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Pepperdine University  
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

MEASURING LEADERSHIP PRACTICES OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOL HEADS USING  
THE LPI SELF-REPORT

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

by

Randy R. Bertin

December, 2015

June Schmieder-Ramirez, PhD - Dissertation Chairperson

This dissertation, written by

Randy R. Bertin

under the guidance of a Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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I would also like to thank the California Association of Independent Schools (CAIS) for the willingness to allow their member Heads of Schools to participate in this study. My hope is that this dissertation will benefit CAIS and the heads of school in its membership.

Most importantly, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my wife Karen, and our children, Michael, Matthew, Ryan and Patrick for their never-ending encouragement, support, and love. I am so fortunate to share my life with such a wonderful family.

## VITA

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## SUMMARY

Randy Bertin has been a leader in independent boarding schools for the past 17 years, which includes spending the last 4 as Head of School at Besant Hill School of Happy Valley in Ojai, California.

Over a 7-year career at Stoneleigh-Burnham School in Greenfield, MA, Randy served in many roles including Certified Athletic Trainer, Residential Faculty, Teacher, Coach, Dean, Director of Athletics, and Development Officer. Before becoming Head of School at Besant Hill, Randy served in multiple leadership

positions there including Director of Admissions and Financial Aid, Director of Advancement, and Assistant Head for Advancement. He also served as the school's varsity basketball coach from 2007-2011, earning CIF-SS Division V coach of the year in 2010. During his tenure as Head of School, Randy has been recognized for his leadership in the areas of international fundraising and has presented a number of times on this topic.

In addition to his presentations on fundraising, other topics have included the Head of School's Role in the Admissions Process, Integration and Immersion of International Students at Boarding Schools in the United States, and Perceptions of Independent School Leaders in California: Global Issues.

## ABSTRACT

This study identified the self-perceived leadership practices of heads of schools in California independent schools as determined by the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI). Quantitative analysis was used to determine the extent of endorsement of statements on each of the five leadership practices, which comprise the LPI subscales. Small but statistically significant differences were found in the means for the subscales, with enable others to act having the highest mean rating, and model the way having the second highest. The scores of the respondents for the present study were compared to scores from a recent study of California public school principals. Small but statistically significant differences were found between the means of the two groups. The author discusses implications of the study and makes recommendations for practical applications for leadership training, hiring, and promotion of independent schools.

## Chapter 1: Introduction and Background

Often times, when analyzing organizations, researchers naturally look at the leader of the organization when evaluating it. According to Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee (2002), "Great leaders move us. They ignite our passions and inspire the best in us" (p. 3). This function is of critical importance in both (a) moving organizations forward as leaders look at the organization they are leading and (b) moving others, not only towards what the organization is and represents, but also towards a defined belief in what the future can hold for each person in their community. Kouzes and Posner (2007) called this facet of leadership the ability to "inspire a shared vision" (p. 14).

The component for this practice of leadership is vision. Kaplan (2011) suggested that a vision should be fundamentally based on a careful analysis and identification of what an organization is best at, and these practices are typically decided by and ultimately communicated by the organization's leader. Leadership is therefore important because, when it is done well, as suggested by these researchers, what is happening is planning for and acting towards a future goal of inspiration towards improvement and greatness. According to Hoerr (2009), the diverse position that heads of schools hold dictates this:

School heads are responsible for curriculum, instruction, and professional development to be sure, but that is just the beginning. They are also routinely involved in issues of finance, buildings and grounds, diversity, athletics, health and safety, financial aid, marketing, development, supervision, community outreach, legal matters, and human resources. (pp. 5-6)

Additionally, independent schools are facing an economic outlook where the economy is recovering at a slower rate than expected and "the cost of education is increasing and families are evaluating their spending and saving priorities" (National Association of Independent Schools [NAIS], 2012b, p. 2). Because of this, solid vision planning becomes even more relevant for independent schools as families may not choose to enroll their children in independent schools due to the financial burden it may bring.

According to NAIS (2012a), "The primary responsibility of the head of school is to carry out the school's stated mission" (p. 18). Heads of schools provide the leadership their schools need to grow, to improve, and most importantly to serve the students who enroll today, while planning to ensure the school is ready for the students of tomorrow. Although the research regarding heads of schools is limited, the NAIS has done a few studies, with the most recent being from 2009.

In that 2009 study, Booth and Torres (2010) found that 36.8% of heads of schools that responded planned to retire within the next 5 years, and an additional 31.6% heads of

schools planned to retire in the next 6 to 10 years. Many member schools of NAIS are the most successful private and independent schools in the world (NAIS, 2012b). Many of these schools have thriving enrollments and endowments that range from a few million to hundreds of millions of dollars. This generation of leaders has taken their schools to a place of success; however, where will the next generation of leaders come from, and what attributes will they need to possess?

The same study (Booth & Torres, 2010) stated that most independent school heads have come from the independent school world, having spent 25 years on average in independent schools before becoming heads. Their roles in these schools have differed greatly as they have worked as teachers and administrators in various departments and disciplines. Add to that the diverse educational background found in the study among heads of schools. Booth and Torres also revealed the following:

Most heads have a graduate degree in education: 41% have a master's in education and 11% a doctorate in education. A large number, 51% reported a master of arts or a master of science degree and 12% reported having a doctorate in philosophy. (para. 8)

With such diverse backgrounds and skill sets, heads of schools often times learn the attributes that they need to possess while on the job or while working alongside a head of school who may be interested in developing future leaders. National and regional organizations offer training for school

heads at conferences and professional development events. These events are important because they are often based on qualitative data and case studies from a head of school's own experience or from a collection of many experiences that can possibly prepare the school leader for situations they may face in the future. Reflecting on this environment of leadership and professional development, this researcher would like to answer the questions of what attributes the next generation of independent school leaders need to possess to continue to lead independent schools towards increased student achievement (Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003), teacher effectiveness (Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008), and financial sustainability. Although the present study focuses on leadership practices, as these behaviors become habits, they become indistinguishable from leadership attributes.

In order to develop good leaders, it is important to understand current leadership practices of individuals who are currently heads of schools. This can be the foundation for training in the future or as examples for new heads of schools to look upon for professional development and insight into this complex job. Understanding current leadership practices can also identify trends that may need to be corrected or highlighted throughout the profession. Therefore, an



examination of current leadership practices of heads of schools is useful to continually improve independent schools.

### **Problem Statement**

The problem addressed in this paper is that the development of leaders in independent schools can vary greatly. Because independent schools are diverse in terms of size, grade levels offered, and availability of resources, it can be difficult to establish generally accepted attributes of leadership among these professionals. Because different schools may represent a range of challenges, the background and experience that their leaders possess may be an appropriate fit for one independent school, while another necessitates a head of school with a completely different set of experiences. Therefore, each unique school requires its own type of leader based upon the professional demands of the institution.

It is known from the author's own experience as a head of school that many heads of schools may not receive formal leadership skills training through their own schools or the various associations that each leader's school may belong to. This may be because of a lack of resources, time, or perceived need by the head of school or his or her board of trustees. What does occur, as mentioned earlier, is that individuals who have had experience and careers in independent schools are often promoted to the role of head of school in the latter parts of

their career. They are seen as individuals who have lived and worked in independent schools, have been successful, and are now capable of leading them. Because of this, heads of schools are gaining leadership skills from their own mistakes throughout the years and from observing others.

According to Mendels (2012), schools and even school districts can benefit from strong professional development given to the leaders of schools. Often leadership development in independent schools could improve employee and student engagement, which could result in an increase in the performance of the school as a whole. Certainly, the possibilities for improved success are many. This researcher proposes that an examination of leadership practices among current heads of schools is critical in determining and understanding the manner in which a head of school would optimally conduct himself or herself to lead their individual school to success. This information can then become the foundation upon which to build future professional development.

### **Importance of the Study**

Today is a turbulent time for education in the United States. More than ever, students are suffering due to politics and failed educational policy. As a result, particularly those schools in the public sector are suffering the results of hotly debated educational policies. On the other side of the

spectrum, independent schools are fighting for affordability, diversity, and relevance among the other options from which students have to choose. With online public school options, charter schools, parochial schools, and homeschool options, competition is increasing at an alarming rate among independent schools as a small yet successful portion of the education profession in the United States.

What both of these sectors require is strong leadership. Principals in the public schools and heads of schools in independent schools need more than ever the capacity to lead their schools toward a place of success. This success is of course based ultimately on student learning; however, other common desirable achievements among these professionals include creating the right school climate, motivating employees and students, and inspiring a vision of the future. The leadership practices that these educational leaders need to have in order to have the best chance for success is an area worth research and study.

This study presents a foundation for future study on the leadership practices of independent schools. Although research has been conducted on the importance of public school leaders, by comparison, very little has been done on the leaders of independent schools. This study is particularly important to the growth and future development of independent school leaders,

as it draws on the experiences of those who currently lead these institutions. With this self-awareness, leaders of these educational institutions may be able to better lead their organizations toward the goals that bring each of their individual schools to a place of increasing success.

In addition, this study is significant for the leader of any organization. The communities that exist in any organization can be delicate ecosystems. Operating within these environments with the goals of motivation towards a shared vision of the future can be sometimes difficult. Because of this, this researcher believes that some leadership lessons can be learned from the examination of any profession. Leadership is critical in any organization, and studying the behaviors of these individuals can provide valuable data.

### **Leadership Practices Inventory**

In order to examine the leadership practices of heads of schools, this study will employ the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI).

Over three million people have used the LPI as a first step to reaching their personal leadership best--a clear indication that leadership is a practice that can be learned by anyone, not an inborn skill for the lucky few. (Leadership Challenge, n.d., para. 1)

Kouzes and Posner (2007) developed the LPI based on 30 years of original research and qualitative data. The five practices of exemplary leadership are: (a) model the way, (b) inspire a

shared vision, (c) challenge the process, (d) enable others to act, and (e) encourage the heart. In this study, the LPI will help identify which of the five practices are most important for an independent school leader as well as which are least important. These leadership practices could be used in the future implementation and design of professional development for independent school leaders.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this study was to identify the self-perceived leadership practices of heads of school in California independent schools as determined by the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI).

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided this study:

**RQ 1.** According to the heads of schools' self-report on the LPI, what is the frequency of application for each of the five leadership practices in the leadership of independent schools? This question was answered by descriptive statistics of the LPI scores.

**RQ 2.** Do the LPI subscale means from the sample group differ significantly from the LPI subscale means from a comparison group of public school principals? This question was answered by statistical comparison of this sample with a sample

from a prior-published study providing data on public school principal LPI scores.

### **Definition of Terms**

This section provides definitions for terms that are used throughout this study. These are presented below to provide clear definitions so that the misunderstandings are limited. The terms defined below are provided at the prerogative of the researcher. Terms used throughout the study are as follows:

- **Boarding school:** A school in which the students and most or all of the teachers live on the grounds of the school. Most of these schools in the United States are independent schools. This term refers to a traditional boarding school with a college preparatory curriculum.
- **California Association of Independent Schools (CAIS):**

CAIS is an organization of approximately 200 elementary, middle, and secondary schools in California. The association serves and strengthens its schools by setting standards of academic quality and ethical conduct facilitating the professional growth of faculty, administrators, and trustees, promoting ethnic and socio-economic diversity (CAIS, n.d.a, para. 1)
- **Co-ed schools:** Schools that enroll both boys and girls.
- **Day school:** A school in which students live at home and attend school during the daytime. This term is typically used to describe independent schools that are not boarding; however, public schools are all technically day schools.

For the purpose of this study, *day school* refers to an independent school without a residential program.

- **Head of school:** Originally from the British system of schools meaning *head teacher*, this role has taken on many different titles including *headmaster* and or *headmistress*. The current politically correct term in the United States for the chief executive officer of an independent school is most commonly *head of school*. Of independent schools, a minority uses the term *president*; however, for the purposes of this study, the more common term *head of school* is used.
- **Independent school:** Independent schools are non-profit private schools that are self-determining in mission and program. They are governed by independent boards and are funded primarily through tuition, charitable contribution, and endowment income (National Association of Independent Schools [NAIS], n.d.a).
- **International school:** A school that is international in its make-up, meaning it has representatives from many countries in its student body and faculty. Most boarding schools in the United States are also international schools. This term can also refer to American schools that are in other countries (i.e., international locations).
- **Institutional Review Board (IRB):** A committee designed to review, monitor, and approve research done on humans.

- Leadership: "The ability to influence a group toward the achievement of a vision or a set of goals" (Robbins & Judge, 2010, p. 376).
- Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI): The LPI is a 30-statement questionnaire that takes 20-30 minutes to complete. Many studies have used the LPI to investigate exemplary leadership practices, which are: (a) model the way, (b) inspire a shared vision, (c) challenge the process, (d) enable others, and (e) encourage others. Kouzes and Posner (2007) developed the LPI based on 30 years of original research and qualitative data (Kouzes & Posner, 2007).
- National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS): The NAIS is a nonprofit membership association that provides services to more than 1,700 schools and associations of schools in the United States and abroad, including 1,400 independent private K-12 schools in the United States (NAIS, n.d.a).
- Parochial school: A private school that is typically associated with a church or other religious organization.
- Public school: A school that is supported by revenue from local, state, and federal taxes. For purposes of this study, this term refers to public schools in the United



States. For the purpose of this study Charter Schools are included as public schools because they receive public funding, even though in some respects they have much in common with and sometimes begin as independent schools.

- Quantitative research: Aliaga and Gunderson define quantitative research as “explaining phenomena by collecting numerical data that are analyzed using mathematically based methods (in particular statistics)” (as cited in Muijs, 2011, p. 1).
- Researcher: Randy R. Bertin.
- Single-sex schools: A type of school in which the students are all one gender. These types of schools enroll either all boys or all girls.
- Success: This term can have many meanings, depending on the goals of an institution or individual. In the present study, *success* or *accomplishment* refers at its most basic level to students meeting or exceeding the standards of acceptable academic work in the subjects designated by the school as of primary importance. For the most part, independent schools set their basic standards of acceptable academic work on par with or above the scores of the students’ age group, as measured by nationally standardized tests.

- Therapeutic boarding school: A therapeutic boarding school or residential treatment center (RTC) is typically for students who are dealing with a wide range of issues, which may include anxiety, drugs, and alcohol, dysfunctional families, and many other conditions. These schools do not belong to NAIS or the California Association of Independent Schools (CAIS). They may belong to other organizations such as the National Association for Therapeutic Schools and Programs (NATSAP). Those unfamiliar with boarding schools may not make the distinction between therapeutic and traditional boarding schools.
- Accrediting Commission for Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACS WASC): The ACS WASC, according to their website,

is one of six regional accrediting associations in the United States. The ASC WASC extends its services to over 4,500 public, independent, church-related, and proprietary pre-K-12 and adult schools; works with 16 associations in joint accreditation processes; and collaborates with other educational organizations. The ACS WASC accreditation process fosters excellence in elementary, secondary, and adult education by encouraging school improvement. ACS WASC accreditation recognizes schools that meet an acceptable level of quality, in accordance with established, research-based WASC criteria. (ACS, n.d., para. 1)

**Limitations**

This study has the following limitations:

1. The study is limited to independent school leaders in California. This geographic restriction is only a small representation of independent schools from the United States. Findings will only pertain to those leaders at the independent schools in this region.
2. Researcher bias should be taken into account, as the researcher is the head of an independent school in California. The researcher has personal knowledge of the independent school world, and may perceive the data through that lens.
3. Independent schools are a very small subset of the K-12 education system. Therefore, the results of this study should be applied to public school leaders with caution as the environmental differences between public and independent schools are quite significant and can often times be extreme.
4. The dataset collected was self-reported, and therefore can be biased by the individuals reporting such data.

**Summary**

This chapter introduces the benefit of investigating the leadership practices of independent schools as well as provides some background on why this is important research. This study

utilized the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) as a survey instrument. The researcher decided to use the LPI because it has two decades of proven use (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). The problem statement and research questions are discussed briefly. A definition of terms is provided to eliminate any confusion over the terminology used in this paper. Finally, limitations of the study are discussed and presented in this chapter.

## Chapter 2: Review of Literature

The National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) defined independent schools as follows: "Independent schools are non-profit private schools that are self-determining in mission and program. They are governed by independent school boards and are funded primarily through tuition, charitable contributions, and endowment income" (NAIS, 2012c, p. 2). This independence in mission and program is accredited by state accrediting agencies. For example, independent schools in California have a dual accreditation by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) and the California Association of Independent Schools (CAIS).

"On Saturday, October 5<sup>th</sup>, 1940, Miss Ada Blake, head of Marlborough School in Los Angeles, California, invited a group of people to her school to formally discuss the creation of an organization of 'superior' private schools" (CAIS, n.d.b, para. 1). This group has evolved over time, added to its original mission of maintaining standards without standardization, and since the 1940s, has joined forces with the WASC to accredit its 219 members in the state. These schools represent the highest performing academic institutions in California and are members of an organization called the California Association of Independent Schools.

Research and observations indicate that autonomy is the key to school success, as it allows decision making to occur closer to the classroom and gives schools the freedom to be innovative ("Autonomy," 2008; Bagehot, 2012). In order for independent schools to maintain their independence and to allow them to continue being successful and innovative, the leaders of these institutions must be effective in the stewardship of these organizations.

### **Independent School History**

Private schools in the United States were the first schools established, and many were connected to religions and located on church property. Over the years, public schools were created, and many of the private schools lost their connections to the original groups that founded them. This was particularly the case among schools founded by protestant groups. Since Massachusetts was the first colony to pass a law regarding the need for educating children, most of these early schools began in the New England area.

As schooling has continued to evolve, most of the private schools that were no longer affiliated with religious groups or institutions began to refer to themselves as independent schools. Other institutions were founded simply as private schools with a specific constituency and have evolved into independent schools as well. Whatever track the institution has

taken, the end result is that an independent school is independent in its finances and government and does not depend on funding from the state or national governments. A board of trustees that is also independent governs them. This board of trustees is ultimately the group that is financially responsible for the institution and has the duty of hiring and evaluating a head of school. This head of school manages the day-to-day operations of the institution.

Because these institutions are self-sufficient and self-governing, the head of school has the ability to decide what expectations the school has, not only for its students but also for teachers and other employees. The head of school also sets expectations and goals in all other parts of school life including admissions, fund-raising, buildings and physical structure, and finance. Therefore, the leadership style and abilities of an independent school head can affect every department and employee at these institutions. Because of this, the review of literature focuses on the traits and behaviors that school leaders have shown over time that have positive impacts on their schools.

The organization of this review will follow the "Five Practices of Exemplary Leaders" (p. 1) as suggested by Kouzes and Posner (2002). These five practices of exemplary leadership are (a) model the way, (b) inspire a shared vision, (c)

challenge the process, (d) enable others to act, and (e) encourage the heart. The impact of school leaders as instructional leaders was reviewed, as were traditional theories of leadership. It is the hope of this researcher that such a review will provide a thorough examination of the literature on educational leadership to show the importance of the five practices of exemplary leaders as they relate to school leaders who were respondents in this present study.

### **The Head of School**

With its name coming from head teacher in the system of the United Kingdom, the head of school at independent schools in the United States today has a very complex, multi-faceted, and hopefully rewarding job. Unlike their public school counterparts (principals), the head of school has to work to not only lead the academic portion of the school, but must also be intimately involved in admissions, fund-raising, physical building management, board issues, financial aid, and much more. The job is all encompassing and involves any issue that can be presented to the school or organization.

The NAIS (2012a) offered principles of good practice (PGP) for these individuals. These principles of good practice are a general guide to independent school leaders for the interactions they have on a daily basis in the communities that they lead. The principles are as follows:



1. The head works in partnership with the board of trustees to establish and refine the school's mission; articulates the mission to all constituencies--students, faculty and staff, parents, alumni, and the community; and supports the mission in working with all constituencies.
2. The head oversees the shaping of the school's program and the quality of life in the school community.
3. The head establishes an effective manner of leadership and appropriately involves members of the administration and faculty in decision-making.
4. The head is responsible for attracting, retaining, developing, and evaluating qualified faculty and staff.
5. The head is accessible, within reason, and communicates effectively with all constituencies.
6. The head is responsible for financial management, maintenance of the physical plant, strategic planning, and fund raising.
7. The head ensures that every element of school life reflects the principles of equity, justice, and the dignity of each individual.
8. The head is alert to his or her role within the broader networks of schools, school leaders, and the community.
9. The head cooperates with heads of other independent schools to ensure that the principles of good practice of all school operations, especially those of admission, marketing, faculty recruitment, and fund raising, demonstrate integrity at all levels of the school. (p. 18)

Reviewing these numbered principles gives the impression that a head of school's position exists on many different levels of the school community. Because of their work in every facet of the school, the impact of their leadership touches every dimension of the school's staff and programs. Therefore, the behavior of this individual as a leader is critical to a school's performance.

## **Educational Leadership**

Much of the focus on educational leadership literature is on the leader or principal of the school and that individual's impact on improving the school or turning it around (Sheppard, 2013). Leithwood and Strauss (2009) proposed that "efforts to better understand the nature of successful school turnaround process would do well to begin with a focus on successful school turnaround leadership" (p. 27). The leader of a school often times has an impactful and intangible effect on the instruction given at the school, morale of faculty and staff, and the overall climate and culture of the institution.

How the effect of that leadership is felt in the different dimensions and aspects of the school community and among its constituents is an area for continued exploration and research. However, Webster (1995) offered, "Most principals had a clear purpose, expressed in terms of goals" (p. 12). Principals are leaders who are "committed to doing a good job" (Webster, 1995, p. 15); yet, what behaviors the principal needs to possess and how those behaviors are acted upon remains the subject of continued research.

Long-time independent school head, John Suito (2009) wrote, "If your story is appropriate, right, and fine, positive results will follow, be they in fundraising, good-faculty, supportive board, a positive school culture" (p. 15).

Independent school heads do have a somewhat different set of responsibilities than that of public school principals.

However, the similarities are many, as they both manage the day-to-day operations of the school and set the tone for the climate and culture of the institution and its community. Additionally, it is this tremendous impact on the school that has led to research showing that effective educational leadership has positive results both on school climate (Kelly, Thornton, & Daugherty, 2005; Sergiovanni, 2009) and student performance (Fullan, 2002; Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 1999; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010).

It is for this reason that the role of a school leader is central and critical to the overall performance of the school at which they are employed. Because schools are very complex and delicate organizations, the principal or head of school must be consistently focused on how they are leading. Attributes or behaviors must be considered in almost every interaction as the leader of a school must create and sustain relationships with faculty (Harris, 2007), while also being aware of the impressions they are making among their pupils, colleagues, board of trustees, superintendents (in public schools), and administrative assistants (Wolcott, 2003). Certainly, this is a

multi-faceted position that requires close attention to many different levels of interaction and behavior.

### **Model the Way**

Kouzes and Posner (2007) defined "model the way" (p. 15) as an attribute that is all about behavior. This attribute focuses on values and ideals; otherwise stated, "Leaders must forge agreement around common principles and common ideals" (p. 15). In this section ethical leadership, trust, and mentoring are explored as critical components of this attribute in the realm of educational leaders. "Modeling the way is about earning the right and respect to lead through direct involvement and action" (Kouzes & Posner, 2007, p. 15). It is in these behaviors that the head of school or principal finds their voice and sets the example for the rest of the organization.

**Educational leadership and ethics.** The financial side of a school is similar to any business and requires an awareness and acknowledgement of ethics as the foundation for a leader's success. Thiroux and Krasemann (2012) noted, "Business ethics has to do with the establishment and maintenance of vital and significant relationships among human beings" (p. 323). In the case of schools, stakeholders are trustees, faculty, staff, administrators, students, parents, and alumni as well as any candidates for admissions, employment, and potential philanthropists. Relationships are at the core of a head of

school's day-to-day job activities, and therefore this leader "must balance two imperatives: real business results and core human values" (Thiroux & Krasemann, 2012, p. 322).

According to Robbins and Judge (2010), when a high ethical standard is present in organizations, the culture that tends to form is one that tolerates high-risk, low to moderate aggressiveness, and expects fair means as well as outcomes. Robbins and Judge (2010) also suggested that managers in ethical organizations are supported for not only what goals are achieved but also, and more importantly, how they are achieved. All schools are essentially doing the same thing; however, the challenge of the school leaders is to think differently about the experience students have (Gallo, 2011). High ethical standards give rise to this type of culture (Robbins & Judge, 2010).

Cichucki (2005) wrote, "One of our jobs as leaders of our schools is to be role models of ethical and moral behavior" (p. 12). This behavior is extremely important, as the head of school and principal are both very visible people at their individual schools. Their daily decisions are the subject of criticism by not only students and teachers but also by the larger community (town or city), parents, board of trustees, superintendents, alumni, and others. The leader of the school cannot expect those that they are leading to act in an ethical

and moral way, unless they are modeling those individual values themselves through the daily decisions and actions.

Cichucki (2005) expanded on his comment, "We must also work with our school communities to create policies and curricula that support ethical and moral development" (p. 12). That sentiment is also echoed by Haynes (2009) when he wrote, "Education's highest aim is to create moral and civic habits of the heart" (p. 6). This goal needs to be initiated by the leader of the school who must make these values a central part of their leadership. As Kouzes and Posner (2007) wrote, "It is one thing to expect that leaders are clear about their values and beliefs, but it is another to prove that it really matters if they are" (p. 54). This reinforces the need for school leaders to be thoughtful in their behaviors and actions, as students and teachers cannot be expected to act in a moral and ethical way until their leaders are modeling this behavior first.

**Educational leadership and mentoring.** When considering the values important to educational leaders, the development of future leaders is critical. This value allows for the development of future leaders in our educational institutions. More than 500 colleges and universities offer programs in school leadership (Glasman & Glasman, 1997). These programs differ tremendously in terms of what degrees (e.g., MA, MS, MEd) are

offered as well as if administrative credentials are attained. Different areas of focus are also offered with choices ranging from independent school leadership, to student counseling, to curriculum and staff development.

Informal training of school leaders can come through mentoring by the leader of a school to a teacher or other administrator. These relationships are valuable and are often the basis for the modeling behavior, albeit, in a much more intimate and personal setting. In these relationships, "leaders engage others in conversations that ignite self-reflection and sense-making" (Goslin, 2012, p. 43). In these mentoring relationships, leaders are able to model their behavior to others who are interested in becoming educational leaders as well.

Current principals or heads of school model this behavior themselves by employing an executive coach. In this case, the school leader is the mentee to someone from outside of the institution, usually from a private consulting firm. Grace (2005) wrote, "Successful heads must nurture new, collaborative, leadership structures involving faculty/staff, partly to retain those who will carry out the mission most effectively" (p. 59). Others heads have chosen to use an executive coach to "model learning leadership behavior" (Grace, 2005, p. 60). This is an effective way for school leaders to model the behavior of

receiving feedback about their behavior and actions, and can possibly help teachers feel more comfortable about receiving feedback, as they know that their leader values feedback and is willing to receive it as well.

Mentorship appears to be a critical value that school leaders possess. This can happen formally by encouraging teachers to attend college and university training programs or informally through relationships between the leader and teachers at the school.

### **Inspire a Shared Vision**

Inspiring a shared vision is being able to communicate to those in your organization a picture about what the future could be. "Every organization, every social movement, begins with a dream. The dream or vision is the force that invents the future" (Kouzes & Posner, 2007, p. 16). Vision refers to a picture of the future with commentary on why people should strive for that future, and is the central component of great leadership (Kotter, 2012). A good vision serves three important purposes: It (a) clarifies the general direction for change, (b) motivates people to take action in the right direction, even if that is initially painful, and (c) coordinates the actions of different people in an efficient way (Kotter, 2012). Vision can also help the various school offices identify projects and



initiatives that are in line with the vision and avoid those that are not, enabling them to focus their activities.

**Educational leadership and vision.** One head of school recently stated the importance of vision in being the leader of a school community:

Vision. You have to be able to see your community not only for what it is, but also for what it could be. Then you have to be able to put the people and planning in place to help it get there. Ultimately, our schools need leaders who are as forward thinking and ambitious as their students. It takes a lot of resolve to advance an educational institution, so a combination of passion, perspective, and productive patience is absolutely necessary. (Bertin, 2014, p. 188)

Additionally a number of other studies have shown the need for vision as an attribute of successful school leaders (Eacott, 2010; Elmore, 2000; Murphy & Torres, 2014; Shannon, 2011; Stueber, 2000; Terry, 1999). According to Senge (2006) "building a shared vision" (p. 9) is one of the five essential components of learning organizations. Clearly, having a shared vision that others will follow is a critical attribute for successful leadership in schools today. What is even more compelling is that others outside the school arena also encourage vision as a key component of leadership (Kaplan, 2011). Murphy and Torres (2014) list mission, goals, and expectations as three critical components of vision in schools.

**Educational leadership and mission.** Although a glance at the mission statement from different schools may look very

similar, some principals report that they use these statements in everyday tasks of their day-to-day management of the school (Fayad & Yoshida, 2014.) Other research has shown that the mission is only relevant when made operational (Conklin-Spillan, 2014). In other words, these statements are most effective when they are related to markers for student and school success.

The problem is, as alluded to before, many of these mission statements are not very different among schools. In a study by Meacham and Gaff (2006), the mission statements from 312 educational institutions were examined to determine if any direction was given for goals and or vision of the schools' future. The results provided very little in terms of concrete advice for how to fulfill the so-called mission of these individual schools (Meacham & Gaff, 2006). Additional doubt to the need and effectiveness of the mission statement is given by Gow (2009):

Many of today's school mission statements are so general and so alike that they fail to differentiate themselves and the schools they represent, reducing even the most noble of aspirations to banalities. Speakers from psychologist Rob Evans to messaging guru Dan Heath can raise uneasy laughs by skewering the hollowness of the documents purported to be credos, even manifestos, for our schools. (para. 2)

Educational leaders should proceed with caution, and form mission statements that are riddled with practicality and goals towards obtaining the vision.

**Educational leadership and goals.** In order to create or reach a vision, one must have goals that allow an organization to follow a path towards realizing that vision. In this way, following a vision is also taking a school or organization through change. According to Kotter (2012) these goals must be short-term to create excitement about the change, and long-term for those goals that are more comprehensive. All the while, the behaviors that allow these changes to happen need to be anchored in the culture of the school to support that vision (Kotter, 2012).

According to Murphy and Torres (2014), "goals that function well can be identified as critical markers" (p. 3). This is similar to the short-term and long-term goals outlined by Kotter (2012). In the realm of schools, it could include areas such as student learning, facilities improvement, faculty development, pedagogy, and fundraising, among others.

How school leaders identify these goals is critical, as they must be rooted in the shared values of the community and be integral to the mission of the organization. The research also tells us that the "goals found in productive schools are challenging, but achievable" (Murphy & Torres, 2014, p. 3).

Ultimately, those in the school community must accept these goals as part of the vision. As Kouzes and Posner (2007) wrote, "People will not follow until they accept a vision as their own.

Leaders cannot command commitment, only inspire it" (p. 17). Having clearly laid out goals to reach the destination set forth by an inspiring vision is a clear way to have others get on board with that vision.

**Educational leadership and expectations.** Once the vision has been established, and goals created, the leader can have expectations to achieve these goals because the vision is the shared work of the community based on values of the organization. It has been noted that although a teachers' first reason for being committed to their profession and their school is for a care of children and the future, another reason for commitment is a belief in an ideal vision, with expectations that they are a part of accomplishing that vision (Day, Elliott & Kington, 2005). Additionally, expectations that allow for goals to be fulfilled--when they are in relation to the vision and professional learning--are central to a school's improvement (Murphy, 2013).

In terms of academic expectations, studies have consistently shown that schools that have a higher level of expectations academically tend to produce better outcomes and are overall more effective as institutions of learning (Bryk, 2010). Bryk (2010) also found that leadership drives the change that is needed in schools: "In the process, principals cultivate a growing cadre of leaders (teachers, parents, and community

members) who can help expand the reach of this work and share overall responsibility for improvement" (p. 25).

Expectations can have effects on forming the culture that is needed for a vision to come to fruition. These expectations can help create organizational scholarship at the school and infuse it into the overall climate that is felt by members of the community (Hallinger & Heck, 1996). Leithwood et al. (1999) wrote that the expectations of a leader could strengthen a school's culture by, "clarifying the school's vision in relation to collaborative work and the care and respect with which students were to be treated" (p. 83).

The same can be said for expectations of teachers, as the authors noted, "High expectations also were manifest in the principals' expectation that teachers themselves would follow through on issues considered to be mutually important" (Leithwood et al., 1999, p. 69). These expectations will motivate the faculty at the school and help them see the ambitious nature of the vision that they are a part of (Leithwood et al., 1999). Lastly, when these expectations are communicated in a proper manner, teachers are more likely to consider them feasible and attainable (Leithwood et al., 1999).

Setting expectations among the employees at the school is critical for the vision to be realized and for the leader to inspire engagement from the constituencies of the school toward

that vision. The vision must have meaning for the faculty and staff. The meaning must be born from the development of the vision based on shared values. Then it is the leader's job to communicate and share that vision in a way that inspires action toward goals, both short-term and long term, which will then help to develop new behaviors in the culture for the long-term. Those new behaviors that will result from both short and long term gains will be reached by continued expectations of the educational leader to reach the vision. The educational leader should not allow these expectations to be limited to teachers and students. High expectations toward the accomplishment of a vision must be extended beyond those who are present at school on a daily basis and should include the community, alumni, parents, and non-profit agencies (Stone-Johnson, 2014). Then the vision is not only shared with immediate stakeholders in the school community, but also with the extended school community as well. This extension brings even more partnership to a shared vision.

### **Challenge the Process**

Kouzes and Posner (2007) wrote about *challenge the process* as an attribute that is about challenge, innovation, cutting-edge practices, taking initiative, and changing the status quo. This attribute looks at leaders who are both constantly striving for improvement and seeking new and better ways to get the job

done (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). Elmore (2000) stated, "Effective leaders help everyone overcome difficult challenges to achieve excellence for all students" (p. 291). Kouzes and Posner also wrote about leaders in this area who experiment and take risks. The leaders who show this attribute are not afraid of mistakes, but seem to see them as learning opportunities and growth potential. Henry Ford (n.d.) stated that, "Failure is simply the opportunity to begin again, this time more intelligently" (para. 1). Leaders who embrace this mantra are described in this section. As Kouzes and Posner (2007) wrote,

It would be ridiculous to assert that those who fail over and over again eventually succeed as leaders. Success in any endeavor isn't a process of simply buying enough lottery tickets. The key that unlocks the door to opportunity is learning. (pp. 19-20)

The other attribute associated with *challenge the process* is enthusiasm. Kouzes and Posner's (2007) research showed that leaders who exhibit this practice have an excitement that is contagious and spreads throughout the organization. In this subsection, innovation, change, and enthusiasm are investigated as facets of educational leadership.

**Educational leadership and innovation.** When thinking of innovation, many people automatically think of forward thinkers such as Steve Jobs. Jobs was certainly innovative, but his style of leadership was certainly one that we do not see in schools. Jobs was looking constantly at the bottom-line, while

in education we are modeling behaviors that should take place with respect, trust, and care (Hoerr, 2012). As Hoerr (2012) stated, "We want our students to learn scholastic skills, but we also want them to become good people, responsible citizens, and value others" (p. 84).

Much has been written about innovation in education regarding the need to make schools ready for the 21st century (Amirault, 2012; Boyer & Crippen 2014; Helm, Turckes, & Hinton, 2010; Thomas, 1992; Witt, 2009). Brown (2014) wrote,

It appears that exemplar schools are fueled by five interacting ingredients that represent the essential conditions for transformation into a 21st century school--one that prepares students for college, career, and citizenship. (p. 38)

Innovation in this area requires engagement by the greater community of parents, teachers, students, teachers, and leadership of the school toward common goals (Brown, 2014).

Innovation is risk-taking, and many leaders in schools may be hesitant to take such risks when students and parents are watching. As Perkins and Reese (2014) stated, "Innovation is always a chancy enterprise, and all schools, principals, faculties, and communities come with their own individual circumstances" (p. 47). Every individual school leader must assess the environment they are in and carefully weigh how they will pursue innovative practices. No matter how the innovation is carried out, it must include conversations about frameworks,



leadership, community, and institutionalization (Perkins & Reese, 2014). With innovation comes change, as Moreno, Luria, and Mojkowski (2013) wrote, "Innovating requires that principals and teachers take on the demanding leadership role of internal change agents" (p. 10). The following section will explore that change in schools and the leadership support of that change.

**Educational leadership and change.** Establishing an urgent and compelling need for change and communicating that need, thereby creating a sense of urgency, is foundational to change (Kotter, 2012). "Establishing a sense of urgency is crucial to gaining needed cooperation" (Kotter, 2012, p. 37). Kotter argued that without this sense of urgency, complacency would be high. When this occurs, it is difficult to establish change because too few people are interested in working on the issue. *Change in schools* can be defined as, "the outcome of the social and political forces calling for school improvement to increase learning for all students regardless of race, ethnicity, or economic status" (Madsen, Schroeder & Irby, 2014, p. 23).

The need for educational leaders to be change agents is evident in everyday news, as we hear the latest fad in education come and go. Heads of schools and principals must look at their own environments and communicate to the school community that there is indeed a crisis and urgent need for change (Zimmerman, 2003). These leaders need to create this urgency as a first

step for change (Kotter, 2012). Leaders need to proceed with caution, however. Because of short-term programs such as "No Child Left Behind" or the most recent "Common Core," teachers are skeptical of change (Wagner, 1995). Principals and heads of schools should keep this in mind when initiating change, particularly when an out-of-touch bureaucracy or governmental agency dictates that change. It may be difficult to create urgency around such types of change, when the change is not coming from the leader supported by shared values of the school population. This is where independent schools have the advantage.

Independent schools have substantial freedom and independence, both in their programmatic and financial decisions. As such, independent schools differ in their missions that identify both what they are and what they hope to become. They are not tied to governmental agencies or out-of-touch politicians. Many times, they have the authority and freedom to initiate change. If we consider innovation and Pink's (2009) description of an organization or individual that has autonomy, mastery, and purpose, independent schools are certainly more able to be innovative than their public school counterparts. However, leaders of both should understand that urgency is the beginning of change, and as the leader of the organization, communicating that urgency starts with them.

**Educational leadership and enthusiasm.** A recent study on teacher attrition stated, "After their first year, more than 18% of science teachers left, 14.5% of mathematics teachers left, and 12.3% of other teachers did so [left the profession]" (Ingersoll, Merrill & May, 2012, p. 32). Given this, one may consider that enthusiasm among teachers is at an all time low, at least for 12 to 18% of the profession. Chen (2007) defined work enthusiasm in this way: "Work enthusiasm means the degree of employee involvement in and effort expended on the job" (p. 20). Chen (2007) continued to write that,

Correlation analyses show that teachers' overall work satisfaction and the degree of satisfaction with leadership and administration, student quality, social status, income and welfare, social acknowledgment, and working conditions clearly have positive relations with work involvement. (p. 24)

This points again in the direction of the leader as the one who can generate enthusiasm and positive work involvement or, taken a step further, engagement. Fullan (2002) noted that principals who are able to change school cultures display the traits of hope, energy, and enthusiasm. This helps to improve and forge relationships, as the energy surrounding such a leader would be mostly positive. That leads to engagement.

When teachers engage, they rise to the expectation levels that are put upon them by school leaders (Hale & Rollins, 2006).

This enthusiasm can be contagious, and can sometimes lead to increases in performance. Hale and Rollins (2006) wrote,

Principals' inspiration and enthusiasm convinced reluctant teachers and students that all students could achieve to high standards. And they persuaded parents and entire communities that higher expectations were in everyone's best interest. They did this because in their hearts, they knew it was the right thing to do. (p. 9)

Enthusiasm can help to challenge the process, as the above illustrates that the concept of all students achieving high standards means absolutely pushing the status quo. It is innovative and pushes teachers and students past their typical expectations.

Once teachers are engaged, one could expect that students will also be more likely to be engaged. Marzano (2013) wrote,

Teachers can also indirectly communicate the importance of content through their enthusiasm. If the teacher is genuinely excited about content, the tacit message to students is that it contains useful information. Teachers can also share their excitement by recounting how they became interested in the content when they were students themselves. (p. 82)

Enthusiasm can have a multitude of effects on those in a school community and may increase the level of engagement by both the faculty and students. This occurs by the leader being positive, hopeful, and full of energy. This will produce better feelings about the work being done and its importance to the leader. Such feelings may then become contagious, allowing the mood to spread throughout the organization. Kouzes and Posner (2007),

in a story about this, noted, "Well, Claire is excited about it, so I'm going to get excited about it. She believes in it and thinks it is going to be great--well I think it is going to be great" (p. 13).

### **Enable Others to Act**

The leader of any organization, no matter how talented, cannot do the work that is needed to move the organization forward without the efforts of a team. In this attitude, the leader must *enable others to act* (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). Kouzes and Posner stated, "Grand dreams do not become significant realities through the actions of a single person. It requires a team effort" (p. 20). For this team effort to occur, the leaders must allow for the team to work and succeed towards realizing the vision. In this section, a focus is on employee motivation, collaboration, relationships, and accountability.

**Motivation.** Robbins and Judge (2010) defined motivation as "the processes that account for an individual's intensity, direction, persistence, and effort toward attaining a goal" (p. 204). All of these attributes should be present among the faculty and staff at a school in order to have success. Intensity describes how hard a person tries, and this is the element most individuals focus on when thinking about motivation (Robbins & Judge, 2010). However, it must be remembered that

intensity needs to be channeled in a *direction* that most benefits the organization (Robbins & Judge, 2010). The final piece, *persistence*, is a measure of how long a person can maintain their efforts (Robbins & Judge, 2010). Intuitively, when looking at this definition, one can come to the conclusion that motivated individuals can direct their tasks with an intensity that most benefits the organization over a long enough period of time to get results.

Pink (2009) suggested that the way to achieve motivation might be counterintuitive, as there is a gap between what science knows and what business does. Pink proposed an approach to achieve motivation that is made up of three elements: autonomy, mastery, and purpose. He proposed that it is human nature to crave autonomy and that people are motivated when they are able to direct their own lives. Mastery is defined as the pursuit of getting better and better at something that matters, and purpose as the yearning to something that is larger than ourselves and for the service of others, a common purpose (Pink, 2009). Regarding purpose and motivation, Sergiovanni (2009) wrote, "What is rewarding gets done, gets done well, and gets done without close supervision or controls" (p. 98). Losing that close supervision brings in the autonomy that Pink (2009) proposed. Tying in both of these definitions can certainly be used to motivate teachers and students towards a change.

Initial steps by a leader could be to give departments in various areas the autonomy to meet the objectives of the vision with strategies and short-term wins determined by each department or functional area. This type of motivation in organizations is a fit for schools, as Coggins and Diffenbaugh (2013) wrote,

We need a new framework that is backed by emerging evidence on the factors that increase motivation and performance. Pink's themes of mastery, purpose, and autonomy provide a good place to begin. (p. 45)

Sergiovanni (1992) echoed that sentiment in regards to teachers as they are driven by what "is right and good and by the norms that emerge by connections with other people" (p. 23).

**Collaboration.** Sergiovanni (2009) wrote, "One of the characteristics of successful schools is their ability to organize around and to effectively use collaborative cultures" (p. 124). Employee collaboration or teamwork would seem to be a basic requirement for any group of people trying to achieve a set number of goals. This is no different in schools, as teacher must collaborate on a daily basis with each other, administrators, students, and parents. School leaders have similar requirements for collaboration as they must interact and work with individuals and teams from these same constituencies. Terry (1999) stated,

Successful leadership is measured by the improvement in the performance of others. Effective and skilled principals

are able to create an atmosphere that breeds successful and motivated teachers. (p. 28)

In order to achieve this environment, collaboration should be central to what is occurring on the campus of the leader's school (Reevy, Chamberlain, & Stein, 2013).

Another area in which educational leaders can collaborate is outside of their school campuses. Collaboration among leaders is a great way to develop professionally, grow as a leader, and improve one's own school. Funk (2013) noted,

The most successful leaders will only continue to grow and develop, once they are on the job, if they have the ongoing opportunity for professional growth through meaningful interaction with experienced mentors. (p. 38)

This collaboration of like-minded professionals from outside of one's school can help a leader to grow professionally, while decreasing the likelihood of "groupthink" (Whyte, 1952, p. 142). This type of sharing among professionals can be valuable to any leader, because those in collaboration know the types of challenges that their peers are facing, many of whom may have had the same experiences before. This can create an environment of growth, learning, and renewed energy.

**Educational leadership and relationships.** If leaders create the environment in which employees can do good work, then the relationships between the leaders and their followers should be healthy and positive in order to achieve that end (McLester, 2014). Once this environment is created, educational leaders



can create other leaders in the organization with whom to collaborate. Kouzes and Posner (2007) wrote, "Through that relationship, leaders turn their constituents into leaders themselves" (p. 21). By doing this, teachers can lead by creating these bonds as "relationships are an important aspect of all interactions" (O'Reilly, Matt, & McCaw, 2014, p. 190). Additionally, relationships influence a person's competence and commitment to a job, and therefore the ability and desire of a faculty member can be affected by their relationship with the principal or head of school (O'Reilly et al., 2014). The same has been examined for the relationship between the superintendents and their school board members. Effective communication between the superintendent and school board members is influenced by the presence of positive and healthy relationships (Eadie, 2012). The relationship of a school board with the community is also important as it helps to keep channels of communication open, and improves the ability to make decisions (Eadie, 2012).

Of course, relationships with educational leaders are not the only way relationships come into play. The same can be said for the nature of relationships in every aspect of a school community, be it between teachers and students, teachers and parents, and students with students, and faculty members with faculty members. As Hoerr (2014) wrote, "Our authority stems

from our relationships with others; they need to know that we're on their side even if they don't always agree with our decisions" (p. 86). All of these interactions are important as they have an effect on the overall commitment to success by the school community.

**Educational leadership and trust.** Prior paragraphs in this section discussed autonomy, collaboration, and relationships as part of the practice *enable others to act*. Each of these requires trust, namely trust to allow others autonomy in their respective duties, while collaboration and positive work relationships require trust that others will do their part ethically and to the best of their ability. Trust goes two ways in leadership: trust in subordinates and a leader's trustworthiness. The LPI reports on trust in subordinates.

"Integrity characterizes leaders who possess the qualities of honesty and trustworthiness" (Northouse, 2010, p. 24). Both of these characteristics are critical for a leader to have credibility within an organization and in their relationships with others. A leader who is viewed as dishonest and therefore unworthy of trust has very little political capital within their organization to get anything done. The challenge in this area is that the school leader needs to maintain balance between being open and candid while being aware of what is appropriate to share in the situations that they face on a day-to-day basis

(Northouse, 2010). Examples of areas that cannot be disclosed are personnel matters. Because of state and federal law, situations dealing with the employment of staff and faculty cannot be disclosed. This can sometimes be difficult in such a closed knit community, such as a school.

Trust is a large component of integrity, and according to Robbins and Judge (2010), it is at the foundation of leadership. It allows a team to accept and commit to its leader's goals and decisions. Trust is the primary attribute associated with leadership (Robbins & Judge, 2010). Robbins and Judge continued to argue that only a trusted leader would be able to get people to reach transformational goals. Working to gain the trust of a school community is often the primary focus of a school leader, as it helps the leader build political capital at the school. In order for school constituents to view the head of school or principal as trustworthy, the individual must possess three characteristics: integrity, benevolence, and ability (Robbins & Judge, 2010).

Other researchers have connected trust and its importance in schools. Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2000) wrote,

What we care about may be things tangible, such as our children or our money, or things intangible, such as democracy or norms of respect and tolerance. Schools look after all of these for our society, and consequently the issue of trust is vital in the study of schools. (p. 548)

Trust in schools starts with the leader of the school. The leader needs to be trusted to not act in a way that satisfies their individual interests over the interests of others. In an educational setting, trust is a value that the leader should value (Bryk, 2010).

In comparison, CEOs are charged to "create organizations that are economically, ethical, and socially sustainable" (O'Toole & Bennis, 2009, p. 56). The same is expected of school leaders, and in addition, schools are charged to do this while being the educational example to a group of students for 40 weeks per year in all of these areas. In the case of boarding schools, this example is 24 hours a day. Of course, leaders have found that "complete transparency is not possible" (O'Toole & Bennis, 2009, p. 60), and the employees, students, and other constituents in schools need to balance this when extending trust to their leader.

**Educational leadership and accountability.** Certainly, the term *accountability* can seem like bit of an oxymoron when it comes to schools, particularly public schools. Stories such as those of *Rubber Rooms* (Brill, 2009) from New York City may lead an observer to think that accountability is nearly impossible in the world of education. In these temporary reassignment centers, teachers who have been disciplined are awaiting an arbitration process regarding the consequences of their

behavior. Until then, they continue to receive a salary, benefits, and pension. Again, this is where independent schools may hold an advantage, as employees are not unionized and do not work for states or municipalities. Instead, they work for individual non-profits who, if operated correctly can reassign or revoke employment of those who are not meeting the expectations set by the vision of the school leader.

The leadership of the principal at a school has a strong impact on the overall effectiveness of the school (Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Robinson, Loyd, & Rowe, 2008). Unfortunately, schools fail to recognize that principal evaluation is a critical step to assessing the performance of the principal, and many fail to conduct this type of assessment on a regular basis (Westberg, Sexton, Mulhern, & Keeling, 2009). At independent schools, boards of trustees are encouraged to conduct evaluations of the head of school. NAIS provided guidelines and recommendations for the boards of trustees at independent schools to evaluate the head (NAIS, n.d.b). Because the leader of an educational institution has tremendous impact on the school, the accountability of that individual is central to making sure that the behaviors of the leader are appropriate and held to the guidelines of the individual evaluation.

Helping others gain confidence in their ability to do their work is done by giving people more choice and holding them

responsible and accountable to those choices (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). However, the other side of the equation, as Kouzes and Posner (2007) pointed out, is that the more people have the freedom to be responsible for their part of the work, the more likely they are to take pride and responsibility for it.

### **Encourage the Heart**

Working towards a vision can be a long and arduous journey. "Leaders *encourage the heart* of their constituents to carry on" (Kouzes & Posner, 2007, p. 22). In this fifth attribute of exemplary leadership, leaders genuinely care and show gratitude to others. Leaders build an organizational culture and climate where appreciation and caring can be paid forward by all within the organization. In this friendly atmosphere of gratitude, leaders can reinforce the values that were used to build the vision and continue to support them through their daily behaviors and interactions. This can help a school build a solid sense of community and identity (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). In this subsection, culture, transformational leadership, and recognition in the context of educational leadership are explored.

**Educational leadership and culture.** "Organizational culture refers to a system of shared meaning held by members that distinguishes the organization from other organizations" (Robbins & Judge, 2010, p. 521). Having a unifying identity to

a culture is important for employees at any organization. It gives people a set of expectations for interactions within an organization and oftentimes makes them proud to be a part of it. Examples of successful businesses with unique cultures are legendary, and names such as Starbucks, Zappos, Saturn, and many others come to mind when thinking about how organizational culture can lead an organization to success. In looking at how leaders can impact the culture at educational institutions, Bolman and Deal (2013) give a succinct perspective on its definition:

Over time an organization develops distinctive beliefs, values, and customs. Managers who understand the significance of symbols and know how to evoke spirit and soul can shape more effective and cohesive organizations, so long as the cultural patterns align with those of the marketplace. (p. 264)

Oftentimes, schools have division among different types of employees in the organization's hierarchy, for example, rifts between faculty and administration can occur (Jones & Egley, 2006). A school wide initiative for change towards a vision may provide opportunities for work among these individuals to develop a common set of "beliefs, values, and customs" (Bolman & Deal, 2013, p. 264). Northouse (2010) called this culture building "setting the tone" (p. 105). The leader of the school or organization can then encourage these values.

In educational institutions, constructive cultures seem to produce the best results (Ohm, 2006). This type of culture in schools "invites innovative solutions, efficiencies, increased satisfaction, and consistency of higher performance (Ohm, 2006, p. 27). Encouraging the leadership behaviors of others in the organization can help to achieve this type of culture, as Roby (2011) wrote in the following excerpt:

Informal leaders have the potential to influence the culture of the school, and this can be dramatic. The potential positive affect of teacher leader efforts could lead to a school culture that includes continuous learning for all. (p. 788)

Continuous learning is a value that can be encouraged by the educational leader. By modeling, others within the school will also act in an encouraging way in order to reinforce shared valued practices that the desired culture is based on. As Sergiovanni (2009) stated, "For better or for worse, culture influences much of what is thought, said, and done in a school" (p. 18). Because of this, the culture, and encouraging the desired one, should be a large focus for the leader of an educational institution.

**Educational leadership and appreciation.** Most people have heard of teacher appreciation week, as it is celebrated annually during the first full week of May. Many independent schools also celebrate National Teacher Day. The history of the day and



week, as provided by the National Education Association (2015) is this:

Around 1944 Arkansas teacher Mattye Whyte Woodridge began corresponding with political and education leaders about the need for a national day to honor teachers. Woodridge wrote to Eleanor Roosevelt, who in 1953 persuaded the 81st Congress to proclaim a National Teacher Day. (§ 1)

Innately, we all seem to know that the job of teachers is difficult and in need of appreciation. They are helping to raise the future of our country and world and that deserves continued recognition. Combine that need of appreciation with the fact that most people in the United States leave their job due to a lack of appreciation (Robbins, 2000), and the result is a delicate profession with alarming rates of voluntary attrition (Ingersoll et al., 2012). With events like teacher appreciation day or week being impersonal and mandatory, the likely result is that they do not genuinely make a teacher feel like their work is appreciated. Leaders should look for alternative methods to show thanks for the work these professionals are doing.

The alternative solution is to be sure that appreciation occurs regularly, is personal, and is communicated in language and actions that are important to the person hearing it (White, 2014). Recently, the diocese of Memphis interviewed its teachers and asked them what they would need in order to stay teaching at their current schools. Surprisingly, appreciation was number one on the list, and a higher salary was number eight

(McDonald, 2011). The diocese then looked at ways to appreciate the teachers' work and came up with over a dozen awards at each school and a process by which teachers could nominate each other. Following this implementation, the diocese reported very low attrition and more interest from the outside when positions open up at the schools in the diocese (McDonald, 2011). While this may not be true for every school, it shows an effective way to personalize the recognition for specific achievements by teachers. Additionally, the nominations occur at the school level, which makes the appreciation even more personal. No matter how an educational leader approaches the need for appreciation and recognition, there is no doubt that it is important in keeping the best teachers in our schools.

### **Traditional Leadership Theories**

There are several traditional theories of leadership that have been investigated in the literature. In the following subsections, the researcher will briefly explore transformational leadership, transactional leadership, trait theory, skills approach, style approach, situational leadership, contingency theory, path-goal theory, and leader-member exchange. Exploring these leadership theories should provide a thorough overview on leadership and its importance to an organization.

**Transformational leadership.** Burns (1978) first wrote about transformational leadership and transactional leadership, showing them as contrasting styles of leadership. Transformational leadership is the type of leadership that changes the behavior and values of followers of that leader. It is the type of leadership that allows people to believe that they can accomplish more than they could have possibly imagined. This leader motivates others, including their superiors, to put aside their own interests and work towards common goals. "Transformational leaders are those who inspire followers to transcend their own self-interests and are capable of having a profound and extraordinary effect on followers" (Robbins & Judge, 2010, p. 391).

Transformational leaders are role models, consider the needs of others, are ethical, and avoid using their power for personal gains. As Northouse (2010) wrote, "Transformational leadership is the process whereby a person engages with others and creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower" (p. 40). The characteristics of the transformational leader are idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Robbins & Judge, 2010). These leaders provide meaning to the tasks being performed, show enthusiasm, involve employees in thinking about the future,

communicate clear expectations, and create a team-like atmosphere. Bolman and Deal (2013) stated, "transformational leaders champion and inspire followers" (p. 88). This type of leadership could be helpful in schools today. Schools and education practices have been the subject of endless local and national debates. Improving these institutions may require the type of leader who is going to evoke a sense of pride, inspiration, and ownership towards a common purpose or goal. This leader evokes a sense of intellect, pays attention to individuals in the organization, and works to develop future leaders by delegating tasks (Burns, 1978).

With school improvement being a heated topic of conversation, the leadership type desired in schools also becomes a question. Hallinger (2003) wrote that the practice of transformational leadership is currently a common and best practice type of leadership in schools. Leithwood et al. (1999) also wrote that transformational leadership is a good place to start when thinking about the shifting needs of leadership in schools during these changing times. In this type of leadership, wrote Leithwood et al. (1999),

Power is attributed by organization members to whoever is able to inspire their commitments to collective aspirations and the desire for personal and collective mastery of the capacities needed to accomplish such mastery. (p. 9)

In the schools of today, which are becoming less hierarchical by encouraging teachers to take on roles of leadership, the qualities of the transformational leaders are even more relevant. In addition, encouraging members of the school towards their collective aspirations is an important attribute of an educational leader. Recognizing the accomplishments of those whose work furthers those aspirations can do this. As Kouzes and Posner (2007) wrote,

Leaders send the message that someone took the time to notice the achievement, seek out the responsible individual, and personally deliver praise in a timely manner. (p. 292)

By consistently doing this type of recognition, educational leaders will be more likely to get the best out of their employees using transformational leadership to inspire, recognize, and encourage their positive performance.

Although the term *transformational leadership* was defined after his death, Antoine de Saint-Exupery (n.d.), the French writer and poet, gave a good summation on the essence of this leadership type:

If you want to build a ship, then don't drum up men to gather wood, give orders, and divide work. Rather, teach them to yearn for the far and restless and endless sea. (¶ 1)

**Transactional leadership.** In contrast to transformational leadership, transactional leadership focuses on an exchange of valued commodities or activities. Burns (1978) first wrote

about transactional leadership and transformational leadership, portraying them as opposite styles in some respects.

Transactional describes the exchange relationship that teachers have with schools, as they are on a year-to-year contract, receive a salary, health insurance, retirement. While these are necessary parts of employee compensation, there has been a push to take this exchange motivation too far by financially incentivizing and penalizing teacher and student performance. This type of leadership is what Pink (2009) called the "carrots and sticks" (p. 15) approach as it rewards or disciplines employees depending on how they perform within the organization.

Transactional leadership awards individuals for how they complete goals upon which the organization agrees. Those awards are based upon agreements that followers have made with their leader (Burns, 1978). However, once these tasks have been completed, it is unlikely that employees will go above and beyond those original goals and agreements. This is a key difference that transactional leadership has with transformational leadership. In transformational leadership, employees will continue to work hard alongside the leaders with whom they share common values and beliefs. In transactional leadership, once the agreed-on objective has been completed, there may be little motivation for additional effort (Bass, 1998).

According to Burns (1978), transactional leaders approach followers in anticipation of a *quid pro quo*, which in Latin means, "something for something." Typically, transformational leadership is explored when discussing organizational culture and leadership; however, Bass (1998) contended that transactional leadership is an important part of being a leader as well. In fact, transactional leadership has been shown to be effective in managing students at a university as long as the transactions are transparent and ethical (Miller, 2011). In a study conducted on 179 high school teachers and their principals, transactional leadership was shown to be a stronger predictor than transformational leadership in relation to job performance and satisfaction (Vecchio, Justin, & Pearce, 2008). This is especially important for school leaders to keep in mind as they think about rewarding performance of their followers at both the faculty and student levels.

**Traits approach.** The trait approach to leadership is also known as the *great man* theory and focuses on the innate skills and talents that an individual may have. Essentially this theory states that great leaders are born, because of the qualities that they possessed. This was the theory that much of the early research on leadership was based upon, as it was the first systematic way to study leadership (Northouse, 2010).

Stodgill (1948) was the first to challenge the belief that was centered on in-born leadership traits. Stodgill juxtaposed that traditional belief with research showing that no consistent set of traits separated leaders from non-leaders in various settings. His research was based on over 100 trait studies that were conducted between 1904 and 1947. His findings indicated that a person does not become a leader because of an innate trait that they possess. The attributes that were seen in leaders depended upon the situation (Stodgill, 1948). In other words, an individual who was a leader in one organization or setting was found to have different skills and characteristics than a person who was a leader in a different organization or setting. Because of this, leadership shifted into being more about relationships among people and less about the traits that one is born with. This resulted in thinking of leadership as something that was active and alive, a set of skills that needed development.

Stodgill conducted further research in 1974, which analyzed 163 new studies and compared these to the findings in his first study (as cited in Northouse, 2010). This second survey identified 10 traits that were positively associated with leadership:

- 1) drive for responsibility and task completion, 2) vigor and persistence in pursuit of goals, 3) risk-taking and originality in problem solving 4) drive to exercise



initiative in social settings, 5) self-confidence and sense of personal identity, 6) willingness to accept consequences of decision and action, 7) readiness to absorb interpersonal stress, 8) willingness to tolerate frustration and delay, 9) ability to influence other people's behavior, and 10) capacity to structure social interaction systems to the purpose at hand. (Northouse, 2010, p. 17)

The trait approach to leadership theory remains relevant because the traits or attributes that one possesses are still an area that is heavily researched today. Many studies offer different thoughts on which attributes are most important for leaders. Some say intelligence, self-confidence, and determination, while other lists include integrity and sociability (Northouse, 2010). More research is needed to continually examine these traits and many others.

**Skills approach.** In a completely different approach than trait theory, the skills approach focuses on leadership practices that can be learned and are not in-born. While a person's personality is important when leading an organization, it is the skills approach that supposes ability is required for strong leadership to occur. This was first introduced by Katz (1955) when he suggested a three-skills approach to the selection and development of administrators in U.S. businesses. These three skills were technical, human, and conceptual. He added that at different levels within the organization, individuals need to have different strengths. For example, in

top management, conceptual skill was important; in middle management, a balance between the three skills, and at the supervisory management level, technical skill was deemed as more important. This approach theorized that having knowledge and being proficient in certain work or activities was important and should be matched with the level at which a manager is in the organization.

This research stated that technical skills were a proficiency or understanding of an activity with which the supervised employees are involved. Katz (1955) stated, "Technical skill involves specialized knowledge analytical ability within that specialty, and facility in the use of tools and techniques" (p. 2). The second, human skill is being able to work with people and having a general understanding of them. In summary, this is how a person views the people above and below them in the organization's hierarchy, and the way in which that person conducts themselves at work. The third and final skill is conceptual, which involves seeing the organization not only for what it is, but also for what it can be as an entire entity. Today, we would probably call this vision. A person with this skill can see the big-picture and then make decisions for the organization based upon the skill of conceptualizing a way to advance the company over time.

Trait leadership and skills approach are two very different types of leadership theories, as one places importance on innate personality attributes and the other places a focus on specific leadership skills that should be learned and developed. Today, it is generally agreed that a mix or balance of personality and learned abilities are important for successful leadership, although research continues to determine which leadership characteristics are needed for specific situations. The author of the present study locates the LPI as fitting the skills approach more than a style or trait approach, because of the use of the term *practices*. This term indicates that the related behaviors can be learned and deliberately increased. However, the LPI practices also are associated with the transformational leadership style, making the next section quite relevant to the present study.

**Style approach.** The style approach emphasizes the behavior of the leader. Behaviors are separated into two main types: task and relationship. The approach investigates how leaders combine these two behavior types to influence their followers and to accomplish the goals of the organization (Northouse, 2010). This approach is focused on leaders as either being task oriented or relationship oriented individuals (Northouse, 2010).

According to Northouse (2010), leadership requires not only an understanding of how work needs to be done, but also attends

to the actual "doing" of the work as well. This is the styles approach, as leaders need to balance both tasks and relationships. An individual leader should reflect on their own leadership behaviors, and according to Northouse (2010), find a way to blend these two that fits the situation and organization.

Task leadership is more focused on getting work done and completing goals. Stodgill, in his work, identified task leadership as initiating structure (Stodgill & Bass, 1981). Stodgill (Stodgill & Bass, 1981), while on the other side of the spectrum, what one might think of as a relationship style of leadership was termed *consideration*. Each of these is on a spectrum in which each individual leader has to determine how much of each skill is best for the leader in order to create the right mix. As Northouse stated, "Effective leadership requires that leaders be both task oriented and relationship oriented" (p. 58).

A well-known model to demonstrate the style approach was developed by Blake and Mouton (1985) to show how leaders could work in an organization with regard to concern for people, while also having concern for production. This is very similar to the terms described above where *task leadership* and *initiating structure* are similar to a concern for production, and *relationship leader* and *consideration* are tied to a concern for

people. As a way to integrate these types of polarities, the situational leadership model next became prominent.

**Situational leadership.** Situational leadership focuses on the followers of a leader in an organization. As Robbins and Judge (2010) stated, "successful leadership is achieved by selecting the right leadership style contingent on the followers' readiness" (p. 384). The situational leadership theory is grounded mostly in the work of Hersey and Blanchard (2013). The theory has the basic assumption that the leader needs to change his or her behavior depending on what the situation demands. To know what style of leadership or type of behavior is needed for a particular situation requires the leader to constantly evaluate his or her followers to determine what they require. The state of readiness of the followers in the organization then requires the leader to display one of four behaviors (Robbins & Judge, 2010).

The categories of behaviors needed are combinations of attributes that are both directive and supportive. The first style is high-directive and low-supportive and is needed when clear instructions and goal achievement is needed. The second is high-directive and high-supportive and is also focused on goal achievement but has more of a focus on the emotional needs of the followers. The third is low-directive and high-supportive and still focuses on goals, but also supports the

growth and development of the followers. Finally, the fourth is low-directive and low-supportive. This type of behavior is needed when employees require a substantial amount of autonomy to get their jobs done (Hersey & Blanchard, 2013).

Situational leadership is a theory that can demonstrate how individuals may become effective leaders no matter what type of organization they are leading. The theory also recognizes the importance of followers and establishes some suggestions on how leaders can compensate for a lack in employee motivation and ability. However, according to Robbins and Judge (2010), situational leadership is not as effective as one may think:

Research efforts to test and support the theory have generally been disappointing. Why? Possible explanations include internal ambiguities and inconsistencies in the model itself as well as problems with research methodology in tests. So despite its intuitive appeal and wide popularity, an endorsement must be cautious for now. (p. 384)

**Path-goal theory.** In path-goal theory, "it is the leader's job to provide followers with the information, support, or other resources necessary to achieve their goals" (House, 1996, p. 385). This theory asks the leader to evaluate the situation and then determine if they should be directive or supportive. The theory is based on the work of House (1996) who found that a positive relationship between a leader's initiation of structure and the satisfaction of employees in that leader's organization. Since that type of finding had not been made before, it led

House (1996) to theorize that followers needed expectations clarified and obstacles removed by the leader towards that end in order to be more motivated.

Path-goal theory is really a focus on how leaders act and behave in order to motivate their subordinates. These actions and behaviors directly help employees overcome obstacles that get in the way of production (House, 1996). Once these obstacles are removed, people are motivated because they now believe that they are capable of the work being asked of them. This is a leadership theory that asks leaders to work on generating motivation among their employees. Obstacles to an organization's production can be resources, lack of training, regulation, or even unclear directions or lack of challenge. As Northouse (2010) wrote, "The leader's job is to help group members reach their goals by directing, guiding, and coaching them along the way" (p. 141). Removing obstacles is constant and on a day-to-day basis to ensure that production is continuing to occur among those employees in the organization. Thus, the name of this theory is fitting, as the leader is making a path for those in the organization to follow in order to reach a defined goal or set of goals.

Seven major obstacles in the path goal theory are defined as (a) unclear goals, (b) unclear directions, (c) low motivation, (d) complex tasks, (e) simple tasks, (f) low

involvement, and (g) lack of challenge (Northouse, 2010). In order to remove these obstacles, the path-goal theory focuses on four leadership behaviors: (a) directive leadership should be used when a complicated problem has to be solved; (b) supportive leadership should be used when employees are performing mundane jobs; (c) participative leadership should be used when employees are not feeling part of the group, or when they are considered outsiders; and (d) achievement-oriented style should be utilized when employees are not challenged. Since obstacles always will exist, it is the sign of a good leader when they continually work to eliminate these obstacles (Northouse, 2010).

**Leader-member exchange.** Leader-member exchange says that because of time constraint, leaders develop special relationships with a subset group of their followers (Robbins & Judge, 2010). This may be seen as a leader having a small circle of trust in the organization or even so-called favorites among the group of employees. This group is trusted, probably receives more of the leaders time, and is more likely to achieve special favors from the leader as well (Robbins & Judge, 2010).

This theory proposes that early in the leader's interaction with people in the group, they automatically or subliminally divide followers into one of two groups: the in and out groups. That category and relationship remains fairly constant over time in the same organization. Additionally the leader rewards



followers with whom he or she wants a closer relationship and punishes those with whom he or she does not. For the leader-member exchange theory to exist, both the leader and the follower must engage in this described behavior (Robbins & Judge, 2010). What remains unclear is how the follower falls into the in and the out group for a given leader. As Robbins and Judge stated,

There is evidence that in-group members have demographic, attitude, and personality characteristics similar to those of their leader or a higher level of competence than out-group members. Leaders and followers of the same gender tend to have closer relationships than those of different genders. Even though the leader does the choosing, the followers' characteristics drive the categorizing decision. (p. 386)

Northouse (2010) cautioned that it is important for the leader to identify with and listen to the out group. Even though the members of this group may not identify with the leader or identify with the followers who do, it is important to keep them in mind, as they still represent a significant portion of the organization.

### **Leadership Practices Inventory**

The leadership practices inventory (LPI) was developed during the 1980s using numerous case studies. This was an empirically-devised rather than theoretically-devised approach, because the authors allowed their large dataset to point to their practices. Approximately 350,000 everyday leaders were

questioned across a diverse collection of organizations and backgrounds about their best personal experiences of leadership. The questions asked of these individuals were a 12-page questionnaire and consisted of 30 open-ended questions about leadership (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). Five practices of exemplary leadership were identified and named as a result of Kouzes and Posner's research: (a) challenge the process, (b) inspire a shared vision, (c) enable others to act, (d) model the way, and (e) encourage the heart. Each leadership practice consists of six related questions, for a total of 30 responses (Kouzes & Posner, 1992, 2002, 2007). Many research articles, dissertations, and other academic works have used the LPI as a research tool.

Initially, the LPI was developed with a 5-point Likert scale. A response that had a higher value showed a higher use of that leadership behavior: *rarely or never* do what is described in the statement, *once in a while* do what is described, *sometimes* do what is described, *fairly often* do what is described, *very frequently or always* do what is described (Kouzes & Posner, 1992). To improve the analysis of the LPI questionnaire, Kouzes and Posner (2002) changed the LPI response scale to a 10-point Likert scale: *almost never*, *rarely*, *seldom*, *once in a while*, *occasionally*, *sometimes*, *fairly often*, *usually*, *very frequently*, and *almost always*).

As for the validation of the LPI, Kouzes and Posner (2002) wrote,

Validation studies that we, as well as other researchers, have conducted over a 15-year period consistently confirm the reliability and validity of the Leadership Practices Inventory and the *five practices of exemplary leaders* model. (p. 2)

Internal reliability of the LPI is estimated to range from .70 to .91 and above (Posner & Kouzes, 1993). "Test re-test reliability was .93 and above" (Posner & Kouzes, 1993, p. 193). Dozens of studies have been performed in various fields using the LPI including engineering managers, women executives, college presidents, correctional institution leaders, nursing managers, and many others. All of these studies showed reliabilities well over the .60 level (Kouzes & Posner, 2002).

The LPI has solid psychometric properties (Kouzes & Posner, 1992, 2002). Internal reliabilities of the test and the five leadership practices have been shown over the past two decades to be steady (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). The test has been shown to be reliable and valid across a multitude of professions, genders, and individuals from different cultural values. The tool is one of the most widely used and accepted tools for leadership assessment and development. As Kouzes and Posner (2002) stated, the LPI contributes "richly to our understanding of the leadership process and in the development and unleashing of leadership capabilities" (p. 19).

**Summary**

This review of literature included a brief history of independent schools in California and in the United States along with a description and role of the head of school. Educational leadership was investigated, particularly as it relates to the practices that are investigated in the LPI. These included ethics, trust, mentoring, vision, mission, goals, expectations, innovation, change, enthusiasm, motivation, collaboration, relationships, accountability, culture, and appreciation. All of these were examined in view of their relationship with the five practices of exemplary leadership. These are model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). This review of the traits, qualities, and behaviors of exemplary leadership hopefully shows how the information gathered in this study is applicable to leaders of independent schools in California.

Additionally, the traditional leadership theories of transformational leadership, transactional leadership, traits approach, skills approach, style approach, situational leadership, path-goal theory, and leader-member exchange were also described in this chapter. These traditional theories of leadership were examined to show a history of important research and theories about leadership and also to acknowledge that a

familiarity with this work is important for any leader, including those leading educational institutions. An understanding of leadership attributes with the five practices of exemplary leadership, combined with knowledge of the historical contributions of theory and research on leadership, provides a solid foundation for this investigation of heads of schools using the LPI.

As this chapter has shown, the behaviors of a school leader can have tremendous impact not only on the faculty and students but also on the overall success or failure of the educational institution that they are responsible for. As stated by Leithwood and Strauss (2009), it is critical to remember that anytime one is looking at a turnaround school, they had better realize that it has probably occurred due to turnaround leadership. Knowing that the leader of a school wields such influence makes this investigation into the behaviors of school head as measured by the LPI a significant and important study.

It is the hope of this researcher that the reader of this chapter has a basic understanding of the five practices of exemplary leaders, traditional theories of leadership, and the potential impact that a school leader has on their institution. It is also the hope of the researcher that the reader has an understanding of why this study, as well as future research investigating heads of school and their leadership, is useful.

### **Chapter 3: Methods**

This chapter will highlight the methods and design of the study on leaders of independent schools in California. This study will examine the self-perceived leadership practices of heads of schools at independent schools in California. This study will measure these leadership practices using the LPI. Very few studies have focused on independent school heads and their leadership practices. This chapter will provide an overview on how this study will attempt to add to the knowledge of this sparsely studied group.

#### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided this study:

- RQ1. According to the heads of schools' self-report on the LPI, what is the frequency of application for each of the five leadership practices in the leadership of independent schools?
- RQ2. Do the LPI subscale means from the sample group differ significantly from the LPI subscale means from a comparison group of public school principals?

#### **Nature of the Study**

This quantitative research aspires to (a) investigate the practices of heads of schools at independent schools in California, (b) use the results of the investigation to build a

foundation of research on independent school leaders, and (c) provide current research as a basis on which to build professional development opportunities for heads of schools. The significance of this topic has been discussed by national and regional organizations including the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) and the California Association of Independent Schools (CAIS). The work is also relevant to this researcher, as he is currently the head of a small boarding and day school in Southern California.

### **Research Design**

This research was quantitative and used the LPI (Kouzes & Posner, 2002) as a self-report online survey. Quantitative research is best used to address a problem identifying attributes that may impact an outcome (Creswell, 2009). Quantitative is the more traditional type of research. Surveys are most widely used to, "collect data on an instrument that measures attitudes, and the information is analyzed using statistical procedures" (Creswell, 2009, p. 16). In order to form a basis for future study and professional development for heads of schools, a quantitative study (see Figure 1) on the self-perceived leadership practices of heads of schools seemed to be the correct approach for this type of research.

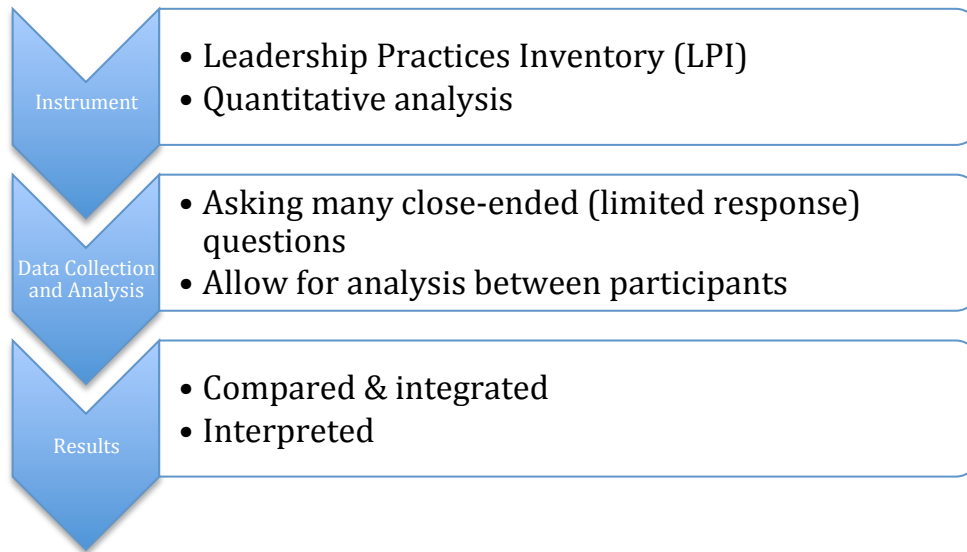


Figure 1. Graphic display of the quantitative research design for this study.

### **Instrument**

The questions in this survey do not include any demographic questions. The questions for this survey are those in the LPI that measure the practices of exemplary leadership. These are: (a) model the way, (b) inspire a shared vision, (c) challenge the process, (d) enable others to act, and (e) encourage the heart, as described in detail in paragraphs that follow.

The LPI is a 30-statement questionnaire that takes 10 to 15 minutes to complete. The instructions for the survey respondent are to respond on a 10-point Likert scale to indicate the frequency with which the leader engages in the behavior described, where 1 indicates *almost never* and 10 indicates *almost always* (The Leadership Challenge, n.d., para. 4). The respondent is cautioned that the responses should not reflect



beliefs about how the leader ideally would behave, but rather an honest and accurate depiction of actual practices.

The development and use of the instrument was described further in Chapter 2. Also the psychometric properties are described further in the Reliability and Validity section later in this Chapter. Due to this strong reliability and decades of use by other researchers, this researcher chose the LPI for the current study.

**Model the way.** With this leadership practice, a leader sets the tone for others to act. This person is an example to their followers and values a few critical principles of the organization that will guide how communication should occur and how goals should be achieved. This type of leader sets small term gains and celebrates them as they are pursued toward the course of more substantial goals. In doing this, the leader tries to make all of their followers aware of the guiding principles that the leader's actions and plans are based on. This type of leader seeks regular feedback in order to reinforce the values of the guiding principles (Kouzes & Posner, 2007).

**Inspire a shared vision.** An example of this leadership practice is when a leader passionately talks about the future and reveals a big picture for the organization and their followers. These leaders see future possibilities and are bold in their commitment to arouse that similar passion in others.

In their thinking about the totality of the organization, this leader often gives a road map for how the organization will get from the place it is currently at, to how it will get to the leader's vision for the future. The vision is produced by two commitments: (a) imagining the future and its exciting possibilities and (b) recruiting others to create that shared vision (Kouzes & Posner, 2007).

**Challenge the process.** With this leadership practice, a leader looks to change the existing state of affairs. *Innovative* and *risk taking* are terms that could be used to describe this individual. These leaders look for new ways and processes to improve the organization. This leader is aware of and willing to accept this risk in order to realize their vision. This leader sees this potential failure as a learning opportunity. Ultimately, these leaders want to change what is happening because they see new and more effective possibilities for better processes in the future (Kouzes & Posner, 2007).

**Enable others to act.** With this leadership practice, leaders focus on teamwork, collaboration, and collegiality in the organizations that they lead. The values of ethics, trust, integrity, and respect are important in their day-to-day work. The person notices the strengths in their followers and looks to build upon those strengths by encouraging that positive behavior. This allows each member of the group to feel like

they are contributing to the overall success of the organization. This leader also provides the correct resources to allow each person's strengths to be utilized in the best way possible. This leader knows how to motivate employees in order to get the job done (Kouzes & Posner, 2007).

**Encourage the heart.** With this leadership practice, a leader looks to celebrate wins that those in the organization may have. Rewards are given to members of the organization who make accomplishments encouraged by the leader. These leaders are motivators too, but work to accomplish this by means of incentive, recognition, and constant praise. This type of positive environment helps to create a friendly and rewarding workplace, which can then in turn help the organization to move towards its overall goals and aspirations. This leader appreciates and respects the input of everyone in the organization (Kouzes & Posner, 2007).

**Statements exemplifying the five leadership practices.**

Each one of the five practices of exemplary leaders is associated with six statements (see Table 1). Respondents typically are not aware of the correspondence between statements and the leadership practices.

Table 1

*LPI Subscales and Associated Practices*

Subscales	Practices
Model the way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sets personal example of what is expected</li> <li>• Makes certain that people adhere to agree on standards</li> <li>• Follows through on promises and commitments</li> <li>• Asks for feedback on how his or her actions affect peoples performance</li> <li>• Build consensus around organizations values</li> <li>• Is clear about their philosophy of leadership</li> </ul>
Inspire a shared vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talks about future trends influencing our work</li> <li>• Describes a compelling image of the future</li> <li>• Appeals to others to share a dream of the future</li> <li>• Shows others how their interests can be realized</li> <li>• Paints the big-picture of group aspirations</li> <li>• Speaks with conviction about meaning of work</li> </ul>
Challenge the process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seeks challenging opportunities to test skills</li> <li>• Challenges people to try new approaches</li> <li>• Searches outside the organization for innovative ways to improve</li> <li>• Asks "What can we learn?"</li> <li>• Makes certain that goals, plans, and milestones are set</li> <li>• Experiments and takes risks</li> </ul>
Enable others to act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develops cooperative relationships</li> <li>• Actively listens to diverse points of view</li> <li>• Treats people with respect and dignity</li> <li>• Supports decisions other people make</li> <li>• Gives people choice about how to do their work</li> <li>• Ensures that people grow in their jobs</li> </ul>
Encourage the heart	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Praise people for a job well done</li> <li>• Express confidence in peoples abilities</li> <li>• Creatively rewards people for their contributions</li> <li>• Recognizes people for commitment to shared values</li> <li>• Finds ways to celebrate accomplishments</li> <li>• Gives team members appreciation and support</li> </ul>

## **Data Collection**

This study had three phases of data collection: gaining permissions, a pilot test of the survey, then the invitation email and distribution of LPI.

**Purchase and permission to use survey instrument.** Workplace Learning Solutions (WLS), the company that allows distribution and use of the LPI as a research tool, normally charges \$40.00 for the LPI Self examination used in this study; however, with approval from WLS for educational purposes, a discount of \$35.00 is applied, making the LPI-Self only \$5.00 per respondent. This approval was given for use in this research (see Appendix A), and the cost per participant in the research was \$5.00 per LPI completion. Permission by the IRB was gained before data collection and is described in a later section.

**Pilot study.** To ensure an understanding of using the survey instrument in independent schools, a pilot study was conducted. Five independent school leaders participated in a pilot study. Participants in the pilot study were (a) volunteers, (b) selected due to their knowledge of the independent school world, and (c) in leadership positions in an independent school at the time of the pilot study. The respondents in the pilot study did not participate in the main study. No revisions or alternate distribution strategies were made based on the information gathered from the pilot study group of volunteers. The pilot

study was valuable for the researcher to examine how the email and instructions were received and gave an initial chance for examination of how the data would eventually be received.

**Distribution to CAIS.** The executive director of CAIS gave permission to conduct this study among its member heads of schools. The executive director provided email addresses of these leaders to assist in this study. An email was distributed to the population from the researcher, who is also a current head of a school with membership in CAIS (see Appendix B).

This email from the researcher included an introductory letter to all heads of school. This email and introduction included a consent form. This introductory letter explained the significance and purpose of the study and provided background on the LPI. The letter explained that an email would arrive from the researcher asking each head of school to participate and gives the respondents directions on how to do so. The letter further explained that participation would be voluntary and that all information and responses would be kept as confidential and anonymous. Finally, the letter stated that the results of the study would be shared on request and that the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Pepperdine University (see Appendix C for approval letter) approved the research. The LPI was then distributed to all 219 heads of schools in CAIS (termed heads of CAIS) through this email from the researcher.

**Follow-up and reminder.** The executive director of CAIS followed up during his remarks at the CAIS annual conference in June of 2015, asking them to participate in the study, and confirming its importance. The researcher then scheduled reminder emails out every week that were sent directly from the LPI platform that allowed participants direct access to the survey, for a total response period of 4 weeks. An email 2 days before the survey closed was sent from the researcher as a final reminder in hopes to get the best response rate possible.

### **IRB Compliance**

A request for IRB Exempt status was submitted to Pepperdine University's IRB Board, as the study met necessary criteria for this designation. This study was allowed an exemption from federal regulation because it was (a) conducted in established educational settings and (b) all responses were anonymous and collected in a way that would not allow any of the research participants to be identified (see Appendix C).

### **Population and Sample**

The targeted groups of respondents were current heads of schools in California who were employed at institutions currently members of CAIS. This group was chosen as it represents professional leaders from various school settings including different grade levels (elementary, middle school, and/or high school), student composition groups (all boys or all

girls [single-sex], and coed), and various school types (residential, day, or both). This researcher chose this group as it also represents a mix of schools from rural, suburban, and urban areas and is also diverse in terms of student and faculty populations.

### **Validity and Reliability**

The LPI instrument has been used for over 20 years in many studies and is generally understood as being a reliable and valid tool for identifying the leadership practices of individuals. Posner and Kouzes (1993) used Cronbach's alpha to measure reliability. Cronbach's alpha scores can range from 0 to 1.0. A score below .5 is considered unacceptable, .6 to .7 acceptable, .7 to .9 good, and above .9 is considered excellent (Muijs, 2011). Posner and Kouzes (1993) reported that the Cronbach's alpha for the LPI ranges from .75 to .93 for the five practices of exemplary leadership. Therefore, this indicates that the reliability of the LPI is in the range of good to excellent, depending on which category of exemplary leadership is being considered.

In addition, because this study was not directly associated with any of the national and or regional associations mentioned above, and each respondent's identity will not be disclosed, the researcher expected that the respondents would be more likely to be honest in their responses. This separation from employers



and associations should improve the integrity of the data and produce results that are more reliable.

### **Summary**

This chapter discussed the way in which this research was performed and how the research problem was approached. This chapter examined the importance of the study and also restated the purpose and research questions. A thorough review of the methodology was given as well as the collection of data and description of the sample. A pilot study was also conducted to not only look at how the survey was disseminated, but also to look at the process of data collection and be proactive in anticipating problems that might arise during the actual study. The process of IRB review was also discussed. Finally, validity and reliability were shown to be very strong by Posner and Kouzes (1993).

## **Chapter 4: Results**

This chapter presents the findings from the survey administered to heads of schools at independent schools in California for the purpose of examining their self-perceived leadership practices. The analysis included the examination of the most commonly used practices of exemplary leadership and also those that were used least commonly. Responses to the questions in the LPI were analyzed to address the research questions. This was done through statistical analysis instructions provided from Workplace Learning Solutions (WLS), the company that allows distribution and use of the LPI as a research tool. Additionally, a study of public school principals was used for a comparison of this survey with a study of LPI results from public school administrators to compare with these independent school leaders.

### **Pilot Study**

The pilot study was conducted by administering the Leadership Practices Inventory to five independent school leaders in California whose responses were not included in the analysis. These individuals went through the process of completing the survey so that the researcher could learn from the process of distributing the study and using the on-line platform to receive results and collect data. The pilot study was extremely valuable, because the majority of the participants

stated they did not notice the email at first. The subject of the email stated, "Welcome to the Individual Leadership Practices Inventory," and the email address that it came from was notifications@lpionline.com. By having this knowledge I was able to let participants in the study know to be mindful that the survey for this study would arrive in the same way. I believe this increased the level of participation in the study, because an email from that address seems anonymous and similar to junk mail or spam.

### **Sampling**

As explained in more detail in Chapter 3, the targeted groups of respondents were currently heads of schools in California who were employed at institutions that were members of CAIS schools at the time that the research was conducted. Members of CAIS currently number 219 (CAIS, n.d.c). Assuming that approximately that number had accurate working email addresses and therefore received the invitation to participate, the invited participants would number approximately 219. In comparison, the number who responded by completing and submitting the survey was 35. This indicates a response rate of approximately 16%.

### **Data Preparation**

The data set was visually inspected, and no problems with missing data or response sets were found. Descriptive

statistics, frequency tables, histograms, stem-and-leaf plots, and boxplots were examined for deviations from normality, outliers, or other problematic characteristics. Consequently, two respondents were dropped because of outliers, leaving a total of 33 respondents whose surveys were included in the final dataset.

### **Reliability**

The Cronbach's alphas for the LPI subscales were .60 for model the way, .69 for inspire a shared vision, .75 for challenge the process, .50 for enable others to act, and .80 for encourage the heart. Refer to Table 1 in Chapter 3 to review the meanings of these five subscales.

With the exception of enable others to act, all the subscales had Cronbach's alpha scores that are considered acceptable or good (according to the criteria of Muijs, 2011) and reasonably close to those reported by Posner and Kouzes (1993). The lower reliability score (.50) for enable others to act might be considered bordering on acceptability; however, there is reason to consider it not problematic in the current analysis. As was noted later in presenting the results for RQ2, the results for both studies (the current sample and that of the public school principals) were similar with regard to this subscale, which is evidence for the validity of this subscale in this study. If a measure is valid, then by definition it has to

be reliable, because reliability is a necessary precondition for validity.

## **Findings**

This section begins by reporting the main results of the study (RQ1), and then the supplemental results compare this study to a similar study with a sample of public school principals (RQ2). An alpha level of .05 was used for all tests of statistical significance.

**Research question 1.** RQ1 asked: According to the heads of schools' self-report on the LPI, what is the frequency of application for each of the five leadership practices in the leadership of independent schools? This question was answered by descriptive statistics of the LPI scores. A one-way repeated measures ANOVA was used to test for differences among the LPI subscales. There was a statistically significant difference among subscale scores,  $F(4, 128) = 11.27, p = .000$ . Mauchly's test indicated that the assumption of sphericity was not violated,  $\chi^2(9) = 7.15, p = .622$ . This is a special assumption for repeated measures ANOVAs. If it is violated, corrections to degrees of freedom are recommended. Table 2 shows the means and standard deviations for the LPI subscales as well as the results of the post hoc tests comparing each pair of means. As apparent in Table 2, the results show that the leadership practice most reported as used was enable others to act (marked with

superscript c), the second most reported as used was model the way (marked with superscript b), and the least reported as used were the other three (marked with superscript a), which three were not significantly different from each other.

Table 2

*Means for LPI Subscales*

Subscale	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Model the way	51.36 <sup>b</sup>	4.15
Inspire a shared vision	50.00 <sup>a</sup>	5.03
Challenge the process	48.76 <sup>a</sup>	5.37
Enable others to act	53.61 <sup>c</sup>	3.35
Encourage the heart	49.67 <sup>a</sup>	5.47

Note.  $N = 33$ . Means that do not share a common superscript are statistically significantly different from each other, according to Tukey LSD post hoc tests.

To restate these results simply, the respondents reported the most frequently occurring practice of exemplary leadership employed by the independent school heads that participated in this study was enable others to act, followed by model the way. These practices show which leadership attribute was applied by each respondent in order to help their subordinates to accomplish their own necessary responsibilities. Table 3 shows the five practices ranked, along with the meanings detailed.

Table 3

*LPI Subscales and Associated Practices with Average Scores*

Rank	Subscale	Practices
1	Enable others to act  (54%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develops cooperative relationships</li> <li>• Actively listens to diverse points of view</li> <li>• Treats people with respect and dignity</li> <li>• Supports decisions other people make</li> <li>• Gives people choice for how to do their work</li> <li>• Ensures that people grow in their jobs</li> </ul>
2	Model the way  (51%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sets personal example of what is expected.</li> <li>• Makes certain that people adhere to agree on standards</li> <li>• Follows through on promises and commitments</li> <li>• Asks for feedback on how his/her actions affect peoples performance</li> <li>• Build consensus around organizations values</li> <li>• Is clear about his/her philosophy of leadership</li> </ul>
3	Inspire a shared vision  (50%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talks about future trends influencing work</li> <li>• Describes a compelling image of the future</li> <li>• Appeals to others to share a dream of the future</li> <li>• Shows others how their interests can be realized</li> <li>• Paints the big-picture of group aspirations</li> <li>• Speaks with conviction about meaning of work</li> </ul>
	Encourage the heart  (50%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Praise people for a job well done</li> <li>• Express confidence in peoples abilities</li> <li>• Creatively rewards people for their contributions</li> <li>• Recognizes people for commitment to shared values</li> <li>• Finds ways to celebrate accomplishments</li> <li>• Gives team members appreciation and support</li> </ul>
	Challenge the process  (49%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seeks challenging opportunities to test skills</li> <li>• Challenges people to try new approaches</li> <li>• Searches outside the organization for innovative ways to improve</li> <li>• Asks "What can we learn?"</li> <li>• Makes certain that goals, plans, and milestones are set</li> <li>• Experiments and takes risks</li> </ul>

Thirdly, of approximately equal reported frequency was to provide inspiration, challenge existing norms or policies about processes, and encourage subordinates. For the reader's convenience for considering the practices of the LPI subscales as part of the results, the subscales are listed in Table 3 in ranked order along with the practices making up the five subscales.

**Research question 2.** RQ2 asked: Do the LPI subscale means from the sample group differ significantly from the LPI subscale means from a comparison group of public school principals? The comparison LPI averages were obtained from a relatively recent study of California public school principals whose LPI scores are reported (Hammack, 2010). See the Limitations section in Chapter 5 for a further discussion of this comparison. Table 4 shows the comparison means and standard deviations that were used from Hammack's study. They were calculated as overall averages of the means and standard deviations of the groups reported in of Hammack (2010), weighted by size of each of those groups.

Independent samples *t* tests were used to compare the pairs of means between studies. Three of the subscale means were significantly different between the present study (see Table on Hammack's p. 562) and the corresponding means from Hammack



(2010), namely model the way, challenge the process, and encourage the heart,  $ps = .000$ , with the present study's scores being lower in all three cases. The leaders from the schools in the present study reported using all five practices more than did the leaders from the schools in the other study.

Table 4

*Means for LPI Scores Reported by Hammack*

Subscale	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Model the way	53.45	4.26
Inspire a shared vision	51.13	6.02
Challenge the process	51.41	5.30
Enable others to act	54.56	3.42
Encourage the heart	53.14	5.61

*Note.*  $N = 325$ .

The pattern of means for both studies can be compared visually in Figure 2. This shows visually the previously described result (Table 2) that the principals in Hammack's study reported using the five leadership practices of exemplary leadership more overall. It should be noted that even though three of these results were found to be statistically significant, they are at face value small differences, which may or may not be of practical importance. As illustrated in Figure

2, the present study's score means were lower in each case, whether significantly different or not.

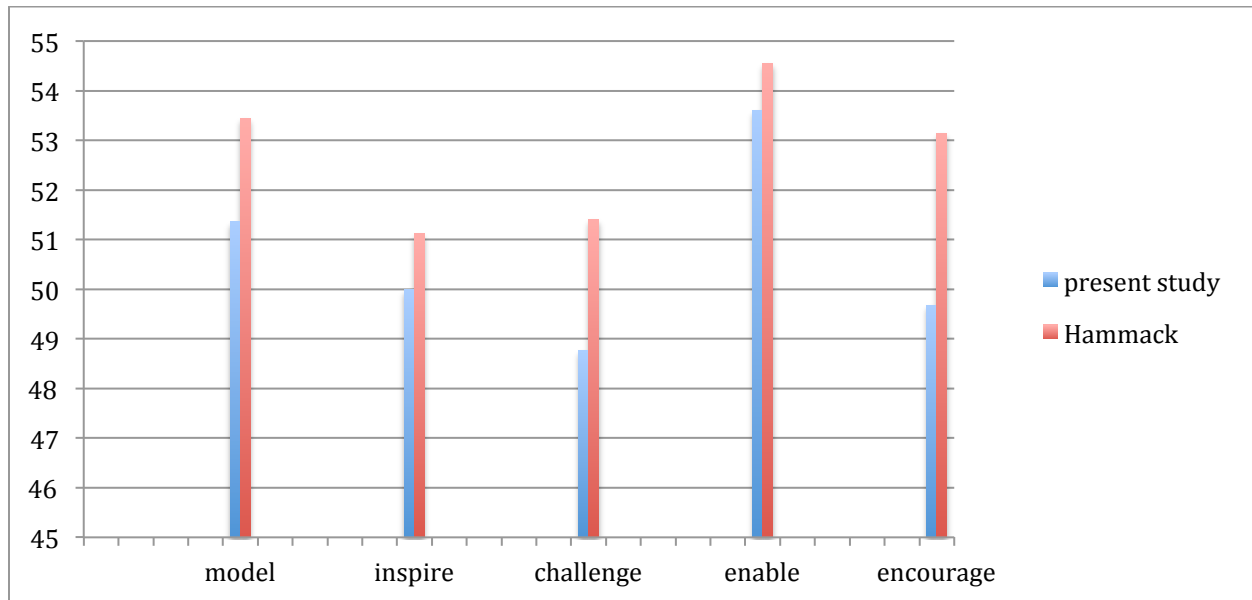


Figure 2. Comparison between present study and Hammack (2010) for LPI score averages on each of five subscales.

### Summary

In summary, according to the heads of schools' self-report, the level of reported frequency that each of the five leadership practices of the LPI have in the leadership of independent schools is as follows, in order of reported frequency: enable others to act, model the way, then the other three subscales (inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, and encourage the heart). These three did not differ significantly from each other in reported frequency (RQ1). Also, three of the LPI subscale means from the sample group differ significantly from the LPI subscale means from a comparison group of public school

principals (RQ2) completed by Hammack (2010), namely model the way, challenge the process, and encourage the heart, with the present study's score means being lower in each case.

## Chapter 5: Discussion

This study examined the five characteristics of exemplary leadership as described in the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) and how the frequency of these practices is self-reported by heads of schools in the California Association of Independent Schools. The survey data provided a view of the leadership practices of heads of schools for independent schools in California that are members of the California Association of Independent Schools (CAIS). This chapter relates the findings to the existing literature, discusses the implications of the findings, makes recommendations for practical application, notes limitations of the study, makes suggestions for further research, and summarizes the main conclusions of the study.

### Summary of Findings and Implications

In this section is a brief overview of the findings for the two research questions and the researcher's interpretation on what these findings mean.

**Research question 1.** RQ1 asked: According to the heads of schools' self-report on the LPI, what is the frequency of application for each of the five leadership practices in the leadership of independent schools? As previously stated, 35 of the 219 heads of independent schools that are members of CAIS responded to the study, and two surveys were removed from the results, as they were outliers. Statistical analysis revealed

that independent school heads self-reported through the LPI-self the highest frequency in using practices associated with the practice of *enable others to act*. The second most commonly used practice of exemplary leadership reported was *model the way*. Thirdly, of approximately equal reported frequency were the practices of *inspire a shared vision*, *challenge the process*, and *encourage the heart*.

In the practice of *enable others to act*, Kouzes and Posner recommend two points that a leader must commit to. These are (a) foster collaboration by promoting cooperative goals and building trust, and (b) strengthen others by sharing power and direction (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). Kouzes and Posner (2007) also remind us that, "collaboration is the master skill that enables teams, partnerships, and other alliances to function effectively" and that "collaboration can be sustained only when leaders promote a sense of mutual reliance--the feeling that we're all in this together" (p. 266).

According to Robbins and Judge (2010), trust is the primary attribute associated with leadership. They go on to argue that only a trusted leader will be able to get people to reach transformational goals. As was discussed in Chapter 2, trust is often the foundation of educational leadership. This is particularly important in the field of education as leaders must

demonstrate trust in their subordinates in order to instill a sense of autonomy, collaboration, and positive relationships.

In order to achieve collaboration among teams, heads of schools should also focus on motivation and teamwork. It is not surprising that this practice was reported as most used by the respondents, as heads of schools work and collaborate with every department on campus from academics and student affairs to business, finance, admissions, advancement, and many others. In order to motivate teams towards collaboration, heads of schools often work to help employees channel their efforts in a way that most benefits their school. This is done in a number of ways; however, in independent schools it is more likely done by heads of schools allowing autonomy within the organization. This is more likely to occur because of the independent nature of these schools, and heads of schools can provide freedom to administrators to take the lead on issues or challenges, which first extends trust, and then provides motivation by directing the flow of work from that department or individual. This autonomy is not only naturally present in independent schools but is also a key component of motivation as defined by Pink (2009).

Initially this finding was a surprise, as I expected model the way or inspire a shared vision to be first among independent school leaders. However, after reflection on the results and

analysis, I have realized that enable others to act is part of the foundation of independent schools, since I would argue that a major component of this practice involves autonomy for both staff members and (in the case of modalities of student-directed learning such as Montessori and Waldorf), for students as well. Since independent schools are often more by their nature autonomous (except in the case of those with a military model, catering to increased needs for structure), the practice of enable others to act among independent schools heads seems a likely result for a top practice employed by these leaders.

Similarly, the practice of enable others to act seems to fit well with the path-goal theory, where the leader identifies obstacles and assists in whatever it takes to remove those obstacles. This type of leadership practice seems fitting for independent schools where teacher and staff autonomy is a strong component.

**Research question 2.** RQ2 asked: Do the LPI subscale means from the sample group differ significantly from the LPI subscale means (prior published results) from a comparison group of public school principals? For this research question, the results of RQ1 were compared with a dissertation study that was previously published, which looked at the LPI scores of public elementary school principals. Statistical analysis found that

overall, independent school heads reported using all of the five practices of exemplary leadership less frequently.

The score averages for model the way, challenge the process, and encourage the heart subscales of the LPI from the present study were statistically significantly lower than the corresponding means from Hammack's (2010) study.

This difference could be attributed to the difference in the roles of a public school principal versus the role of the independent school head. Independent school heads are often focused on issues of long-term sustainability and or survivability. These issues include affordability, enrollment, fund-raising, financial management, financial aid, and many other concerns. These issues require a carefully refined vision that can be inspired across multiple constituencies, yet it may be that there is more buy-in across constituencies from the start, and thus less need for the head of school to generate that buy-in through transformational leadership practices such as the LPI measures. Independent school heads are effectively leading their teachers, students, and parents; however, they are of necessity more involved with the nuts and bolts of leadership. They are hands-on problem solving in various arenas on a daily basis. While they are trying to ignite the interests of alumni, community members, trustees, past parents, grandparents, foundations, and anyone else that may be



interested in the school, their attention is diverted consistently for day-to-day tasks devoted to individual needs, taking their focus somewhat away from the overall leadership mode such as communicating the shared values of the organization to its constituents. Instead, the heads of school are busy evidencing the practical application of those values in numerous ways through small tasks.

One important value of this study is in showing that, although heads of school for independent schools and public school principals do not share the same training requirements or course of progression through their careers, according to the LPI measures, they have a very similar approach to school leadership (i.e., without statistically significant difference) in two areas: inspire a shared vision and enable others to act.

**Comparison with normative data.** A comparison of the present study with normative data was not planned as part of this study, therefore, this discussion is not included in Chapter 4. Interestingly, respondents from the present study reported higher use of LPI leadership practices than did the sample on which the LPI was most recently normed. See Table 5.

Table 5

*Visual Comparison of Means for LPI Scores Between Three Studies*

Subscale	<i>M</i> present study	<i>M</i> Hammack	<i>M</i> normative
Model the way	51.36	53.45*	46.70
Inspire a shared vision	50.00	51.13	43.59
Challenge the process	48.76	51.41*	44.69
Enable others to act	53.61	54.56	49.34
Encourage the heart	49.67	53.14*	45.79

Note. *N* = 33 for present study's sample, 325 for Hammack's (2011), and 1.1 million for normative sample (Wiley Publications, 2011a).

\* indicates significant difference between current study mean and Hammack's mean

It is interesting to note that for both the present study and Hammack's study, school leaders showed more use of the five leadership practices than did the group of leaders that made up the sample on which the LPI was most recently normed (Wiley Publications, 2011b), as shown in Table 5. The normative sample included leaders of the following types of organizations, small and large: financial services, government and military, medical, pharmaceutical, education, computers, aerospace and airlines, telecommunications, social services, retailing, transportation, automotive, hospitality, petroleum, real estate, and publishing (Wiley Publications, 2011a).

### **Recommendations for Practical Application**

The findings seem suitable for mention in the leadership hiring considerations for independent school heads. Heads of schools are not always held to the same exacting requirements as are public school principals, but have their own specific requirements. According to the present study, the type of training needed for public schools is often largely theoretical, which might lead to a more lofty and ideological type of leadership, while heads of school get much of their leadership training hands-on, possibly leading to a more practical type of nuts-and-bolts helping out on a daily basis. For selection criteria when hiring heads of school, heads of school with their likelihood of less structured and more varied schooling and career paths, should be seen as more than adequately prepared in the ways they will approach leadership, as they show high LPI scores in comparison with the normative sample. Results of the present study may indicate that on-the-job classroom experience and non-education-related degrees give at least roughly equivalent preparation for school leadership roles in independent schools as compared with the typical public school principal, such as the typical Ed.D. degree or similar qualifications.

In addition, a goal of the researcher through this study was that by identifying the leadership practices that are

reported as most used by heads of school, that professional development opportunities can be developed for heads of school based on these results. Heads of schools do have various professional development opportunities available to them through state and national organizations. Hopefully, this research can be utilized to enhance those offerings.

The findings seem suitable for mention for promotional purposes. For transformational leadership, heads of school should be seen as roughly on par with that of public school principals, as indicated by LPI scores, and more transformational than the leadership norms in other professions and industries. In summary, the practical applications of the results could include (a) considerations for hiring criteria, (b) training, and (c) promotion of independent schools as having transformational leadership practices, though in some ways less so than principals, perhaps because of their hands-on approach.

#### **Recommendations for Future Studies**

It is also hoped that this research will provide a basis for future studies of leadership at independent schools in California, across the United States, and even internationally. These recommendations may be of use to researchers furthering this topic of study.

**Demographic information.** It would be interesting to gather data on educational attainment level, years in the classroom,

background field of study, and background field of work. These characteristics may differentiate heads of school from public school principals and shed further light on the findings.

**Various operational definitions of leadership.** Leadership of independent schools might be compared to small business startups needing entrepreneurial skills. In contrast, public schools, in their role as an extension of a larger bureaucracy, may need fewer so-called survival skills and more diplomacy and managerial skills. If there is an advantage for principals as exemplary leaders according to three subscales of the LPI, it may reflect simply this difference in leadership definition.

**Qualitative study.** My speculation that the heads of schools are required to engage in different types of activities than public school principals is anecdotal, based on my own experience as a head of an independent school. The autonomous nature of these schools allows leaders of independent schools to act with greater freedom, risk, and possibly innovation than their public school counterparts. This may lead to less emphasis on the LPI characteristics, because these are already built into the structure and culture of the school. To provide evidence and clarification for this viewpoint, a qualitative study might be used to gather statements from heads of schools about the activities consuming most of their time on a regular

basis, and these findings could be compared to similar findings from public school principals.

**Objective metrics.** Self-report has inherent biases. It may be possible to obtain more objective results by anonymous survey of employees working under heads of schools.

### **Limitations**

It may be that a response bias is present, as is possible with any self-report measure. In addition, ideally, the current study would have benefitted from utilizing the averages specifically for a subset of smaller public schools and public schools K-12. This sample was of elementary school principals only. Thus, the comparison sample was not ideal, as a sample matched in school size and range of grades (K-12) would have been more similar in characteristics other than those under study.

Another important limitation to consider was the relatively small sample size and small response rate in the present study. Further, *voluntary response bias* can occur when sample members are self-selected. Future studies might consider ways to increase the response rate, such as by phoning to follow up with school personnel or offering incentives for participation.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

Dissertation studies such as the present one help solve the *file drawer problem* in research, which refers to the tendency

that studies with non-significant findings and small differences are less likely to be published by journals. Journals want to present noteworthy and exciting information to their paid readership, thus studies that have less impressive results are most often not published. This study did not result in findings striking enough that journal would likely be interested in reporting them. Yet, they do have value, both in supporting a significant difference between scores and between samples, and in showing that neither the scores nor the samples are likely much different from each other in for any practical purpose.

One value of this study is in showing that, although heads of school for independent schools and public school principals do not share the same training requirements or course of progression through their careers, according to the LPI measures, they have a similar approach to school leadership in two subscales in line with transformational leadership: inspire a shared vision and encourage others to act.

This study adds to the body of knowledge that is lacking in the area of independent school leadership and the types of behaviors heads of schools report in the effective leadership of the independent schools they lead. Research has shown that effective leadership is critical for school success and improvement (Leithwood et al., 1999; Leithwood & Strauss, 2009; Sergiovanni, 2009; Sheppard, 2013). Independent schools in

California are some of the finest in the state, with many having 100% of their students attending 4-year colleges. However, the vast majority of the research on school leaders has been conducted on public school principals. Although the response rate was not large, the results indicate exemplary leadership practices by heads of school who participated in this study.



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## APPENDIX A

## Letter of Permission to Use LPI Instrument

**WILEY**

April 2, 2015

Randy Bertin  


Dear Mr Bertin:

Thank you for your request to use the LPI®: Leadership Practices Inventory® in your dissertation. This letter grants you permission to use either the print or electronic LPI [Self/Observer/Self and Observer] instrument[s] in your research. You may **reproduce** the instrument in printed form at no charge beyond the discounted one-time cost of purchasing a single copy; however, you may not distribute any photocopies except for specific research purposes. If you prefer to use the electronic distribution of the LPI you will need to separately contact Eli Becker ([ebecker@wiley.com](mailto:ebecker@wiley.com)) directly for further details regarding product access and payment. Please be sure to review the product information resources before reaching out with pricing questions.

Permission to use either the written or electronic versions is contingent upon the following:

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- (3) One (1) **electronic** copy of your dissertation and one (1) copy of all papers, reports, articles, and the like which make use of the LPI data must be sent **promptly** to my attention at the address below; and,
- (4) We have the right to include the results of your research in publication, promotion, distribution and sale of the LPI and all related products.

Permission is limited to the rights granted in this letter and does not include the right to grant others permission to reproduce the instrument(s) except for versions made by nonprofit organizations for visually or physically handicapped persons. No additions or changes may be made without our prior written consent. You understand that your use of the LPI shall in no way place the LPI in the public domain or in any way compromise our copyright in the LPI. This license is nontransferable. We reserve the right to revoke this permission at any time, effective upon written notice to you, in the event we conclude, in our reasonable judgment, that your use of the LPI is compromising our proprietary rights in the LPI.

Best wishes for every success with your research project.

Cordially,

Ellen Peterson  
Permissions Editor  


## APPENDIX B

## Recruitment Email and Informed Consent Letter

Hello,

I hope everyone is having a good summer preparing for the upcoming school year. As Jim McManus mentioned in Santa Barbara, I will be sending out a survey to all CAIS Heads of Schools as part of my doctoral work at Pepperdine University. The survey is brief and should only take a few moments to complete. When it arrives, it will be from the email address: [notifications@lpionline.com](mailto:notifications@lpionline.com).

On my email system this shows as only "notifications." The subject of the email will be, "Welcome to the Individual Leadership Practices Inventory." I am sending this email because often times an email from "notifications" would mean an automatic delete. Please be aware that this message will be sent to you tomorrow, July 31st. I would greatly appreciate if you would consider participating in this project. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

Thank you,



**Randy R. Bertin**  
**Head of School**  
Besant Hill School  
P.O. Box 850  
Ojai, CA 93024

My name is Randy Bertin, and I am a student in the Doctorate of Education Program at Pepperdine University, Graduate School of Education and Psychology who is currently in the process of recruiting individuals for my study entitled, "Measuring the Leadership Ability of Independent School Heads Using the LPI." The professor supervising my work is Dr. June Schneider-Ramirez. The study is designed to investigate leadership attributes so I am inviting individuals who are heads of CAIS member schools to participate in my study. Please understand that your participation in my study is strictly voluntary. The following is a description of what your study participation entails, the terms for participating in the study, and a discussion of your rights as a study participant. Please read this information carefully before deciding whether or not you wish to participate.

If you should decide to participate in the study, you will be asked to complete an electronic survey called the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI). It should take approximately 5 minutes to complete this electronic survey. Please complete the survey alone in a single setting.

Although minimal, there are potential risks that you should consider before deciding to participate in this study. These risks include fatigue, boredom and possible disappointment in the results. In the event you do experience any of the above you may choose to discontinue the survey. If you are disappointed in the results, please remember that the survey is only a tool that captured your responses in a single moment and does not define your overall character.

The potential benefits to you for participating in the study is feedback on your leadership style as compared to over two decades of research that has been used to develop the LPI. This research is from leaders not only in education, but also in almost every field imaginable.

If you should decide to participate and find you are not interested in completing the survey in its entirety, you have the right to discontinue at any point without being questioned about your decision. You also do not have to answer any of the questions on the survey that you prefer not to answer--just discontinue the survey, as the LPI requires an answer to each question.

After one week, a reminder note will be sent to you to complete the survey. A reminder will again be sent at two weeks. Since this will go out to everyone, I apologize ahead of time for sending you these reminders if you have complied with the deadline and have completed the survey.

If the findings of the study are presented to professional audiences or published, no information that identifies you personally will be released. The data will be kept in a secure manner for three years at which time the data will be destroyed

If you have any questions regarding the information that I have provided above, please do not hesitate to contact me at the phone number provided below. If you have further questions or do not feel I have adequately addressed your concerns, please contact Dr. June Schneider-Ramirez at [june.schneider@pepperdine.edu](mailto:june.schneider@pepperdine.edu). If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, contact Dr. Thema Bryant-Davis, Chairperson of the Graduate & Professional School Institutional Review Board at Pepperdine University, via email at [gpsirb@pepperdine.edu](mailto:gpsirb@pepperdine.edu) or at 310-568-5753.

By completing the survey, you are acknowledging that you have read and understand what your study participation entails, and are consenting to participate in the study. Your identity will be anonymous – the LPI platform, administered by Workplace Learning Solutions (WLS), will maintain the de-identified data from this survey for three years on a secure server. This will insure anonymity.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information, and I hope you decide to complete the survey. (deleted sentence here) You are welcome to a brief summary of the study findings in approximately one year.

Sincerely,



Randy R. Bertin  
Doctoral Candidate



To begin, click the link below and log in:

<https://www.lpionline.com/adminmgmt/adminapp/login/loginPage>

Username: [rbertin@besanthill.org](mailto:rbertin@besanthill.org)

Due Date: July 28, 2015

If you have forgotten your password, you can retrieve it using this link:

<http://www.lpionline.com/adminmgmt/adminapp/login/recoverPassword>

After logging in, please click on "Start Assessment" under the LPI Self heading to complete your self-assessment.

Technical Issues?

Please contact tech support at <http://lpi.custhelp.com>. Please do not reply to this email. It is an automated mailbox.

## APPENDIX C

## Letter of IRB Permission to Conduct Research With Human Subjects

# PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY

## Graduate & Professional Schools Institutional Review Board

June 18, 2015

Randy Bertin  


Protocol #: E0515D04

Project Title: Measuring the Leadership Abilities of Independent School Heads Using the LPI

Dear Mr. Bertin:

Thank you for submitting your application, *Measuring the Leadership Abilities of Independent School Heads Using the LPI*, for exempt review to Pepperdine University's Graduate and Professional Schools Institutional Review Board (GPS IRB). The IRB appreciates the work you and your faculty advisor, Dr. Schneider-Ramirez, have done on the proposal. The IRB has reviewed your submitted IRB application and all ancillary materials. Upon review, the IRB has determined that the above entitled project meets the requirements for exemption under the federal regulations (45 CFR 46 - <http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/45cfr46.html>) that govern the protections of human subjects. Specifically, section 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) states:

(b) Unless otherwise required by Department or Agency heads, research activities in which the only involvement of human subjects will be in one or more of the following categories are exempt from this policy:

**Category (2) of 45 CFR 46.101**, research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: a) Information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and b) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

In addition, your application to waive documentation of informed consent has been **approved**.

Your research must be conducted according to the proposal that was submitted to the IRB. If changes to the approved protocol occur, a revised protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before implementation. For any proposed changes in your research protocol, please submit a **Request for Modification Form** to the GPS IRB. Because your study falls under exemption, there is no requirement for continuing IRB review of your project. Please be aware that changes to your protocol may prevent the research from qualifying for exemption from 45 CFR 46.101 and require submission of a new IRB application or other materials to the GPS IRB.

A goal of the IRB is to prevent negative occurrences during any research study. However, despite our best intent, unforeseen circumstances or events may arise during the research. If an unexpected situation or adverse event happens during your investigation, please notify the GPS IRB as soon as possible. We will ask for a complete explanation of the event and your response. Other actions also may be required depending on the nature of the event. Details regarding the timeframe in which adverse events must be reported to the GPS IRB and the appropriate form to be used to report this information can be found in the *Pepperdine University Protection of Human Participants in Research: Policies and Procedures Manual* (see link to "policy material" at <http://www.pepperdine.edu/irb/graduate/>).