3) communicator, and 4) visible presence (Evans, 1996). The common thread amongst effective change leaders is a passion for the organization, its mission, and their own common sense in regards to leading others (Vaill, 1989).

Organizational Culture

An organization's culture can determine the capacity it may have for genuine change. Schein (1992) defines organizational culture as the following:

The deeper level of basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by members of an organization, that operate unconsciously, and that define in a basic 'taken for granted' fashion an organization's view of itself and its environment. These assumptions and beliefs are learned responses to a group's problems of survival in the external environment and its problems of internal integration. They come to be taken for granted because they solve those problems repeatedly and reliably. (p. 12)

An organization's culture not only has the ability to shape and influence people's behavior, perception and understanding of events, but also on how people respond to changes to their environment. Culture ultimately serves as a force that reflects our "human need for stability, consistency, and meaning" (Schein, 1992, p. 11) and organizations by their very nature oppose unpredictability. In regards to schools, daily routines provide a basic security and comfort with knowing what to expect. It has even been declared that this "comforting assurance that the immediate environment will not change significantly all at once" (Kaufman, 1971, p. 45) causes many people

to tolerate annoyances within an organization, just to avoid the pains of change. It is not then surprising that many working in organizations are not open to change.

Generally, the organizations that do implement innovation and change are the new and young ones. As most organizations succeed and grow, they usually become more conservative and structured (Evans, 1996) and just as for individuals, stability is the norm.

Implementing successful change can be difficult when the culture is not well developed with open communication and high expectations. Changes to a culture may be necessary in order to retain employees, influence behavior, make improvements to the organization, refocus the organization's objectives, improve customer service, or achieve specific organizational goals and results. The ability to change culture can be affected by many things such as the environment and any industry competitors, change in industry standards, changes in technology, the size of the workforce, and the organization's historical context.

Evans (2008) argues that culture is affected by leadership, rather than management, and that change should be approached as a long-term project. Evans (2008) further suggests that before a change is implemented, a needs assessment can be useful in determining the current culture and where changes need to be made. This assessment can be made through employee surveys, interviews, focus groups, observations, or even customer surveys to further identify areas that require change. The organization should then review and develop a plan for the change process. The following six guidelines for implementing cultural change are provided by Cummings

and Worley (2004, p. 19): “1) formulate a clear strategic vision, 2) display top-management commitment, 3) model culture change at the highest level, 4) modify the organization to support organizational change, 5) select and socialize newcomers and terminate deviants and 6) develop ethical and legal sensitivity”.

Summary

Implementing change in any organization can be a challenging task. As research and experience show, humans and organizations have built in resistances to change that stem from biological, political, and societal forces. It requires a deep understanding of the resistances to change, an honest evaluation of the organization’s existing culture, and an effective and bold leader to successfully lead others into change. Schein (1987) highlights a critical challenge in implementing change: “I have found over and over again that the acceptance of a new point of view...has much less to do with the validity of that point of view than with one’s readiness to consider any alternatives whatsoever” (p. 107).

The literature explored throughout this chapter provides a foundation of knowledge on the field of change. The research assists in better understanding the Transformative Learning Theory and the process humans go through during change. Knowledge and understanding of significant change paradigms along with researched human response to change also provides useful insight into how change is delivered within educational organizations and ways that change impacts humans.

Chapter Three: Research Design

In chapter one, I introduced my research topic of educators' response to change and provided a brief overview of the theory behind the change within education and my plan for research. Chapter two provided a thorough overview of the literature on human response to change, including the pertinent theories along with experienced researchers on the subject of change. This chapter details the method that guided the study on educator's response to curricular change within their schools. Drawing on a qualitative research paradigm, this chapter focuses on the components of the research design, along with limitations and reliability of the study.

Research Question

In order to better understand change and change efforts within K-12, I conducted research on educators' experience with change. The following research question and sub-question guided this phenomenological qualitative study:

How do K-12 public school educators respond to curricular change?

- What factors influence change efforts?

Educators' experience with a change in curriculum was explored to gain insight on their response to change. The change in the curriculum was explored to better understand the significance of the change.

Curriculum Change

The study was conducted within three educational organizations: 1) Unified school district, 2) Independent charter school, and 3) Elementary school district. Each utilized a variety of curriculum resources within their programs and have experienced

change within their curriculum. The vehicle to examine the impact of change was curriculum in all three schools. Within Giroux's (1992, 2001) nine principles of critical pedagogy, the fourth pertains to curriculum texts and the importance of avoiding a single narrative that suppresses alternative interpretations. Giroux (1992, 2001) believes that curriculum knowledge should not be considered a sacred text, but "developed as part of an ongoing engagement with a variety of narratives and traditions that can be reread and reformulated in politically different terms" (p. 77). Giroux (1992, 2001) further argues that traditionally implemented curriculum should be rejected in that its focus has only served to perpetuate inequality and injustice.

Giroux's (1992) fifth principle addresses the need to create new forms of curriculum knowledge and break down the barriers to new ways of thinking. Giroux (1992) argues that the current ways by which curriculum knowledge is distributed contributes towards forms of discriminatory practice and in that process to conceal historical origins. Giroux (1992, 2001) expands by claiming that his work is both political and utopian and that critique should not be viewed as negative, but an identification of history and language that contribute to curriculum production and that possibility should always be present in schools where students can express risky and hopeful thoughts and aspirations.

Giroux (1992, 2011) claims that critical pedagogy and even further, radical pedagogy, can only operate when certain conditions are present. The first involves reconfiguring of the notion of authority, which he refers to as emancipatory authority. This would require the reorganization of structures in which teachers work and the

authority granted to shape and organize their work so that they can teach creatively, create alternative forms of curriculum, and engage in emancipatory politics (Scott, 2008). Secondly, texts need to be read critically and treated as historical artifacts that can be deconstructed. The text should be an empowering document that opens up possibility and new insights about how the social world is constructed. Finally, a critical pedagogy needs to acknowledge ways of making sense of the structures in which students live and the discourse involved should interrogate the way narratives develop a sense of determination and agency. Giroux (1992, 2011) believes this sets the stage for students to develop a radicalized consciousness where students can begin to interrogate the three types of voices within the school: the dominant and officially sanctioned voice of the school, the student's own voice, and the voice of the teacher (Scott, 2008, p. 114). Giroux reminds us that an interrogative mind is essential in order for significant change to take place in curriculum and texts.

Based on Giroux's emphasis on the importance of curriculum and interpretation of texts so that students can become more interrogative and develop new ways of thinking, curricular text has been selected as the vehicle for change in which to focus throughout this dissertation. Each district in this research has experienced some form of change within curriculum, whether it be the Common Core Standards or from textbooks to digital curriculum or from one digital curriculum to another.

Among all of the changes that could have been selected to focus on for this research, curriculum was chosen because it is one that impacts all schools in all states

in the same way. For example, if a change in leadership was selected, responses to that could be attributed to personality types, making it a far more subjective topic from which to study. Changes in curriculum can be implemented amongst the federal, state, or local level and impacts all schools in the same ways. Changes to curriculum include modifications to textbooks, instructional materials, instructional strategies, and many other elements. These are components that impact all teachers in the same way and provide a clear, objective landscape for research.

Variety of School Programs Examined

Different school programs were used to conduct research to demonstrate the impact change can have in a variety of educational models. The three models used for research were 1) Standard unified school district in a high school setting, serving students in mainstream, and credit recovery classrooms, along with an independent study program, 2) Independent study program operating under a school district, serving students in grades kindergarten through 8th grade, and 3) Independent charter school serving high school students in a blended program (partial onsite and online work). Each program is highlighted and the curriculum change that was experienced is described.

The programs chosen for research mostly represent alternative forms of educational models primarily due to the level of experimentation to curriculum formats used for students. Credit recovery, independent study, and homeschool programs tend to attract students that need, or are looking for, a non-traditional approach to teaching and learning. These programs are then charged with the task of

finding or developing new ways for learning to engage different types of learners. Based on initial email responses, those districts that expressed a higher level of curriculum change were chosen to participate in the research on curriculum change, and those just happened to be from alternative educational models.

Setting 1: Unified School District

The Unified School District (USD) serves 8,128 students in grades kindergarten-12th grade and includes only one comprehensive high school, which provides educational services to students in grades nine through twelve and an additional 120 students participating in an Independent Study program.

Residents of this school district work to retain much of its small-town feel and many of the commensurate values and sensibilities. Chief among those values is strong community support for USD schools. High School athletic events, drama performances, and other extracurricular programs, such as Back-to-School Night and College Night, are well attended. The High School faculty and staff are committed to providing all our students with the best possible learning experience.

The comprehensive high school and independent study programs within USD were the focus of the research due to identified changes to Common Core curriculum and online curriculum from paper packets.

Setting 2: Independent Charter School

Independent Charter School (ICS) serves over 600 students in 9-12th grade. ICS offers small class sizes, flexible learning options, CIF sports, clubs, theater, choir, and extracurricular activities. ICS is accredited by the Western Association of

Schools and has among the highest test scores in the region. The school incorporates rigor, relevance, and relationship into their academic program and was recently listed on the Washington Post's list for 2014 America's Most Challenging High Schools. ICS offers a variety of flexible options as it is classified as an independent study school. Students are able to attend the school site 1-4 days a week or work from home.

The independent study/online program within ICS was the focus of the research due to identified changes to Common Core curriculum and the implementation of online curriculum from traditional paper packets.

Setting 3: Elementary School District

Elementary School District (ESD) serves over 13,000 students in transitional kindergarten-8th grade. ESD currently operates twelve transitional kindergarten-5th grade elementary schools and four middle schools, along with a Community Day School and a home schooling program. ESD's graduating eighth grade students are served by another district for grades 9-12th. A home schooling program, preschool program, and day care are provided at some schools within the district.

The homeschooling program within ESD was the focus of the research due to an identified change in the curriculum from paper packets of curriculum to a blend of online and textbook curriculum.

Conceptual Framework/Research Paradigm

A phenomenological qualitative research paradigm was employed to conduct this study to better understand educators' response to curricular change. In most

studies, the most fundamental difference in research methodology was whether it is qualitative or quantitative (McMillan & Wergin, 2010). Quantitative research “involves the use of numerical calculations to summarize, describe, and explore relationships among traits” (McMillan & Wergin, 2010, p. 4). Within quantitative research there is a dependence on the control of the variables, along with a reliance on the statistics, measurement, and experiments conducted or referred to in the study. Within quantitative research, it is important to determine if the research is experimental or non-experimental. An experimental study is when the researcher has control over one or more of the variables that may have an impact on the participants’ responses in order to determine a correlation between the two. A non-experimental study is when the researcher has no control over any variable and is seeking out what occurs naturally to potentially uncover phenomena and relationships. (McMillan & Wergin, 2010).

Comparatively, qualitative research is conducted in natural settings where verbal descriptions are articulated through stories and case studies as opposed to statistical and numerical reports utilized in quantitative research (Creswell, 2014). The value of qualitative research can be seen in the ability it has to identify and analyze specific actions within social and historical contexts (Myers, 2000). When conducting qualitative research, it can be useful to employ a thick description (Ponterotto, 2006) of observed actions and assign purpose and intentionality to these actions. Thick description enables the researcher to more effectively communicate the

thoughts and feelings of the participants and any complex relationships among them (Ponterotto, 2006).

Qualitative research can provide an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world and studies things in their “natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of meanings people bring to them” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3). Common characteristics of qualitative research are: 1) natural setting: data is collected in the field at the where the participants are experiencing the problem or phenomenon, 2) researcher as key instrument: data is collected themselves using instruments they generally create themselves, 3) multiple sources of data: gather multiple forms of data are collected, 4) inductive data analysis: built patterns, categories, and themes from the bottom up, 5) participant’s meaning: focus on learning the meaning the participant holds about the problem or phenomenon, 6) emergent design: all phases of process may change after the researcher has entered the field, 7) theoretical lens: use a lens to view the study, 8) interpretive inquiry: form of inquiry where researcher makes interpretations of the data, and 9) holistic account: try to develop a complex picture of the problem or phenomenon (Creswell, 2007).

In an attempt to better understand these participating educators’ response to the phenomenon of change, a qualitative paradigm approach was designed to examine their response to change at their organizations. The research questions was not aimed at the curriculum materials, but rather the human response to the change. I believe this was most effectively acquired through a qualitative paradigm and a phenomenological approach.

Phenomenology

A phenomenological approach was used to conduct the study on how K-12 public school educators respond to curriculum change. Husserl (Dreyfus & Wrathall, 2006), based his ideas on Hegelian philosophy, conceptualized the phenomenological approach. According to Husserl, phenomenology is “a study of structures of consciousness which proceeds by ‘bracketing’ the objects outside of consciousness itself, so that one can proceed to reflect on and systematically describe the contents of the conscious mind in terms of their essential structures” (Dreyfus & Wrathall, 2006, p. 32). The process of reflection and description required of the phenomenological approach makes it an effective research as the participants can explore their response to change through open and meaningful ways. Within phenomenology, “the researcher describes the lived experiences of individuals about a phenomenon as described by participants. This description culminates in the essence of the experiences for several individuals who have all experienced the phenomenon” (Creswell, 2014, p. 14).

The prereflective experience is a primary theme of phenomenology, meaning there is “nothing more meaningful than the quest for the origin, presentation, and meaning of meaning” (Van Manen, 2013, p. 36). Phenomenology is less a strict code of inquiry than it is a search meaning of reflective experiences and involves the following (Van Manen, 2013):

- Phenomenological research begins with the wonder of why something is the way it is

- Phenomenological question explores what takes place during prereflection
- Phenomenology strives to discover the identity and essence of a phenomenon or event
- Phenomenological reflection primarily take place during epoche and reduction

Merleau-Ponty (1945) describes phenomenology as the study of essences, and all problems amount to finding definitions of essences, such as the essence of perception or the essence of consciousness. Phenomenology is also a philosophy which puts essences back into existence, and does not “expect to arrive at an understanding of man and the world from any starting point other than that of their facticity” (Merleau-Ponty, 1945, p. viii). It is a philosophy that claims the world is already existence before reflection takes place and all its efforts are “concentrated upon re-achieving” a direct and primitive contact with the world, and endowing that contact with a philosophical status” (Merleau-Ponty, 1945, p. viii). Phenomenology attempts to provide a direct description of human experience just as it is, without focusing on its psychological scientific, historical, or sociological origins.

Phenomenology provided an effective approach to research educators’ response to change. In studying the phenomenon of change, I was able to gain insight into educators’ direct experience with change and potentially discover themes of human response to change. In developing a research design for this study, I examined

two fundamental approaches to phenomenological research: Hermeneutical (Creswell, 2007; Van Manen, 2013) and Transcendental (Van Manen, 2013).

Transcendental Phenomenology. Husserl is generally regarded as the intellectual founder of phenomenological philosophy (Van Manen, 2013) and defines phenomenology as a descriptive philosophy of the essences of pure experiences. The goal of transcendental phenomenology is to capture human experience in its origin or essence, without interpreting, explaining, or theorizing (Van Manen, 2013).

According to Husserl, phenomenology does not direct its reflective attention to an external object, but to our experience of the object or to the way that the object appears in consciousness. Phenomenology does not study the “what” of our experience but the “experience” of the what (Van Manen, 2013, p. 120).

Phenomenology is the study of the phenomena, which are an individual’s direct experiences that belong to her stream of consciousness. Husserl argues that within phenomenological inquiry, “experience is the thing and how the things of experience appear to consciousness is the focus” (Van Manen, 2013, p. 120).

Husserl’s focuses on the concept of the “epoche”, also known as bracketing within his approach. This practice initiates the notion for “investigators to set aside their experiences, as much as possible to take a fresh perspective of the phenomenon under examination” (Creswell, 2007, p. 59-60). In his last work, *The Crisis of the European Sciences* (1936), Husserl turned phenomenological analysis away from the transcendental ego and consciousness, to the prereflective lifeworld of everyday experience. As an “investigator” into educators’ experience with change, Husserl’s

work on transcendental phenomenology lends insight on how to focus on the “experience with the object”, rather than the “object” itself. In this research study, the “object” is the curriculum and the “experience” is the teachers’ account of the change. I focused more on the experience within the identified three categories, rather than the curriculum, to better understand the phenomenon of change.

Hermeneutical Phenomenology. Heidegger, Gadamer, and Ricoeur are the biggest contributors to the hermeneutical phenomenological approach (Van Manen, 1990). Phenomenology becomes hermeneutical when its method is taken to be interpretive. This perspective is apparent in the work of Heidegger who argues that all description is by nature interpretative (Van Manen, 1990).

This type of phenomenology focuses on interpreting the ‘texts’ of lived experience. Van Manen (1990) conceived six research activities that guide hermeneutic phenomenology methodology: 1) phenomenon is identified, and it is weighed as a serious interest or concern, 2) essential themes are reflected upon, 3) followed by a written description of the phenomenon, 4) the researcher maintains a strong connection to the subject matter, 5) ensures that all of the parts of the writing are balanced, and 6) the researcher offers an interpretation of the meaning of the lived experiences (Creswell, 2007).

Hermeneutic means that reflecting on experience “must aim for discursive language and sensitive interpretative devices that make phenomenological analysis, explication, and description possible and intelligible” (Van Manen, 2013, p. 35). Hermeneutical phenomenology is seen as a method of questioning rather than

answering and realizing that insights come to us in the mode of reflective questioning about meanings of lived meanings.

I have identified a Hermeneutic phenomenological research approach as the most effective approach to studying human response to the phenomenon of change. Hermeneutical phenomenology's inquisitive approach is most appropriate in this study since it is aimed towards human experience. The approach of questioning, rather than providing answers, appears most effective as the investigator is looking for feelings and reactions from those experiencing change. As the investigator, I was not in a position of providing answers, as I had not experienced the change myself. Acquiring educators' response to change allowed for me as the researcher to "gaze towards the regions where meanings and understandings originate, well up, and percolate through the porous membranes of past sediments" (Van Manen, 2013, p. 36). Measuring human response to change is not a quantitative matter, but rather a potentially emotional and highly personal affair. In allowing educators an open forum to voice their lived experiences, I strived get to the root of their response to change. In the next section I will discuss the design of my planned research on educators' response to change.

Research Design

The design of my research on the topic of K-12 educators' response to change was based on a qualitative paradigm approach within a hermeneutic phenomenological approach. This approach provided the research with lived

experience from the participants that helped to gain insight to how educators experience change.

Method

In order to better understand educators' response to change, I used a hermeneutic phenomenological approach that employed an Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) method. Through this analytical approach, I conducted research at three separate school districts. The following sections discuss the different elements included in my research method.

Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis. The main goal of the phenomenological research approach, Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), is to explore in detail how participants make sense of their personal and social world (Smith & Osborn, 2007). The main idea of an IPA study is identifying the meanings that specific experiences and events have for participants. This approach attempts to “explore personal experience and is concerned with an individual’s personal perception or account of an object or event, as opposed to an attempt to produce an objective statement of the object or event itself” (Smith & Osborn, 2007, p. 1). An IPA approach also emphasizes that the act of the research is a dynamic process where the researcher plays an active role in the process.

A researcher in this process is charged with the task of acquiring an “insider’s perspective” (Conrad, 1987). During this process, however, access “depends on, and is complicated by, the researcher’s own conceptions; indeed, these are required in order to make sense of that other personal world through a process of interpretative

activity” (Smith & Osborn, 2007, p. 2). Ultimately, a two-stage interpretative process, or a double hermeneutic, is required where the participants are trying to make sense of their world while the researcher is trying to make sense of the participants trying to make sense of their world. IPA is therefore intellectually connected to hermeneutics and theories of interpretation (Packer & Addison, 1989; Palmer, 1969).

IPA combines an empathic hermeneutics with an inquisitive hermeneutics, and in alignment to phenomenological origins, is concerned with trying to acquire the understanding of what it is like, from the point of view of the participants. A detailed IPA analysis can involve asking questions of the participants, such as: What is the person trying to achieve here? Is something being revealed that wasn’t intended? Do I have a sense of something that maybe the participant is less aware of? (Smith and Osborn, 2007). Whether it is identifying or empathizing, either interpretation style is valid for a qualitative study. Integrating both approaches of inquiry can make for a more detailed analysis and provide a more comprehensive picture of the participant.

Smith and Osborn (2007) argue that IPA has a “theoretical commitment to the person as a cognitive, linguistic, affective and physical being and assumes a chain of connection between people’s talk and their thinking and emotional state” (p. 3).

Within IPA the challenge remains that participants may not be able to express themselves effectively or choose not to disclose information, leaving the researcher to interpret only what is told to them. IPA’s emphasis on meaning making through both the participant and researcher means that it can be “described as having cognition as a central analytic concern, and this suggests an interesting theoretical alliance with the

cognitive paradigm that is dominant in contemporary psychology” (Smith & Osborn, 2007, p. 3). However, IPA separates from psychology when it develops the methodology for the questions. While psychology is closely aligned to quantitative and experimental methodology, IPA is deeply rooted in qualitative analysis. The focus on both the researcher and participant within IPA is an approach I have chosen to take in order to better understand all perspectives involved in the research process.

Protocol Analysis. This analysis approach involves eliciting verbal reports from research participants through surveys or interviews (Sudman, Bradburn, & Schwarz, 1996). Semi-structured interviews can be used within this approach where the ordering of questions are less important than in a structured interview. The questions used can be aimed towards the areas of interest of the investigator all while trying to gain insight into the participant’s psychological and social world. When the questions are constructed in a way that allows for open-ended responses, the participant may introduce an issue or perspective that the investigator may not have considered. This allows for the participant to be the expert on a subject, and according to Smith and Osborn (2007), should be allowed ample opportunity to share their own story. Within a semi-structured interview approach, the interviewer is attempting to get as close as possible to what the participant thinks about the topic, without being too restricted by the questions provided.

Smith and Osborn (2007) offer a related interview technique called funneling that aims at gaining both the respondents’ general views and their response to more specific concerns. The first question within a funneling approach gathers the

participant's general view on change. Upon establishing the participant's general views on the topic of change, the question probes for more specific insight. This sequence of asking questions allows the participants to explore and articulate their own views before funnelling them into more specific questions on the research topic (Smith & Osborn, 2007).

For this study, I translated the semi-structured funneling approach into an online survey and focus group questions. I worked with four participants who worked in a variety of school settings and have experienced a curriculum change at their organizations. Each participant was asked to share their experience with the change within the following three categories identified as critical within successful change implementations (Fullan, 2000, 2011, 2015): 1) leadership, 2) organizational culture, and 3) the new curriculum program. Their responses were captured within an online survey that included open-ended writing, allowing for expression of their experience of each category within the change. The questions started with general perceptions on change and then funnel into specific questions on how their experience with the curriculum change was within each category.

Focus Group. A focus group was conducted towards the end of the school year amongst four participants across all three school districts. Open discussion took place over a ninety-minute period amongst the teachers who experienced the change. During this open-ended focus group session, participants were encouraged to share and reflect on their experiences. The goal was to identify commonalities in experiences and perceptions.

The focus group was guided by discussion questions that were based on the open-ended responses from the online survey. The emergent themes were discussed and participants were able to further express their experience with the curriculum change in regards to the identified categories of 1) leadership, 2) organizational culture, and 3) curriculum program. Participants were also encouraged to express their viewpoints beyond the questions within the categories. The entire focus group was recorded and then transcribed, including the investigator's questions. From there, emergent themes were examined.

Setting. The research was conducted amongst three different schools and districts that are all at various stages within a curriculum change. The curriculum spanned a variety of changes from worksheet packets to online content, from state adopted curriculum to the Common Core curriculum. The initial open-ended questions were delivered online, and responses were captured within the online survey platform, Survey Monkey. The Focus Group was hosted at the Unified School District where all participants attended and was audio recorded.

Participants. The participants included a variety of educators that worked in environments where the new curriculum implementation has taken place. The experienced educators were sent an email requesting their volunteer participation in the research study to complete the open-ended online survey and participate in the focus group.

Instruments. As part of the protocol analysis, each participant was asked to share their experience with the change regarding the following three categories

identified as critical within successful change implementations (Fullan, 2000, 2011, 2015): 1) leadership, 2) organizational culture, and 3) curriculum program. Their responses were stored in an online survey with open-ended questions, allowing for expression of their experience of each category within the change (see Appendix A).

As part of the focus group, guiding questions were asked to facilitate discussions on the participants' experience with change. Questions that guided the process, but allowed for open ended and exploratory responses were used (see Appendix B).

Data Collection. Data was collected through open-ended responses through an online survey. These responses provided preliminary data on the educators' response to the change within the provided categories on change of 1) leadership, 2) organizational culture, and 3) curriculum program.

Upon acceptance of participating in the research, I conducted an initial meeting to go over procedures of question submissions, timing, and data collection with the teachers and administrators. The researcher sent a link to the online survey to each participant via electronic mail at the beginning of the research period for participants to complete online at their leisure.

The focus group was guided by discussion question responses that were based on the responses from the open-ended online survey previously collected. The emergent themes were discussed based on the curriculum change. The focus group was recorded and then transcribed, including my questions and themes were examined.

Data Analysis. Hermeneutic phenomenology is a “research methodology aimed at producing rich textual descriptions of the experiencing of selected phenomena in the life world of individuals that are able to connect with the experience of all of us collectively” (Smith, 1997, p. 80). Through a hermeneutical phenomenological approach, a deeper understanding of the meaning of an experience with a phenomenon is sought (Smith, 1997). This can take place through a deeper reflection of the experience by using rich descriptive language. Langdridge (2007), claims that a hermeneutical phenomenological approach takes into account that our experiences can be best understood through stories we tell of that experience.

In order to understand participants’ perspectives and beliefs, I analyzed participants’ stories through their writings and discussions. This required me to engage in an interpretative relationship with the open-ended responses and transcripts from the focus groups. The analysis process began with looking for themes in the participants’ open-ended responses and focus group transcripts. The open-ended responses and transcripts were read a number of times, utilizing the margins to note anything significant or that stands out from the response. Notations were made on similarities and differences, echoes, reiterations, and contradictions throughout the analysis.

Emergent themes and connections were identified, noted, and summarized amongst all participants’ responses. Titles were given to the emerging themes and notes were taken throughout the open-ended responses and focus group responses that were transformed into concise phrases, which strived to identify the essence of what

was found in the text (Smith and Osborn, 2007). The identified themes transformed the responses to a more critical level of abstraction and required more detailed psychological terminology, even though Smith and Osborn (2007) stress the importance of maintaining the true nature of the participant's responses as well. The ultimate goal at this stage was to find expressions that are at a high enough level to create theoretical connections within a study, but are still grounded in the true sense of what was said.

The transformation of notes into themes was conducted throughout all open-ended responses and focus group transcripts. Although not all notes were not worthy of a theme title, the richness of the text is reflected through the themes that emerged. All emergent themes were then listed and connections amongst them were identified. Some themes fit together and some emerged as independent concepts. As themes were clustered, it was important to consistently check interpretations made of the text to be sure the interpretations were as close to the participant's intent as possible. If I didn't maintain sensitivity to the participant's original intent of the text, then mistaken interpretations could have skewed the data generated through the clustering (Smith & Osborn, 2007).

Once the text was been sorted into clusters, they were compiled into tables. The clusters were given a name that represents the superordinate themes along with an identifier to be able to find the original source of the cluster in the text. During this stage, some themes were omitted if they didn't fit within the emerging structure or if there wasn't ample evidence of it within the text. After the table of clusters was

created, the transition was made to prepare for a write-up and final statement that outlined the meanings of the experience of the participants. Further analysis of the themes took place during the write-up process.

The translation of the themes into a narrative account involved explaining the themes while including continuous excerpts from the responses or transcripts to support the narrative. It was clearly distinguished what the participant stated or wrote and what the researcher's interpretation of it was. This is a critical component of the narrative process to ensure that the essence of the participant's is not lost in translation. The themes were thoroughly discussed and connections to the literature have been identified.

Limitations

This study examined how K-12 public school educators respond to curriculum change in order to better understand change and change efforts within the K-12 educational space. It is important to note that results generated from this study may or may not be able to be generalized for all teachers and administrators in all schools and districts.

The reliability of the data depends on the honesty and willingness of each participant to provide genuinely candid responses to questions and discussion items throughout the study without malicious or otherwise skewed intent for what might be perceived as the researcher's desired responses. Because of the nature of a phenomenological study, the data is dependent on participants remembering events accurately and with as much detail as possible. Each response is confined to an

individual's interpretation of experiences and events and this can create a variance of responses. Coding for themes can be critical in a qualitative study and in this case, it assisted in finding similarities in experiences, making the data as reliable as possible.

Summary

This chapter introduced the research methods that were used in this qualitative study that employed a hermeneutical phenomenological approach. The phenomenological research design allowed participants to share their experiences of change within their schools through an online curriculum implementation. The researcher relied on Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to explore how participants responded to the personal, social, instructional, and technological changes to their practices. Through a protocol analysis approach, the researcher retrieved written reports from the participants through journal entries completed throughout the implementation. Additionally, focus groups were conducted to gather post-implementations and feedback from the participants to gain further knowledge of their experience with the change. Chapter four presents the research findings of the gathered qualitative data described in this chapter and discusses conclusions made through a close examination of the research data.

Chapter Four: Data Analysis & Findings

This study researched four educators with a variety of positions and perspectives during different phases of a curriculum change at their school or district. The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study was to investigate the common experiences of educators from differing perspectives as they responded to a curriculum change at their school or district. The findings of this study were summarized, analyzed and then categorized based on themes and then clusters identified through the collection of the open-ended and focus group responses all based on the main research question:

How do K-12 public school educators respond to curricular change?

- What factors influence change efforts?

As part of the protocol analysis, each participant was asked to share his/her experience with the change regarding the following three categories identified as critical within successful change implementations (Fullan, 2000, 2011, 2015): 1) leadership, 2) organizational culture, and 3) the curriculum program itself. Participant's responses were initially collected through an online open-ended survey and then questions were deepened during a final focus group.

As previously discussed, the tool with which to observe the response to change was a new curriculum implementation in all three schools. In alignment with Giroux's (1992, 2001, 2011) belief that curriculum knowledge should not be considered a sacred text, but "developed as part of an ongoing engagement with a variety of narratives and traditions that can be reread and reformulated in politically

different terms” (p. 77), change in curriculum is something that educators are continuously experiencing. Curriculum was an ideal educational component from which to study response to change as it is continuously withstanding change from either the federal, state, or local level. Changes within pedagogical focus of curriculum are also frequent based on the exact principles Giroux (2001, 2011) highlights. Curriculum is consistently reformulated to adjust to changing needs of the political and social landscape from which it serves. In the case of this study, it proved to be a pertinent component to study in relation to educators and change.

Individual Curriculum Change Scenarios

In order to gather diverse data on change, I conducted my research at a variety of programs with differing implementations, levels of experience, and staff roles in order to gain a variety of perspectives on change and determine the impact setting has on response to change. Each setting is explored in detail below to demonstrate a variety of change scenarios.

Settings

Research on response to curriculum change was conducted at three different school settings over a period of time. Because each setting was unique in its background and structure, highlights for each setting are provided to better understand each school’s approach and response to the curriculum change in Table 3 below.

Setting One: Unified School District. Research was conducted at a suburban Unified School District (USD) that serves over 8,000 students in grades kindergarten-

12th grade. USD includes one comprehensive high school and an independent study program. The programs that experienced change at USD during this study were the

Table 3

Types of Organizations

Organization	Type of Organization	Number of Students	Applicable Programs	Change
Setting 1: Unified School District (USD)	Suburban Unified School District Grades PreK-12	8,128	- Core Curriculum - Independent Study Curriculum - Credit Recovery Curriculum	- Math Series -Common Core - Online curriculum from worksheet packet
Setting 2: Independent Charter School (ICS)	Semi-Urban Independent Study, Independent Charter School Grade 9-12	610	- Core Curriculum	-Common Core - Online curriculum from textbooks
Setting 3: Elementary School District (ESD)	Suburban Elementary School District Grades	13,000	- Independent Study/Homeschool	-Common Core - Online curriculum from worksheet packets

core and credit recovery curriculum for the comprehensive high school and independent study programs. The changes experienced were: 1) Change in Math series curriculum, 2) Transition from state standards aligned curriculum to common core aligned curriculum, and 3) Transition from worksheet packet curriculum to online curriculum.

Setting Two: Independent Charter School. Research was conducted at a semi-urban independent study, independent charter school (ICS) that serves over 600 students in 9th-12th grades. Governed by their own Board and policies, ICS is classified as an independent study school so all students do not come to campus

everyday. Students work in a combination of on-site classes and workshops and at home in curriculum. The programs that experienced change at ICS included the core curriculum for the high school program for students who both attend site 1 to four days a week and those who only attend when needing instructional support. The changes experienced were: 1) Transition from worksheet packet curriculum to online curriculum, 2) Transition from state standard based curriculum to Common Core curriculum, and 3) Depth of Knowledge (DOK) thinking proficiencies integrated into curriculum content.

Setting Three: Elementary School District. Research was conducted at a suburban Elementary School District (ESD) that serves over 13,000 students in grades kindergarten-8th grade. The independent study/homeschool program that operates under ESD serves approximately 100 students who work primarily at home with a parent and attend campus for meetings with Highly Qualified Teachers, tutoring, and direct instruction. This program experienced curriculum change within the last year. The changes experienced were: 1) Transition from state standards aligned curriculum to Common Core aligned curriculum and 2) Transition from worksheet packet curriculum to online curriculum.

Setting Similarities and Differences. The three settings described share similarities and differences that will be discussed. USD and ESD are similar in that they are both traditional school districts that are governed and funded in the same way, primarily serve neighborhood students, and rely on traditional educational systems such as seat based instruction 5 days a week. Each of these districts serve

students in the thousands and operate on a large scale in comparison to ICS, however, USD is the most comprehensive of the three settings, serving grades kindergarten through 12th grade.

ICS is unique from the others in that it is not a traditional school district, but rather an independent study, independent charter school authorized by a school district. ICS is a newer school and serves far less students than USD and ESD. Additionally, ICS is an independent study program that allows students to work either at home or at a school site. Based on data retrieved from each setting, both USD and ICS had a more positive experience with change and experienced more effective change implementations. ESD had the most challenging time with change. In comparing the settings, it became clear that the experience with change had little to do with the structure of the setting as far as what type of educational organization it is or how many students it served. Based on my findings, the response to change had far more to do with the leadership and culture of the organization, rather than the specifics of the setting. Leadership and culture will be further discussed throughout chapters four and five.

Participants

Research on response to curriculum change was conducted at three different school settings over a period of time. USD and ICS each included one participant and ESD included two participants. Because each participant brought a unique level of experience, skills set, and program expertise, highlights for each participant are

provided in Table 4 below to better understand each participant's perspective and response to the curriculum change.

Table 4

Overview of Participants

Participant	Gender	Organization	Title/Role	Years at Current Organization
Participant 1 Mike	Male	USD (Unified School District)	- Classroom Teacher - Independent Study Teacher - Independent Study Principal	Over 5 years
Participant 2 Leona	Female	ICS (Independent Charter School)	- Independent Study Teacher - Director of Online Learning	Over 5 years
Participant 3 Keara	Female	ESD (Elementary School District)	- Independent Study/Homeschool Teacher - Lead Independent Study/Homeschool Teacher	3 years
Participant 4 Sally	Female	ESD (Elementary School District)	- Registrar - - Independent Study/Homeschool Administrator	2 years

Participant 1- Mike:

Experienced Classroom Teacher/Principal of Independent Study Program.

Mike is a male high school teacher who has worked at his current school district as a teacher and then principal for over five years. His more recent experience as a teacher is in the alternative setting where he has worked in the district's independent study program, which serves students who were previously in a mainstream classroom environment. Through his work as a teacher, he became principal of the program and helped it become its own accredited school within the school district.

Mike was the most eager participant of this study and demonstrated a very high degree of passion for change. He considered himself a key change agent at his organization and went so far as to state “change is my middle name.” He started as a teacher of the alternative education program and through hard work and an “innovate” approach to teaching, became the lead teacher for the program. In the role as lead teacher of the program, he completed all of the groundwork to develop the program into its own school and earned its own WASC accreditation.

He was well versed in the different curriculum programs and had clear opinions of which curriculum programs worked well and which didn’t. Their initial transition from paper packets to online curriculum was expressed to be somewhat smooth as he described the curriculum program was dictated to them and it wasn’t effective. His school had begun looking for a new curriculum program through a process he described as supportive and collaborative. He explained that his leadership style as one that allowed for teachers to be involved in the decision making and implementation process and as the principal, was always willing to take responsibilities for any failures of the school. Mike was ready to advance in his career and upon completing his EDD, was looking for advanced leadership opportunities within and outside of his current school district.

As the teacher and then principal of the school, he has experienced significant change, particularly in the area of curriculum. The district has made the following curriculum changes in the past several years: 1) math series curriculum, 2) worksheet

packet curriculum to online curriculum, and 3) state standard based curriculum to Common Core curriculum.

Mike noted the consistent changes throughout the previous two years in regards to tools used for delivery of curriculum, along with changes in standards and educational approaches to teaching and learning. The change from using worksheet packets and textbooks to online platforms for content delivery was one of the most significant and continuous change experienced by Mike at his school setting and overall district. The heightened awareness and commitment to preparing students with the 21st Century Skills needed to be successful in today's workforce, was driving many decisions made by Mike and those above him to make changes to the way curriculum and instruction was delivered. Specifically in Mike's independent study program, content is now stored online along with students' assignment and assessment scores. This relieves teachers and administrators from prepping and grading assignments and assessments for more one-on-one direct instruction, and provided them the ability to create more flexible scheduling for students in their coursework. Through this delivery model, students are called upon to be independent learners that can work from school or at home, and teachers can access their progress at any time.

Additionally, the change in curriculum standards from the state standards to the Common Core standards has been a significant change that has also impacted Mike's independent study program along with the entire district. The change to the Common Core has required not only a change in all curriculum offered to reflect the

new standards, but a new approach to teaching and learning that all teachers and administrators are still working on acquiring. This overall shift in curriculum approach has caused an upheaval in textbooks and instructional strategies used. In addition to using online curriculum that is aligned to the Common Core standards, teachers have devoted time to writing their own curriculum to align to the Common Core.

Mike has been in a primary administrative role during the changes that have taken place at USD. As the acting principal, he has overseen the implementation, facilitation, staff training, and ongoing evaluation of the curriculum changes for the independent study program.

Participant 2- Leona:

Experienced Independent Study Teacher/Director of Virtual School. Leona is a female director who has worked at her current independent charter/independent study school for over five years. She previously worked as a teacher for her current organization and then later became director of the virtual school where she has helped it grow and become its own accredited school.

Leona also considered herself a key change agent at her organization and stated that she “loves change, but forgets that not everyone else does.” She appeared to have a command for implementing change and a calm and confident approach to seeking it out. She started as a teacher for her organization several years back and worked primarily with middle school students. As her organization grew and developed a high school, she was appointed to work at the high school to develop

procedures and policies for the new school. In her role at the high school, she developed confidence as a leader and primary contact at the school and began working on her EDD. Throughout the years, she developed positive and collaborative relationships with the organization's leadership team and became known as one who gets things done.

While working on her EDD, she approached the executive director to begin an online program for high school students and was given a year to research and plan its implementation. She was then appointed the Director of Online Learning and oversees two online high school programs. She describes her leadership style of one that includes all staff in the process of change and always provides them with the "why" of change. She believes that giving staff context into why change is taking place assists in acquiring buy-in.

As the teacher and then director of the virtual school, she has experienced curriculum changes. The virtual school has made the following curriculum changes in the past several years: 1) worksheet packet curriculum to online curriculum and 2) state standard based curriculum to Common Core curriculum.

Leona's organization is a well-established independent study charter school that has developed its own independent study curriculum and Leona has used that curriculum as a teacher for several years. Recently, Leona was appointed the Director of the Virtual School and has experienced significant change within that new role. The change from using school created curriculum and textbooks to online platforms for content delivery was one of the most significant and continuous change

experienced by Leona at her organization. The demand for a more flexible learning environment for high school students along with the need to better prepare students for the 21st Century has prompted the development of the virtual high school. According to Leona, many changes came with the implementation of the virtual school, such as changes in policies, procedures, instructional practices, and curriculum. Leona explained that students have the flexibility to work at home and on-site, based on their instructional needs. According to Leona, the new curriculum platform allows for teachers and administrators to monitor progress through the curriculum through completion of assignments in the online platform and intervene as needed. The platform also stores all student scores and generates comprehensive reports on students time spent on assignments, scores, and overall grades.

Similarly to the experience of Mike, the change in curriculum standards from the state standards to the national Common Core standards was also a significant change that has impacted Leona's virtual school along with the entire organization. The change to the Common Core also required changes to all curriculum offered to reflect the new standards and new approaches to teaching and learning that all teachers and administrators are still working on acquiring. This comprehensive change in curriculum has caused major changes in textbooks and instructional strategies used throughout the organization and within the virtual school.

Leona also experienced a change in curriculum through the increased integration of Depth of Knowledge (DOK) thinking proficiencies into the curriculum content. In alignment with the Common Core, DOK categorizes tasks according to

the complexity of thinking required to successfully complete them. This focus within curriculum and instruction required significant modifications to the curriculum and instructional practices of both Leona and the teachers of the virtual school.

Leona has been in a primary administrative role during the changes that have taken place at ICS. As the director, she has overseen the implementation, facilitation, staff training, and ongoing evaluation of the curriculum changes for the virtual school program.

Participant 3- Keara:

Experienced Homeschool/Independent Study Teacher. Keara is a female independent study teacher who has worked at her current school district as a teacher for over five years. Her more recent experience is as the lead teacher for district's homeschool/independent study program which serves students who work primarily at home with their parent and come to the school site to meet with their credentialed teachers and receive any needed support. Through her work as a teacher, she became the lead teacher of the program.

Keara saw herself as a change agent at her organization as well, but experienced a tumultuous path during the change. Her role at her organization was as a homeschool teacher working closely with the lead teacher of the homeschool program. They had been using worksheet packets for several years in the program and had been working together on researching online curriculum programs for their homeschool students. During this process, the lead teacher became disgruntled and was let go on negative terms. After two years as a teacher there, Keara was then

handed the responsibility to oversee the implementation of the new curriculum program.

Upon the departure of the lead teacher, Keara found that the leadership team and homeschool program staff were impacted by the instability and there was little effort or commitment to seeing the implementation of the new curriculum program through. Keara felt charged with a task, but with little support, guidance, or vision to assist her in being successful. She worked diligently to at least keep the implementation going but felt little support or direction. This caused a negative stance and approach to the change on her part that seemed to impact the overall culture of her organization and of the new curriculum program. Keara ultimately collaborated with the Independent Study Registrar in getting the new curriculum program implemented. They became support for each other and had each other to rely on in getting the work done for the implementation to take place.

As the teacher and then lead teacher of the program, she has experienced significant change, particularly in the area of curriculum. The program has made the following curriculum changes in the past several years: 1) worksheet packet curriculum to online curriculum and 2) state standard based curriculum to Common Core curriculum.

The homeschool/independent study program is well established and has been using worksheet packets and textbooks for curriculum since its inception. The teachers and families have grown very accustomed to the curriculum and processes used at the program. Like all other districts and organizations in this study, the

heightened awareness and commitment to preparing students with the 21st Century Skills needed to be successful in today's workforce, has been driving many decisions to transition to online content.

The new online curriculum program Keara is using for her curriculum in the homeschool/independent study program includes a combination of online content and textbook materials that are shipped directly to the student's house. The online platform organizes the content and delivers the semester-paced lessons to the students on a daily basis. All assessment and course progress is stored online along with ample reporting features for student, parents, and teachers to monitor progress.

Like the other participants, Keara's district has experienced the change in curriculum from the state standards to the Common Core standards within the homeschool/independent study program and within the entire district. This change continues to impact the homeschool/independent study program as they not only are working to get to know the new curriculum but the Common Core standards with which they are aligned as well.

Keara has been the primary lead teacher during the changes that have taken place at ESD. As the lead teacher, she has overseen the implementation, facilitation, staff training, and ongoing evaluation of the curriculum changes for the homeschool/independent study program.

Participant 4- Sally:

Moderately experienced Homeschool/Independent Study Registrar/Clerical. Sally is a female registrar/clerical assistant who has worked at her current school

district for 2 years. She works for the homeschool/independent study program and has experience with the previous curriculum and procedures used. She has the most interaction with the students and families in the program and has an overall view of the culture of the program.

Sally didn't originally consider herself change agent until she began to collaborate with Keara and join her efforts in getting the new curriculum program implemented with little support or guidance from their leadership. She expressed issues with "vision and buy-in" at her organization during the change and attributed that to a fragmented leadership team and trying to recover from the impact the departure of the previous lead teacher had on the program.

Although her job duties mostly involved helping families register for the program, she found herself working alongside Keara regularly in getting the new program implemented. She observed negativity at her organization and saw it had an impact on the new curriculum program and its implementation. She also observed the response families were having to the change and stated that their resistance came from a "fear of failing" or not knowing how to use the new curriculum.

As the registrar/clerical aide, she has experienced the same significant change as Keara, particularly in the area of curriculum. She has also experienced the following curriculum changes in the past year: 1) worksheet packet curriculum to online curriculum and 2) state standard based curriculum to Common Core curriculum.

As previously stated, the homeschool/independent study program is well established and has been using worksheet packets and textbooks for curriculum since its inception. The teachers and families have grown very accustomed to the curriculum and processes used at the program. The change to online curriculum and the common core standards has been a significant change that has impacted the families the program has been serving for years and the staff that has also been using the same curriculum and processes for many years.

The new online curriculum program the homeschool/independent study program is using is a combination of online content and textbook materials that are shipped directly to the student's house. The online platform provides a variety of learning modalities and advanced tools that could enhance the user experience of the homeschool families.

Like the other participants, Sally's district has experienced the change in curriculum from the state standards to the Common Core standards within the homeschool/independent study program and within the entire district. This change continues to impact the homeschool/independent study program as they not only are working to get to know the new curriculum but the Common Core standards with which they are aligned as well.

Sally has been one of the key communicators to families during the curriculum changes at ESD. As the registrar and clerical assistant, she has helped to oversee the implementation, facilitation, staff training, and ongoing evaluation of the curriculum changes for the homeschool/independent study program.

Participant Similarities and Differences. The similarities and differences amongst the participants of the study contributed to the overall perspectives towards change within their organizations. Both Mike and Leona had over 5 years experience in the field of education and the most recent 5 years of their experience has been administrative. They each described several experiences throughout change implementations that they were able to reflect on and determine what qualities made for a more effective change implementation.

As described throughout the identified themes in the section titled Data Collection Method and Analysis, leadership, buy-in, communication, and follow through are some of the attributes they found imperative for successful change implementations. The level of leadership and practical experience with change Mike and Leona had helped shape their perspective on change and as a result, had a more positive report of their experience with change. Additionally, they each reported a strong leadership from which they worked under during the change and reflected that they were in turn able to provide the same level of supportive leadership to the staff they worked during change implementations. Both participants expressed working with strong leadership that was empowering during the change implementations they experienced and it appeared to impact their overall view on change.

Contrastingly, Keara and Sally each expressed very little experience with change and neither had any administrative experience. They each described a fragmented level of leadership at their organization during the change implementations and confirmed the absence of all of the qualities Mike and Leona

found to be of value from leadership during change. For example, Keara and Sally noted that there was little follow through, inconsistent communication, and very little buy-in from leadership and staff alike. I believe that this type of leadership contributed to their clearly stated negative experience with change and significantly impacted their overall perspective on change. To summarize, the participants' level of experience with change and the leadership under which they were directed appeared to have an impact on their overall perspective on change.

Data Collection Method and Analysis

As mentioned in Chapter three, Hermeneutic phenomenology is a “research methodology aimed at producing rich textual descriptions of the experiencing of selected phenomena in the life world of individuals that are able to connect with the experience of all of us collectively” (Smith, 1997, p. 80). Through a hermeneutical phenomenological approach, a deeper understanding of the meaning of an experience with a phenomenon is sought (Smith, 1997). This takes place through a deeper reflection of the experience by using rich descriptive language. Langdridge (2007), claims that a hermeneutical phenomenological approach takes into account that our experiences can be best understood through stories we tell of that experience.

In order to understand the perspectives and beliefs of these four, it was best for me to analyze participants' stories through their writings and discussions keeping aligned to an Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), which aims to identify the meanings that specific experiences and events have for participants. This approach attempts to “explore personal experience and is concerned with an

individual's personal perception or account of an object or event, as opposed to an attempt to produce an objective statement of the object or event itself" (Smith and Osborn, 2007, p. 1). An IPA approach also emphasizes that the act of the research is a dynamic process where the researcher plays an active role in the process.

A researcher in this process is charged with the task of acquiring an "insider's perspective" (Conrad, 1987). During this process however, access "depends on, and is complicated by, the researcher's own conceptions; indeed, these are required in order to make sense of that other personal world through a process of interpretative activity" (Smith, and Osborn. 2007, p. 2). Ultimately, a two-stage interpretative process, or also referred to as a double hermeneutic, is required. This process takes place during the research process where based on questions asked, participants are trying to make sense of their world. While the participants are trying to make sense of their world, the researcher is trying to make sense of the participants trying to make sense of their world. IPA is therefore linked to hermeneutics and interpretative theories (Packer and Addison, 1989; Palmer, 1969). This approach requires the researcher to engage in an interpretative relationship with the open-ended responses and transcripts from interviews or focus groups.

The steps of the data analysis are outlined as follows: 1) collect data from participants from the open-ended survey and focus group responses were read for overall content, 2) line by line analysis was made from each participant's responses, 3) all data was reread, 4) key ideas and responses were highlighted throughout all responses, 5) key ideas and responses were coded into themes, categories,

descriptions, and definitions, 6) interpreted meanings aligned with themes, 7) themes were identified per participant, 8) themes were compared across participants to determine thematic commonalities, 9) themes were summarized into a narrative, 10) thematic commonalities were grouped into clusters with overarching meanings, 11) clusters were identified, and 12) clusters were summarized into a narrative. The identified 12 steps of the data analysis process are outlined below.

In alignment with an Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), the main goal is to identify the meanings that change experiences and events had for participants. This approach aimed to “explore personal experience and is concerned with an individual’s personal perception or account of an object or event, as opposed to an attempt to produce an objective statement of the object or event itself” (Smith & Osborn, 2007, p. 1). Within an IPA approach it is also emphasized that the act of the research is a dynamic process where the researcher plays an active role in the process.

As a researcher in this process, I was charged with the task of acquiring an “insider’s perspective” (Conrad, 1987). This process “depends on, and is complicated by, the researcher’s own conceptions; indeed, these are required in order to make sense of that other personal world through a process of interpretative activity” (Smith, & Osborn. 2007, p. 2). Ultimately, a two-stage interpretative process, or a double hermeneutic, was required where the participants were trying to make sense of their world while I, as the researcher was trying to make sense of the participants trying to make sense of their world. IPA is therefore intellectually connected to hermeneutics and theories of interpretation (Packer & Addison, 1989; Palmer, 1969).

The first step of the data analysis process was data collection from participants from the open-ended survey and focus group responses. With the IPA approach in mind, the data were collected in three different phases. The first data collection phase involved participants completing brief and informal pre-interview questions regarding recent curriculum changes they have recently experienced. These were sent out via electronic mail and helped with understanding the changes they have recently experienced.

The second phase consisted of an online survey that included a series of questions regarding curriculum change regarding the following three categories identified as critical within successful change implementations (Fullan, 2000, 2011, 2015): 1) leadership, 2) organizational culture, and 3) curriculum program. As part of the protocol analysis approach to collecting data, the questions used were constructed in a way that allowed for open-ended responses, in order for the participant to potentially introduce an issue or perspective that the researcher may not have considered. This allowed for the participant to be the expert on a subject and according to Smith & Osborn (2007), and allowed the opportunity to share their own story. The link to the online survey that included open-ended questions was emailed to participants to complete online at their convenience.

The third phase of data collection was a focus group interview to gather additional data on the participants' responses to the curriculum change at their organizations. I utilized Smith & Osborn's (2007) interview technique called funneling that aims at gaining both the respondents' general views and their response

to more specific concerns. The first question within a funneling approach attempts to gather the participant's general view on change. Upon establishing the participant's general views on the topic of change, the question probes for more specific insight. This sequence of asking questions allows the participants to explore and articulate their own views before funneling them into more specific questions on the research topic (Smith and Osborn, 2007).

Some of the open-ended online survey questions and the focus group questions started with general perceptions on change and then funneled into specific questions on their experience with the curriculum change within each category. This was conducted at one of the participant's district sites. Three participants attended in person and one attended virtually.

Utilizing the IPA approach guided me in making some interpretations of participants' responses. Responses from each data collection event was read and reread to ensure that interpretations of responses were as accurate as possible. They all had experience with curriculum change in their organizations and were very open to sharing their experience with it along with their honest perspectives on change.

The second step of the data analysis process was to conduct a line by line analysis of each of the participant's responses. All responses from the online survey and the focus groups were transferred into a transcribed document that was read and re-read several times. After becoming familiar with the responses, highlights were made amongst each line of the transcripts, noting dominant words and phrases,

commonalities of words and phrases used, and anything else that stood out in any way, in relation to their reaction to change.

As part of step three in the data analysis process, the transcripts from both the online surveys and focus groups were re-read with the notations included. Re-reading with the notations helped as a researcher to become more familiar with the key words and phrases that surfaced throughout all of the responses. This provided a refined overview of the responses along with the opportunity to begin to drill down the focus onto key concepts amongst the responses. This step was critical in the analysis process to prepare for making connections between the key words and phrases and translating them into overall ideas and concepts as described in step four.

Step four of the data analysis process included highlighting key ideas and concepts throughout all of the participant's responses. The transcripts were reviewed again being sure to consider the main ideas and concepts as reading the transcripts. During this reading, I found that some of the key words and phrases I had identified were not as prominent in a second and third read and chose to eliminate them such as interference and flow. During this step, I was able to commit to the prominent words and phrases identified, remove those that didn't still resonate and generate key ideas and concepts that seemed to express each participant's experience with change at their organizations. Similar to my experience shopping, as I start roaming through the store, I fill my shopping cart with anything I want, yet as I approach the check out stand, I am required to release some items from my basket that I don't really need or

may be excessive or reflect an impulsive purchase. During this step, I began to release impulsive purchases from my key ideas and concepts basket.

During step five, all key ideas and concepts were reviewed to be sure that all remaining key ideas and concepts were instrumental in conveying representations of the participant's responses. Once the key ideas and responses were finalized, I began to group them into main categories or themes to better summarize and organize the key ideas. Notations were made on similarities and differences, echoes, reiterations, and contradictions throughout this step. The identified themes transformed the responses to a more critical level of abstraction and may have require more detailed interpretations, still considering importance of maintaining the true nature of the participant's responses as well (Smith and Osborn, 2007). Some of the themes needed further notation such as follow through and freedom, as the participants responses were emerging as divided between two viewpoints. Mike and Leona had more positive reports to share regarding their change experience, while Keara and Sally's reports were more negative. Due to the dissimilar experiences, some of the categories such as follow through, may have represented both a negative account of follow through and a positive account of follow through, so notes needed to be included to be sure both viewpoints were represented.

Step six included interpreting meanings that were aligned to the themes. As the themes were identified and supported by notations and excerpts, overall meanings were created for each theme. The ultimate goal at this stage is to find expressions that are at a high enough level to create theoretical connections within a study, but are still

grounded in the true sense of what was said. For example, the theme of buy-in was expressed by each participant and through my interpretation of each of their responses, it meant the same thing to each participant; that they believed in the proposed change- so I was able to align that theme to the same meaning for each participant.

During step seven, I identified themes per participant. As previously noted, there were two primary reactions represented amongst the participants, yet they had the same notions of the identified themes. For example, the participants had different experiences with micromanagement, though they all had accounts of either the presence or absence of micromanagement and if it was not present, understand the impact it could or could not have on change. During this step themes were identified per participant based on their responses in the open-ended online survey questions and the focus group questions.

During step eight, themes were compared across participants to determine thematic commonalities. After identifying themes per participant, many included the same theme, with a few exceptions, for example, the theme of fear only came up for Keara and Sally, yet the theme of vision came up for all 4 participants. The theme of follow through came up for all participants, except for Leona. Table 6 below outlines the themes identified per participant.

Step nine included summarizing themes into a narrative. The translation of the themes into a narrative account involved explaining the themes while including continuous excerpts from the responses or transcripts to support the narrative. In

order to translate themes into a narrative effectively and maintain an accurate account of what was expressed by the participants, the transcripts were reviewed to extract supporting excerpts from the transcripts. During this process, I relied heavily on the transcripts to guide my writing that I my account was as close to what was stated as possible. During this step, I allowed the transcripts to do the talking, while I acted more as the organizer of the information. Translating the themes into a narrative supported by the participants' responses helped the themes come alive with the actual language used by the participants.

During step 10, thematic commonalities were grouped into clusters with overarching meanings. During this process, I began to group the themes into clusters to better summarize the identified themes. Notations were made on similarities and differences, echoes, reiterations, and contradictions throughout this step. Similarly to the process of identifying themes, the determined clusters transformed the themes to a more critical level of abstraction and may have require more detailed interpretations, still considering importance of maintaining the true nature of the participant's responses as well (Smith & Osborn, 2007). Due to the dissimilar experiences, some of the clusters such as leadership, may have represented both a negative and positive account of leadership, so notes needed to be included to be sure both viewpoints were represented. The difference in viewpoints will be expressed in the narrative and in the findings and implications of this chapter. As themes are clustered, it was important to consistently check interpretations made of the text to be sure the interpretations are as close to the participant's intent as possible.

During step 11, clusters were identified. After the process during step 10 of grouping into clusters, the clusters were given a name that represented all of the themes within that main idea to represent the main factors that influenced the participants' experience with change. There were five clusters identified that included all of the themes identified along with an identifier to locate a reference to the cluster in the text. These clusters act as the key ideas of the overall research conducted on change. All literature, responses and themes can be linked to these overarching clusters of the overall experience the participant had with change. All clusters are listed in Table 7 toward the end of chapter 4.

The final step of the data analysis process, step 12, was to summarize the clusters into a narrative. Similarly to summarizing the themes into a narrative, once the themes were sorted into clusters, they were compiled in to a table. The clusters were then given a name that represents the superordinate themes along with an identifier to be able to find the original source of the cluster in the text. After the table of clusters has been created, the transition was made to prepare for a write-up the meanings of the experience of the participants. The translation of the clusters into a narrative account involved explaining the clusters while including continuous excerpts from the responses or transcripts to support the narrative. The clusters were discussed and will be thoroughly explored during the implications and findings section of Chapter 5 where connections to the literature will be also identified.

Themes

As previously noted and part of the Hermeneutic phenomenological approach, a protocol analysis was used which involved eliciting verbal reports from research participants through surveys or interviews (Sudman, Bradburn, & Schwarz, 1996). This allowed for each participant to be the expert on a subject and according to Smith and Osborn (2007), should be allowed ample opportunity to share their own story. Within a semi-structured interview approach, the interviewer is attempted to get as close as possible to what the participant thought about the topic, without being led too restricted by the questions provided.

In order to understand participants' perspectives and beliefs, I analyzed participants' stories through their writings and discussions. This required the researcher to engage in an interpretative relationship with the open-ended responses and transcripts from the focus groups. The analysis process began with looking for themes in the participants' open-ended responses and focus group transcripts. The open-ended responses and transcripts were read a number of times for in depth-analysis.

Emergent themes and connections were identified, noted, and summarized amongst all participants' responses. Titles were given to the emerging themes and notes taken throughout the open-ended responses and focus group responses that are transformed into concise phrases, which strive to identify the essence of what was found in the text (Smith and Osborn, 2007).

The transformation of notes into themes was conducted throughout all open-ended responses and focus group transcripts. Although not all notes were worthy of a

theme title, the richness of the text was reflected through the themes that emerged. All emergent themes were then listed and connections amongst them were identified.

Emergent themes and connections have been identified amongst each of the participant's responses. Titles have been given to the emerging themes and notes taken throughout the open-ended responses and focus group responses (Smith and Osborn, 2007). The identified themes transform the responses to a more critical level of abstraction and may require more detailed terminology, even though Smith and Osborn (2007) stress the importance of maintaining the true nature of the participant's responses as well. The ultimate goal at this stage is to find expressions that are at a high enough level to create theoretical connections within a study, but are still grounded in the true sense of what was said.

As previously noted, each participant was asked to share their experience with the change within the following three categories identified as critical within successful change implementations (Fullan, 2000, 2011) in open-ended questions through an online survey and through focus group questions: 1) leadership, 2) organizational culture, and 3) the new curriculum program. The transformation of notes into themes was conducted throughout all open-ended responses and focus group transcripts. Although not all notes were worthy of a theme title, the richness of the text is reflected through the themes that emerge. All emergent themes were then listed and connections amongst them were identified.

The translation of themes into a narrative account involves identifying the themes while including continuous excerpts from the responses or transcripts to

support the narrative. It will be clearly distinguished what the participant stated or wrote and what the researcher's interpretation of it is. This is a critical component of the narrative process to ensure that the essence of the participant's is not lost in translation.

There were 10 total themes identified from the analysis of the open-ended survey question and focus group question responses. Many similar responses were expressed from two participants who tended to have a more positive response to the curriculum change, while similar responses were expressed from the other two, who appeared to have a more negative response to the curriculum change. Both positive and negative statements are included for each theme by the participants to demonstrate both a positive and negative experience with the given theme. These are outlined in Table 5 below.

Theme One- Fear

A major theme that emerged during the analysis of the open-ended survey question and focus group question responses was fear. Each participant expressed that fear was the primary cause of any resistance to change they or other staff members (administrators, teachers, or support staff) experienced. Fear of the unknown, and fear of failing were mentioned when participants were asked about change within their organizations.

Mike noted that he has observed fear as a significant reaction to change throughout his career as a teacher and then principal.

It's about the people the change is going to impact and the fear of the unknown. "What is it going to mean to me?" "I can't see...I can't wrap my head around what that change is going to mean to me." I think when you don't involve people, the stakeholders, in the process, they don't have a vision of what the change is going to do, but when you involve them, like I said, in the collaborative process, they know what's coming. It's easier to not have that fear. They may still have some anxiety because it's different from what they've been doing, but they're more bought in to it because they were on the leading edge of making that change happen.

Table 5

Central Themes and Statements regarding Educator's Response to Change

Theme	Statements
Fear	<p>*Neutral: "Am I going to be successful at this?"</p> <p>Negative: "It's about the people the change is going to impact and the fear of the unknown"</p>
Micromanagement	<p>Positive: "No micromanagement at all, a very high level of encouragement, lots of really good suggestions"</p> <p>Negative: "I often felt like my boss monitored everything I did because he thought I wouldn't do it right"</p>
Follow through	<p>Positive: "It's very important that the leader isn't always solving the problems and the staff is seeing things through with their own skills"</p> <p>Negative: "Throughout the change I found myself constantly waiting to hear from leadership about this, this and this"</p>
Change Agent	<p>Positive: "I've been given the space to be a change agent"</p> <p>Negative: "So, the decisions were being made by everyone above with the idea that I would be the one to run it and implement it and all of that, and then nothing was really happening with it, until then it was all dumped on me"</p>
Buy-in	<p>Positive: "Getting their feedback (teachers) for buy-in is very important"</p> <p>Negative: "Change doesn't come from the ones who just want to ease through their day and know exactly what is expected from them and don't want to do anything more and just the ones that are just comfortable"</p>
Communication	<p>Positive: "When the change is communicated to staff and they are included in the process of planning the change they have a vested interest"</p> <p>Negative: "I'm updating them, he's telling the superintendent, they'll update the board, so there's a lot of room for interpretation error and that's been kind of what the challenge is"</p>
Freedom	<p>Positive: "The change was really good and it gave the teachers a lot of freedom, and they took that freedom and ran with it"</p> <p>Negative: "as far as how often we were receiving direction – it was not very - it was just "how's the online program going?"</p>
Trust	<p>Positive: "There is a high level of trust that I know what I'm doing"</p>

Collaboration	<p>Negative: “The change process has just been getting people on board and seeing the need for the change and embracing it and that's been my job”</p> <p>Positive: “It’s not a one-person show or a one-department show – it’s very much collaborative and supportive of us”</p> <p>Negative: “At first it was a one-man show and I was doing everything, but realized I couldn’t do everything alone”</p>
Vision	<p>Positive: “The vision has come from the fact they want us to give them the vision”</p> <p>Negative: “And there was never a clear direction, and one of the big things I never got was the vision”</p>

* The statement corresponding with Fear doesn’t represent a positive or negative response, therefore is the only statement classified as neutral.

Leona also noted observance of fear from fellow teachers and administrators in relation to change and stated “I think fear of the unknown and what it will do to their job and to student success has been significant in my experience.”

Keara expressed fear as a significant barrier during change at her organization and stated the following:

And even for my job, learning something new, and you think, okay, this is so different, always just want to fall back into your comfort zone, for sure. This is the way I do it - now I have to do it this way, so I think it’s just a process I think when they get more comfortable with it, they won’t be as fearful. I think it’s just fear.

Sally has been in a key role to observe response to change from many stakeholders from administrators and teachers to the families the homeschool/independent study program serves. She has seen a variety of responses at her organization and believes that “Sometimes I just think change for people does cause fear and sometimes I wonder if they feel like “Am I going to be successful at this?” Nobody likes to feel like I can’t do this. They don’t want to feel foolish.”

Overall, fear emerged as a main theme in educators' observations of response to change.

Fear can create a significant barrier to successful change implementations. Fear of failure, feeling foolish, or just of the actual disruption in normalcy can cause stress that can impact the effectiveness of any change. Heading into the unknown with fear can cause any attempts towards successful change to fail. As Hoffer (1967) discovered throughout his studies on organizational change, fear of the unknown can cause stress that challenges one's overall self-esteem and self-confidence personally and in the workplace. This "inner trembling" (Hoffer, 1967, p. 2) is a common response to change as it challenges established wisdom and can devalue accumulated skills.

During change efforts in my previous educational organization, I found fear to be the most common response to proposed change. In my experience a new program or new way of doing things caused those with the most fear to feel personally violated as if their entire comfort zone was being taken from them. One example of change at my previous organization involved implementing a new online platform that required the user to click print from the left side of the screen rather than the right side, which is where users have been clicking from for years. As I demonstrated all of the enhanced features the new platform had to offer, I lost a small group of individuals who couldn't support the program because they felt that if they would be required to print from a different place, what else would they be expected to do differently? They

ended up complaining enough that we continued using the old platform to accommodate their need for the known.

Fear can be the biggest obstacle to significant and sustainable change. Fear of losing competence and of the unknown can create a big enough barrier that keeps genuine educational reform from being possible.

Theme 2- Micromanagement

The participants expressed that the less they were micro-managed, the more easily the change implementations were. The theme of micro-management emerged as one of the biggest obstacles to making change successful. Mike described his work environment to be:

A very hands-off approach on their part, no micromanagement at all, a very high level of encouragement, and lots of really good suggestions. So if I run into a roadblock of some sort and I don't know what to do in this situation, they'll say why don't you try these options? For me it was a very pleasant experience...and I think the result has been some very positive and successful programs for our school district that meet the needs of kids.

Leona also helped implement change under little micromanagement and she noted the following:

I can ask any questions, but there hasn't been a lot of micromanaging of the program. There's no telling me what I have to do...My staff works very well together and I think that's part of it that he hasn't needed. Little leadership has been needed to interfere in a negative sense.

Mike and Leona found working in an environment with little micro-management worked well for them during change. Keara and Sally expressed similar accounts regarding micro-management in their environment. They agreed that although they did not feel micro-managed, they also didn't feel like any direction or guidance was given during the change implementation.

The concept of hands-off was expressed as valuable to the participants in regards to leadership taking a less directive approach during the change implementation. Mike expressed that leadership at his organization took a hands-off approach that ultimately empowered him to make his "own decisions regarding the change and recruit help of the teachers as well." Mike stated that the allowance of he and his teachers to make critical decisions regarding the change, "created a level of investment that furthered the success of the change."

Leona also experienced a hands-off approach from leadership and further claimed that because her "staff works very well together, little leadership was needed during the implementation." Leona claimed that the hands-off approach worked well for the implementation at her organization, as she and her teachers felt supported and not micro-managed by leadership.

Keara and Sally both claimed to have experienced a hands-off leadership style during the change implementation at their organization. They expressed that the hands-off style they experienced was coupled with some confusion in regards to still refining the "overall vision of the program" and who was completing what and in charge of what during the change planning and implementation. A hands-off

leadership approach appeared to be a consistent theme amongst all participants.

Additionally, Keara and Sally's experience with the hands-off leadership approach at their organizations caused them to feel alone and unsupported because there was almost no guidance and support. Whereas, Mike and Leona enjoyed the hands-off approach because they did receive some guidance and support, just not too much.

Change is often implemented in order to do something better, with increased ease or to offer more innovation. If efforts to implement change are coupled with micromanagement, it can counter the exact spirit required to implement change. If individuals are over managed during a change implementation, it can cause further stress, as they do not have the space to find their own comfort level with the change.

As part of Fullan's (1996, 2011) notion of the top-down rational-structural paradigm, the usual objective is to get staff to go along with a new implementation by developing a sense of ownership by providing explanation, persuasion, training, and incentives. If these attempts prove to be futile, then organizations may institute mandates, requirements, and policies. Fullan (1996, 2011) provides an example of this paradigm at work within education as curriculum standards and competency testing and how implementations move forward without ownership and then policies are put in place to ensure compliancy. This often leads to micromanagement because there is not investment in the new implementation and therefore staff is not motivated to ensure the implementation is successful. Management then feels the only way to combat the lack of motivation is to micromanage.

As a leader of several charter schools I have discovered that any change to the teachers' daily routines, large or small requires a thorough explanation of why and then some space and trust to find their own way with the change and to offer their own solutions to implementing it in a truly sustainable way. This way they feel part of the change and are invested in the change and genuinely want it to be successful.

Theme 3- Follow through

Follow through by seeing a change implementation all the way through emerged as a theme amongst the participants. Without follow through, change cannot come to fruition and each participant noted his experience with that. Mike expressed his experience with change without follow-through:

I've been in other situation where as a teacher or even as an administrator you keep your head down, do your job, keep your mouth shut and nod your head yes, and you take change as it comes and in those situations what usually happens is there's not a lot of change.

Without follow through, it can be challenging for change to take place. Leona noted the need for follow through in being thorough in the change implementation to ensure optimal results, by helping staff "know that the change is coming and it's not something that just happened overnight, it's something that was researched and discussed."

Additionally, Keara and Sally expressed their struggle with getting a planned implementation off the ground. They each claimed that the responsibility of following through was completely on them, since the guidance from leadership on the

implementation was inconsistent. Keara stated that whenever she would approach leadership on slow and at times failing progress on the beginning steps of the implementation, they would state “Don’t worry, it will all be fine.” She further explained:

So, that’s how it kind of started, and then we had a series of events happen the beginning of this year to where we couldn’t kick it off, and then just a lot of back and forth and then it I was finding out that I was kind of maybe going to be in the hot seat because we hadn’t started it, so that’s when I said okay and spent days and days and hours training to be prepared and then they’d say “oh wait, hold on, we’re not making that much money on these kids so we’re going to have to stop there.” So it was a lot of back and forth. And there was never a clear direction.

The theme of follow through is significant in that no change can take place without the ability and commitment to complete the tasks involved to make the implementation. Without the right follow through many implementations may not take place.

The theme of follow through couples well with the theme of vision as you cannot have one without the other for successful change to take place. The most inspiring and well thought out vision can be developed, yet if there is little follow through to support the vision, then nothing is genuinely accomplished and the vision can become just words on a page. Conversely, exhibiting follow through on tasks can

be misdirected if they are not driven by some overall goal or vision, which was not provided to Keara and Sally.

Vaill (1998) has identified the term “purposing” and defines it as a “continuous stream of actions by an organization’s formal leadership that induces clarity, consensus, and commitment regarding the organization’s basic purposes” (p. 29), which effectively describes the effectiveness of follow through and vision when properly conjoined.

I have spent several years working for charter schools and have worked on many committees where we spent a lot of time developing strategic vision and mission statements only to have them sit in a binder or in a computer file and never visited again. Without follow through the vision becomes words only. Direct actions need to be linked to the vision in order for plans to come to fruition. All participants found follow through to be a key component of successful change.

Theme 4- Change agent

Another theme that emerged from Mike’s responses was that as a teacher and then principal, he observed and further reflected that all change experienced was successful only when key change agents were in place creating and taking effective steps towards the change. He identified himself as a key change agent in the curriculum changes that took place and communicated that in his experience, without one or two committed individuals to the change, it cannot be successful.

Mike claimed that he had to stay focused on the change with persistence in order for the change to actually take place. Otherwise, practices would default to the

way things had always been done. Mike also discovered that the changes that were most successful in his experience were those that were implemented through a collaborative approach. His experience was that changes that were implemented as a teacher were most effective when the principal included the teachers in the decision making process and kept them as an integral part of making the change happen. He furthered by commenting on the development of the online independent study school:

Starting a new school, the process you have to go through with the state, the application, all the aspects of the application, the naming of the school, all those things I had to do it all myself, because nobody else knew how to do it, and the interesting thing was I said we need to make this change, and it didn't happen...I was expecting that someone was going to make the change.

Leona also identified herself as a change agent within her organization and stated "the biggest thing I've learned about change is that I love change but most people don't." Leona feels she is always a driving force of change at her school. She feels fortunate that her boss's leadership style is one that is very supportive and allows for her to flourish as a change agent and oversee implementations based on her own research and expertise. She furthers by explaining:

So I was very blessed that I went to my boss and said I think we need an online program and he said okay fine do it and he gave me a year to research it and create a program, and being the one basically in charge of organizing and running everything I think it's been really important the I have the support of our executive director and he's not the educator and he doesn't try to

interfere with the educational decisions. He leaves that to his educational team to start any initiatives.

Having a change agent that is not only comfortable with change, but pursues it, can be an important theme in educational change.

Change agents are incredibly important in educational organizations to ensure that reform actually takes place. A change agent acts as an additional third component to the partnership of the themes vision and follow through as described. Just as follow through is important to carry out a proposed vision, a change agent is important to conduct the follow through. Change agent is essentially the “who” of change and vision is the “what.”

According to Evans (1996), it is critical for organizations to develop change agents to adhere to a vision and see that vision through. When organizations successfully develop change agents it can create “an active, engaged, self-managing commitment to change among those who implement it” (Evans, 1996, p. 18). This demonstrated commitment to change is what can make genuine change take place.

Sally and Keara both expressed that they felt like change agents at their organizations. They believed in the change and saw it as valuable for the program. The difference in their experience as change agents from Mike and Leona’s is that the they were somewhat forced into the roles as change agents somewhat willingly but ended up with very little support to be successful.

All of the four participants in this study considered themselves change agents. They each felt as though they were on the front line of change and weathering the

glories and storms of change. I too considered myself a change agent at my previous education at organization and often times felt that if I weren't continuously pushing for change then it would likely not happen. Most of my colleagues had little interest in change and treated it more as a nuisance than an opportunity. In order for new implementations to take place and for improvements to be made, required me to be consistent in my efforts to make change.

Theme 5- Buy-in

The theme of buy-in emerged amongst all four participants as they all noted that it is incredibly important to have buy-in from stakeholders when implementing change. Without buy-in change can be less successful. Mike claims to make every effort as a principal to be sure that all of his teachers are provided the opportunity to be a part of the planning and implementation of the change to ensure investment and buy-in.

Leona also noted that buy-in is important when implementing new curriculum. She expressed the importance of keeping staff informed and part of the process. She states:

I think giving teachers the power to problem solve and be part of the solution and part of the whole creation of the program allows them to see that yeah, you know, we're changing to this new learning management system and maybe it's not perfect, but it's way better than what we have and we all have looked at multiple learning management systems and that we all see that this is the best one for what we're doing, so that they all can embrace it and know

that the change is coming and it's not something that just happened overnight, it's something that was researched and discussed. So I think the open collaboration and being transparent and having their feedback and buy-in is very important.

Keara has noticed throughout her experience that there can be resistance to change when teachers are not involved in the change process. She explains:

At first it was a one-man show and I was doing everything but realized I couldn't do everything and recruited another staff member, a willing and wanting participant, who could and we both have the buy in and the knowledge of what's going on so that's helped us. The biggest resistance could be that they haven't been a part of it and don't have the buy-in and they're seeing it growing and they're not a part of it though they've been given the opportunity. They've been given some tools to read up on it and do some training and they haven't taken that opportunity.

Sally also commented on the importance of buy-in and the teachers with which she is working during the implementation of the new curriculum program. She stated:

I think the staff and teachers were very excited about it and I think that's really when we got the true buy-in because before, although the leadership is very supportive of us and the program, he's a new director of people services. Personally, I think it took him a while to wrap his brain around the new program and get behind it.

Buy-in from stakeholders is expressed by all four participants as an important element in implementing change. Buy-in can be challenging to acquire when implementing change when most don't want it. Within top-down approaches, buy-in can be rare as many can feel as though the change is being forced upon them and that they have no choice in the change. This can further fear and discomfort as they don't understand the change and how deeply it will impact them.

According to Marris, (1986), humans have a need to find cause and meaning in all events, including changes that it is "as necessary for survival as adaptability: and indeed adaptability itself depends upon it. For the ability to learn from experience relies on the stability of the interpretations by which we predict the patterns of events" (p. 6). In order for buy-in to take place and to support change, we need to make meaning of it and how it relates to the backdrop of our emotional and psychological foundation.

Theme 6- Communication

The theme of communication emerged as an important element during change at an educational organization. Mike noted that communication with leadership was consistent and supportive and this helped him stay consistent with the teachers during the changes. Mike expressed that communication with leadership was supportive and helped him with problem solving when necessary.

Leona expressed a level of communication with leadership that was minimal at times, but effective and consistent communication with her teachers was a top priority. She stated that "I am very open with my staff about what's happening and

why I think we need to do something, and I very much solicit their feedback and talk with them.”

Keara and Sally expressed their share of challenges with communication during the ongoing change at their organization. They noted that there was confusion regarding leadership of the program and from there, communication had been problematic. Keara stated:

I began last year and then had the baton passed, so the way it was working was kind of like a game of telephone. I would tell the other head teacher, she would tell the director, the director would tell the superintendent...it would go on like that, and now that I'm the head teacher, it's kind of run the same way, you know, I'm updating them, he's telling the superintendent, they'll update the board, so there's a lot of room for interpretation error and that's been kind of what the challenge is that I've personally seen and I haven't quite had the opportunity to present everything to everyone that I would like to.

She further stated that ongoing communication has been challenging as well in that

As far as how often we were receiving direction and communicating with leadership...it was not very-it was just “How's the online program going?” every now and then, and I would counter with “I'm still waiting to hear from you about this, this and this.” We went from a broad last year we were asking for and we would tailor it down to “If you could get me an answer to these three questions answered by next week, then I'll let you know how many kids I can have by then.” So we kind of had to tailor our communication approach,

realizing we were not going to get the broad and just start asking for little bits and pieces that we could run with from there, and we did kind of have to keep reminding them over and over that we were waiting for it.

Based on the participants' accounts, communication is an important element during change. Communication is a bottom of the pyramid basic need within an organization, like oxygen is to humans, not really noticeable unless it isn't there. Without communication very little effective business, not to mention business undergoing a change can take place. If those involved in the change are not on the same page with the changes and are not informed of the "why" or "how" of the change, then the first basic steps of change cannot take place.

Successful school change depends upon the attitudes and the actions of all people involved. If those involved in the change are not well informed of the generalities and specifics of the change, then those attitudes and beliefs are not at all where leadership of an organization would like them to be. Therefore, effective change needs to be collaborative and based on honest communication and commitment of all stakeholders (Hall & Hord, 2006).

Theme 7- Freedom

The concept of freedom during a change implementation surfaced as a primary theme amongst the participants. Mike noted that he felt "like he had the freedom to be a change agent." He expressed that he felt the support from leadership when he went to them with a proposed change. As far as the freedom he felt his teachers experienced, he stated:

The change was really good and it gave the teachers a lot of freedom, and they took that freedom and ran with it and I did some pulling on the reins, because it was like, “Okay, we’ve got this really cool culture and we’re doing great things for kids”, and it was like every other day I was getting new ideas from teachers saying “Let’s do this, let’s do this, let’s do this” and sometimes I was like “Okay let’s try that.

Leona also noted a level of freedom granted to her from her leadership that she was then able to pass on to her teachers of the online school. She stated that she had “a lot of freedom” and was able to work independently of leadership to oversee her own implementation.

Keara and Sally both expressed a significant amount of freedom during the implementation of the online curriculum in their program. They both noted that the level of freedom may have not been intentional and was due to a “lack of cohesion amongst stakeholders” on the implementation. They expressed that this false sense of freedom caused anxiety amongst all stakeholders, especially themselves, who were charged with the task of getting the implementation off the ground.

Flexibility was also valued amongst the participants and in some ways similar to the theme of freedom, but implies more of a deliberate investment in the change but with flexibility for the change to take place in a way that is best suited for as many stakeholders as possible. Mike noted the flexibility that came from leadership throughout the change implementation and stated:

The good thing about the district I'm in is everybody was flexible from top to bottom: teachers, district administration, assistant superintendents, superintendent- everyone had a hand in it. When we started meetings with the community- you know because you have to get the community involved too- we're changing from this program that everyone's been used to for several years to an online school. I sent emails out to all the parents involved in the independent study program, asked them to come to an informational meeting, had an online interest form that they could fill out- everyday people were filling out that online form. People were interested in the change and we were able to inform them, and we got the involvement and flexibility that we wanted and needed to be successful.

Leona noted flexibility as a part of her experience during the change at her organization. She received ample flexibility from leadership during the change and because she was then able to allow for greater flexibility with the teachers of the online program. She noted the need for flexibility during many changes the entire staff was experiencing:

Teachers were being trained to be an online teacher and in addition to that, because we're moving everything in our organization more online we have had change with our learning management system and how we share the context and that has probably been our most difficult transition and that has just been getting people on board through support and flexibility.

Similar to their account of freedom during the change at their organization, Keara and Sally felt flexibility was present for them, but mostly due to lack of congruency between teachers and leadership. Keara expressed that “learning something new can always be difficult” and that flexibility is important for those that want to “fall back into their comfort zone.” Sally noted that the uncontrolled flexibility they received from leadership perpetuated a less than flexible environment they were able to provide for the rest of the stakeholders.

Freedom and flexibility both serve an important role during change within an educational organization. Flexibility and freedom coupled with strong leadership and guidance can be a powerful combination in relation to successful change implementations. Once those that are charged with the task of implementing and seeing the change through receive ample communication and guidance on the “why” and “how” of the change, then providing some freedom and flexibility to navigate through the change and find grounding within the change in their own way can be quite valuable.

According to Nisbet (1969), humans are inherently conservative in their position towards change. He further states that “the conservative bent of human behavior, the manifest desire to preserve, hold, fix, and keep stable” (p. 270). Humans tend to dislike any alteration in their daily lives, from minor things such as road detours due to highway improvements to larger aspects such as changes within the career and workplace. Because humans by nature can potentially struggle with

being flexible, it can be wise for those overseeing a change implementation to provide some freedom and flexibility to find their own comfort level within the change.

Mike and Leona highly valued the freedom they were given to help implement the change because they had received strong guidance from leadership and due to their levels of experience with change they were able to approach the granted freedom and flexibility with confidence. Contrarily, Keara and Sally were less comfortable with anything perceived as freedom because they had not received sufficient guidance and support. It is important to note that freedom and flexibility doesn't just manifest in the form of having space to do your job the way you want. Valued freedom and flexibility during change involves providing the guidance and support to be equipped for the change, and then offering ample freedom to find one's own grounding and comfort level with it.

Theme 8- Trust

Trust surfaced as a theme amongst the participants in relation to the change at their organizations. Mike expressed that he enjoys a high level of trust leadership at his organization and this in turn helps him foster the same for the teachers of the online program. He noted that he provides the teachers with the trust to come up with their own ideas on new practices and tools to use for the new program. He stated that this environment based on trust seems to be “fun” for the teachers and for himself as well.

Leona also commented on a high level of trust from leadership at her organization and also is in a position to offer the same to the teachers of her program as well. She further stated that:

There's a lot of trust that I'm doing the right thing and I think that's because I do share frequently... environment with a lot of trust that helps all of staff feel invested in our success.

Keara shared that much time has not been spent at her organization on developing trust between the independent study program and leadership. They are still in the process of figuring out the details and roles of those involved in the program and further developing vision is a top priority. Sally noted that because there has not been much time to develop trust between the independent study program and leadership, it has in turn been challenging to develop that trust amongst the independent study program staff themselves. Both Keara and Sally agree there is work to be done in this area.

Encouragement was also expressed as an important element during change and is listed here as a subtheme for Trust. Mike noted a high level of encouragement from the leadership at his organization and felt it helped him implement the change more successfully. He stated that he received a "very high level of encouragement" and continuous suggestions and ongoing support throughout the implementation.

Leona noted that she received a high level of encouragement during the change implementations at her organization. The leadership style of her organization is one that provides her with ultimate freedom and flexibility even to the point that

she stated she was “never directly asked how things were progressing” with her implementation. Very general updates on her implementation would be provided to leadership during their weekly leadership meetings and those updates would always be met with little interrogation and much encouragement. When Leona was asked how encouraged she felt with such leadership style and she stated:

I don’t know what it would have been like had I been asked, I’ve never really been questioned too much on what I do...If I do have questions I know I can go and get them answered. They are always sure to encourage my work and progress and I work best under those conditions.

Keara noted that the planning for the implementation was so fragmented that it was “difficult to decipher a level of encouragement at most times.” She felt that the leadership at her organization was spending most of their time and energy understanding the implementation and trying to “get behind it” that there was much time to establish an encouraging environment. In regards to the same implementation at the same organization, Sally stated that there seemed to be a lack of congruency and “everyone on the same page” that they felt somewhat on their own in getting the implementation off the ground.

Trust within all relationships of an organization during change can be critical for success to take place. It is important that the staff trusts leadership in the decision being made regarding changes being implemented and that leadership has practiced ample communication regarding the change and provided opportunities for buy-in of the change and also provided continued guidance throughout the change. It is also

important for leadership to trust staff to support and implement the change in a way that allows for freedom and flexibility for the staff to find through grounding and comfort level with the change. Mutual trust between leadership and staff is highly beneficial to acquire in order for change to be successful.

According to Evans (1996), it is best if leaders generate trust, which builds confidence during change implementations. Evans further claims that effective leaders who are followed “are not distinguished by their techniques or styles but by their integrity and savvy” (Evans, 1996, p. 184). Most people seek a combination of genuineness and effectiveness in a leader, who also generates trust and confidence and is worth following into the uncertainties of change (Fullan, 1991 2011, 2015). Within a school context, real change is most able to successfully take place in an environment that promotes trust and integrity (Hall & Hord, 2006; Senge, 1990, 2014).

Theme 9- Collaboration

Another theme that emerged during change amongst the participants is that of collaboration. This theme emergence was not at all a surprise as collaboration is required when any group of people are required to work together. Mike noted the most about his experience with collaboration and how it has affected the change implementation at his organization. He first commented on the level of collaboration between he and the leadership:

As far as level of interaction between me and my leaders, again another collaborative process where I did the majority of the questioning, prodding,

this is what I want to do and they were just thumbs up all the time, and when it came time to do things like presentations to the school board, we'd sit down and have a meeting to discuss how we were going to present, and we'd go over the PowerPoint, and those kinds of things... it was a very collaborative process.

Mike furthered his discussion on collaboration by noting that he and staff worked in a very collaborative environment that ultimately helped during the changes at his organization:

The plan for the transition to the online program came from me working with my staff in a collaboration process to develop what we believed would be the best thing for the kids. The staff was ready to make those changes. They were ready to do things to just help the kids and they dug right in – they just dove in – and we went from an average of 7 graduates a year to an average of 40 graduates a year, so that's a huge change.

Leona also worked in a collaborative environment during the changes at her organization and noted "I think open collaboration and being transparent and using staff's feedback is very important."

Keara also commented on the lack of collaboration at her organization during the implementation at her organization. She noted that she felt that once decisions were made by leadership, the program development was "dumped" on her to sort the details and plan the implementation. Sally noted the same experience at setting 3 that there was little collaboration other than what took place between her and Keara.

As part of Evan's (1997) theory on change paradigms, the rational-structural paradigm of change is rooted in the concept of scientific management, which was established to improve industrial performance by improving work efficiency. This paradigm is antiquated as it is no longer aligned to the purpose of schooling today. Skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, and collaboration are highly valued today as part of the 21st Century Skills and these older paradigms aligned to Industrial Age no longer suffice.

As part of Evans' (1996) second change paradigm called the strategic-systemic paradigm, collaboration is highly valued. This paradigm challenges traditional assumptions and employs a holistic approach that by focusing on "broader, underlying systemic patterns can we solve problems effectively and develop a truly creative, self-renewing learning organization that can cope with a changing environment" (p. 42). This study shows that the best way to solve these problems and renew organizations is through collaborative problem solving, not singular driven tasks from past paradigms.

Hall and Hord (2006) also emphasize the importance of the collaboration of staff in different roles within a change implementation as it builds a culture of flexibility and collaboration. As a charter school leader, I have found that the best products we offer to students are a result of the entire team's efforts in working together to come up with the best solutions for today's students in today's educational settings. This also promotes a strong culture where all individuals are able to take

ownership because they had all contributed to meaningful decisions implemented at the school.

Theme 10- Vision

Vision emerged as a theme during change implementations at educational organizations. Mike noted that vision is important for stakeholders to have an investment on the program and in the change. He noted the following in regards to those that are being affected by change:

I think the stakeholders ask “What is it going to mean to me?” “I can’t see...I can’t wrap my head around what that change is going to mean to me.” I think when you don’t involve people, the stakeholders, in the process, they don’t have a vision of what the change is going to do, but when you involve them and they understand the vision and are a part of it, it’s easier to not have that fear. They may still have some anxiety because it’s different from what they’ve been doing, but they’re more bought in to it because they were on the leading edge of making that change happen.

Leona noted that having a clear overall vision and communicating it and it’s proposed changes is critical in “acquiring staff investment”. She furthered by noting that including staff on the development of the program’s vision is ultimately effective.

Both Keara and Sally noted that their program struggled with vision during the implementations. Keara stated the following in regards to the vision for the change she was expected to implement:

One of the big things I never got from leadership was the vision and that was something I started asking for early on when we first started talking about the implementation. If I had known what the vision was, I could have taken off with it, but I was repeatedly asking for it and not getting it so then when I decided to take off with it, I came up with not exactly the vision, but the idea of what I think it should be like and how I think it could be most successful.”

Keara noted that as she continued to develop the vision of the online program for the current independent study program, she and Sally felt support from leadership growing.

Even when educational organizations are not implementing change, vision can guide the entire focus and efforts of that organization. Ideally, all decisions made from staffing to curriculum programs, should be aligned to the organization’s developed vision. During change, the organization’s vision can be even more critical in helping to initiate the change to helping the change along. Staying committed to an organization’s vision is purely a matter of culture and because it helps guide the change, culture can be one of the most important elements during change.

As previously noted, Evans’ (1996), strategic-systemic paradigm opposes the top-down implementation methodology and in claims that when change efforts are primarily focused on formal tasks and procedures and not the critical task of altering people’s beliefs, true ownership of the change does not take place, and the change is at a higher risk for resistance. Commitment building is an important element in

change implementation; likewise, the organization's vision and mission is critical in pursuing shared goals (Evans, 1996).

An organization's culture is determined by the overall commitment to its vision. According to Schein (1992), an organization's culture can determine the capacity it may have for genuine change. Furthermore, an organization's culture not only has the ability to shape and influence people's behavior, perception and understanding of events, but also on how people respond to changes to their environment.

Mike and Leona's favorable response to change is partly rooted in the common experience they share with the overall vision and culture of their organizations. Each of their organizations initiated change based on their vision and implemented change systematically, but allowing freedom and flexibility for all to be on board with the change. Contrarily, Keara and Sally experienced change that wasn't necessarily aligned to the organization's vision, nor did the organization's culture reflect one that embraced change. The changes were therefore not implemented with cohesion and consistency, and the change ultimately became less effective.

Summary

The 10 themes identified from the analysis of the open-ended survey question and focus group question responses are the following: 1) Fear, 2) Micromanagement, 3) Follow through, 4) Change Agent, 5) Buy-in, 6) Communication, 7) Freedom, 8) Trust, 9) Collaboration, and 10) Vision. As previously noted, each participant was asked to share their experience with the change within the following three categories

identified as critical within successful change implementations (Fullan, 2000, 2011) in open-ended questions through an online survey and through focus group questions: 1) leadership, 2) organizational culture, and 3) the new curriculum program. The transformation of notes into themes was conducted throughout all open-ended responses and focus group transcripts. Although not all notes were worthy of a theme title, the richness of the text is reflected through the themes that emerge. All emergent themes were then listed and connections amongst them were identified.

All four participants had some level of experience with each of the themes identified. Some participants may have experienced a presence of the theme within their organization during a change, while others may have noted the absence of that theme during their change. In alignment with the protocol analysis approach within a hermeneutical phenomenological design, the next step in the data analysis process is to carefully combine these themes into clusters and provide a narrative for each.

It is important to emphasize and further reflect on the notion that when participants were asked to share their experience with the actual curriculum that changed and its impact on their response to the change, they mostly shared that the curriculum itself was not as much an issue during the change process, but that how the change was implemented was most impactful on their response to the change. Interestingly, the idea of “how” more than “what” was prominent in the findings.

Chapter Five: Clusters

As previously noted and part of the Hermeneutic phenomenological design, a protocol analysis was used which involved eliciting verbal reports from research participants through surveys or interviews (Sudman, Bradburn, & Schwarz, 1996). This allowed for the participant to be the expert on a subject and according to Smith and Osborn (2007), should be allowed ample opportunity to share their own story. Within a semi-structured interview approach, the interviewer is attempted to get as close as possible to what the participant thought about the topic, without being led too restricted by the questions provided.

In order to understand participants' perspectives and beliefs, the researcher analyzed participants' stories through their writings and discussions. This required the researcher to engage in an interpretative relationship with the open-ended responses and transcripts from the focus groups. The analysis process began with looking for themes in the participants' open-ended responses and focus group transcripts. The open-ended responses and transcripts were read a number of times for in depth-analysis.

Emergent themes and connections were identified, noted, and summarized amongst all participants' responses. Titles were given to the emerging themes and notes taken throughout the open-ended responses and focus group responses that are transformed into concise phrases, which strive to identify the essence of what was found in the text (Smith and Osborn, 2007).

The transformation of notes into themes was conducted throughout all open-ended responses and focus group transcripts. Although not all notes were worthy of a theme title, the richness of the text was reflected through the themes that emerged. All emergent themes were then listed and connections amongst them were identified.

The next step was to group the themes together into clusters based on similarities and consistencies. As themes were clustered, it was important to consistently check interpretations made of the text to be sure the interpretations are as close to the participant's intent as possible.

Once the themes were sorted into clusters, they were compiled in a table. The clusters were given a name that represents the superordinate themes along with an identifier to be able to find the original source of the cluster in the text. During this stage, some themes may have been omitted if they did not fit within the emerging structure or if there isn't ample evidence of it within the text. After the table of clusters was created, the transition was made for a write-up and final statement outlining the meanings of the experience of the participants.

The translation of the themes and clusters into a narrative account involved identifying the themes while including continuous excerpts from the responses or transcripts to support the narrative. To effectively capture the essence of each cluster, one to two participants' responses were highlighted, as these responses were most reflective of the identified cluster. This is a critical component of the narrative process to ensure that the translation from theme to cluster is transparent and clearly

synthesized (Smith & Osborn, 2007). The clusters and themes are outlined in Table 6 below.

Table 6

Clusters & Themes regarding Educator's Response to Change

Cluster	Themes
Resistance	Fear Micromanagement
Empowerment	Change Agent Freedom
Relationship	Trust Communication
Standards	Buy-in Vision
Guidance	Follow through Collaboration

Cluster 1- Resistance

The cluster of resistance is made up of the themes fear and micromanagement. When fear and micromanagement is present, resistance is likely to be there. This cluster represents the opposition to change that all participants experienced, but was mostly expressed by Keara and Sally at Setting 3. As the primary force against change, Keara stated the following in regards to resistance to change within her organization:

A lot of the resistance came from the fact that staff wasn't involved and they haven't been involved in this process because we didn't have the benefit of

having a year to research and dedicate ourselves fully toward this process. So we are currently trying to run the program that we have right now and add this. The biggest resistance could be that staff hasn't been a part of the change planning or implementation and they're seeing it growing and they weren't a part of it though they've now been given the opportunity. They've been given some tools to read up on it and do some training and they just haven't taken that opportunity.

Keara further exemplified the cluster of resistance by expressing her own resistance to change:

I don't like change, but I don't hate change the way I used to. What I've learned most about myself through this change is that if you're not changing you're not growing and that, luckily, it came at a point where I was ready to the point in my personal life and my professional life where I was ready to take on more and to change. It definitely has not been without resistance and some hesitations and it hasn't been seamless or easy but we're just in a transition here, so everything we're doing is the growing period.

Resistance embodies all of the negative influences that impact change efforts as expressed by every participant, but more specifically, Keara. Interestingly, she is still on a journey with her own acceptance of change as were those in her organization.

As previously discussed, research shows that change is often met with intense resistance from those whom it will impact (Burke, 2008; Evans, 2001; Hall & Hord, 2006). Rogers (1962) claims that the feelings of political, ideological or basic

resistance are closely related to the five adopters' categories that are evident during any change process. Through the two primary components of meaning called understanding or attachment Evans (1996), our values have emotion attached to them and when they are recognized we feel valued and when they are ignored, we feel hurt. This is where resistance comes in.

Based on research and personal experience, resistance is a common response to change. Both Mike and Leona experienced little resistance themselves and from their leadership and colleagues. They each worked in environment that was guided by a vision and leadership for change along with support and guidance throughout the change. Keara and Sally worked in an environment whose vision and leadership were not as open to change and ongoing support and guidance was not as evident. Logically speaking, the organizations that experienced the least resistance were the ones who experienced higher levels of success with change. I believe that utilizing the findings from this study to guide change efforts might help in not only recognizing resistance to change but help provide effective insight in to how to deal with the resistance.

Cluster 2- Empowerment

The cluster of empowerment is based on the combination of the themes change agent and freedom. This cluster represents an identified commonality amongst all participants that expressed the need and or preference for empowerment by those around them. Those participants who had experience with being a change agent,

freedom, and encouragement all expressed a sense of empowerment that allowed them to feel more effective during the change implementations at their organizations.

Mike expressed the sense of empowerment those at his organization helped him feel by stating:

Part of change is also, you know we're all in the dark and we don't have flashlights and you kind of have to muddle your way through sometimes, but the good thing about the district I'm in is everybody was supportive and empowered each other to be successful.

Leona also speaks to the cluster of empowerment by stating the following in regards to change at her organization:

I think probably the biggest thing I've learned about response to change is that I love change but that people don't. I'm constantly having to remind myself that even though I love thinking out of the box and innovating and trying new things, that people are uncomfortable with it. I have had the freedom to bring about change at my organization. This is where I think empowering others to be in the change as well is important for any change to be successful.

Empowerment is a cluster that reflects the commonality amongst the participants who experienced the freedom and support to be change agents within their organizations. According to Giroux's (2001) notion of emancipatory authority can be useful when applied to assisting teachers in developing a level of independence and empowerment in order to implement change. He believes in nurturing teachers' ability to see themselves as "transgressive intellectuals who shape

curriculum content and pedagogy so that dominant ways of thinking and acting are challenged” (Scott, 2008, p.112). This generally requires challenging traditional structures that are operated within a top down approach and allow teachers to act more independently.

The concept of emancipatory authority can inform change agents within educational organizations in successfully implementing change. Developing confidence and independence within an organization can assist with challenging antiquated systems and making change happen. When under the right leadership, change agents are granted the freedom and flexibility to be more independent and effectively implement sustainable change.

Mike and Leona were not only change agents within their organizations, challenging dominant thinking and acting independently, but they were also working with leadership that empowered them to be effective change agents, granting them the freedom and flexibility to make change happen in their own way. This generated ultimate confidence and commitment to further change. Keara and Sally were on the cusp of becoming change agents within their organizations. They were definitely challenging traditional systems, but lacked the experience, confidence, and support from leadership in seeing sustainable change all the way through. They did receive freedom, but it was due more to neglect and lack of cohesion, than from purposeful, guided leadership. Empowerment is critical for change agents to be successful and that requires freedom and flexibility from leadership.

Cluster 3- Relationship

The relationship cluster is comprised of the themes of trust and collaboration. Participants expressed the importance of positive relationships with leadership and teachers during change implementations within their organizations. The participants that noted a positive experience with the change implementations all mentioned trust and collaboration amongst this with which they work. Mike noted that although he has been tasked with making the final decisions on things he gave his teachers “a lot of power in decision-making” and helped to create an environment where “all parts are equal”, meaning that the relationship with leadership and fellow teachers was not authoritative, but collaborative. This prompted an increase in input and investment from teachers.

Leona expressed a positive response to the trust and collaboration she experienced in her relationship with leadership and teachers. She noted that not only did she have a successful relationship with leadership of her organization, but had established the same type of successful relationship with whom she worked. She furthered by stating:

I was very blessed that I went to my boss and said I think we need an online program and he said okay fine do it and he gave me a year to research it and create a program, and being the one basically in charge of organizing and running everything I think it's been really important the I have the support of our executive director and he's not the educator and he doesn't try to interfere with the educational decisions. He trusts my work and judgment.

All relationships in a work environment are important and become even more

so when the stress of a change is present. The fear, uncertainty, and unknown can test the durability of even the most effective professional relationships. Based on the participants' responses, if there is a high level of trust and collaboration amongst staff, changes can be far more successful.

Relationship is a cluster that reflects the commonality amongst the participants who identified trust and collaboration as important within their organizations during change. As previously noted, according to Erickson's (1963) "basic trust" concept, humans have a need for a psychological security about the predictability of the world that is created through a parent's continual nurturing. Even as adults, we need for ontological security persists where we seek to maintain a level of confidence in the orderly nature of things (Starratt, 1993). If trust isn't existent between leadership and their staff during change, they run the risk of staff feeling as though the change has been forced on them by leadership who is looking out to serve their own purposes and not what's best for the students and staff.

If a viable relationship hasn't been formed between leadership and staff then significant changes can only hurt the relationship further. To help educators invest in change, it is important that leadership creates a supportive environment that is conducive to change. Leadership should provide ongoing guidance and support that not only address resistant behaviors to change, but help develop a trusting relationship. The focus should be more on people and relationships and not on structures during critical changes.

Participants 1 and 2 had a positive working relationship with their leadership and colleagues that included trust and collaboration. They each viewed leadership favorably and believed decision were made for the right reasons, which made it less challenging for them to invest and spearhead change within their organizations.

Effective collaboration amongst staff and leadership were reported as well.

Participants 3 and 4 noted that they didn't necessarily trust the motivations of leadership on the proposed changes and that they didn't feel like leadership trusted them to effectively implement the changes either. The lack of collaboration was noted as frustrating by each participant and this impacted relationships as well. All things start with relationships and if a solid relationship is formed between staff and leadership, great change can take place. If not, change can be quite challenging.

Cluster 4- Standards/Beliefs

The culture of an organization can be critical during a change and the cluster titled standards/beliefs represents the themes of buy-in and vision. The standards or beliefs of an organization can be conducive to change or can make change impossible. Amongst the four participants of this case study and the settings they represented, each type of standards or beliefs were revealed in their responses to some degree. Settings 1 and 2 seems to have a more innovative setting where change was welcome while setting 3 appeared to have some struggles with change as they hadn't experienced change in so long that there didn't seem to be any organization to structure the change.

Mike noted the following on the standards and beliefs of organizations during a change implementation:

I've been in other situation where as a teacher or even as an administrator you keep your head down, do your job, keep your mouth shut and nod your head yes, and you take change as it comes and in those situations what usually happens is there's not a lot of change. There's not a lot of innovation, it's just status quo, status quo is good, there's not problems with status quo except for the fact that no one's learning or growing. And so I haven't had a whole lot of experience with change before here other than just, hey don't rock the boat. So coming here for me was very liberating, because I'm innovative, I want to do different things, I'm dynamic, I don't want to be sitting still.

Mike expressed that he worked for an organization that was innovative and welcomed change. He noted:

If you're in a culture of innovation I think everybody knows that sometimes things are going to get off the rails and it's just the way it is. I know that for myself, I can't sit still and I can't let things go status quo ever. I don't believe that can be a philosophy in education at all. So change is my middle name.

Participants' responses expressed that this type of setting accommodates and allows for successful change.

Sally expressed a willingness to change but experienced challenges at her organization in regards to change. Her organization hadn't changed anything in the

program she worked for over 8 years and the reaction to the change was significant.

In relation to change, Sally noted:

I like some change as long as it's not for just changing, there has to be a reason. The goal has to be a good one as far as why we're doing it. For me what I like about change, or what I have to remind myself about change is that nobody likes failure, but of course if you fail you learn something. I do like that I can change again and learn something every single time you get a little bit out of your comfort zone.

Standards or beliefs within an organization that welcome or allow for change is critical based on the responses of the participants. Without standards or beliefs that promote a healthy approach to change, the change can either be unsuccessful or not happen at all. In order to acquire genuine staff buy-in, the "why" of the change needs to be thoroughly communicated with all stakeholders. The "why" of the change can be guided and generated from the organization's vision and an overall commitment to it. If the vision is changing within an organization based on identified needed changes, it can cause tremendous stress on an organization.

Significant and more impactful changes, or second order changes, are systemic in nature and are aimed to alter the mission and vision of the school as well as its strategy, leadership and culture (Burke, 2008; Weick & Quinn, 1996). The task of altering a school's overall culture and structure can be an enormous and demanding task. Change can generate a variety of responses as it is a process that requires people to learn new technologies, practice new behaviors, and most

importantly, adopt new beliefs (Evans, 1996).

Mike and Leona noted a well-established vision at their organizations and an overall commitment to that vision. The commitment to their vision helped create a culture that was committed to change. Keara and Sally were less guided by a vision and culture that was committed to that vision. Additionally, even though the organization was trying to make for positive change, it wasn't necessarily embraced, which made change even more challenging. A commitment to an organization's vision and a culture that embraces change is critical in implementing successful change.

Cluster 5- Guidance

The cluster titled guidance represents the themes of follow through and collaboration. From my experience with the participants during this case study, I have found this cluster to be the most significant in contributing to change in an organization. Every participant had positive or negative feedback based on guidance and most praises or issues could be linked back to guidance.

Guidance sets the stage for any success or failure during change. I have also found that some of the participant may prefer one style over another in some slight cases and that appears to be the responsibility of leaders providing the guidance to understand each member of their staff to provide them with the style that works best for them. Mike expressed positive feedback in relation to the guidance he received and provided:

I think the part about leading change is you have to have the attitude that it's okay for people to make mistakes. You really have to go in and say we don't know what the outcome is going to be. We hope it's going to be ABC, but we're not sure, let's give it a shot and if we screw up, we did. Now my whole thing is I really like to give the credit to my teachers when things go well and I like to take the blame when they go bad, but that's me personally. I consider them the experts in the classroom and so they don't need to be taking on any extra baggage if we make a mistake, if it goes wrong and it's their fault, they don't need that. Managing change means taking a lot of the responsibility on as a leader. And if you have leaders above you that are in the same frame of mind, and they know it's messy and it gets dirty, that's the way it is, then it's good.

Leona also expressed the importance of guidance during change implementations and stated:

I really do think it comes down to leadership when implementing change.

We're doing our best to message the change to stakeholders and front load the truth and I think it's a very positive thing for the parents who trust us because we've worked with them for so long it has that relationship with them and I think that our relationship with our teachers is important that they trust that I'm going to make the right decision for them and for the students.

Based on the participants' responses successful change is very difficult to

attain without effective guidance. Guidance comes from leadership and effective leadership requires ample communication, trust, follow-through, and collaboration. According to Evans' (1996) strategic-systemic paradigm, it opposes a top-down implementation methodology and relies more on collaboration and follow through. When change efforts are primarily focused on formal tasks and procedures and not the critical task of altering people's beliefs, true ownership of the change does not take place and the change is at a higher risk for resistance.

True change is acquired when leadership provides guidance in developing a culture of commitment building, which is an important element in change implementations. Commitment building revolves around the organization's vision and mission and is critical in pursuing shared goals (Evans, 1996). As previously noted, Vaill (1989) has labeled this important task as "purposing" and defines it as "continuous stream of actions by an organization's formal leadership that induces clarity, consensus, and commitment regarding the organization's basic purposes" (p. 29).

Mike and Leona expressed significant guidance during their change implementations and felt supported by leadership. They also practiced and observed follow through and collaboration during their change implementations which facilitated success. Keara and Sally experienced less guidance during their changes and faced some challenges with follow through and collaboration. This significantly impacted their overall success during their change implementation.

The cluster of guidance is mostly attributed to leadership as leadership is where most guidance should come from within an organization. Throughout this study, guidance and leadership emerged as the most important cluster and theme as leadership is responsible for all elements of an organization from communication to vision to flexibility. If strong leadership is in place, most elements are present and that makes for a highly functional organization that will embrace change and effectively implement it.

Participants' Connection to Themes, Clusters, & Identifiers

Of the overall 10 emergent themes identified, many were expressed by more than one participant and perspectives overlapped. For example, the themes encouragement, freedom, change agent, hands-off, flexibility, and vision emerged for both Mike and Leona, as there were many similarities in their experience and response to curriculum change. Additionally, the themes fear, interference, follow through, communication, and vision emerged for both Keara and Sally as their experiences were similar.

Through the analysis of each participant's response to and perspective on change, I assigned prevailing themes and clusters to each participant, along with an identifier. As part of the Interpretive Phenomenological Process (IPA), an identifier was highlighted from the focus group transcripts that captured instances of each theme (Smith and Osborn, 2007). Key words from the transcript were extracted to exemplify each participant's overall experience with change and noted as an identifier in the Table 7 below along with prevailing themes and clusters per participant.

Assigning each participant a cluster that best represents their overall experience with change at their organizations along with a supporting identifier from the transcripts helps to create a persona of sorts for four of the clusters. This ultimately helps to personalize the cluster and better understand the human response that aligns to it.

Mike's primary experience with change was his role as a change agent and how he "felt supported and effective". His experience embodied the cluster of empowerment, as he had the freedom to be an effective change agent during change within his organization. Leona's primary experience was through the cluster of relationships she had at her organization. She experienced ample trust and communication during change at her organization that gave her the "space to see change through".

Keara's primary experience with change at her organization was through the cluster of guidance. She represents the absence of this cluster during change at an organization as she did not experience follow through or collaboration with the leadership team at her organization. This left her to feel "alone and unsupported" during change at her organization. Sally's experience with change at her organization represents the cluster standards/beliefs, as there was little buy-in or vision during the change and this allowed her to observe that "no one knew what was going on". The clusters, themes and identifiers aligned to each participant are outlined in Table 7 below.

Table 7

Clusters, Themes, and Identifiers regarding Educator's Response to Change

Participant	Cluster	Themes	Identifier
Mike	Empowerment	Change Agent Freedom	"Felt supported and effective"
Leona	Relationship	Trust Communication	"Space to see change through"
Keara	Guidance	Follow-through Collaboration	"Felt alone and unsupported"
Sally	Standards/Beliefs	Buy-in Vision	"No one knew what was going on"

Summary

The five clusters determined from the identified themes from the analysis of the open-ended survey question and focus group question responses are the following: 1) Resistance, 2) Empowerment, 3) Relationship, 4) Standards, and 5) Guidance. As previously noted, the themes were grouped together into clusters based on similarities and consistencies. As themes were clustered, it was important to consistently check interpretations made of the text to be sure the interpretations are as close to the participant's intent as possible.

All four participants had some level of experience with each of the determined clusters. Some participants may have experienced a presence of the cluster within their organization during a change, while others may have noted the absence of that cluster during the change.

Chapter Six: General Discussion and Recommendations

In chapter four, the findings of the study on educators' response to change were discussed, utilizing protocol analysis as part of a Hermeneutic phenomenological design. Protocol analysis involved eliciting verbal reports from research participants through surveys or interviews (Sudman, Bradburn, and Schwarz, 1996). This allowed for the participant to be the expert on a subject and, according to Smith and Osborn (2007), should be allowed ample opportunity to share their own story. Within a semi-structured interview approach, the interviewer is attempted to get as close as possible to what the participant thought about the topic, without being led too restricted by the questions provided. Themes and clusters were identified based on the participants' responses and those were then translated into a narrative, which were supported by direct excerpts from the participants' responses.

This chapter provides a summary of the study on educators' response to change, an interpretation of the findings identified and discussed in chapter four, a discussion on the limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research.

Interpretation of Findings

The purpose of this study was to examine the lived experiences of participants in order to learn how K-12 educators respond to change within their organizations and to potentially identify factors that impact change efforts. The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study was to investigate the common experiences of educators from differing perspectives as they responded to a curriculum change at their school or district. The findings of this study were summarized, analyzed and

then categorized based on themes and then clusters identified through the collection of the open-ended online survey responses and focus group responses all based on the research question:

How do K-12 public school educators respond to curricular change?

- What factors influence change efforts?

The following clusters represent the main themes that were generated from the participants' responses to change within their organizations: Resistance, Empowerment, Relationship, Standards, and Guidance. Based on similarities of concepts, the clusters, were grouped into two key findings to demonstrate the most critical implications discovered within the study of educators' responses to curriculum change within their organizations.

Through my research and data analysis, I found that all themes and clusters were able to be categorized into the two overarching findings that impact change within organizations: Culture and Leadership. This diverges from my original research conducted, which aligned all questions posed to the participants within the following three categories identified as critical within successful change implementations (Fullan, 2000, 2011, 2015): 1) leadership, 2) organizational culture, and 3) the new curriculum program. Through the data collected from the participants' responses, the category of the actual curriculum program that was changed did not play a significant role in the participant's responses to change. When participants were asked to share their experience with the actual curriculum that changed and its impact on their response to the change, they mostly shared that the curriculum itself was not as much

as an issue during the change process, but that how the change was implemented was most impactful on their response to the change. Interestingly, the idea of “how” more than “what” was prominent in the findings.

Based on the process of identifying themes and clusters, most positive and negative responses to change could be linked to leadership, while many others were linked to culture of the organization and its approach and treatment to change. Due to this finding, Leadership and Culture emerged as the primary categories of responses to change within educational organizations.

More importantly, the primary element that emerged in order for effective change to take place at any level was leadership. While culture is just as important as leadership to be present for change to be successful, all themes, clusters, and findings of this study rely on effective leadership for any of these elements to be present or for effective change to take place. Leona discussed the importance of leadership in all areas of successful change implementations:

So I think the way change is handled is determined by the leadership and how they manage the message getting out there. I am very open with my staff about what’s happening and why I think we need to do something, and I very much solicit their feedback and talk with them and I do have to say that the changes that we’ve had - my staff has not been the staff that’s resisted the change. The change has come from other locations and sites where the leadership feels that everyone doesn’t necessarily need to know everything, and so I think that that’s huge that the leadership and their transparency and

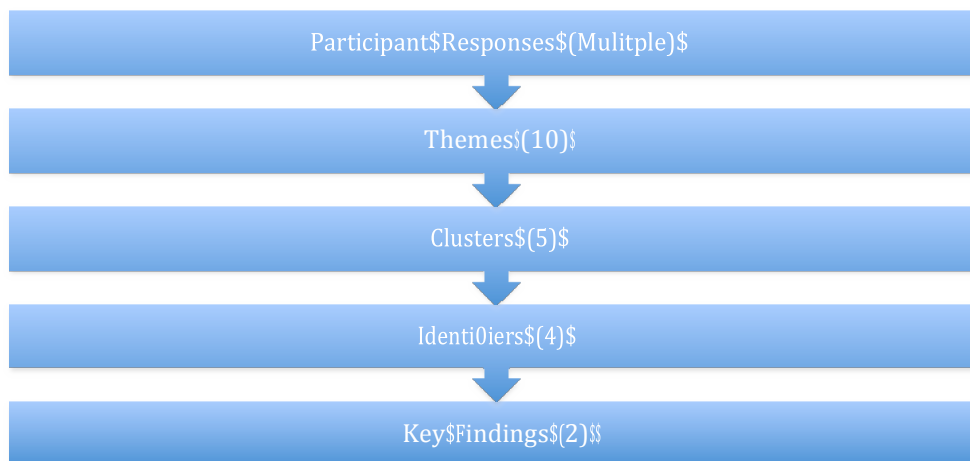
openness on why the change is important is very necessary to have a staff buy in.

Both Mike and Leona had a positive experience with their leadership during changes at their organizations and therefore, the changes were implemented more effectively and with less resistance.

Another factor that was not prominent enough to claim as a theme, but common enough to note was that of time. The participants expressed that they were able to feel more secure in the process of change if they were provided the time to pilot or explore the changes before the changes actually went live. This way, they were able to work through initial challenges and alleviate the anxiety of the not knowing how things will work and impact their daily schedules and expected duties.

The responses were structured in a way that allowed for them to be categorized within two of the initial categories identified and provide two overarching findings for all identified clusters to reside. The reduction process of the data I utilized is provided in Figure 2 below and includes the following categories of data along with the number of items per category.

Figure 2



Hermeneutic Reduction Process

I identified the two key findings of Culture and Leadership through the reduction process and have outlined them in table below along with their corresponding clusters and themes. Participants’ responses are provided in the narrative below the table to support the key findings. Key findings in relation to the clusters, themes, and identifiers are outlined in Table 8 below.

Table 8

Key Findings based on Clusters, Themes. Identifiers regarding Educator’s Response to Change

Key Finding	Cluster	Themes	Identifier
Leadership	Relationship	Trust	“Felt Supported and Effective”
	Guidance	Communication Follow through Collaboration	“Felt alone and unsupported”
Culture	Resistance	Fear	“ Space to see change through”
	Empowerment	Micromanagement Change Agent	“No one knew what was going on”
	Standards/Beliefs	Freedom Buy-in Vision	

Key Finding 1- Leadership

Leadership emerged as the key findings that demonstrated the most critical implications discovered within the study of educators' responses to curriculum change within educational organizations. The key finding of leadership is comprised of the clusters of relationship and guidance. The cluster of relationship is made up of trust, collaboration, and communication and the cluster of guidance includes the themes of hands-off, follow through, and flexibility.

Leadership emerged as the most influential factor in successful change based on all the participant's responses. Nearly every response provided by the participants on their experience with change could be linked back to leadership. Many of the responses reflected a positive experience with leadership and some expressed frustration with or lack of leadership, but amongst all of the responses, leadership was referred to in almost all responses.

Evans (2008) argues that culture is affected by leadership, rather than management and that change should be approached as a long-term project. Leadership is critical in implementing innovation and change within an organization. To transform schools, principals and superintendents must inspire confidence along with trust and according to Evans (1996) the key to both is authenticity. Leaders who are authentic are followed and "they are not distinguished by their techniques or styles but by their integrity and savvy (Evans, 1996, p. 184)". Most people seek a combination of genuineness and effectiveness in a leader, which makes him authentic and a credible resource who inspires trust and confidence and someone worth following into the uncertainties of change.

Experience and research confirm that leadership requires aptitude within unfamiliarity and change (Drucker, 1986). A study on leaders who achieved significant change in their organizations highlighted the importance of disposition and temperament. The study also suggested that the impulse and capacity to lead stem largely from innate talents and early childhood experiences (Gibbons, 1986). Evans (1996) links research on effective leaders to three practical implications: 1) Some central aspects of leadership are innate and un-teachable and that not everyone has all the necessary potential, which means that some people will always lead better than others and that some are simply ill-suited for leadership, 2) Effective leaders must foster hardiness. People don't follow the timid, indecisive, and those that void problems, and 3) Authentic leaders build their practice outward from their core commitments rather than inward from a management text.

During change at their organizations, Mike and Leona described leadership they experienced as collaborative, flexible, and with mutual trust instilled between them and the leadership team. Leona described herself as change agent at her organization and felt fortunate that her boss's leadership style has been one that is very supportive and allows for her to flourish as a change agent and oversee implementations based on her own research and expertise. She furthers by explaining:

Being the one basically in charge of organizing and running everything I think it's been really important the I have the support of our executive director and he's not the educator and he doesn't try to interfere with the educational decisions. He leaves that to his educational team to start any initiatives.

Based on the participants' responses, effective leadership also consists of communication, follow through, flexibility and a hands-off approach. Leona noted the importance of effective leadership during change:

I think it comes down to leadership. If the leadership is supportive of teachers trying new things; the leadership hiring teachers and staff that are embracing doing what's right for kids; the leadership – are they transparent with what's happening on why they want to make change; I really do think it comes down to leadership and about the change...I think the big thing is just leadership all the way around, and like Participant #1 said, it comes down to the teachers are trying new things and we're not going to blame them for failure and that we're going to use it as a learning moment and grow from there and sit down and analyze with the staff, like why didn't that work. The best way to teach that same idea and make it work and that's actually built into our weekly staff meeting that everybody shares something they tried and then we dissect it and why does it work; why didn't it work and how can we all try something a little bit different to make it even better even if it didn't work because we're never done changing and growing.

Leona experienced effective leadership during her change implementations and felt that a lot of her success was due largely to the leadership under which she worked.

According to studies conducted on leadership, Bennis (1989) claims that while the natural order of things involves change, there can be a power struggle between the fulfillment of job duties and different interest groups, and potential

conflicts over status and resources. Changes to routine work can create disruption in the daily flow of task and that can cause stress and anxiety for staff.

It is common that staff sees change as something imposed upon them by administrators for their own purposes and the proposed changes only complicate their daily lives in the classroom (Evans, 1996). When change becomes real and less theoretical and begins to affect staff's daily lives, conflicts may come up that complicate successful implementation. This is when it is can become critical that leadership sets the tone of adaptability and openness to new ways of doing things, while always being receptive to suggestions from staff on how to best implement new procedures.

Mike stated that during the changes at his organization, he felt supported and encouraged by the leadership team at his organization and this helped him not only implement change successfully, but in turn support and encourage his own staff. Mike emphasizes the importance of relationship with staff as a leader and states:

I think the part about leading change is you have to have the attitude that it's okay for people to make mistakes. You really have to go in and say we don't know what the outcome is going to be...Now my whole thing is I really like to give the credit to my teachers when things go well and I like to take the blame when they go bad, but that's me personally. I consider them the experts in the classroom and so they don't need to be taking on any extra baggage if we make a mistake, if it goes wrong and it's their fault, they don't need that. Managing change means taking a lot of the responsibility on as a leader. And

if you have leaders above you that are in the same frame of mind, and they know it's messy and it gets dirty, that's the way it is, then it's good.

Leona's account of how to approach leading change supports Evan's (1996) strategic

systemic paradigm in that it counters a technoholic approach (Vaill) 1989 that individuals who try to avoid uncertainty, messiness, and politics of human interaction. Contrastingly, Leona possesses the ability to be flexible enough to modify the plan for change and to continuously support those on the front lines of the change and absorb some of the stress involved during change. Leona's discussion on flexibility within a changing environment supports the unpredictable nature of change and contributes to overall change success.

Leona reiterates this point by stating:

I really do think it comes down to leadership when implementing change...and I think that our relationship with our teachers is important that they trust that I'm going to make the right decision for them and for the students.

Both Keara and Sally expressed some breakdowns in the support they received from leadership during the change at their organization. They expressed that they felt supported at times but the vision, guidance, and consistency often wasn't present and it left to them to feel misdirected during the change. Upon their participation during this case study, they were still working on finding ways to develop effective relationships with leadership during their change implementation.

Leadership emerged as one of the key findings that demonstrated the most critical implications discovered within the study of educators' responses to curriculum change within educational organizations. Based on the participant responses, all of the identified themes can be negatively or positively attributed to leadership. Leadership has a direct influence over every all of the experiences shared by the participants.

In analyzing the four participants and their response to change, it became apparent that Mike and Leona, the two who were in leadership positions, had a more positive experience with change and the implementations they were involved with were reported to be successful. On the other hand, the two who were brand new or not in a leadership role at all expressed an overall negative experience with change and reported the implementation to be less successful.

Based on this comparison, a correlation can be made between being in a role of power and how that impacts a human's response to change. Based on Keara and Sally's responses, the only real power they had within the change was to wait for leadership to tell them what to do next and those directions were fragmented. This caused a feeling of powerlessness and frustration that led to an overall negative experience with the change that ultimately impacted the success of the implementation. Furthermore, even though Mike and Leona were still subjected to a leadership team that held the ultimate power, they themselves were leaders and had a say in how things were decided and implemented and this impacted their overall experience with change.

Based on my experience with leadership and change and the research conducted in this study, I believe that those in leadership positions experience change very differently than those who are not in a leadership position. This furthers the importance of the key finding of leadership and how it impacts change efforts. When change is being implemented, it is critical that leadership practices the themes identified in this study in order to create a healthy environment for change where everyone feels supported and valued.

Key Finding 2- Culture

The key finding of culture is comprised of the clusters of resistance, empowerment, and standards/beliefs. The cluster of resistance is made up of the themes of fear and micromanagement, the cluster of empowerment includes the themes of change agent, and freedom and the cluster of standards/beliefs is made up of buy-in and vision.

As part of the findings of this study, resistance to change emerged as a primary force within the cultures of the organizations. According to research, change can cause loss and conflict, and challenge competence. As previously discussed, an organization's culture can determine the capacity it may have for genuine change.

Edgar Schein (1992) defines organizational culture as the following:

The deeper level of basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by members of an organization, that operate unconsciously, and that define in a basic 'taken for granted' fashion an organization's view of itself and its environment. These assumptions and beliefs are learned responses to a

group's problems of survival in the external environment and its problems of internal integration. They come to be taken for granted because they solve those problems repeatedly and reliably (p. 12).

An organization's culture not only has the ability to shape and influence people's behavior, perception and understanding of events, but also on how people respond to changes to their environment. Culture ultimately serves as a force that reflects our "human need for stability, consistency, and meaning" (Schein, 1992, p. 11) and organizations by their very nature oppose unpredictability. In regards to schools, daily routines provide a basic security and comfort with knowing what to expect. Implementing successful change can be difficult when the culture is not well developed with open communication and high expectations.

This study has reinforced the research that change can cause loss and conflict, challenge competence, and create confusion, which can all impact the culture of an organization and ultimately can cause an effect on change within organizations. The resistance cluster supports these research claims directly through the participant's responses. In alignment to Nisbet (1969) claims that change represents loss and that humans are inherently conservative in their position towards change, He further states that "the conservative bent of human behavior, the manifest desire to preserve, hold, fix, and keep stable" (p. 270). When change takes place we mourn what was lost and our world stops making sense.

Change can threaten people's sense of competence and their desire to feel effective and valuable at their work place. Change often discredits this established

wisdom and challenges our identities and devalues our skills (Marris, 1986). Evans (1996) comments on a coping mechanism that teachers often resort to when asked to change. Often a teacher may combine the request from the administrator to change and their personal need to preserve their competence and come up with a change product that doesn't quite hit the initial request and expectation. This can often increase frustration for both the administrator and the teacher.

All of these reactions to change can cause a significant impact on an organization's culture and that can in turn impact change efforts. Keara observed these reactions during change at her organization due to a culture that struggled with change. Keara stated the following in regards to resistance to change within her organization "A lot of the resistance came from the fact that staff wasn't involved and they haven't been involved in this process." In response to the resistance she experienced at her organization, Sally expressed that:

Sometimes I just think change for people does cause fear and sometimes I wonder if they feel like "Am I going to be successful at this?" Nobody likes to feel like I can't do this. They don't want to feel foolish.

Mike stated that the resistance he experienced with his teachers came from the fear of not knowing what it was going to entail and "how it was going to affect their job". He furthered by noting that many of his staff members wanted to come in, get their work done and leave. He furthered noted that change challenged their comfort level and caused resistance. Similarly, Leona stated that resistance came from those that didn't necessarily want to be challenged by the change and wanted things to stay

as they always have been. Resistance embodies all of the negative influences that impact change efforts as expressed by each participant.

Culture also consists of empowerment which is comprised of the themes change agent, freedom, and encouragement. Based on the participants' responses, the three themes of change agent, freedom, and encouragement were important to have present during change in order to be successful. This cluster represents traits within their organizations that helped them feel empowered to navigate the change more effectively and ultimately invest in the change. Amongst the, two expressed they felt a tremendous amount of empowerment while the other two noted they wished they had felt more.

Mike expressed that he worked for an organization that was innovative and welcomed change. He noted:

If you're in a culture of innovation I think everybody knows that sometimes things are going to get off the rails and it's just the way it is. I know that for myself, I can't sit still and I can't let things go status quo ever. I don't believe that can be a philosophy in education at all.

Both Mike and Leona worked in an environment that was open and supportive of change. Change was actively pursued and when it was implemented with follow through from leadership and their respective change agents, buy-in was common amongst all of staff. This verifies that culture is an important element during attempted change.

The participants' responses expressed that an organization with acceptance of change allows for successful change to take place. Participants expressed that a culture that accepts change is critical for successful change to take place and empowering those who are in the position of making change happen is critical as well. Both Mike and Leona felt very empowered at their organizations. Mike noted that "the good thing about the district I'm in is everybody was supportive and empowered each other to be successful." Leona also speaks to the empowerment at her organization, stating the following in regards to change at her organization:

I have had the freedom to bring about change at my organization. This is where I think empowering others to be in the change as well is important for any change to be successful.

Culture also consists of the standards and beliefs of the stakeholders in the change process and this cluster consisted of the themes buy-in and vision. Mike noted that vision is important for stakeholders to have an investment in the program and in the change. He noted the following in regards to those that are being affected by change:

I think when you don't involve people, the stakeholders, in the process, they don't have a vision of what the change is going to do, but when you involve them and they understand the vision and are a part of it, it's easier to not have that fear.

Leona noted that having a clear overall vision and communicating it and its

proposed changes is critical in “acquiring staff investment”. She furthered by noting that including staff on the development of the program’s vision is ultimately effective and can enhance staff buy-in. Without buy-in, change efforts are vulnerable to resistance so a strong culture that is open and supportive of change is an important present element during change.

Both Keara and Sally noted that their program struggled with vision during the implementations. Keara stated the following in regards to the vision for the change she was expected to implement:

One of the big things I never got from leadership was the vision and that was something I started asking for early on when we first started talking about the implementation. If I had known what the vision was, I could have taken off with it, but I was repeatedly asking for it and not getting it so then when I decided to take off with it, I came up with not exactly the vision, but the idea of what I think it should be like and how I think it could be most successful.

Culture emerged as one of the key findings that demonstrated the most critical implications discovered within the study of educators’ responses to curriculum change within educational organizations. Based on the participants’ responses, culture played one of the most significant factors during change.

Limitations

This study examined how K-12 public school educators responded to curriculum change in order to better understand change and change efforts within the K-12 educational space. It is important to note that results generated from this study

may or may not be able to be generalized for all teachers and administrators in all schools and districts.

One of the limitations of the study is that the validity of the data was reliant on the honesty and willingness of each participant to provide genuinely candid responses to questions and discussion items throughout the study without malicious or otherwise skewed intent for what might be perceived as the researcher's desired responses. Because of the nature of a phenomenological study, the data was dependent on participants remembering events accurately and with as much detail as possible. Each response is confined to an individual's interpretation of experiences and events and this can create a variance of responses.

The analysis of the participants' responses, which were translated into themes, then into clusters and then into key findings, is never totally exhausted. The clusters can only provide a representation of one specific time and place based on the time period of each individual's participation in the research. The participants reported on their own perceptions and interpretations of the events and these could have been different than their actual behavior. Self-described behavior can be challenging for the researcher to verify. It is important to note that the participants also bring their own biases that the researcher should be sensitive to as well.

As part of the Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), a second layer of interpretation is included in the data analysis process. This approach attempts to "explore personal experience and is concerned with an individual's personal perception or account of an object or event, as opposed to an attempt to produce an

objective statement of the object or event itself” (Smith and Osborn, 2007, p. 1). An IPA approach also emphasizes that the act of the research is a dynamic process where the researcher plays an active role in the process.

As a researcher in this process, I was charged with the task of acquiring an “insider’s perspective” (Conrad, 1987). During this process however, access “depends on, and is complicated by, the researcher’s own conceptions; indeed, these are required in order to make sense of that other personal world through a process of interpretative activity” (Smith, and Osborn. 2007, p. 2). Ultimately, a two-stage interpretative process, or a double hermeneutic, was required where the participants were trying to make sense of their world while the researcher was trying to make sense of the participants trying to make sense of their world. IPA is therefore intellectually connected to hermeneutics and theories of interpretation (Packer and Addison, 1989; Palmer, 1969). This approach required the researcher to engage in an interpretative relationship with the responses, which taken into account can be misinterpreted at times, especially when combined with nay inaccuracies or biases included in the participant’s responses as well.

Another limitation could be that I chose to work with four participants. I would have liked to include more, but I received a high level of declines to participate due to tight schedules or over committed duties at their school sites. Upon completion of the research on change, I couldn’t help but experience my own bias in response to the numerous declines to participate and wondered if some of the declines were due to a resistance to any change in their daily schedules or tasks. Although only

anecdotal at this point, it is interesting to think that it could be possible that less research is completed on this very topic because of a lack of willingness to participate in the research due to resistance to changes in daily life.

Even though the study had limitations due to some aspects of the methodology and the participants, the study provided a complete method of analyzing data around the lived experiences of the participants and the factors that impacted their experience with change at their organizations. Through analysis of the participants' responses, through identified themes, clusters, I have revealed significant findings that support educators' response to change, which I think can ultimately contribute to genuine reform in education.

Suggestions for Future Research

Based on the research and findings of this study, I believe that the following could be beneficial for future research within the field of educational reform and amongst any change that takes place within educational organizations.

One recommendation for further research is to investigate the role a participant plays in the change as well as a participant's years of experience in regards to response to change. This recommendation comes from analyzing the current participants, as Mike and Leona of this study were both in an administrative role and had over 5 years of experience and they each shared positive experiences with change that expressed empowerment and success. Contrarily, Keara and Sally were both non-administrators and were at their organizations for less than five years. Retrieving qualitative data on each group could be beneficial to compare teachers

experience with change to that of leaders experience with change. Through this current study on a combined experience with change for both teachers and leaders, there appears to be a need to probe deeper into their experiences, from each perspective. Where leadership emerged as a critical finding within experience with change in education, exploring each side's perspective could provide more insight into what impacts the effectiveness of change. This could lead to an insightful study on how both years of experience and role at organization impact response to change.

A second recommendation for further research is to conduct a mixed methods study that combines qualitative data on educator's experience with change and then correlate that qualitative data to its impact on the success of the change or its impact on student achievement. While these are both challenging aspects to measure and to correlate directly to educator's response to change, it could be highly beneficial to make the correlation between the two in order to make educational reform more possible sustainable.

A final recommendation is based on a cyclical process that emerged throughout the data analysis. For example, in this study if leadership provided an identified theme such as empowerment to the participant, that participant then modeled that theme of empowerment to their colleagues through the change process. As the leadership saw the continued use of empowerment with other staff, they were encouraged to continue with this approach during change. This would make for a valuable study in identifying how the cyclical process impacts all staff within an organization during change.

Conclusion

This qualitative study explored educators response to change and factors that impacted that change. The purpose of this study is to better understand factors that impact change in education in order to make educational reform more sustainable. The following clusters led to the two key findings of this study: 1) Resistance, 2) Empowerment, 3) Relationship, 4) Standards & Beliefs, and 5) Guidance. These clusters were merged into the two major key findings of this study, which were Culture and Leadership.

Through further analysis I also found that one main element is critical for any change to take place at any level and that is leadership. While culture is just as important as leadership to be present for change to be successful, all themes, clusters, and findings of this study rely on effective leadership for any of these elements to be present or for effective change to take place.

The experiences of the participants were evenly divided between a positive experience with change and a somewhat negative one. The two participants who had some experience with change had a more positive outlook on the change implementations at their organizations. The organizations they worked for had a vision that included innovation and change and leadership that stayed committed to that change. The leadership empowered the change agents at their organizations by instilling trust and allowing freedom and flexibility through open communication and collaboration. This all made for an overall positive and successful change implementation at both organizations.

Contrastingly, the two participants who struggled with change at their organizations had little experience with change and their organizations did not have a clear vision for change nor did they work with a leadership team that was aligned to any one vision. Because there was little cohesion due to the lack of vision, culture for change, or effective leadership that empowered the change agents, these participants did not have a positive experience with change, nor were the change implementations successful at their organizations.

Based on research and experience, the two key findings of this study, Culture and Leadership are critical to have present during change within educational organizations. These two are elements have a strong presence at the settings that had a positive experience with change and were hardly present at all at the settings that had a negative experience with change.

Through my fifteen years of experience in education, ample research on change, and findings from this study, I have found that change can hardly happen at organizations that lack strong leadership and a healthy culture. I managed to fight for change at an organization where both the leadership and culture were almost non-existent and the changes were not sustainable. Without the foundation of strong leadership and culture, real, sustainable change is difficult, if not impossible.

In reference to Evans' (1996) change paradigms, the rational structural paradigm was developed during the Industrial Age and accommodated an assembly line approach to production and education. This paradigm utilizes a top down approach where decisions are made from the top and ordered down to those below.

All individuals are treated the same without any personalization or invited collaboration. Federally mandated educational initiatives are an example of a change implemented within a rational structural paradigm. A small group of individuals at the top determine changes that are going to impact the country's entire education system, and those changes are forced upon those at the bottom to implement at whatever cost. This paradigm for business and education is outdated and no longer accommodates the needs in our classrooms and educational organizations.

A strategic systemic paradigm (Evans, 1996) is one that promotes a bottom up approach. This is where leadership exists within an organization, but it fosters collaboration, empowerment, and a high level of communication. It is where change is sought out and decided upon as organization and is integrated into that organization's culture where everyone has a role to play with in the implementation of that change and all are invested in the success of that change.

For sustainable change to take place, it needs to occur within a strategic systemic paradigm. This study reveals the need for a change paradigm that allows for all stakeholders to be involved in a change process and accommodates the ten identified themes, five clusters, and two key findings of this study.

Freire believed that education transcends the classroom and is present in all aspects of a learner's life, education is naturally political and creates ground for transformation (Shor & Freire, 1987, 2012). This transformation cannot take place without a better understanding of how humans and specifically, educators respond to

change. I believe this study provides significant insight into educator's response to change and how those reactions impact the effectiveness of change efforts.

Appendix A: Survey on Change

*1. What subject area(s) do you teach?

1. ☐ ☐ ☐ English
2. ☐ ☐ ☐ Math
3. ☐ ☐ ☐ Science
4. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Social Science
5. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Foreign Language

6. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Other *2. How long have you been teaching the subject area(s) you listed above?

3. ☐ ☐ ☐ 0-1 year
4. ☐ ☐ ☐ 2-3 years
5. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 4-5 years

☐ ☐ More than 5 years 3. What grade level(s) do you teach?

☐ ☐ K ☐ ☐ ☐ 1st ☐ ☐ 2nd ☐ ☐ 3rd ☐ ☐ 4th ☐ ☐

☐ ☐ 5th

☐ ☐ 6th ☐ ☐

☐ ☐ 7th ☐ ☐

☐ ☐ 8th ☐ ☐

☐ ☐ 9th ☐ ☐

☐ ☐ 10th

☐ ☐ 11th

☐

*4. How long have you been teaching at your current

school?

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 0-1 year

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 2-3 years

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 4-5 years

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ More than 5 years

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

☐
☐
☐
☐

*5. Have you experienced any changes in curriculum within the last 2-3 years? ☐ ☐ ☐ Yes ☐ ☐ ☐ No

☐ ☐

*6. Please describe the curriculum change you experienced.

*7. Please rate the level of leadership involvement/participation in the curriculum change.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very High

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Somewhat High

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Neither High Nor Low

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Somewhat Low

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very Low

***8. Please comment on your answer above relating to leadership participation in the curriculum change.**



***9. What was the level of leadership support during the curriculum change?**

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very High

☐ ☐ Somewhat High

☐ ☐ Neither High Nor Low

☐ ☐ Somewhat Low

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very Low

***10. Please comment on your answer above relating to leadership support in the curriculum change.**



*11. How often did leadership communicate to teachers during the implementation of the curriculum change?

- ☐ ☐ ☐ Daily
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Weekly
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Every other week
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Monthly

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ I'm not sure

*12. Please comment on the frequency and level of communication from leadership during the curriculum change.



*13. Please rate the attitude of teaching staff during the curriculum change.

- ☐ ☐ ☐ Very Positive
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Somewhat Positive
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Neither Positive Nor Negative
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Somewhat Negative

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very Negative *14. Please comment on the overall attitude of all teaching staff toward the curriculum change.



*15. There was enough infrastructure (staffing, technology, training, etc.) in place to implement the curriculum change effectively.

- ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Agree
- ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Neither Agree Nor Disagree
- ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Disagree
- ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly Disagree

*16. Please explain your answer above regarding the infrastructure in place during the curriculum change.



*17. Please rate the teaching staff commitment to the curriculum change.

- ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very Committed

☐ ☐ ☐ Somewhat Committed

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Neither Committed Nor Uncommitted

☐ ☐ ☐ Somewhat Uncommitted

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Not Committed At All *18. Please comment on the level of staff commitment to success of the curriculum change implementation.

A large rectangular text input box with a light gray background and a dark border, intended for a comment on staff commitment.

*19. How effective was the training that was given to teaching staff on the new curriculum?

☐ ☐ ☐ Very Effective

☐ ☐ ☐ Somewhat Effective

☐ ☐ ☐ Neither Effective Nor Not Effective

☐ ☐ ☐ Somewhat Not Effective

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Not Effective At All *20. Please comment on the effectiveness of training teaching staff was given for using the new curriculum.

A large rectangular text input box with a light gray background and a dark border, intended for a comment on the effectiveness of training.

*21. How easy (or difficult) to use was/is the new curriculum after the curriculum change?

- ☐ ☐ ☐ Very Easy
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Easy
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Neither Easy Nor Difficult
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Somewhat Difficult

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very Difficult *22. Please comment on the ease of use of the new curriculum.

*23. What level of ongoing support was/is apparent after the change in curriculum?

- ☐ ☐ ☐ Very High
- ☐ ☐ ☐ High
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Neither High Nor Low
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Low

☐ ☐ ☐ Very Low *24. Please comment on the level of

ongoing support following the curriculum change.



Appendix B: Focus Group Questions

1) Type of Change

- 1) Math series twice
- 2) Common Core
- 3) Online Content
- 4) Next Gen Science Standards
- 5) DOK/Thinking proficiencies integrated into content

Questions

- 1) Please describe the change you've experienced
- 2) Identify and explain the methodology/background from which the change came?
- 3) How did the change involve a new delivery system?
- 4) Was it more of a procedure change or a content change?
- 5) Describe and change you have been through that is similar to this one.

2) Leadership Participation in the curriculum change

- 1) A lot of district training on new curriculum and common core
- 2) Hired new staff (Director of Curriculum & Online Learning) to facilitate changes and lots of PD
- 3) Pilot testing
- 4) Include large groups of stakeholders to participate in curriculum development

Questions:

- 1) Were you part of the decision making process for the change? If not, who was?
- 2) Explain how clear the change was described to you by leadership.
- 3) Describe if and how leadership spent time on the "why" of the change.

- 4) Explain to what extent leadership appeared invested in and knowledgeable of the change.
- 5) Was all staff included in the initial steps of the change by leadership?
- 6) Describe leadership's oversight of the change.
- 7) How did leadership participation impact the change.

3) Leadership Support during change

- 1) Lots of trainings
- 2) Develop team meetings
- 3) Provide teacher coaches to help with implementations
- 4) Leaders have participated in trainings
- 5) Leaders have taught classes to model and experience shift in content and curriculum

Questions:

- 1) How many trainings have you gone through for the change?
- 2) Describe any other levels of support have been provided by leadership besides trainings.
- 3) What else would you have liked to see from leadership before/during/after the change?
- 4) How knowledgeable was leadership on the change?
- 5) How did the leadership support impact the change?

4) Frequency of Leadership Communication

- 1) Weekly meetings
- 2) Weekly emails
- 3) Daily interactions with teachers/staff
- 4) Observed three times a year

Questions:

- 1) Describe the types and frequency of communication from leadership before/during/after the change.
- 2) What were most of the communications about? (Logistics, content, methodology, etc.)
- 3) What form of communication do you prefer the most? Why?

- 4) Did the leadership communication impact the change?
- 5) Overall attitude of all staff toward change

- 1) Everyone hates change
- 2) Not embracing
- 3) Ownership when able to be part of the change
- 4) Most part positive aside from increased workloads
- 5) Change is always difficult

Questions:

- 1) How significant were those in your department/school that “hated” or was resistant to the change?
- 2) Describe how staff demonstrated resistance toward the change.
- 3) What level of buy-in of the change did you observe at your school?
- 4) How did leadership handle it?
- 5) Did it affect others’ attitudes towards the change?
- 6) From your observation of the change, why do you think the change was difficult?
- 7) Did any factors contribute to the resistance of the change or make it less prominent?
- 8) In your opinion, what could have made the change more or less successful?
- 9) How has staff reacted to change in the past? Was this implementation any different? Why?

- 6) Infrastructure in place during change

- 1) Slowing increasing technology, but challenging to train veterans on new systems
- 2) More support is needed with CC
- 3) District is up to date due to LCFF
- 4) More resources needed to be put into training

Questions:

- 1) How was infrastructure in place to support the curriculum implementation?

- 2) What infrastructure would have made the change more successful?
- 3) How did leadership show an awareness of the infrastructure?
- 4) How did the presence or lack of infrastructure have an impact on the change?

7) Staff commitment to change

- 1) Depends on year of experience- veterans not open to change, new ones more willing
- 2) Always reluctance, but most are acceptant
- 3) More resistance comes with lack of information
- 4) Some more committed than others

Questions:

- 1) What is the breakdown of staff at your school between veteran and new teachers?
- 2) Describe how veteran teachers react to changes.
- 3) Describe how newer teachers reacted to the change.
- 4) How did leadership impact the way each group handled the change?
- 5) Describe the culture of your school specifically with regard to change.
- 6) How did overall school culture impact the way each group handled the change?
- 7) Was there a lack of information or preparation that impacted any resistance to the change?

8) Effectiveness of Training

- 1) Does the best they can with what they have
- 2) Excellent job
- 3) Remains to be seen
- 4) Needed additional training

Questions:

- 1) How many trainings did you attend?

- 2) Describe the effectiveness of the vendor training?
- 3) Describe the effectiveness of the district training?
- 4) Describe the impact that the training had on whether participants accepted or resisted the change.
- 5) Did the trainings focus mostly on content/methodology or logistics?

9) Ease of use of new curriculum

- 1) Remains to be seen
- 2) Depends on person
- 3) Intuitive and easy to use

Questions:

- 1) Was the curriculum easy to use?
- 2) Was it in a format you were familiar with?
- 3) Did you need to learn content and platform?
- 4) How did the ease of use or lack of impact the curriculum change?

10) Ongoing Support

- 1) Could use ongoing training
- 2) Good support from district
- 3) Remains to be seen

Questions:

- 1) How effective was the provided training?
- 2) Was enough training provided?
- 3) Did leadership provide ongoing support throughout the implementation?
- 4) How did ongoing support impact the change?

Overall Questions:

- 1) What did you learn most about the change?

- 2) What did you learn about yourself during the change?
- 3) What did you learn about Leadership during the change?
- 4) What did you learn about culture during the change?
- 5) What factor do you think had the most impact on the change you experienced?
- 6) Can you make any correlation between leadership, culture, and curriculum and the success of the implementation?
- 7) How would you implement change differently?

Appendix C: Field Notes Log Sheet

Teacher Name:		Date:	
Question:		Response:	
Question:		Response:	
Question:		Response:	
General Response to Change:	Leadership:	Culture:	Curriculum Program:

--	--	--	--

References

- Bassett, P. (2011). Change agency leadership. *Independent School*, 1-12.
- Bell, L. A. (2010). *Storytelling for Social Justice: Connecting Narrative and the Arts in Antiracist Teaching*. NY: Routledge.
- Bennis, W. (1989). *Why Leaders Can't Lead: The Unconscious Conspiracy Continues*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Berrios, G. E. (1989, July). What is phenomenology? A review. *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 82, 425-428.
- Bolman, T.G. & Deal, T.E. (1991). *Reframing Organizations*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Brookfield, S. (2000). Transformative learning as ideology critique. In J. Mezirow & Associates (Eds.), *Learning as transformation: Critical perspectives on a theory in progress*, (pp. 125-148). San Francisco: Jossey Bass.
- Burke, A. (2008). *Organization Change*. New York: Sage.
- Capra, F. (1997). *The Web of Life: A New Synthesis of Mind and Matter*. London: Flamingo.
- Cohen, A. (2001). Review of literature: Responses to "Empirical and hermeneutic approaches to phenomenological research in psychology, a comparison". *Gestalt*, 5(2). Retrieved from <http://www.g-gej.org/5-2/reviewlit.html>
- Conrad, P. (1987). The experience of illness: recent and new directions. In: J. A. Roth

- & P. Conrad (Eds), *Research in the sociology of health care*, Volume 6 (pp. 1–
- 31). London: JAI Press Inc.
- Cranton, P. (1994). Understanding and promoting transformative learning: A guide for educators of adults. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Creswell, J. (2007). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*. New York: Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J. (2014). Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches. New York: Sage Publications.
- Cummings, T. & Worley, C. (2004). *Organization Development and Change*. SouthWestern.
- Denzin, N.K., & Lincoln, Y.S. (2005). Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The sage handbook of qualitative*.
- Dewey, L. (1938). Experience and Education. New York: Macmillan.
- Drucker, P.F. (1986). *The Practice of Management*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Elmore, R.F. (2004). *School Reform from the Inside Out: Policy, Practice, and Performance*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.
- Erickson, E. (1963). *Childhood and Society*. New York: Norton.
- Evans, R. (1996). The Human Side of School Change: Reform, Resistance, and the Real-Life Problems of Innovation. Jossey-Bass. San Francisco, CA.
- Freire, P. (1973). *Education for critical consciousness*. New York: Continuum.

- Freire, P., & Faundez, A. (1989). *Learning to question*. New York: Continuum.
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. London: Penguin Education.
- Fullan, M. (2011). *Change leader: Learning to do what matters most*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Fullan, M. (2015). *Freedom to change: Four strategies to put your inner drive into overdrive*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Fullan, M. & Stiegelbauer, S. (1991). *The New Meaning of Educational Change*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Gibbons, T. (1986). Revisiting the Question of Born vs. Made: Toward a Theory of Development of Transformational Leaders. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. The Fielding Institute.
- Giroux, H. (2011). *On critical pedagogy*. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Giroux, H. (1997). *Pedagogy and the politics of hope: Theory, Culture, and Schooling, a critical reader*. CO: Westview Press.
- Giroux, H. (2001). *Theory and resistance in education: Towards a pedagogy for the opposition*. New York: Greenwood Publishing Group.
- Gleick, J. (1987). *Chaos: Making a New Science*. New York: Penguin.
- Goleman, D. (1986). Major Personality Study Finds That Traits Are Mostly Inherited. *New York Times*.
- Habermas, J. (1972). *Knowledge and Human Interests*. New York: Beacon Press.
- Habermas, J. (1971). *Knowledge of human interests*. Boston: Beacon.
- Habermas, J. (1984). *The theory of communicative action*. Vol. 1: Reason and the

- rationalization of society (T. McCarthy, Trans.). Boston: Beacon.
- Hall, G. & Hord, S. (2006). *Implementing change: Patterns, principles, and potholes* (2nd ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Hord, S. (1992). *Facilitative leadership: The imperative for change*. Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory. Retrieved August 13, 2004, from *Southwest Educational Development Laboratory* Web site: <http://www.sedl.org/change/facilitate/welcome.html>
- Hoffer, E. (1967). *The Ordeal of Change*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Hubert, D. & Wrathall, M. (2006). *A Companion to Phenomenology and Existentialism Sponsors*. New York: Blackwell Publishers.
- Kafle, N. (2011). Hermeneutic phenomenological research method simplified. *Bodhi: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, (5), 181-198.
- Kaufman, H. (1971). *The Limits of Organizational Change*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.
- Kitchenham, A. (2008). The evolution of John Mezirow's transformative learning theory. *Journal of Transformative Education*, 6(2), 104-123.
- Kuhn, T. (1962). *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Langdrige, D. (2007). *Phenomenological psychology: Theory, research and methods*. London: Pearson.
- Marris, P. (1986). *Loss and Change*. London: Routledge & Keagan Paul.
- McMillan, J. & Wergin, J. (2010). *Understanding and Evaluating Educational*

Research. Pearson.

Merleau-Ponty M. (1945). *Phenomenology of Perception*. London: Routledge.

Merriam, S. & Brockett, R. (1997) *The Profession and Practice of Adult Education*.

San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, p.7.

Mezirow, J. (1978a). Education for perspective transformation: Women's re-entry programs in community colleges. New York: Teacher's College, Columbia University.

Mezirow, J. (1978b). Perspective transformation. *Adult Education*, 28, 100-110.

Mezirow, J. (1994a). Response to Mark Tennant and Michael Newman. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 44(4), 243-244.

Mezirow, J. (1991a). Transformative dimensions in adult learning. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Mezirow, J. (1991b). Transformation theory and cultural context. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Mezirow, J. (2003). Transformative learning as discourse. *Journal of Transformative Education*, 1(1): 58-63. Clark and Wilson. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 41(3), 188-192.

Mezirow, J. (1994b). Understanding transformation theory. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 44(4), 222-232.

Murphy, J. (1990). *The Educational Reform Movement of the 1980s*. Berkeley, CA: McCutchan.

Myers, M. (2000). Qualitative research and the generalizability question: Standing

firm with Proteus. *The Qualitative Report*, 4(3/4).

<http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR4-3/myers.html>

Nisbet, R. (1969). *Social Change and History*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Nisbet, R. (1980). *The History of the Idea of Progress*. New York: Basic Books.

Nolan, J., & Meister, D. G. (2000). *Teachers and educational change: The lived experience of a secondary school restructuring*. New York, NY: SUNY Press.

Packer, M.J. & Addison, R.B. (1989). *Entering the Circle: Hermeneutic Investigations in Psychology*, Albany: SUNY Press.

Palmer, R. (1969). *Hermeneutics; Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer*. Northwestern University Press.

Piaget, J. (1952). *The Origins of Intelligence in Children*. New York: International Universities Press.

Ponterotto, J. G. (2006). Brief note on the origins, evolution, and meaning of the qualitative concept of “thick description.” *The Qualitative Report*, 11, 538-549.

Rogers, E. (1962). *Diffusion of Innovations*. New York: Free Press of Glencoe.

Schein, E. (1992). *Organizational Culture and Leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Senge, P. (2014). *The dance of change: The challenges to sustaining momentum in a learning organization*. Massachusetts: Crown Publishing Group.

Senge, P. (1990). *The Fifth Discipline*. New York: Doubleday.

Senge, P. (2000). *Schools That Learn*. New York: Doubleday.

- Sergiovanni, T. (2004). *The lifeworld of leadership: Creating culture, community, and personal meaning in our schools*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Schein, E. H. (1992). *Organizational culture and leadership: A dynamic view*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Shor, I. (2012). *Empowering education: critical teaching for social change*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Shor, I., & Freire, P. (1987). *A pedagogy for liberation*. Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey.
- Smith, S. J. (1997). The phenomenology of educating physically. In D. Vandenburg (Ed.), *Phenomenology and educational discourse* (pp. 119-144). Durban: Heinemann.
- Smith, J.A. & Osborn, M. (2007) Interpretative phenomenological analysis. In J.A. Smith (Ed.), *Qualitative Psychology: A Practical Guide to Methods*. London: Sage.
- Starratt, R.J. (1993). *The Drama of Leadership*. New York: Falmer Press.
- Sudman, S., Bradburn, N., & Schwarz, N. (1996). *Thinking about answers: The Application of cognitive processes to survey methodology*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Transformative Learning Centre. (2004). The Transformative Learning Centre. Retrieved July 27, 2004, from Transformative Learning Centre Web site: <http://tlc.oise.utoronto.ca/index.htm>
- Vaill, P.B. (1989). *Managing as a Performing Art: New Ideas for a World of Chaotic*

- Change*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Van Manen, M. (1990). *Researching lived experience: human science for an action sensitive pedagogy*. New York: SUNY Press.
- Van Manen, M. (2013). *Phenomenology of practice: meaning-giving methods in phenomenological research and writing*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.
- Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in Society*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Wagner, Tony. (2005). *Change leadership: A practical guide to transforming our schools*. New York, Jossey-Bass.
- Watzlawick, P., Weakland, J. & Fisch, R. (1974, 2011). *Change; Principles of problem formation and problem resolution*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
- Weick, K.E., & Quinn, R.E. (1999). Organizational change and development. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 50, 361–386.
- Wilson, H., & Hutchinson, S. (1991). Triangulation of qualitative methods: Heideggerian hermeneutics and grounded theory. *Qualitative Health Research*, (1), 263-276.

