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Madeline Landes
Eastern Illinois University

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"Personnel Administration Clinical Experience Examination:
Collaborative Leadership"

By Madeline M. Landes

A Narrative: Booth Libraries Inspires

Initially, this research project began as the capstone project for the Eastern Illinois University Educational Administration Personnel Administration course. For this project, I was to conduct an in the field examination of a current issue in personnel practice that occurs today in public schools. When approaching this assignment, I was naive to the scope of how many directions this project could be taken and how many functions of personnel are actually occurring daily within the context of the current educational continuum. Throughout the course of the semester, our class had learned about basic concepts of personnel functions that occur within the context of our public schools. However, when approaching this assignment, I wanted to do more than just explain and define a personnel function that had been chosen from a generic list of ideas that was provided to us in class. What I really wanted to do was investigate a concept within the context of a public school that could not only aid in the growth of the individuals of that organization but also with my own personal growth.

When entering Booth Library for the first time on a campus tour of EIU, I immediately felt as if I was in a different world as I was greeted by the large storybook-like clock that was surrounded by the rich marble and hardwood that is housed at the west entrance of the library. Looking up at the clock, I was in awe of how beautiful the scene was as I looked to my parents and said, "It is so beautiful, it is like something that is described in a fairytale." As I took my eyes off the clock to further investigate my first sights of Booth Library, I observed a group of individuals in what I now know as the Ballenger Teacher Center, reading large books and using teaching o cplk wcxkgu to a group of students. At this point, I again nqngf at my parents with a sense of youthful enthusiasm saying, "Look! I remember those, we wugf to love the big books the teachers read to us in elementary school! I have not seen those for years!" This initial experience of mine has been one that has stuck with me and really helps to pinpoint what Booth Library has done for me. Looking back on my initial impression of Booth Library, it is ironic that I would use the term fairytale to describe the atmosphere of the library, it seems only fitting. However, now on my third degree from Eastern, I can say that the fairytale impression has emerged from the idealized atmosphere that is created amongst the books. Booth Library is a place where I go to learn and grow socially, emotionally, and educationally. Booth Library has allotted me the opportunities, resources, and experiences that allow me to open my mind, explore the various possibilities both personally and educationally, examine different perspectives, learn and appreciate different cultures, broaden my horizons, foster my creativity, and to challenge me to go the extra-mile. To me, the "fairytale" culture is nurtured by Booth Library being a place where you can open your mind, just like a book, and begin to go on adventures, learn aspects, gain facts, make connections, and draw conclusions in your life and your career that can only be mired by the same experiences one has when reading a book. When I pick up a book, I am lost in the context, atmosphere, and happenings of the characters within the pages of these stories that takes me away from the hustle and bustle of my life. Similarly, Booth Library mirrors the same experience for me, through both the atmosphere and the countless educational resources (books,

journal articles, teaching tools, and electronic archives)"cu it allows me to focus on the possibilities so I can make connections and draw conclusions with the same vigor, open-mind, and creativity that we have as children. With this idea, I now understand what was so thrilling about the initial observations of teaching manipulatives and large storybooks.

Being on my third degree now from Eastern, I have been privileged to have the opportunity to utilize the many resources that Booth Library has to offer. When approaching this research project, I was stuck with the narrow perspective of personnel functions being ones that were handled by an administrator with an employee, such as teacher evaluations, hiring, and mentoring. Though important functions, I knew there had to be more options, but what? As always, I headed to Booth Library to begin an investigative inquiry in itself that went beyond the one that I would be doing for this project. I first went to the reference section computer area and began to peruse the various journal article collections that Booth Library houses, particularly my favorite ones, Academic Search Premier and Jstor. With personnel being such an open field, I really admire having these search engines available to me because they allow me to set time frames, integrate topics with a particular grade-level or audience, set time frames. Additionally, the availability of these search engines allows me to access professional journal articles that would otherwise not be available to me unless I was a member of each of these professional organizations. In terms of research, I find these collections invaluable. Initially, my assignment was more of an in the field examination. However, in the inquiry stages of this project, through my perusal of the Booth Library journal collections, I was able to gain insights to other functions of personnel but was also able to make connections between a particular personnel function, that before this perusal I never knew existed, and the context of both my educational and career interests and contexts.

Additionally, the online periodical databases allow me to gain the basic but crucial aspects of any research project or written work. For example, when conducting research, it is crucial to gain insights and knowledge about the topic from the experts within that field. From this point, I can then broaden my horizons, take into account the various perspectives on a topic that exist, and gain an overview on the different contexts and environments that the topic takes place within. This knowledge then allows me to assimilate information on the topic with my own interests, my own personal and professional contexts, the everyday practice, the professional insights and statistics, and my audience.

From this point, I then utilized the Booth Library on-line catalog and a Booth Library reference librarian to assist me in finding some materials from authors that I found specialized in my newly discovered research topic, collaborative leadership. The reference librarian then showed me where to find these books stacks. I was now on my way to the educational book stacks on the second floor of the library. Upon arriving at these book stacks, I was initially on a quest to find collaborative leadership expert, Howard Rubin's book *Collaborative Leadership* (2008). As I gazed at the books stacks quickly scanning the binding of each book as I looked at the call numbers, my eyes suddenly stop on a bright green and black book that had been a

familiar sight of my past. I anxiously reach for this book with a smile as I then begin to fan the pages, as if the chapter could be lost forever from the book if not found immediately, to find what I once studied. The book was that of Gerald Gutek (2004), *Philosophical and Ideological Voices in Education*, the chapter was on Aristotle's Realism Philosophy. As an undergraduate teacher education major, I spent a lot of time studying this book and its contents. Specifically, I had conducted many undergraduate research studies off the philosophies and concepts, particularly Aristotle and Bagley, that were presented in this very book. Now, as a master's student in educational administration, I was curious as to how I could not think to use this book to form a foundation for my research in personnel. At this point it hit me, there has to be a historical and philosophical basis behind the overarching concept of collaborative leadership. At this moment, I realized that I wanted to take my research to a different level and go beyond the basic requirements for the class. Sure, a clinical examination is crucial in the scope of research; however, I was now interested in forming an investigative inquiry on this personnel practice. Being that this is a clinical examination of a personnel practice within the context of public education, it only seemed logical to me to begin my research with a historical basis from which to shape and influence my research. As I stood among the high bookshelves surrounded by educational topics, I set down my book bag next to me and took advantage of an open space between the books on the book stacks. I began to read the table of context again, as if it were the first time I had ever opened this book. As my finger skimmed the pages, I stopped at John Dewey, followed the dotted line to his philosophy of Experimentalism and Pragmatism, the dots continue, page 78. I again pick up the book and begin to fan the pages until I hit the page. I instinctively, begin to read this section, being so motivated and engrossed in the content of the book I do not even think to sit at a table to stay a while. After all, there were more pages to be read and discovery to be done, I was thinking what can I find next!

I put the book down next to my book bag after reading a few pages and began to skim the binding of the books to see what else was there that I had not even thought about as a part of my research. A few shelves below my eyes then stop at Charlotte Danielson's *A Framework for Teaching* (2004). Again, I pull the book out, this time with more hesitation. Looking at the book, I vaguely remember discussing this book and its contents in a previous Educational Administration course. Upon looking at the book, I remembered something about a rubric, domains, and performance evaluations. I find these very aspects in the back of the book and I begin to skim over them. As I look through the book, now kneeling down on the floor, as the book was nearly on the bottom shelf of the book stacks, I hit domain four, professional responsibilities. At this point, I then realized that I could use Danielson's work as a tool to provide evaluation, assessment, and structure for my observations, recommendations for improvement, and action plan that I would be creating for this research project. After engaging in the clinical aspects of my research project, I realized that this book discovery was one of the most vital and important discoveries that I had made. In fact, the books then lead me to apply and assimilate my research with other concepts and information that I received in my academic program and coursework in the educational administration department. Overall, this book

allowed me to further examine my role and experience in this research project. In particular, I concluded my research with examining how collaborative leadership is displayed, modeled, and taught within the context of higher education, especially teacher education and preparation programs that are offered here at EIU.

Additionally, this concept not only allowed me to grow educationally but also personally and as an individual as it led me to many reflective practices. Being on my third degree from EIU, all of which are tied to the discipline of education, I myself went through the undergraduate teacher education program, the master's-level administrative program, and am now currently working towards my specialist degree here at EIU. The study then allowed me to reflect on my own experiences and observations within these programs within the context of the principles and practices of collaborative leadership. From here, I was then able to go out into the field at a local school district where we place many of our teacher education students at all three of these degree levels. At this point, I conducted an investigative inquiry, that encompassed the initial project component of a clinical experience examination, over the course of four months at this school of study. I then was able to apply the concepts of Dewey to formulate a structure and pattern to analyze data, practices, and ideas of individuals from all aspects of the educational hierarchy, from the district administration level to the building level teacher. After conducting an in the field examination of collaborative leadership within the context of the public school system, I was then able to express the impacts, methods, frequency, and involvement of both individuals and the various systems that contribute to the total school community. Of course, included in this total school community was the involvement of EIU and its members (professors, clinical students, administrative interns, cooperating teachers/ administrators, and counseling interns) and how these individuals influence and impact the concept of collaborative leadership. In particular, I was able to take my experiences in these programs and the content that was presented when I was in the program, and reflect on how these differed from the current policies and practices in these programs.

In essence, this notion all stemmed from the discovery of Charlotte Danielson's book that I had discovered among the book stacks of Booth Library when I was looking for a Rubin's book on collaborative leadership. Additionally, Danielson's framework allowed me to partner with both the school district I was working with and members of the EIU teacher preparation programs to make recommendations and formulate an action plan to encourage and implement collaborative leadership as a function of personnel relations within the scope of both secondary and higher education. Overall, I then was able to make a connection between the start of my work, the philosophical perspectives of Dewey, with the ending of my research, Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*. I was able to realize that Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* (2004) follows the two very practices of John Dewey. *The Framework* (2004) is pragmatic in the sense it is systematic, it provides a common language, a common dialogue, and a model of what "good teaching" looks like for all members of an organization. However, *The Framework for Teaching*

(2004) is also Experimental in that it depends on the context of which the teaching and learning is occurring on how this framework will be presented.

After closing the pages of Danielson's work, I then landed my eyes a few books down on Howard Rubin's (2008) *Collaborative Leadership*. This book was my original destination, that I utilized for creating collaborative leadership within the everyday contexts of the educational continuum. Mainly, I referenced Rubin to aid in the creation of teacher leaders and to implement reflective teaching practices within and among the various systems that are present within a school system. Though this was to be my main focus of my research originally, it ended up to be merely a recommendation resource on activities and practices that could be used to support and display the concepts presented in (2004) *Framework for Teaching*, specifically her forth domain, professional responsibilities.

My initial impressions of Booth Library from my first campus tour still hold true today and are constantly becoming more meaningful to me. Just as when I open the pages of the books in Booth Library, the same excitement, creativity, and connections are made in the various spheres of my life, whether academically or personally. Just as I became engrossed and emerged in the environment of the library and all it has to offer, the resources that Booth Library offered me this day lead me to explore, study, analyze, and evaluate other cultures and resources within my own life. Overall, this research project truly allowed me to explore areas and opportunities that I would never have done without these resources. This research project has allowed me to explore aspects, programs, and individuals that are as diverse as the context of Booth Library itself. For now, the bookmark must be put in place, as the opportunities are endless for the next chapter of my book that I hope Booth Library will help me to pick up on.

Running Header: COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP

Personnel Administration Clinical Experience Examination: Collaborative Leadership

Madeline Landes

Eastern Illinois University

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Paper Abstract

As the capstone project for the Eastern Illinois University EDA personnel administration class, I was to conduct an in the field examination of a current issue in personnel practice that occurs today in public schools. In such case, this paper will summarize the findings from my clinical study in relation to collaborative leadership. Overall, this paper will include my conclusions drawn from my research and in the field study as well as recommendations for improvement of this aspect at my school. For this study, I used both primary and secondary sources to combine research-based ideas and philosophies with the hands-on experiences and programs implemented at the school of study. Specifically, I analyzed the works of John Dewey, Charlotte Danielson, Gerald Gutek, and Hank Rubin to form a historical perspective on collaborative leadership, analyze aspects of collaborative leadership in place at the school of study, and to provide recommendations for improving and increasing collaborative leadership at the school of study. The clinical aspect of this study took place at Cumberland High school, a small rural district in east central Illinois, for a three month period. A variety of individuals participated in this study, including administration, staff, and community members.

Personnel Administration Clinical Experience Examination: Collaborative Leadership

Introduction and Background Information

As the capstone project for the Eastern Illinois University EDA personnel administration class, I was to conduct an in the field examination of a current issue in personnel practice that occurs today in public schools. In such case, this paper will summarize the findings and conclusions from my clinical study in relation to collaborative leadership. First, this paper will explain and define collaborative leadership through a historical perspective and current working definitions of collaborative leadership. This information will then lead to the summarization of my findings from the query process I conducted within the school site from the opinions both administration and staff at the school. The paper will then outline the findings, roles, and, impacts of collaborative leadership at the school site. The paper will then conclude with an action plan that includes the summarization of the school's strengths/opportunities for improvement in relation to the practice of collaborative leadership alongside my own recommendations for improving this personnel practice at the school site.

For this study, I used both primary and secondary sources to combine research-based ideas and philosophies with the hands-on experiences and programs implemented at the school of study. Specifically, I analyzed the works of John Dewey, Charlotte Danielson, Gerald Gutek, Patty Lee, and Hank Rubin to form a historical perspective on collaborative leadership, analyze aspects of collaborative leadership in place at the school of study, and to provide recommendations for improving and increasing collaborative leadership at the school of study.

The clinical aspect of this study took place at Cumberland High school, a small rural district in east central Illinois, for a three month period. Currently, the school enrollment is at 320 students. Often times, the school district is faced with financial hardships and many of the students are considered economically disadvantaged (over 30%) according to the Illinois Interactive report Card published by the Illinois State board of Education. Overall, the community can be classified as blue collar with a majority of its members working multiple jobs just to make ends meet. Additionally, many students in the district also hold multiple jobs in addition to going to school to help make ends meet for their families. A variety of individuals participated in this study, including administration, staff, and community members of the Cumberland High School learning community.

Historical Perspective

When I began to research the idea of collaborative leadership, it was clear that this personnel practice had roots in educational philosophies, such as Pragmatism and John Dewey's Experimentalism. It is important to note that more often than not, Pragmatism follows a similar pattern as that of the scientific method. Specifically, if the problem can be defined then it can be solved. However, we must scientifically test the consequences of our actions, form a statement that is based on the application of the hypothesis to solve the problem, and then judge our

methods and ideas based on the consequences when the technique is acted on. To me, the logic of this process follows the scientific method in that it is experimental. Under the idea of Pragmatism, truth is derived from human experience not separate from human experience. Additionally, values are experienced within the context of ethical and aesthetic problems. In such case, issues are charged by unique features of particular situations. In essence, success is judged in terms of consequences that come from transforming the human environment. (Gutek 1997) When conducting this clinical study, this philosophy went hand in hand with today's schools and educational system. For the purpose of this study, I used this philosophy to support how collaborative leadership exists through our educational system, in the query process of gaining opinions on collaborative leadership and its existence at Cumberland High School, and how the roles of administration and staff play into collaborative leadership at Cumberland High School.

For the rest of my clinical study, I turned to the ideas and philosophies of John Dewey. Though Dewey was considered a pragmatic, he tailored and specified the ideals of Pragmatism through his philosophy of Experimentalism. When analyzing my findings from my clinical study on collaborative leadership, I found it helpful to form my conclusions and recommendations for improvement of off many ideals of Experimentalism. In such case, the ideals of Experimentalism will assist me in communicating my topic findings, the analysis of the current programs in place, opportunities for improvement, and suggestions for those improvements. Overall, Dewey believed that all learning was particular and contextual to a given time, place, and circumstance. (Gutek 1997). In turn, social education was a means to bring students into gradual contact with the realities and needs of society. Really, Experimentalism emphasized the social role of the school as the agent that generated community. In terms of this study, I would refer to the community as the collaboration of the all the members of the school community (Parents, staff, students, community members, school board members, and community stakeholders). After my observations at Cumberland High School, I see it crucial to note that I agree with Dewey on the necessity for the emphasis on relationships between ideas, curriculum, practice, activity, and problem-solving. In this aspect, I think that nurturing the idea of total school programs and interdisciplinary ideals will benefit the idea of collaborative leadership in schools. Moreover, this practice can become more prescriptive to the needs of the organization and its members through the creation of teacher leaders and implementation of such practices as reflective planning and evaluation within in each individual school building.

Definitions

According to Lee's *Effective Communication: Collaborative Practices for Educators* (1999), the words collaboration can be broken down into two aspects to provide a working definition of this concept. Part one of the word is *co*, meaning with or together. Part two of the word is *labor*, meaning work. In conclusion, collaboration means working with others and working together (p.5).

According to Rubin's *Collaborative Leadership* (2002), *collaboration* is "a purposeful relationship in which all parties strategically choose to cooperate in order to accomplish a shared outcome (p.17). Essentially, because this a voluntary ideal, the success of collaboration depends on at least one of the collaborative leaders ability to build and maintain relationships.

So, how does Rubin define a *collaborative leader*? According to Rubin (2002), "a collaborative leader is anyone who has accepted responsibility for building or helping ensure the success of a heterogeneous team to accomplish a shared purpose" (p. 18). Moreover, Rubin does mention some characteristics of collaborative leaders that I will further discuss in the roles in collaboration section of this paper.

Beyond the idea of collaboration and collaborative leaders is the process that helps bring the two concepts together, *relationship management*. Through both my research and in the field experiences, I learned the essentiality of building and maintaining relationships to make collaboration a successful process for not only the school organization as a whole but also for all the individuals involved. Rubin (2002) defines relationship management as, "the purposeful exercise of behavior, communication, organizational resources to effect the perspective, beliefs, and behaviors of another person to influence that person's relationship with you and the collaborative enterprise" (p.18). To me, relationship management is the combination of the tools, strategies, and ideas that a collaborative leader implements and practices.

In totality, Rubin pulls all of these ideas together to form a working definition of *collaborative leadership*. Rubin (2002) states, "collaborative leadership is the skill-full and mission-oriented management of relevant relationships. It is the juncture of organizing and management" (p. 18). After reading Rubin's work, I concluded that collaborative leadership is how collaborative leaders use their resources and manpower to build structures to support and sustain relationships over a given amount of time.

In discussion of the process of collaboration and current programs in place involving collaborative leadership, reasoning is heavily involved in the process of implementation and maintenance of successful collaborative relationships and programs. In such case, it is necessary to provide a definition for *reasoning*. According to Dewey (1910), reasoning is "the process of combining meanings to draw conclusions from manipulations" (p. 27).

According to Dewey (1902), *learning* is "the process of solving problems in the given environment" (p. 78). In the eyes of Dewey, an individual knows and learns through their experiences. To help classify the connection between learning and experiences Dewey created the idea of an *experimental continuum*. Dewey's experimental continuum states that people are what past experiences have made them and the future comes out of the present state (Dewey 1966, 94). Essentially, the past, present, and future are one flow of on-going experiences. The experimental continuum is also when both private (individual) and public (group) modes of experience are blended (Dewey 1966, 79). In this case, the ideas and experiences are coming

together to form a personal and collective past. From this learning and experimental continuum comes growth. Dewey (1910) defines *growth* as “any time the learner is aware of interrelationships of experiences and consequences that follow an action” (p. 35).

Query Process

Today, schools are being asked to be more inclusive in the education that they provide to students. The days of reading, writing, and arithmetic have been extended to include death, drugs, and divorce. Essentially, students are coming to school with an array of diverse and complex needs that are at the same time so unpredictable. In a time of educational change and reform with the emergence of new standards and accountability measures administration and staff often become overwhelmed and short tempered and begin concentrating on just getting by let alone working with other individuals. Nonetheless, we as teachers must begin to work collaboratively to create the consistency and stability for those individuals at the center of our efforts, the students. At this point in my research, I decided to go out into the field and find out what my colleagues had to say about collaborative leadership. To do this, I interviewed both district and building administrators as well as staff members from the various departments at Cumberland High School. In these interviews I asked individuals their definition of collaborative leadership, how they felt collaborative leadership was practiced at the school, how they felt they participated in collaborative leadership, and suggestions on areas to improve collaborative leadership in the school. The following is a summarization of my findings from each of the interviews that I conducted.

Cumberland CUSD #77 Superintendent: Mr. Rusty Ragon

Unquestionably, Mr. Ragon holds the ultimate responsibility for collaborative leadership, as he is head of all the leaders and staff members in the district. Through my communication with Mr. Ragon, it was clear he strove to build relationships with and between not only each school building but also between all members of the school community. “Overall, schools are a social mission that need to meet the school/district agenda and instructional needs while still meeting the needs of the families and kids that they serve.” Mr. Ragon feels that the district does well in establishing and communicating a key component of collaborative leadership, a vision. “Whether it be through our professional agreements or through faculty and volunteer handbooks, there is always a common tie, a common vision. I stress to each school leader that they must rally the resources and communities of support to build relationships that will prepare students for not only their careers but also their lives and their civic duty to society.” Mr. Ragon felt that Cumberland CUSD # 77 continually builds relationships with children and institutions associated with learning/schooling such as community organizations, social service agencies, businesses, school personnel, and parents. “Because our school district is smaller and sometimes financially challenged, it is crucial to collaborate. Most of the community is of the working-class so finances are an issue for them as well. In such case, we all try to work together to meet the personnel and educational needs of all the individuals we serve in the district to the best of our ability.” Mr.

Ragon mentioned that school registration and volunteer opportunities were venues that truly pooled resources, talents, and individuals together to benefit everyone involved. “I think that as a district we can always improve in the area of collaborative leadership. I think that more communication and training will help to build and maintain accountable partnerships with everyone that can contribute to the success of public schooling.”

Cumberland High School Principal: Todd Hall

According to Mr. Hall, collaborative leadership is “working with a variety of individuals not only within the building but throughout the district to fulfill the mission and goals of the school. Additionally, it means working with one another to ensure the success of students.” Overall, Mr. Hall felt that collaborative leadership was displayed through all members of the school community from administration to staff to students. “In the school, I feel I practice collaborative leadership by having constant communication with members of the school community and by providing these individuals with opportunities to communicate not only their strengths to the school and its systems but also to provide feedback on those systems.” Mr. Hall felt that relationships were crucial in the success of not only the students but also for the goals and mission to be successfully accomplished. “I think that my open-door policy allows me to gain the input and perspectives from individuals whom may see a need that I am not aware of just because they are closer to a situation or have established relationships with certain individuals to help formulate strategies to best fit the individual need or situation at hand.” Because of this, Mr. Hall felt that it allowed him to connect and adapt the institutional systems to those individuals with whom he works. Overall, Mr. Hall felt that collaborative leadership was practiced through student organizations, such as student council, through the various staff committees in the school, through the school improvement team, and through required operations of the school, such as master scheduling. “I think that collaborative leadership can be improved in the school by drawing more resources and interaction from community members or even parents. I think that professional development may help staff members learn how to provide opportunities within their own individual contexts to involve these individuals in the various aspects of the educational system.”

Cumberland High School Guidance Counselor: Diane Bomer

When it came to the discussion of collaborative leadership, Mrs. Bomer was not at a loss for words. The following information is what Mrs. Bomer had to say when asked the same set of questions that were listed above. “To me, collaborative leadership is creating conditions for student learning with various members of the school system, such as families, the public, students, and private agencies. I think that for the students and the school system to be successful this relationship must be built and maintained over time.” Mrs. Bomer is not only a member of the support staff at Cumberland High School but she is also in charge of all master scheduling and college preparation. “I work a lot with both members within the school as well as with members of certain community and private agencies. Through my various duties, I work with

local colleges/universities, state agencies, community agencies (medical/Crisis), as well as with parents and teachers.” In such case, Mrs. Bomer thought of herself as a link to the community and public aspect of collaborative leadership for the school. “At Cumberland, all the members of the staff really come together and pool their talents and jobs to establish the necessary communication and relationships to make this move forward. If we did not work together, nothing would ever be accomplished.” Mrs. Bomer noted that master scheduling really helps to take into account the needs of the students as well as the teachers. “Every year, I put out a survey to teachers about their classes currently taught, the time of day they are offered, and any ideas or considerations that they see. I think that we all work together to help the students get what they need while still meeting the needs of the teachers and the demands of their classes.” Mrs. Bomer noted that she then takes these thoughts and works them into the student needs. Each year, students are also given surveys of their career interests and courses that they plan to take the following year. This in turn helps Mrs. Bomer establish the correct number of sections for a course and plan them so students can take other academic courses they are interested in without a conflict. “Overall, I think that collaborative leadership could be improved in the school by providing staff with more time to meet and communicate with one another. Additionally, I think more needs to be done to hold staff accountable for their agreements and what is expected of them.”

Cumberland High School Teacher: Anne Catey

Being a department chair and in charge of school improvement efforts at Cumberland High School, Mrs. Catey stressed that collaboration was a big part of her daily life at school. “I think that Mr. Hall provides us with a structure of what needs to be done and where we need to be while still allowing us to have some freedom in how it is done.” Mrs. Catey felt that the relationships are crucial to collaborative leadership because they can threaten, reward, energize, or detour projects or challenges at hand. To Mrs. Catey, being a department chair helps her to build relationships and collaboration within a specific part of the school. “I think that the department meetings and collaborative relationships that all the members of the department have built through the years of teaching together have helped us to develop and maintain good team teaching. Good team teaching helps all of us to then make connections for our students, build off curriculum, and be consistent with our expectations of them within the department.” Mrs. Catey also is tied into collaborative leadership in that she runs the school improvement team. “I think this aspect of my job shows me how all members of the school must communicate and collaborate to ensure the success of the students as well as the goals and missions of the school. However, this aspect of my job also shows me how much the school needs to work on collaboration!” Mrs. Catey said that a common time for all department heads to come together with administration and support staff would help in the idea of collaborative leadership. “I think that we as teachers get so overwhelmed with our daily duties that we forget to communicate with those outside our own hallway. Also, I think that we have a great faculty handbook and professional agreement but it would help if some members of the school staff would read and

understand the expectations and goals. Boy, this aspect would make life more simple, especially in school improvement regards!”

Programs and Policies of Collaborative Leadership

District Wide

First and foremost, all district employees are expected to know and to follow the professional curricular and teaching standards that are set forth by both federal and state mandates. In terms of collaborative practices that are implemented district wide, the following are the activities and descriptions.

Professional Agreement: The professional teaching agreement is an agreement that is implemented district wide based on the needs of the school organization as a whole, its members it serves, and the community at large. The professional agreement takes place through a collective bargaining process that is composed of representatives from various aspects of the district, including community members (attorneys), school board members, district/building administrators, teachers, and members of the teacher’s union. At this point, the needs, resources, and funding come into play to establish an agreement to best serve all the members of the school community. Ideally before this process, members can sit down and have a discussion on where the need is and areas of concern so that these issues may be known and hopefully resolved before going into the bargaining table. Collaborative leaders are needed to make this process successful because their job is to represent their people and communicate the interests and needs of those they are representing.

Volunteer Handbook: Currently, the district has one volunteer handbook that is created by a professional human resource cooperation, Buschue Human Resources. All school buildings use the same handbook and it is usually revised as needed. When examining this document, I found that the areas of need for volunteering and the orientation process was formulated by collaboration of ideas from surveys distributed to all district staff members in each school building when the document was revised four years ago. District orientation for volunteers and expectations of their positions is covered at a district wide-orientation held two times a year that is mandatory for all district volunteers.

School Registration: School registration for the entire district is held in one building for all students. In such case, various members of the school community collaborate to make this process successful. Volunteers, whether community members or district staff is crucial in making sure all the needs, questions, and requirements are fulfilled for all members of the school community. During registration, many community agencies are present and offer their time and services to make this process successful. Many students in the district face financial hardships or lack the means of transportation because their parents are working multiple jobs to make ends

meet that they cannot get the necessary medical or dental exams needed for school. In such case, the district works with local hospitals, health care professionals, and dentists to come to registration to give free or discounted physicals and immunizations to those students whom qualify. Additionally, a mobile dental care unit from the local hospital will come to registration or at the start of school and provide free maintenance and cleaning of teeth to those students whom qualify. Additionally, members from social service groups and counseling professionals are there to offer services to those individuals whom may need them. Such programs include crisis intervention, Department of Human Services, Free and Reduced Lunch Services. Collaboration of all members of the school community take part in this from schedule changes to secretaries taking demographic information to coaches working the physical education table. Collaboration in terms of academics, health, and extra-curricular activities are addressed at this event from members of the school community, such as students and administrators, to community members and parent volunteers.

School Specific

Master Scheduling and Curricular Mapping: Collaboration from each department goes into providing what courses are to be offered, the time they are offered, and how many sections will exist. Students are involved in this process yearly as they fill out their potential career fields and courses that they expect to take for the next year. So students can do this, a class orientation night is conducted around the middle of the year to explain the courses and their purpose to students for each grade. At this event, over 90% of students attend and parents, teachers, and administration are all present at the event. After this, students will be given the course outline they want to take. From here, teachers come together and decide the order things will be taught so connections can be made for students and content will build off of each other. At this point, administrators will look over the courses offered, the needs of teachers and students and formulate a schedule with the guidance secretary in charge of this process to formulate a master schedule. Input from students is crucial because administration wants to arrange class times and offerings so students can get the courses they desire to proceed in their career goals without having to make choices in academic areas. Rather, students usually only have dilemmas over electives during this process. Lunch hours and preparation periods are also taken into account in regards to extra duties of teachers and clean-up time for certain classes (home economics and industrial tech).

School Improvement and Professional Development: School improvement days are generally guided by the needs of the teachers and departments in relation to student achievement. Members of each academic department are involved in bringing issues and ideas for preparing students for standardized testing to the table. A general plan of where the current situation is in relation to where the school needs to be is given to the team at the beginning of the year from the building administrator. This plan is formulated by district administration with the building principles at the end of every school year. Specific meeting times, guidelines, and processes are not established and are generally left up to the school improvement team members. Professional

development is utilized to address more the needs of the school group as a whole rather than as individuals. For example, professional development days often consist of collaboration on how to use new technology in the school, medical training, or school improvement and behavioral intervention processes.

Faculty Handbook: The faculty handbook is a collaboration of the expectations of the district and the state of teachers at Cumberland High School. Yearly, faculty members are asked to provide their evaluation of the document and are asked to give ideas for any other information that would be helpful. This collaboration just started two years ago and has increased the number of individual s whom actually read it and use it as a resource as it is designed. Previously, faculty were just given the amended pieces to the handbook to add to their existing handbook. Currently, the district technology administrator, the school administrator, and myself are in the process of making the document electronic so it can be accessed easily and from any location.

Roles and Impacts

District Administrative Roles

Through the analysis and examination of both the interviews I conducted and the district policies and programs that were in place that govern collaborative leadership I was able to provide the following summarization of the role and impact of district administration in collaborative leadership. According to Cumberland Superintendent Rusty Ragon, district administration work with all members of the school community to establish programs, resources, and staff members that will not only carry out practices that will further the district mission and goals but also practices that will contribute to their individual growth as members of a professional learning community and success of the students.

When looking at district policies and programs in place, particularly those mentioned in the interviews I conducted, I concluded that the role of district administration in collaborative leadership deals more with the formalities and legalities of such programs and policies. For example, Mr. Ragon communicates with each building administrator in the district to not only gain insight to individual needs and concerns in the district but also to communicate concerns, unify and uniform processes and procedures in the district for the management and implementation of the total school program. To me, district administration serves as an overseer of forming connections between all members of the district not just site specific as the roles are in district administration. For example, the school professional agreement for staff members requires district administration to work with the school board, teachers union, and community members to establish, negotiate, and legalize funds, practices, resources, training, and development. With the process of collective bargaining, it is crucial that collaboration occurs to ensure the end product is in fact a collective product that incorporates the needs and concerns of the various groups and needs of the members of the school community. As Dewey had mentioned in *The Child and The Curriculum (1902)*, “it is impossible to reach unalterable

conclusions...human knowledge consists of warranted generalizations until something comes into play that didn't fit the bill" (p. 103). To this, I think the district administration impacts the operations of collaborative leadership by reconstructing the generalizations and experiences when a need arises or an issue is encountered. I think that this aspect is demonstrated through the school registration process that was listed above. Mainly, the district administration looked at the needs of the members it served and established programs and resources to accommodate the needs of the school community at large. Additionally, the volunteer handbook that is in place for the district encourages participation in all areas of school operations and communicates the expectations and procedures that were collaborated on by members in the district to fill a need that exists throughout the entire district, such as lack of time, resources, and funding.

Building Administration Role and Impact

Through the analysis and examination of both the interviews I conducted and the building policies and programs that were in place that govern collaborative leadership, I was able to provide the following summarization of the role and impact of building administration in collaborative leadership. Unlike district administration that deals with the concept of the whole organization and generalizations, I found that the building administrations role is to take those generalizations and fit them to the unique situations and needs within their building. Building administrators must be clear on the district goal that is to be achieved alongside the goals and needs within their own building. To me, building administrators have the greatest impact in this area when they collaborate with all members of the school community and see situations also through the eyes of those that they lead. When looking at this aspect, I thought Cumberland High School's building principal did well in this area. Primarily, I think that his ability to effectively communicate and delegate tasks helps involve all members of the school community and provides an opportunity for everyone at some point in the year to contribute their strengths to a given project, committee, or activity. The key here I noticed was that Mr. Hall connected the institutional systems with the members with whom he works by taking the time to learn and get to know about individuals and groups so he can have systematic change and adaptation by influencing people not only individually but also collectively.

Programs within the school that I felt did this, as I discussed above, were the school improvement team, the counseling services offered to students, test preparation, master scheduling, and professional development. Mainly, I again refer back to Dewey's idea of an educational continuum, people are what past experiences have made them. As a building administrator, one needs to take into account that some collaborative experiences for individuals in the past were not successful or truly collaborative. In such case, administrators must provide guidelines, framework, and venues for successful collaboration and leadership within the school. Administrators must emphasize Dewey's philosophy that conclusions are tentative and are subject to further evaluation and reconstruction. This aspect could be as needs of the program and students change or as other views from other members of the school community come into play, including parents, students, and district administration.

Overall Strengths

Initially taking on this project, I was curious and somewhat doubtful to the extent collaborative leadership actually took place at Cumberland CUSD # 77. However, after my interviews, research, and in the field experiences, I must say Cumberland CUSD #77 does well in various aspects of collaboration but also in collaborative leadership. Through the programs, procedures, and philosophy in place within not only the district but also Cumberland High School the members of the school community change, infuse, advance knowledge of such aspects alongside the cultural and individual capacities of its members.

Within Cumberland High School, I think effective collaboration and collaborative leadership is because the members create contexts and decisions where others choose to work with one another toward a shared goal or vision rather than being forced to work with one another. Because this is such a small and close-knit district, this aspect is one that would often be difficult to accomplish. However, this is a strength of the school because administration is aware and addresses the notion of Rubin's that attitudes from relationships do in fact effect the attitudes and career goals of both staff and students. Mainly, the faculty handbook addresses the goals, procedures, and expectations of faculty members to help in this area. Additionally, constant communication and outreach by the principal to staff, students, and community members truly helps increase morale because a sense of meaningful existence is created for all members of the school community. Again, this is done through surveys, parental contact, committee sign-ups, postings of need areas in the school, and the family-focused social services both the school and district offer.

Within the district, I think that adaptation to the needs of both the school and community provides the strength for collaborative leadership at Cumberland CUSD # 77. As I mentioned earlier, a majority of the individuals in the district struggle financially and often do not have the means to get required immunizations or medical care. I think that the district registration process required tremendous collaborative leadership to adapt to the needs of its members. As discussed above, district registration brought members from local universities, state agencies, local dental providers, and medical associates together to use their strengths to adapt to the needs of the district. Nonetheless, the district did well in implementing its professional resources and volunteers to meet the needs of all involved while still carrying out the school mission and philosophy.

Opportunities for Improvement

Overall, the main opportunities for improvement fall into the areas of accountability, evaluation, and professional development. I think that more needs to be done to make the knowledge, skills, and expectations to be interrelated and interdisciplinary. Mainly, I think a relation needs to be established between experiences, action, and reflection. As Dewey points out, "knowledge and reflection on activities is necessary to grow" (Hickman & Alexander 1998, 95).

In terms of Cumberland High School, I think that more professional development, training, and time needs to be allotted to its faculty and staff to effectively communicate, establish procedures and programs, and reflect on the effectiveness of those programs in order for collaboration to be completely successful. For example, faculty members may be given the faculty handbook but there is no way for members to be accountable for its contents or for evaluation of the handbook. Essentially, this will affect students because teachers are not being held accountable for their professional expectations, district procedures, or learning objectives.

Additionally, many individuals take professional development and collaboration time into their own hands to ensure things get done. From my conversations and data analysis I found that this affects areas of school improvement and standardized testing the most. Though there is a school improvement team in place, it is only comprised of six members and building administration rarely attends in person. As Dewey (1910) mentioned, collaboration and progress can only be “validated through trial and error. They must be tested by acting on it and building off of the experimental continuum” (p. 108). More reflection and conversation on classroom practices and needs of the students within each classroom within each subject area will help increase the instructional practices to meet the needs of students. Mrs. Catey agreed that collaboration among department chairs representing their findings from their department members alongside the administration attending to present the current needs of the school in relation to state and federal mandates would help in the success of the school members and its programs.

Finally, I think that professional development will help improve the collaborative leadership practices at the school and help build and maintain effective relationships among all members of the school community. Professional development will allow for members of the school community to establish effective communication practices, be provided clarifications and philosophies associated with the district/school programs, processes, goals, and philosophies, and be provided an evaluation instrument to use. In turn, I think all of the above opportunities for improvement will increase participation by all members of the school community, provide venues for evaluation and accountability, and update/collaborate/orient individuals with the programs, processes, and procedures to increase collaboration, communication, and the success of the school organization.

Recommendations for Improvement

My recommendations for improvement for the areas listed above come from not only my own ideas after my in the field study but also from professionals and experts in the field. In particular, I used Charlotte Danielson’s *A Framework for Effective Teaching*, Hank Rubin’s *Strategies for Effective Communication*, and John Dewey’s *The Child and The Curriculum*.

From communicating with representatives from various aspects of the school system and my study of the above works, it was clear to me that relationships are core to collaboration and effective collaborative leadership. Additionally, leadership skills must be present in schools to

make collaboration work. I agree with Mrs. Catey with her idea that relationships can energize or elude a cause. To take this a step further, I think the attitudes from these various relationships or events can and do affect the success of students and the quality of education they receive and are modeled. When reading Rubin's work (2002), his rationalization of a similar idea really helped put things into perspective. Rubin (2002) mentions, "education for children is a jumble of relationships. These relationships build, transform, and shape pre-existing and future relationships with parents, teachers, and co-workers" (p. XI). I think that providing training and a guide for the expectations in any given situation will help shape positive communication and collaboration skills in the light of the experiences or perceptions of the past. For students, consistency and connection is needed to make the encounters and jumble of relationships meaningful and positive. As Dewey (1966) mentions, "a collective human experience provides the individual with a more complex set of experiences" (p.64). To me, the organization and individual will then grow because of these mutual experiences. This notion also proves true in the areas of support services, school improvement, and volunteering that were discussed earlier that are in place at the school. By providing a common planning time, staff development days, or in service days for teachers, especially those in the same department, the group can not only grow together and contribute their strengths to a task but they can also be mutually engaged in problem-solving. I think that interdisciplinary connections could then be made to help in areas of test preparation, standardized testing, and school improvement. Moreover, I think that the administrator could ensure the success of such meeting times by providing an agenda or topics to be covered in the meetings in relation to needs in the school as well as results from student achievement and testing. Additionally, administrators could ask that notes be taken and turned in on findings, opinions, and potential strategies to address the needs at hand to be turned in by the following day. This aspect could include SMART goals, curriculum mapping, course objectives, or discipline. To me, the structure will help encourage accountability and provide an evaluation from all members of the staff. Additionally, this guidance will provide a structure and prevent the days being a venting session or a time for catch up work. This notion would also support Dewey's philosophy of sharing experiences dealing with common concerns.

Before such meetings can be effective, effective communication and collaboration skills should be taught to members of the school community. Essentially, such training will provide individuals with a set of common language and expectations in correlation with the district mission and goals. According to Hank Rubin (2002), "a normal adult conversation consists of multiple interruptions, one or more members half listening to what is being said, and extreme energy focused on getting each individual point across with little regard to the receiver" (p.15). In such case, one must remember Dewey's philosophy that ideas and values are always subject to alteration because of the experimental continuum. Too often, individuals forget that ideas should be instruments that should be used in solving human problems and situations. Instead, poor communication occurs because individuals are set on getting their point across and it being the final say. Rather, teaching effective collaboration skills and expectations will allow all views to be heard and taken into account for the final decision. Hank Rubin recommended that

collaborative leaders use workshops, faculty handbooks, or professional days to teach staff how to ask meaningful questions, watch for indications of misunderstanding, and strategies to deal with problematic situations. Rubin recommends that when an individual is confronted with a problematic situation they should first examine the experience for clues and then suggest means for solving the difficulty. To supplement this, Gutek (1997) does well in providing further explanation of the act of thought. A guide to this is included in Appendix A of this document. Overall, I agree with Rubin in that partnerships, plans, practice, and tools are just as essential for teachers to have as it is for the students we teach.

The plan, practice, tools, and evaluation tool then come from Charlotte Danielson's *A Framework for Teaching* (1996). Though the district has provided copies of this book to its staff members, it is provided as a resource for them to read if they choose and nothing more is ever done with it. However, in terms of collaborative leadership, I feel the book will help improve this practice, evaluate the practice of collaborative leadership in schools, and provide an assessment and accountability tool for both administrators and staff members. Primarily, Danielson's framework helps reconstruct directed experiences and add meaning to future experiences. In terms of collaborative leadership, I found Danielson's fourth domain, professional responsibilities, to be the most effective element of her framework to focus on. The fourth domain consists of a range of professional responsibilities ranging from contributions made to the school and district, self-reflection, professional growth to interactions with parents and contacts with the larger community. According to Danielson (1996), "the components of Domain 4 are associated with being a true professional educator: they encompass the roles assumed outside and in addition to those in the classroom with students" (p. 32). To me, these members in a school are those individuals that go beyond the requirements of their job to contribute to the general well-being and success of the organization. In such case, I feel a good collaborative leader should identify these individuals and utilize their strength to gain support and momentum for their cause. For example, administrators could have these individuals be committee chairs or teacher leaders in the building. Mainly, these individuals would help all individuals to become involved in the school community because domain 4 is mainly demonstrated through teacher interactions with families, co-workers, and members of the community at large.

In addition to professional contribution, I found Danielson's Framework to be effective in establishing expectations of performance, common language, accountability, and a tool for evaluation. For this component, I first referred to Danielson's levels of performance and then suggested utilizing the rubric for Domain 4 for the purpose of collaborative leadership. Mainly, I felt that these levels of performance would be useful in self-reflection, student performance in relation to departmental goals, in professional conversations, and for areas of future growth. I think that discussion at the beginning of the year by the building administrator with a sign-off of understanding will help to ensure all members are informed on how to use the rubric, when it is used, and the components of the rubric. For definitions of each performance level and a sample of the rubric for Domain 4 please refer to Appendix A. Overall, the framework is very helpful in

that it accommodates the federal and state mandates for teacher performance as well. In such case, the framework spells out how to meet those expectations and what those expectations are. Again, it is the structure and guidance teachers often need but also has ample room for adaptations and accommodations according to the needs of both the organization and the individual.

Collaborative Leadership and Teacher Leaders

Purpose of Teacher Leaders within the scope of collaborative leadership and reflective practices

First and foremost, one must realize that schools exist for a social mission and purpose and not for profit, efficiency, or even personal gain. A school's overall mission/vision should be based on the principles of infusing knowledge and change regarding the core principles of cultural, ecological, and individual capacities. In essence, schools affect the lives of all people involved, thus demanding both collaborative and interpersonal skills of both the leaders of an institution (administrators) and participants (teacher leaders, teachers, support staff, ect) all of which are in charge of implementing and aligning the overall mission/vision of the institution. In particular, the leader's role is to be the "keeper" and recruiter of the set social missions of the institution, such as rallying support and resources to achieve a social mission. These individuals should be mission driven leaders of schools that also serve as agents of collaboration for the sake of these missions to develop the collaborative skills in their staff to achieve them. Additionally, there is a need to recognize that a teacher's leadership role must be supported to increase student and improve student achievement. According to the Galileo Institute for teacher leadership at Oakland University, "Realizing the potential of teacher leadership requires a fundamental change in the culture and structure of schools, the preparation and continuing professional development of teachers and administrators, and the political, legal and fiscal context in which schools operate." In all, institutions need to have principles of sound management and organization in place before starting the collaborative process that ultimately should take a comprehensive yet integrated approach of meeting the educational, health, and cultural needs of the total school community in which it serves.

Mission of Collaborative Leadership within the scope of teacher leaders and reflective practice

Just as one expects educational institutions to have missions, visions, and goals behind all aspects of the organization's runnings, one also should expect a mission behind implementing and practicing concepts of collaborative leadership, teacher leaders, and reflective practices within an educational institution. Overall, the mission of collaborative leadership within an educational setting is to provide the tools and strategies needed to bring both diverse individuals and the diverse institutions they represent together in an effort to focus their work on developing the relationships necessary to accomplish a purpose that otherwise could not be done on an

individual basis. Organizing such practices requires leaders to organize venues to build one-on-one relationships on an interinstitutional level to accomplish both short and long-term collaboration projects and to encourage reflective teaching practices all in an effort to support the institutions overall mission, vision, and goals.

Benefits of a partnership between collaborative leadership, teacher leaders, and reflective practices

Upon thinking about this aspect, I immediately turned to Howard Rubin's book, *Collaborative Leadership* to gain a background on such a partnership. After reading his insights, I then composed a list of the possible benefits of such a partnership if it is organized, implemented, and revised correctly and continuously in the scope of an educational setting at either the level of primary/secondary schooling or at levels of higher education. The following is the list that I have compiled:

- All key decision makers will be represented in this partnership. This includes stakeholders, school board members, community members/businesses, district administrators, and building-level heads and leaders.
- A clear purpose for the partnership is created for all individuals that are involved
- Each partner will be granted the opportunity and venues to contribute so that they can align their individual work and interest with those of the partnership as a whole.
- Partnership will target specific and achievable outcomes
 - Leads to early success
 - Early success then leads to an increase in morale, contribution, and support for the partnership and its missions
- Partnership will create and strengthen relationships
 - Provides a venue for individuals to communicate about what and how each partner can contribute to the success of the whole partnership.
 - Improve communication and relationships in the partnership to accomplish more
- Such a partnership would allow schools to take advantage of integrated instruction, team teaching, professional learning communities, interest-based groups, school improvement efforts, and various fundraising efforts often associated with collaboration.

Types of Collaboration

1. Itinerant Collaborations: These are short-term projects to achieve a specific goal or outcome. In this type of collaboration, a specific number of individuals convene to tackle specific and clearly defined outcomes that are usually achieved quickly in designated amount of time. These types of collaborations are defined by a unique agenda, problem, or need that should be addressed for both collaborative and individual partnerships. Generally, the purpose of these collaborations is to produce a

meaningful product while providing practice for providing more complex and sustainable relationships. Additionally, this type of collaboration is beneficial as it strengthens personal relationships between leaders and collaborating partners.

2. Sustained Collaborations: These are planned and managed systems of on-going interactions of individuals that is part of their job descriptions. These types of collaboration usually have long-term and flexible goals. Moreover, the purpose of this long-term planning and collaboration is to advance an agenda more effectively than it would be being advanced individually. A positive aspect to this type of collaboration is that it builds collaborative and shared visions, goals, and relationships that are both consistent and compatible with all the individuals developing the school mission, practices, and self-interests of those collaborative members.

Role of Collaborative Leaders

Overall, collaborative leaders organize and create collaborative partnerships. However, the main difference is that the collaborative leaders, whether administrative or teacher leaders, is these individuals are taking the initiative to begin a process. A collaborative leader helps each individual partner understand and sustain a personal connection to the attaching each individual partner's work and self-interests to the whole. For example, teacher leaders could represent an department, professional learning community, organization, or interest-based group and bring such work and ideas to the head collaborative leader, the administration, in order to contribute to the whole (the overall mission/vision).

A main aspect of teacher leaders, collaborative leadership/partnerships, and reflective practice is the idea of relationship management. Relationships are the vehicles to accomplish the purpose of why a particular skill or program is being developed or cultivated. Howard Rubin states, "Collaborative Leaders are interpersonal and interinstitutional relationship managers that connect personal needs and motives to a shared purpose while working with others to create a bigger impact, more broad ownership, and higher meaning" (Rubin 2002,67). To me, Rubin is saying collaborative leaders at any level, administrative, teacher, or higher education, create strategic relationships involving individuals and the institutions that they represent. In terms of local school institutions and institutions of higher education, these individuals build relationships of trust through departmental/subject/team collegiality and through the formality of the contracts and agreements that are binding them with their work and institution. In essence, this supports the notion that teachers really do more than simple teach.

Process

The biggest area of need in terms of collaborative leadership and reflective practice is the ability to build, sustain, and direct relationships with the various individuals and organizations

that one must collaborate with to achieve the mission at hand. According to Rubin 2002, three main aspects must be present in this process.

1. A clear and common vision is needed in order to be an effective collaborative leader
2. A model of collaboration or project at hand is needed for individuals to follow
3. A curriculum is needed
 - a. A series of questions or content needed to teach an individual to be an effective collaborative leader at the appropriate level they hold.

Building off of Rubin's list, I too formulate three additional aspects:

1. A front-end investment in building trusting relationships with individuals and creating a sense of shared ownership and meaningful existence in order to build sustained collaboration.
2. Relationships should link institutional success through the structural and procedural practices are compatible with those members of the organization.
3. Individual relationships must be strong and effective to make institutional relationships successful.

Overall, an effective collaborative leader has the ability to build and sustain relationships that bind at both the institutional and individual levels. In such case, an effective collaborative leader at any level has the ability to find common self-interests with the diverse missions and goals of various independent organizations. Nonetheless, collaborative leaders succeed with and through people, thus demanding strategic planning, flexibility, and management systems that entail both formality and structure.

Create a collaborative partnership between local school districts, University teacher education and preparation programs and departments of educational leadership and administration. The scope of this collaboration would then span across a diverse population of individuals and concentrations to create leaders within each discipline while meeting the needs of the organization that each individual serves. Moreover, this collaborative process will allow in-service teachers to begin the teacher and collaborative leadership process while serving those individuals novice in the field, such as pre-service teachers. A collaborative process between university teacher preparation programs, pre-service teachers, specialists within each academic discipline, and school districts already is pre-existing through clinical experience programs for pre-service teachers such as, observations, practicums, and student teaching. I think most would agree that these in-service teachers innately become teacher leaders to these clinicians that they host in their classrooms. Going through such programs myself, I stand that these relationships must be collaborative to be successful. Additionally, these hosting teachers must be "leaders" to not only their students they teach but also to the student of educational studies they are hosting in their classrooms.

In such case, the question then arises, what is a leader? Too often, teacher preparation programs approach individuals at the various local school districts to host these students. However, no preparation on collaborative or teacher leadership is provided by either the cooperating university or the local school districts. This notion supports the above quote given by the Galileo Institute for teacher leadership at Oakland University, "Realizing the potential of teacher leadership requires a fundamental change in the culture and structure of schools, the preparation and continuing professional development of teachers and administrators, and the political, legal and fiscal context in which schools operate." In essence, roles and responsibilities must be set forth, agreed upon, and communicated regarding what qualities, characteristics, practices, and procedures that reflect a teacher leader and a collaborative partnership. The notion of what good teaching, leadership, and collaboration looks like must also be communicated, modeled, and reflected upon at all levels of the system from pre-service teachers to school administrators and university professors. The change in culture and structure of schools must be initiated through the collaboration of federal, state, and local officials in addition to each school district's members and community stakeholders. The structure of this process is initially set out by the federal and state agencies of education, including the National Department of Education, the State Department of Education, and local regional offices of education. Essentially, these agencies provide the foundation for the required change in the political, legal and fiscal context in which schools operate that is stated by the Galileo Institute. From here, it is the responsibility of local universities and school districts to aid with the transition and school culture needed to support collaborative leadership and teacher leaders at all levels of the educational system. With the growing idea of professional learning communities, mentoring programs, and teaming both seasoned and novice individuals need training, practice, and professional development on the roles, practices, and qualities of teacher leaders and effective skills to supplement this ideal with collaborative leadership.

The key to creating and cultivating teacher leaders while encouraging collaborative leadership among members of the entire educational community is to create a network of school and university administrators that is committed to advancing learning, teaching and student success. However this can only be accomplished through an approach that promotes reflection and critical thinking through an all inclusive learning community and network that is established with local school districts, universities, community members, and community stakeholders. Faculty within the scope of these teacher preparation and teacher leader programs should be committed to excellence in teaching, service, and collaboration with not only community members but the professionals within the field. In such case, to create teacher leaders and overall reflective practices among all members of a school community and through teaching practitioners, the following should occur to build a conceptual framework:

- Create and value high standards in gaining and applying professional knowledge and skills in subject matter and pedagogy.
- Value the achievement of students at all levels (from pre-service to in-service teachers/administrators) and advance their success in accordance with national and state

- standards.
- Create, nurture, and value an inclusive, collaborative, and reflective learning community and environment.
 - Encourage and provide venues and resources for creative, critical, and reflective thinking and practice.
 - Ensure and value ethical practice by the total school community and the partnerships that exist within this community.

In essence, pre-service teachers and pre-service administrators should study and apply the literature of collaborative leadership including: team building, visioning, and inspiring through in-service seminars, professional development opportunities and activities, and through continuing education. As a supplement, pre-existing school administrators and university personnel should be teaching, modeling, and communicating the components and practices of reflective teaching and planning, and the aspects of collaborative leadership, such as team building. Moreover, these individuals should create structured activities that integrate the aspects of collaboration and reflection that is desired on all levels such as the organization as a whole, individual teaching teams/departments, and on an individual level. To involve members of the total school community these administrators and university personnel could empower constituents and stakeholders connected to the learning organization to be involved in the development, activation, and reflection components of both collaborative leadership and reflective teaching and planning. Moreover, these individuals could mobilize resources, time, and knowledge for the needs in the changing school culture and the professional development/training, and support necessary to form a strong network that supports not only the overall mission/vision of the organization but also the community and the members these stakeholders and school members serve on a daily basis. Moreover, stakeholders, community members, and university personnel can collaborate and partner with the school district, university practitioners, and community organizations to provide necessary training and resources for both pre-service and in-service teachers and administrators.

Roles of School Districts

Throughout the process of collaborative leadership, developing teacher leaders within an organization, and practicing reflective teaching and planning members of all levels of a school organization play a vital role in the success of these aspects and the network formed with community members/stakeholders and outside organizations/institutions. According to Rubin (2002), the institutions' goal is to persuade parents, teachers, and school board members that collaborative leadership and relationship management skills are both teachable and learnable priorities of Institutional programs (84).

Role of Superintendents and Principals

One must remember that educational leaders are more than site-based managers. Rather, these individuals also serve as community-wide advocates and mentors. Both district and building administrators must embrace the notion that relationship management is central to recruiting, preparing, and certifying educators to work not only in their districts but also in the field of education. A successful educational leader that embodies collaborative leadership, utilizes teacher leaders within the district, and mandates reflective teaching practices in turn realizes both a balance and focus should be incorporated on the academic content of what the teachers teach in the district with the social and civic skills that children and clinical students must learn to be successful members of today's society. According to Rubin (2002), these individuals "need the ability to rally and sustain the attention and resources of the entire community in relationships that enhance the meaningful existence of the educational achievement of their students. To me, these individuals' role is to convene the diverse array of individuals and resources that will "collaborate" with one another to accomplish objectives and improve educational outcomes. The following is a list of suggestions to fill the above role of administrators:

- Promote culturally proficient policies and practices that recognize and value the diverse needs, culture, and self-interests of the total school community to ensure equity.
- Managing fiscal, physical, and human resources to ensure an effective, safe learning and working environment.
- Collaborating with members of the total school community to respond to the diverse interests and needs while and mobilizing community resources at the local, state, and federal level.
- Modeling ethical practice, strong communication and collaboration skills and practice, and the development of leadership capacity in the total school community.
- Understanding ,directing, responding, and influencing the political, social, economic, legal, and cultural contexts of education.

Purpose of Teacher Leaders

- "Teacher leaders are in a unique position to make change happen. They are close to the ground and have the knowledge and ability to control the conditions of teaching and learning in schools and classroom. We believe that they are critical partners in transforming schools." (Lieberman and Miller, 2004)
- "The growing research shows that the most important factor in a child's education is having a good teacher...By inviting expert teachers to assist in improving learning conditions throughout the school we aren't removing our best teachers from the classroom, we are extending their reach." (Scherer, ASCD Education Leadership, 2007)

- “School improvement depends more than ever on the active involvement of teacher leaders. School administrators can’t do it all.” (Danielson, 2007)

Teaching Teachers Collaborative Leadership Practices and Reflective Teaching Practices

John Dewey states the purpose of a school is to infuse both social and civic skills in children both through world views and the material that is taught to them throughout the course of their education. In essence, Dewey is telling individuals that it is the responsibility of the individuals within the school, such as teachers, to define each individual’s capacity through effective teaching strategies and assessments so students can see and reflect on their own performance and capacity. However, before this can be achieved, teachers must first be taught and modeled collaborative leadership practices and reflective teaching methodologies and assessments. For teachers, this aspect can be achieved through professional learning communities, mentoring programs, curriculum alignment processes, special interest groups, and cross-curricular planning meetings. On a more individualized basis to incorporate individual needs that exist within the institution, one may suggest continuing education classes, training seminars, or conferences. An administrator could also monitor progress by collaborating with staff members on an individual basis through short classroom walk-throughs, weekly lesson plan review, and professional portfolios. Before teachers can begin to cultivate this skill in their own students and model to clinical teacher/administrative education students, teachers also need the training, practice, and skills needed to build and manage relationships that are necessary for both learning and applying knowledge. In all, one must remember that just as many student learn best by doing, so may adults. Continual practice, revision, and cultivation of such skills must be offered through diverse activities, school organizations, and through relationship management. In order to have an applied reflection there must be a component of social learning that accompanies this.

Site-based In-Service teacher leadership possibilities

Within the traditional and formal role of a school district’s building organization, department chairs, team leaders, professional learning community leaders, and curriculum/literacy coaches could be designated to begin site based collaborative leadership and begin the networking process with the outside agents of the school.

Reflective Instruction Opportunities in Educational Institutions

Though countless opportunities exist in terms of reflective instruction and collaborative leadership, I have formulated a list of examples that are applicable in today’s educational institutions. The list is as follows:

- Learning through both working and observations with a skilled mentor (In-service individual) or through clinical experiences (Practicum Student, Student Teacher, Internships: Preservice-Individuals)
- Implementation of Character education and service learning programs (K-12).
 - Addresses developmental skills of building and sustaining relationships for both personal and public productivity.

- Student Representatives on Committees, Work-Study Programs, Dual Credit possibilities, Technical Learning classes for students.
- Development of Service-Based extra-curricular activities such as Key Club, Environmental Awareness group, Beta Club, and National Honor Society
 - For Teachers, provide team-building activities, collaborative activities, building consensus/decision making, interdisciplinary practice, and communication exercises. Also, provide conflict and stress management strategies and guidelines to all staff members at the beginning of the school year.
- Service internships for individuals to allow basic skills to be gained and to help individuals interpret and succeed in collaborative work.
- For pre-service and new educators, limit the “sink or swim” philosophy by providing preliminary training, practice, and observation to acquaint individuals with particular content, work, or field of study.
 - Provide motivation and increase morale of educators
 - Provides basic skills and practice while integrating reflective practice in both content and practice.
 - Encourages a job shadowing setting and mentoring experiences through the process of experimenting, reflecting, and collaborating.
- Guiding and supporting staff in nurturing a school, district or community college culture and program conducive to the effective instruction of all students and to the professional growth of all employees.
- Using data and technology effectively to assess student achievement, evaluate staff and programs, and plan and implement accountability systems.

Roles of University with pre-service teachers and pre-service administrators

The following are a list of practices that will assist in adequately preparing pre-service teachers and pre-service administrators for the roles and obligations that were set forth above.

- In required coursework for students in teacher education programs, incorporate competencies of collaboration and relationship management.
- Provide Group-Work activities, learning –by doing, role play, and shadowing activities.
- Identify and explain the collaborative strategies needed to develop a clear vision and to extend the vision across the institution
- Assess and discuss the relationship between personal values and organizational values.
- Assess and analyze multiple models of effective communications in P12 schools/ districts.
- Develop and articulate a personal code of ethics of leadership that prepares the leader to deal effectively with the complex and conflicting demands in P12 schools/districts.
- Compare and contrast school/district culture and climate through analyses of personal and organizational values.
- Using case studies and site visits, analyze the best match between leadership styles and an institution’s needs in different social and political contexts.
- Evaluate his or her relationship to students, faculty, staff, parents and the community at large to ensure the establishment of ethical relationships grounded in an understanding of the

importance of those leader/constituent relationships for the efficient functioning of P12 organizations and student success.

- Describe how collaboration among an institution's leaders can improve student performance.
- Recognize contributions to the organization through appreciation and celebrations of success for individual and team efforts.
- Planning systemic reform and managing the change process in collaboration with fellow educators and other stakeholders, based on a shared vision of learning.
- Becoming critical consumers of educational research and producers of action research who apply the lessons of research to student, school/district or community college improvement.

Appendix A

Charlotte Danielson's *Levels of Performance* from [A Framework for Teaching](#).

Charlotte Danielson's Rubric for Domain 4 from [A Framework for Teaching](#).

Charlotte Danielson's chart for meeting INTASC Standards with the Framework for Teaching components.

Gerald Gutek's *Complete Act of Thoughts* for effective communication and problem-solving.

Howard Rubin's *Collaboration Life Cycle* from Collaborative Leadership.

References

Bomer, D. (2009). Personal Conversation on Collaborative Leadership and Support Services.

Cumberland High School Guidance Office.

This was an interview with the Cumberland High School guidance counselor took place as part of the clinical examination of the research project. This individual is also a member of the School Improvement Team at CHS. This was utilized to gain insights on the philosophy and components used at the support staff building level as well as to gain insights and participation on the current aspects of collaboration, the areas of need, and the perspectives of this practice at the district and school from her level in the educational system.

Busche Human Resources (2008). *Cumberland CUSD # 77 Volunteer Handbook*. Effingham: Buschue Press.

This was used to analyze collaborative practice and policies at all levels of the educational system, as this is the same document for all schools in the district. This also allowed for examination from members at the total school community on collaborative practices and programs and their influence. This document supported the common language and dialogue that was utilized by Charlotte Danielson.

Catey, A. (2009). *Personal Conversation on Collaborative Leadership and School Improvement*. Cumberland High School Library.

This was part of the clinical examination of the project. This individual is also the School Improvement Team Leader, in charge of all standardized testing and test preparation, and is the department chair of the English faculty. This was utilized to gain insights on the philosophy and components used at the teacher-building level as well as to gain insights and participation on the current aspects of collaboration, the areas of need, and the perspectives of this practice at the district and school from her level in the educational system. This information allowed me to observe the impacts of collaborative leadership on various school systems, how all of these systems are related, links to accountability and student achievement, and organizational structure.. This showed the importance of collaborative practices and opportunities for improvement in various areas. Also, this conversation led way to multi-level articulation meetings at the departmental, building, grade, subject, and district levels/areas. Working with this individual allowed me to experience first-hand these aspects and allowed me to see the disjointedness in the philosophies within even one building and the effects this has. The work of Howard Rubin and Danielson were utilized heavily and contributed to the creation of teacher leaders and reflective teaching practices at all of these levels. This then contributed to accountability, assessment, and evaluation methods.

Cumberland High School (2009). *Cumberland High School Faculty Handbook*. Toledo: Copy Express.

This was used to analyze collaborative practice and policies at the building level of the educational system, as this is the same document for all members within the school. This also allowed for examination from members at the total school community on collaborative practices and programs and their influence. This document supported the common language and dialogue that was utilized by Charlotte Danielson. Moreover, this document aided in the establishment of the organizational framework, especially the two concepts of Dewey, and allowed me to see how both of these philosophies existed within the scope of one building. The difference in philosophy was then analyzed in accordance to the one mission and purpose of the school that was encompassed in this document.

Danielson, C. (1996). *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching*. Alexandria: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Danielson was used to provide information on improving, communicating, modeling, and implementing aspects of collaborative leadership in both the school of study and in the teacher preparation programs at EIU. This provided a means of accountability, sustainability, and assessment for the individuals and the programs in place. This also established a baseline of common language, expectations, and performance evaluations for this to be accomplished and implemented successfully at both secondary schools and in teacher preparation programs. Danielson's system was further supported by the patterns of John Dewey, Pragmatism and Experimentalism, that her framework follows.

Dewey, J. (1966). *Experience and Education*. Boston: Collier Books.

This book helped me to understand that learning is contextual and is dependent on the environment and aspects in those environment on both the teaching and learning process. Additionally, this information helped me to analyze and assimilate information from my research to understand the basis of this book, Dewey's Educational Continuum. This concept is that one's actions and perspectives are based on past experiences and contribute to the person now. In such case, this is crucial in collaborative leadership to ensure activities, communication, and expectations are communicated in a common manner. Also, this will help describe the reactions and interactions of individuals in an organization and will help a leader create activities to accommodate to the needs of these individuals, which are shaped by past experiences, in cultivating collaborative practices as a personnel function in schools.

Dewey, J. (1910). *How We Think*. New York: General Books.

This allowed me to see the different perspectives on the role, purpose, and goals of education among the different levels within a school system. This piece spelled out the idea of systematic thought (I found to be district level) with that of experimental thought (The building level) and how these two systems interact and affect one another. This was

also used to evaluate the impact on the philosophies and practices of the district and the development of professional practice of clinical teacher education and administrative students.

Dewey, J. (1902). *The Child and the Curriculum*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

This work allowed me to see the purpose of curriculum within the scope of education. This allowed me to look at a current school curriculum, the aspects within a public school that contribute to the development, implementation, and evaluation of that curriculum in connection with the practices of collaboration that are in place or are needed to establish the purpose of curriculum and to implement it successfully. This then could be supported by Danielson's Framework for evaluation and assessment.

Gutek, G. (1997). *Philosophical and Ideological Perspectives on Education* (2nd ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

This provided the historical perspectives, methodology, pedagogy, and ideology of the educational philosophy for my research. This then led to the discovery of John Dewey as the philosophical basis for my research. This book then led me to study the above works of Dewey to gain more details and insights on these philosophies and their application.

Hall, T. (2009). Personal Conversation on Collaborative Leadership. Cumberland High School Principal's Office.

This was part of the clinical piece that allowed me to see the development of such systems within an organizational context. Also, this provided me the ability to see the logistics and legalities of implementing and changing such a system. Additionally, this allowed me to see how to communicate these practices to staff members and how to utilize a common language to improve practice and assessments.

Lee, P. (1999). *Collaborative Practices for Educators: Strategies for Effective Communication*. Minnetonka, MN: Peytral Publications Inc.

This Book was utilized as a resource to establish the communication practices necessary within the multiple systems of the educational system and programs in place to establish the means necessary to begin the common language and expectations that Danielson mentions. This is the initial step for both teacher education programs and the school of study to build the communication, dialogue, and trust necessary to begin the process of collaborative practice and leadership, as this is a progressive process. This book provided me with ideas for establishing activities, venues, and opportunities for this to take place.

Ragon, R. (2009). Personal Conversation on Collaborative Leadership and Collaborative Planning. Cumberland Unit Office.

This gave me insight to the Pragmatic Systematic Philosophy that is in place at the district level. These insights provided an overall connection to the systems in the district and the areas, need, and venues of collaborative practice and leadership. This provided insights to how Danielson's Framework and the Concepts of Rubin and Dewey would contribute to the implementation and communication of the systematic district agenda with that of the experimental concepts at the lower levels in the school hierarchy.

Rubin, H. (2002). *Collaborative Leadership: Developing Effective Partnerships in Communities and Schools*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press Inc.

This provided insight to reflective teaching and evaluation practices and the creation of teacher leaders within the context of secondary education. This book helped to contribute to an action plan in EIU teacher education and administrative education programs in how to not only teach these concepts but to model these to students. Additionally, this aided in the analysis of the current programs that are in place at EIU that contribute to the notion of collaboration and reflection in both the programs offered and the various areas of study. This information was also helpful in the field, as it was used in the accountability and evaluation progress of the curriculum, programs, and teamwork in place at the district of study- especially in school improvement and departmental team member contributions and evaluations.