MINDFUL INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP: THE CONNECTION BETWEEN PRINCIPAL MINDFULNESS AND SCHOOL PRACTICES

By

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To the Faculty of Washington State University:

The members of the Committee appointed to examine the dissertation of JENNY AVRE SHARP RODRIQUEZ find it satisfactory and recommend that it be accepted.

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Mindfulness offers a wide range of benefits for teachers and students, however, less is known about the role of mindfulness in the work of principals. Current tools that assess instructional leadership, which is a major part of the principalship, omit issues of mindfulness. Further, measures of mindfulness connect little to instructional leadership to make meaningful assessment of the mindful instructional leadership of administrators. The study discusses development of the Principal Resilience for Educator and Student Success (PRESS), a 20-item self-assessment of principal instructional practices and beliefs concerned with cognitive processes shown to support mindfulness: preoccupation with failure, commitment to resilience, deference to expertise, resistance to simplify, and sensitivity to operations. Data were gathered and analyzed from a representative statewide sample of principals in Washington State. Findings reveal differing degrees of variability on specific mindful instructional leadership practices. Scores generated by PRESS are compared to respondent scores on the Cognitive and Affective Mindfulness Scale-Revised (CAMS-R); results indicate positive correlation between the PRESS Mindful Instructional Leadership (MIL) single factor score and the CAMS-R mindfulness single factor score. Use of the tool as part of principal professional growth, as well as further research to examine the relationship between mindfulness in instructional leadership and school improvement, are recommended.
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Tony, and my daughters, Sabrina and Isabella.

Tony, your unwavering belief that I can be extraordinary is a constant source of encouragement.

Sabrina and Isabella – I hope my perseverance in this endeavor is a model for you. Never be afraid to work relentlessly to achieve your goals, and remember to stop for hugs along the way.

You all sacrificed so I could complete this personal journey; this doctorate belongs to all of us.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My own path to this work has been winding and sometimes circular. I began with a research interest around interdisciplinary curriculum, then veered into the world of teacher and principal evaluation, followed by an interest in trust, organizational commitment, and organizational learning. This work, along with my own professional context, drove me to an in-depth look at Professional Learning Communities, and a foray into the world of High Reliability Organizations. As I struggled to find personal meaning in the mechanistic application of mindfulness, as well as my own personal tension surrounding the purpose of schooling, I sought out ideas on mindfulness that are considerably more ancient. Those that have gone before me have asked similar questions, and their voices were a flashlight in the dark.

Throughout this work, I have worked with a collaborative team of school leaders from across Washington State. It is our hope that our work, taken together, will advance the scholarship on mindfulness in education further than any one of us could achieve alone. Each of us brings a unique role, context, and life experience to the project, and our results are the richer for our collaboration. Together, we developed the Teacher Improvement Practices and Sentiments (TIPS) and the Principal Resilience for Educator and Student Success (PRESS) instruments. Through data collection and analysis from multiple perspectives, we hope to shed light on current practice, as well as provide useful tools that school leaders may use to better understand mindfulness practice within their own context. We have purposefully aligned our definition of instructional leadership to the Association of Washington School Principals Leadership Framework, so that leaders within our state may see the significant applicability of mindfulness to current principal practice. While our work was collaborative, any errors within this dissertation are my own.
Underlying my research purposes is a goal to advocate for the measurement of mindfulness in schools at both an individual and organizational level. By doing so, redefinition of achievement is possible. We cannot continue to tell our children they are failing and hope to inspire them, nor can we continue to tell educators they are failing and hope to attract and retain our best and brightest to the profession. Academic achievement data is only a small piece of the picture. As Martin Luther King, Jr., said, “Intelligence plus character, that is the true goal of education.” Children and the adults who educate them are not widgets – they are human beings. A mindful presence and attention to the whole person may help us to make better decisions, encourage resilience, and do more to positively impact our children and society than a narrow perspective on the purpose of schooling can hope to achieve.

As I reach the culmination of this part of my professional journey, I have to acknowledge the support of my doctoral PLC team. Josh, Kevin, and Ken – it has been a pleasure working with you throughout this process. An honorary PLC shout out goes to Heather, Carole, and Jared for sharing the summer institute experience – sometimes laughter is the best fuel! Thank you to Dr. Kristin Huggins for rigorous coursework on the research process, and to Dr. Michelle Acker-Hocevar and Dr. Teena McDonald for serving on my committee. Finally, I need to recognize the guidance and support of my chair, Dr. Gordon Gates. I could not have finished this dissertation without your kind words, cheerleading, thoughtful questioning, and ongoing feedback. I would not have found my way to this topic without your direction, and a better understanding of mindfulness has enriched both my professional and personal life. I am grateful for the learning.
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

Problems that remain persistently insoluble should always be suspected as questions asked in the wrong way.

- Alan Wilson Watts

American public education was condemned with the publication of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983, and the report was quickly followed by an outcry from both the public and private sectors to reform our schools. As a result, a number of accountability policies defined and mandated improvement in America’s public schools. These policies tied federal funding to reform measures, and provided consequences for schools not meeting federal timelines and benchmarks for improvement. State education agencies scrambled to appease federal mandates, while also seeking to assert control within their own geographic region. At the same time, the research community doubled down on prior efforts to define effective practice and link educational strategies and interventions to school and student achievement. Continued pressure for school reform and accountability measures reached unprecedented levels following the 2002 passage of *No Child Left Behind*. States, districts, and individual schools continued to struggle to meet improvement goals dictated by the legislation. While the effective schools research generated a body of literature naming multiple practices correlated to positive school results, many schools continued to “fail” under state and federal guidelines. Today, U.S. student achievement continues to be a major concern (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008). Despite numerous efforts over the past three decades, including school-based management, administrative academies, shared decision making, charter schools, privatization, and parental choice, schools are still “failing” (Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Leithwood, Steinbach, & Jantzi, 2002). In reviewing gains in achievement, for the majority of states there was limited measurable change over the past decade.
(NCES, 2012). However, despite the trend, some schools were effective under the new standards and requirements. A great deal of research has been devoted to these outliers in an effort to determine what factors lead to effective school turnaround.

Each potential lever for school improvement can be deeply explored. This study focused on principal instructional leadership, utilizing the lens of mindfulness. This first required an explanation of the role of the principal, with attention paid to defining principal instructional leadership. To further narrow the focus, this chapter introduces the role of the principal as an instructional leader within the context of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and school climate and culture. A positive school environment is a foundation for student learning, in both the academic and emotional intelligence arenas. With regards to emotional intelligence, this chapter also introduces the concepts of resilience and mindfulness, including an explanation of mindfulness cognitive processes generated from research on High Reliability Organizations (HROs). To address practice, measuring mindfulness in instructional leadership became necessary. The next section of chapter one addresses the problem and purpose of the study. This section is followed by an introduction to the study’s methodology, including the literature review, Mindful Instructional Leadership (MIL) tool development, use of the existing Cognitive and Affective Mindfulness Scale – Revised (CAMS-R) and available school data, sampling, data collection, and data analysis. Ethics, limitations, and the significance of the study are briefly explored. Finally, the chapter closes with an overview of the chapters of the dissertation.

**Background on Principal Instructional Leadership**

A key model for effective school turnaround is the presence of strong and effective instructional leadership. Instructional leadership focuses on improving classroom practices. Which tasks an instructional leader focuses on to create positive impacts in student learning and
school achievement are the subject of much research. As building leaders, principals need concrete leadership processes and models with a demonstrated track record of positively impacting student achievement. Specificity in practice is key to successful change initiatives. At the end of the day, principals must set directions and help others move in those directions (Leithwood, et al, 2004).

Principals matter, and their impact on student learning is second only to teachers. In fact, highly effective principals may raise the achievement of a typical student in their school by two to seven months of learning in one year, as compared to a loss of as much learning in a building under the direction of an ineffective principal (Branch, Hanushek, & Rivkin, 2013; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). Research on effective leadership and its impacts on student achievement suggests the existence of basic leadership practices which provide a necessary foundation for improvement. Principals lead through the use of three major activities: setting directions and using visioning strategies; developing people through efficacy-building strategies; and making the organization work through redesign and the use of context changing strategies (Hallinger & Heck, 1999; Leithwood, et al, 2004). These leadership basics can be achieved in countless ways, and as a result, a number of leadership styles have sprung up around the principalship in order to describe how to meet these task and relational demands. Leadership frameworks include instructional leadership, participative leadership, democratic leadership, transformational leadership, moral leadership, and strategic leadership, just to name a few.

With so many leadership frameworks, it is a difficult task to narrow one’s focus as a building principal. In the current high-stakes, legislative policy driven educational environment, demands for instructional leadership are at an all-time high. New principal evaluation systems
have a strong instructional leadership focus; effective instructional leadership is no longer an option for school principals. To assist principals in their own professional growth and to meet the requirements of legislative demands for increased accountability (RCW 28A-405, WAC 392-191A-150 - 190), the Association of Washington School Principals (AWSP) developed the AWSP Leadership Framework.

The AWSP Leadership Framework, which has been adopted by the majority of districts in the State of Washington, is structured around eight criteria delineated by the State government. These eight criteria include: creating a culture, ensuring school safety, planning with data, aligning curriculum, improving instruction, managing resources, engaging communities, and closing the gap (RCW 28A-405; WAC 392-191A-150). Each of these criteria are made up of multiple elements; principals are evaluated on 28 separate elements on a scale from unsatisfactory to distinguished (Kipp, Quinn, Lancaster, Malone, Lashway, Lochmiller, & Sharratt, 2014). Principals must meet proficiency levels in each of these areas, a daunting task for novice and expert administrators alike. The framework serves as guideposts for principals in their own development as instructional leaders. All eight of the criteria include elements which speak to instructional leadership, and some criteria, like improving instruction, fall entirely under an instructional leadership framework. As principal evaluation continues to evolve in Washington State, instructional leadership is coming to the forefront of a principal’s job description.

In reviewing the 28 elements which comprise the AWSP Leadership Framework, nearly all of the elements speak to instructional leadership. One may argue that ensuring school safety and managing resources fall more into the management role of the principal, rather than an instructional leadership role, however, even these criteria relate to instructional leadership.
School safety requires a principal to make emotional and intellectual safety a top priority for staff and students, and involve the school community in active intellectual inquiry, clearly an instructional pursuit. Managing resources requires a principal to optimize the school’s human resources to maximize opportunities for student growth, adopt research-based strategies for evaluating the effectiveness of professional development, document growth in teacher knowledge and student outcomes, and guide decision-making so that efficacy grows among stakeholders to make fiscal decisions which improve teaching and learning (Kipp, et al, 2014). Again, these tasks require the principal to be an instructional leader.

In addition to the AWSP Framework, some Washington districts have adopted the Marzano Leadership Framework. Marzano developed a leadership evaluation model, aligned to a teacher evaluation model, to facilitate a system-wide vocabulary around improving instruction, as well as to assist districts in meeting the demands for accountability in the area of teacher and principal evaluation. This model includes the five key areas of data-driven focus on student achievement, continuous improvement of instruction, guaranteed and viable curriculum, cooperation and collaboration, and school climate (Carbaugh, Marzano, & Toth, 2013). The model emphasizes instructional leadership on the part of the principal, requiring emphasis be placed on teaching and learning. Perhaps the strongest tie to instructional leadership is the domain of continuous improvement of instruction, which requires the principal provide “a clear vision as to how instruction should be addressed,” be “aware of predominant instructional practices within the school,” ensure “teachers are provided with clear, ongoing evaluations of their pedagogical strengths and weaknesses,” and ensure that “teachers are provided with job-embedded professional development that is directly related to their instructional growth goals” (Carbaugh, et al, 2013, p. 4). Again, each of these includes elements of instructional leadership;
the first four describe effective PLCs. This model emphasizes the role the principal plays in establishing, nurturing, and challenging PLCs to make schoolwide progress in student achievement. In this way, the role of the principal is to be an instructional leader.

One measure which may be considered in a principal’s evaluation is his/her ability to manage Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). PLCs are a common strategy principals may engage in to more widely distribute the task of monitoring and evaluating effective instruction and assessment practices. The demands on a principal’s time far exceed the available hours in the day; utilizing a PLC approach allows principals to shift some of the instructional leadership responsibility to members of the faculty through a distributed leadership model. Principals may also encourage implementation of high-yield strategies through guidance and support provided to PLCs. The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards, which have guided principal preparation and assessment for nearly two decades, may be interpreted as supporting PLCs. The principal is required to be “an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth” (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996, p. 12).

Another area of focus in evaluating principals is the establishment and maintenance of positive building culture. Relationships and social-emotional learning are critical for academic success; social and emotional health problems create barriers to learning (Marx, Wooley, & Northrop, 1998). Considerable research supports the notion that relationships are key to student achievement (Hattie, 2009), and that the quality of student-teacher relationships directly impact student engagement, a critical element for student learning (Martin & Dowson, 2009; Pianta, 1998). Strong instructional leadership does not negate the importance of focusing on a school’s
climate and culture, rather, attentiveness to school culture is a component of instructional leadership. A building’s culture is tied to the unique individuals within the school community. Principals must maintain a dual focus, on academic rigor, high standards, and accountability practices, as well as the social-emotional health of the individual human beings who make up the school. It is the individuals who become the building blocks of the school’s culture.

While traditional measures of school success rely heavily on academic factors alone, principal evaluation systems have paid attention to the climate and culture of a school, knowing these impact a school’s academic success. Regardless of what government bureaucracies have to say about what is important in education, the cognitive and affective domains of schools and the individuals within them cannot be separated (Lang, 1998). In tackling traditional, academic measures of student achievement, an intentional focus on meeting students’ social-emotional learning needs is a largely untapped strategy. The impact of warm, supportive adult-child relationships is supported by studies in child and human development, family structures, school effectiveness, and developing school communities (Benard, 1991), as well as supported by Bandura’s social cognitive theory and self-efficacy theory. Additionally, attention paid to the affective learning which occurs in schools is an end in itself. Helping individual students and teachers reach their full potential as human beings is an important goal of public education, in addition to academic content.

**Resilience and Mindfulness**

Helping children become “competent, confident, and caring” should be a call to action (Werner & Smith, 1992). Social-emotional learning can be taught and developed, but adults must begin the process (Brokenleg & Bockern, 2003; Morales, 2008). Social-emotional learning is “the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge,
attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions” (CASEL, 2014). As students and adults increase their emotional intelligence, individuals and the school as a whole increase their ability to be resilient. Resiliency is the ability to recover and thrive despite adverse circumstances. Building resiliency requires educational leaders focus on creating protective factors in schools, including caring student-teacher relationships, high teacher expectations, and meaningful student participation. The principal as instructional leader can help build resiliency by providing professional development to staff on affective education strategies, modeling emotional intelligence, and bringing attention to students’ social-emotional needs. This may include establishing school goals focused on emotional intelligence and school climate and culture. A focus on school climate and culture may positively impact student and school achievement. Climate and culture, and student and school achievement, are key indicators in the principal evaluation process, as defined by the AWSP instructional leadership framework.

If students are to develop increased emotional intelligence, adults need to intentionally model those skills and processes. Guidance for school implementation can be drawn from many fields of study, including education, psychology, organizational studies, and philosophy. A key concept within social-emotional learning which bridges multiple fields of study is mindfulness. Mindfulness is about “cultivating a different, wiser kind of attention” (Williams, Teasdale, Segal, & Kabat-Zinn, 2007, as cited in Hyland, 2014, p. 281). Mindfulness has been explored as a part of both religious and non-religious meditation practices. It is also intertwined with trust, which research links to increased student achievement (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Goddard, Tschannen-
Mindfulness itself offers practical suggestions for increased organizational effectiveness (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001).

Research on High Reliability Organizations (HROs) describes mindfulness as the consistent use of five cognitive processes: preoccupation with failure, reluctance to simplify, sensitivity to operations, commitment to resilience, and deference to expertise (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2006). Each of these processes is designed to eliminate mindlessness in order to avoid catastrophic failures. Within a school setting, application of these processes would help schools avert failures. Failures could include both negative academic and social-emotional results for students. Averting failures would mean increased reliability in school outcomes, with fewer students experiencing negative outcomes. Measures of student and school success would demonstrate increased ability to meet reform targets. HRO theory is applicable and relevant for educational organizations, providing guidance on improving instructional leadership through application of mindfulness processes.

**Measuring mindfulness.**

Applying learning from HRO theory to school improvement, specifically those cognitive processes associated with mindfulness, may lead to greater success for students. Schools need better tools to measure existing levels of mindfulness, as well as an increased understanding of how to apply HRO cognitive processes to a school setting, in order to become high reliability organizations. Despite considerable policy pressure today, achievement is not just test scores. A wider perspective on the “health” of a school, which factors in both cognitive and affective dimensions, is necessary and appropriate to more fully understand the realities which schools face, in order to assist them in moving forward. A more accurate understanding allows for better decision-making, as schools build on their community’s existing strengths. Measuring only
academic outcomes provides only a fraction of the available data about a school’s success. By considering new metrics to measure the “health” of a school, we may have a deeper understanding of both the cognitive and affective dimensions which impact student self-actualization, as well as achievement. Such attempts are not unfounded; other disciplines are seeking to develop new metrics to measure the “health” of society including factors beyond GDP, such as happiness, well-being, and interconnectedness of individuals within the larger society (Kabat-Zinn, 2013; Layard, 2005).

While there is considerable research on mindfulness at an organizational level within HROs, less is known about measuring mindfulness in schools. Mindfulness offers a potential fail-safe framework for schools advanced in education reform (Bellamy, Crawford, Marshall, & Coulter, 2005) and some studies indicate principal mindfulness results in higher achievement for students within a school (Hyland, 2014). As the instructional leader, the principal has an obligation to pay attention to how teachers interact with students, as well as teachers’ collegial relationships in PLCs, both of which have significant impacts on student performance (Brown & Duguid, 1995; Bryk, Camburn, & Louis, 1999; DuFour, 2004; Louis, Marks, & Kruse, 1996; Scribner, Cockrell, Cockrell, & Valentine, 1999; Scribner, Hager, & Warne, 2002; Smylie & Hart, 2000). In addition to measurement of principal mindfulness for school improvement, the use of mindfulness processes may better equip principals to meet the increasingly stressful challenges facing educators, resulting in better support for others within the organization (Blase & Blase, 2002; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008; Mayer, David, & Schoorman, 1995; McDonald, 2012; Price, 2012; Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008; Youngs & King, 2002).
Problem Statement

Educational reforms will only be effective if both student achievement and social-emotional learning drive policy; accountability measured on test scores alone is only a portion of the story. Increased attention to mindfulness in schools is core to providing for the safety and well-being of all individuals within the school; in turn, mindfulness processes improve school climate and culture, positively impacting student achievement on standard measures. Addressing students’ academic, social, and emotional needs is critical for schools, and by extension, society.

Despite these early positive indicators for the use of mindfulness processes in schools, it is difficult to assess a principal’s mindfulness practice tied to specific instructional leadership tasks because current measurement tools are vague and limited. The M-Scale is designed to assess mindfulness within a school setting (Hoy, Gage, & Tarter, 2004), however, it does not focus on the discrete activities in schools which may indicate use of mindful cognitive processes. Consequently, use of the M-scale for school improvement is limited. Further, other tools, such as the Cognitive and Affective Mindfulness Scale-Revised (CAMS-R), assess mindfulness generally and provide no reference or anchor to educator practices (Feldman, Hayes, Kumar, Greeson, & Laurenceau, 2007).

Bellamy and his colleagues (2005) invite research to better understand the effectiveness of mindfulness-driven, fail-safe functions in schools, and Hoy, Gage, and Tarter (2006) invite researchers to use and refine the concept of mindfulness in schools. In addition, Vogus and Sutcliffe advance a research agenda which includes exploration of “which form of individual mindfulness (Western or Eastern) has greater impact on the emergence of … organizational mindfulness” (2012, p. 731). Before we can understand the current state of affairs in relation to organizational mindfulness within schools, specifically as it relates to instructional leadership,
we must have an accurate method of measurement. Development of an effective tool to help educational leaders assess current use of mindfulness processes in their schools is a necessary next step in this work. Further, a tool which provides guidance to increase levels of mindfulness within the school, and allows leaders to see incremental improvements in organizational mindfulness over time through repeated use of the tool, would benefit schools and students. Use of a more accurate tool may lead to improved instructional leadership, which in turn, leads to improved outcomes for students (DuFour, 2004; Louis & Wahlstrom, 2011; Stein & Nelson, 2003). In addition, by drawing attention to the tenets of mindfulness, which challenge our assumptions about what we “know,” we may cultivate curiosity and innovation within the organization, and evolve practice to a more humanistic and holistic approach to teaching and learning. The literature demonstrates a clear need to develop an instrument which principals and researchers may use to assess the mindful instructional leadership (MIL) practice of building leaders. A quantitative research study to measure mindfulness practices in instructional leadership is warranted.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to develop and describe instructional leadership practices within K-12 public schools through a lens of mindfulness. The study addresses the following questions: 1) What mindfulness cognitive processes are evident in literature on principal instructional leadership? 2) How mindful are principals in instructional leadership as self-reported? 3) How mindful are principals in general as self-reported? and 4) What is the relationship between mindfulness in instructional leadership and mindfulness in general as self-reported by principals?
Methodology

A quantitative research study was designed to address the research purpose. A literature review provided the basis for development of the research questions, as well as construction of a new measurement tool. A brief discussion of the procedures for mindful instructional leadership (MIL) tool development, *Cognitive and Affective Mindfulness Scale - Revised* (CAMS-R), and school data, sampling procedures, data collection, statistical analysis, ethics, and limitations will be presented in this section.

**Literature Review**

A comprehensive review of literature was conducted to identify the intersection between instructional leadership and mindfulness as conceptualized in organizational theory and psychology. Specifically, education literature was examined for principal practices concerned with improvement of teaching and learning processes that provided evidence of or connected to the five cognitive processes of preoccupation with failure, commitment to resilience, deference to expertise, resistance to simplify, and sensitivity to operations. By examining the literature in this manner, the dissertation's first question stated in the purpose of the study was addressed. The literature reviewed for this study is offered in chapter two of the dissertation.

**MIL Tool Development**

Based on the review of literature, questions were identified, organized, and formatted for a self-report survey that assessed mindful instructional leadership of principals. Behavior questions were posed using frequency, while attitude questions employed bipolar scale responses (Schaefer & Presser, 2003; Schwarz, 1999). The survey was field tested, with a sample of 24 principals; scores were examined for variability and central tendency. Respondent comments and feedback about the tool were reviewed. Items on which there was little variability or where
there was obvious response bias were modified. Items unclear to participants were modified to remove ambiguity. Items were also assessed for order, as well as importance for school improvement. A 20-item survey resulted from the process, titled the Principal Resilience for Educator and Student Success (PRESS).

The tool was designed to assess principal mindful instructional leadership using the Likert type scale for degree of agreement (e.g., I raise concerns about student learning with staff; I help my teachers use their student data to improve their teaching; and, I give directives to teachers or students who have repeatedly messed up), as well as frequency (e.g., I ask a lot of questions when I meet with parents of students; When a student insults me, I stop the conversation so he or she can calm down; and, Compliance is a big part of my job). Agreement questions describe principal beliefs, while frequency questions describe principal behaviors.

The final questions included on the PRESS gathered information from respondents about personal and professional information. Specifically, respondents were asked about their gender, ethnicity/race, years of experience, and years in current position.

CAMS-R and School Data

The Cognitive and Affective Mindfulness Scale - Revised (CAMS-R) was selected as a comparison measure for the PRESS, since it has been shown to generate valid and reliable scores for mindfulness within the general population (Feldman, et al, 2007). The tasks described in the CAMS-R are generally relatable to all individuals, and therefore appropriate for administration to school principals. Findings from research on the CAMS-R also supports the use of a single total mindfulness score, with high internal consistency.

In addition to the CAMS-R, school level data were gathered from reports provided by the Office of the Superintendent for Public Instruction (OSPI) for the State of Washington. School
data included level of school, size of school, percentage of students by gender, percentage of students for each identified ethnicity category, percentage of students who qualified for free/reduced lunch programs, students per teacher ratio, average teacher experience, and percentage of teachers with at least a master’s degree. State assessment scores in reading at 5th and 10th grade, in math at 5th and 9th grade, and in science at 5th and 10th grade were also downloaded for schools in the state. The definitions and procedures followed by educators for collecting information that is reported to the state and public ensure the quality and score reliability to use these data.

Sampling

A representative sample of 505 school principals in Washington State was drawn using McNamara’s (1994) formula for determining sample size. A margin of error of 5% and a confidence level of 99% were used to calculate the number of needed subjects. Specifically, a stratified proportional random sample was created using the state’s Department of Education school list and data that are made available to the public through its educational accountability system.

Data Collection

Principals of the randomly selected schools were sent the PRESS and the CAMS-R using a two wave survey mailing process. In the first wave, distribution of the PRESS followed a four-phase administration process, consisting of an invitation to participate with online access to the survey, a follow-up sent four to eight days after, a second follow-up sent approximately two weeks after the initial survey, and a final follow-up sent approximately three weeks after the initial survey (Dillman, 1978). Multiple contacts improve response rates; advance notice, salience, personalization, identification numbers, and sponsorship also increase response rates
(Anseel, Lievens, Schollaert, & Choragwicka, 2010; Dillman, Clark, & West, 1994; Mehta & Sivadas, 1995). The distribution process was then repeated for those principals who completed the PRESS; in the second wave the CAMS-R was distributed to those administrators who provided responses to the PRESS. The data collected from the two surveys were merged with the school data downloaded from the OSPI website for a single file for analysis.

**Analysis**

Survey research is useful for developing and testing instruments as well as determining the generalizability of a construct in a sample to a population (Babbie, 1990). Like other survey research, this study was descriptive and comparative in analyzing data (Fowler, 2002; Mehta & Sivadas, 1995; Simsek & Veiga, 2001). A descriptive analysis of respondents scores and school data was performed and includes respondents, non-respondents, and the state averages. Specifically, school variables included level of school, size of school, percentage of students by gender, percentage of students for each identified ethnicity category, percentage of students who qualified for free/reduced lunch programs, students per teacher ratio, average teacher experience, and percentage of teachers with at least a master’s degree. State assessment scores in reading at 5th and 10th grade, in math at 5th and 9th grade, and in science at 5th and 10th grade were examined; due to extensive missing data, only elementary level data was analyzed. Next the demographic information on principals who participated in the study was examined, including their gender, ethnicity/race, years of experience, and years in current position.

The responses by principals to the 20 items on the PRESS were then scrutinized for variability, central tendency, and reliability. Since a necessary component of survey research is establishment of score validity and reliability (Creswell, 2009; Higgins & Straub, 2006), Cronbach’s alpha was computed for each of the five cognitive processes to assess reliability of
scores (Borg, Gall, & Gall, 1993). Item scores are reported, as well as the calculated factor scores for each of the five mindful cognitive processes assessed by the tool, and the overall measure of mindful instructional leadership (MIL). Procedures used to calculate and assess MIL and its factors are found in chapter three. By examining mindful instruction leadership of principals, the study's second research question was addressed.

The third research question stated in the purpose of the study was, “How mindful are principals in general as self-reported?” To answer the third question, the variability and measures of central tendency, as well as the overall mindfulness score, were calculated using data gathered through the CAMS-R.

Finally, the fourth research question was addressed by analyzing the scores gathered through the PRESS tool developed for this study and the scores from the established CAMS-R instrument. Correlations were run to determine the extent to which composite mindfulness scores on both instruments were related. The result of these procedures contributed to efforts concerned with establishing the validity of the PRESS in measuring principal mindfulness in instructional leadership.

**Ethics**

Standard ethical practices of survey research were utilized in this study. These included a goal of no harm to participants, voluntary participation, confidentiality, identification of the purpose of the study, and accurate reporting. Plans for the study were approved by the Washington State University Institutional Review Board (IRB). In dissemination of the research, care was given to avoiding biased language, anticipating any potential repercussions on certain audiences, and appropriately detailing the study’s methodology so readers may accurately assess the study’s merits and limitations.
Limitations

Survey research may result in various types of error. Sampling error, nonresponse error, and measurement error may impact this study’s ability to generalize its findings (Visser, Krosnick, & Lavrakas, 2000). Notably, a low response rate may impact the generalizability of the findings. The heavy reliance on self-reported data may also result in bias and/or inaccuracies. This study was limited to principals in Washington State K-12 public schools for whom online contact information was available, which further limits generalizability of the findings. Data may not provide the details needed to fully describe instructional leadership practices through a mindfulness lens. While policy should not be enacted on a survey alone, an initial attempt at developing a useful and valid tool to measure mindful instructional leadership is important for practice.

Significance of Study

Substantive and Practical Significance

It is hoped this study produced an instrument that provides valid and reliable scores of substantive benefit to principals to assess and reflect on their instructional leadership practices through a lens of mindfulness. The tool highlights critical ways cognitive processes are present in improvement of teaching and learning processes, which could further efforts toward making fail-safe schools where students are the ultimate beneficiaries. The potential impact is great, as increased preoccupation with failure, reluctance to simplify, sensitivity to operations, commitment to resilience, and deference to expertise would improve school processes and outcomes at the organizational level, as well as positively impact the individuals within the organization through increased trust, collegiality, and job satisfaction.
Theoretical Significance

From a theoretical standpoint, this study posits an intersection between instructional leadership, professional learning communities, and organizational research. It bridges HRO best practices and educational leadership best practices, and addresses a gap in our understanding of how mindfulness may be applied in educational contexts. This study’s findings may assist future researchers and open conversation into the potential benefits of a principal’s personal mindfulness on their own health and wellbeing, as well as the health and wellbeing of their staff, their students, and their school.

Chapter and Dissertation Overview

Chapter one began with an introduction to the current educational context, highlighting areas of knowledge which contributed to the conceptual framework of this study. This section was followed by an outline of the purpose of the study, hypotheses, and a brief overview of methodology. Finally, statement of significance for the study was discussed.

In chapter two, a review of the literature is provided. Relevant literature on the role of the principal, PLCs, trust, and affective education are discussed. Principles of HROs are reviewed to situate the concept of mindfulness within an organizational framework, and develop a clear description of instructional leadership framed through a lens of mindfulness. The review of literature frames the theoretical and conceptual framework which undergirds the study.

Chapter three details the quantitative, survey methodology used in this study. Information on the population and sample are included. Development of the instrument is discussed. Data collection procedures and statistical analysis procedures are also shared.

Chapter four provides the findings of the study. The chapter is divided into four sections. The first discusses the descriptive analysis of the PRESS, including data about the respondents,
their schools, and a comparison between respondents and non-respondents. The second discusses the factors identified in the factor analysis. The third shares the descriptive analysis of the CAMS-R. Finally, the fourth highlights the inferential analysis, comparing results from the PRESS and CAMS-R.

The last chapter of the dissertation provides a summary, and offers a discussion of conclusions, implications, and recommendations.
CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature for this study focused on the role of the principal as the instructional leader, and is divided into five major sections. The first section provides an introduction to instructional leadership to illustrate why the principalship is an important area of focus for school improvement. The second section explores the literature which informs a principal’s instructional leadership practice, including description of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and the importance of trust for improving teachers’ collective practice. The next section investigates the factors impacting school climate and culture, with a narrow focus of social-emotional learning and resilience; climate and culture provide a foundation on which instructional leadership may flourish. The fourth section delves deeper into the concept of mindfulness, a component of social-emotional learning; this section emphasizes organizational theory and research on High Reliability Organizations (HROs). Each of these areas of literature are interconnected, and ultimately support the need for this study (Figure 1). Attention is given to how these concepts have been applied in education, and how principals may utilize a mindfulness lens to improve instructional leadership practices. Finally, this chapter closes with a rationale for increasing attention on mindfulness in the principalship.

**Instructional Leadership**

Desire to improve school outcomes led to various bodies of research, in an attempt to prescribe school practices that would ensure student academic achievement. One body of research focused on school leadership, specifically the principalship. This vein of research made clear that principals impact student learning; three major types of research have supported such claims.
Qualitative case studies describe numerous unique cases where principals impacted student learning, along with a number of school conditions. While such studies are numerous, the nature of the research design makes it difficult to generalize the findings. A second strain of research supporting the “principals matter” argument is large-scale quantitative studies which demonstrate a “small but educationally significant” effect on student learning (Leithwood, et al, 2004, p. 21).

While school leadership accounts for only three to five percent of variation in student learning, school level variables account for ten to twenty percent of variation total (Creemers & Reezigt, 1996). A final set of studies which demonstrate the influence of principals focuses on the leadership effects of specific practices, and are primarily also quantitative in nature. However, these studies are correlational and do not provide answers of causation (Leithwood, et al, 2004).
More specifically, the importance of instructional leadership in promoting student achievement is well documented in the literature. “There are simple, proven, affordable structures that exist right now and could have a dramatic, widespread impact on schools and achievement … An astonishing level of agreement has emerged on this point” (Schmoker, 2004, p. 1). The impact of an instructional leader may include improvements in PLCs, school climate, and social-emotional learning, each of which have the potential to reverberate in positive student outcomes.

**Principal Practice**

At its most basic level, instructional leadership is defined as a principal taking responsibility for improvements at the classroom level – to be leaders of learning (Louis & Wahlstrom, 2011; Stein & Nelson, 2003). “The principal has always been responsible for student learning, even as the position has become increasingly disconnected from the classroom” (Rousmaniere, 2013, p. 3). Principals indirectly impact student learning through their influence on teachers, other school personnel, and the reinterpretation of organizational features (Leithwood, et al, 2004). Instructional leadership tasks can include direct assistance to teachers, group development, professional development, curriculum development, and fostering action research (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2010). Regardless of the myriad job responsibilities placed on principals, student learning has always been core to school leadership, and studies have shown that principal behaviors most closely associated with classrooms make the greatest contribution to achievement, thus justifying an instructional leadership framework (Leithwood, Harris, & Strauss, 2010).

Instructional leadership proponents argue that the primary goal of educational institutions is student learning, and as such, the principal should invest his or her time most heavily in
teaching and learning (Louis & Wahlstrom, 2011; Stein & Nelson, 2003). Because teaching and learning occur at the classroom level, this is where principals are told by some to spend a significant amount of time. By ensuring individual student feedback occurs regularly and frequently, principals can create a data-rich environment; it is then important to create a data analysis rich environment (DuFour, 2004; Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001; emphasis added). Principals can also assist teachers by suggesting, modeling, and providing ongoing feedback on the implementation of research-based instructional strategies. Some of the strategies which provide the greatest increases in student achievement, but which require high fidelity in implementation, include summarizing, reinforcing effort, nonlinguistic representations, cooperative learning, setting objectives and providing feedback, and generating and testing hypotheses (Marzano, et al, 2001). A strong instructional leader understands and is able to coach others in the appropriate use of these strategies.

Robert Marzano, a proponent of strong instructional leadership, argues that administrators should focus on ensuring individual student feedback occurs frequently, at least every two weeks, improving teaching through comprehensive teacher evaluation with professional growth its goal, and widening all students’ background knowledge to make new learning easier, as well as to even the playing field for students who come to school with a wide range of experiences, travel, and other opportunities for learning outside of school. Principals can assist classroom teachers in implementing and refining key strategies through professional development, coaching, and evaluation. Researchers at Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) have identified the strategies most likely to improve student achievement across all content areas and grade levels. These strategies include: identifying similarities and differences, summarizing and note-taking, reinforcing effort and providing recognition,
homework and practice, nonlinguistic representations, cooperative learning, setting objectives and providing feedback, generating and testing hypotheses, and the use of cues, questions, and advance organizers (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001). However, for the observed effect sizes to occur, specific implementation techniques are required. A principal may assist individual teachers through modeling and providing feedback on strategy implementation; leading by example encourages others in the system to reflect on their own practice and become or remain actively engaged in improvement (Leithwood, et al, 2010).

A strong instructional leadership focus also necessitates serious attention in hiring practices. Principals are tasked with ensuring all students receive a quality education, which cannot occur without a quality teacher. According to the National Commission on Teaching & America’s Future, ensuring a “knowledgeable, skillful teacher” is in the classroom should be the highest priority to improve student achievement (Robinson, 2004, p. 3). Within the research, there is clear consensus the quality of the teacher is the greatest determiner of student success (Tucker, Stronge, Gareis, & Beers, 2003). However, it is also well documented that principals indirectly impact student achievement (Hallinger & Heck, 1996). While teachers directly impact students, it must be remembered that “principals are the direct link to teacher learning” (Huggins, Scheurich, & Morgan, 2011, p. 85). Therefore, it is a paramount duty of the principal to be an instructional leader.

**Professional Learning Communities**

Principals can substantively impact instructional practice through a focus on improving Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) within the school. Through supporting teachers to improve their collective practice in PLCs, principals can aid all students in attaining achievement goals. PLCs have become ubiquitous, but attention should be paid to what conditions create
highly effective PLCs. Through an intentional focus on student learning, PLCs can significantly impact student achievement and improve educational conditions (Brown & Duguid, 1995; Bryk, Camburn, & Louis, 1999; Louis, Marks, & Kruse, 1996; Scribner, Cockrell, Cockrell, & Valentine, 1999; Scribner, Hager, & Warne, 2002; Smylie & Hart, 2000). One of the best well-known proponents of PLCs is Richard DuFour. DuFour (2002) advocates for implementation of PLCs in schools, regardless of level, size, or location. DuFour argues principals should not be *instructional leaders* but *learning leaders*; this is an instructional leadership stance. DuFour (2002) argues that rather than emphasizing individual teacher improvements, principals will make more gains as a school by fostering a structural and cultural shift from individual evaluation practices to helping teams of teachers ensure students achieve intended outcomes. In order to shift to a learning focused school, rather than a teaching focused school, implementation of practices must include development of clear outcomes for units and courses, common assessments, analysis of assessment results, and planning for improvement, all at the team, rather than the individual teacher, level. The principal plays a critical role in “initiating, facilitating, and sustaining” this process (DuFour, 2002). DuFour (2004) advocates for an unwavering focus on three big ideas: ensuring that students learn, a culture of collaboration, and a focus on results. He advises PLCs to focus on learning, not teaching, with the following guiding questions:

1. What do we want each student to learn?
2. How will we know when each student has learned it?
3. How will we respond when a student experiences difficulty in learning?
4. How will we extend learning for a student who is proficient? (DuFour, 2004). Principals support this work through strong commitment to the model, creating schedules which support PLC time for teacher work groups, and targeted professional
development to support teachers in implementing and refining this challenging work. Through collaboration, each educator’s strengths are utilized to aid all students in attaining achievement goals. By focusing on each student as an individual, teaching teams hold each other accountable and provided the necessary support to ensure each student is provided interventions in a timely and directive way (DuFour, 2004). In addition, collaborative practice provides necessary support for teachers, whose challenging work can be stressful and isolating.

When principals focus on the health of PLCs operating within their school, they are using an instructional leadership framework to guide their own leadership practice. With any leadership framework, principals affect improvement through vision-setting, helping individuals within the organization grow, and redesigning the system for greater success (Hallinger & Heck, 1999; Leithwood, et al, 2004). Using an instructional leadership framework will dictate these actions occur with the other individuals in the organization, through shared leadership, growth of teacher leaders, and an unwavering focus on student achievement of learning targets. While a principal could be an instructional leader and focus solely on individual teachers within their own classrooms, instructional leadership and PLCs go hand in hand, increasing the organization’s influence on student outcomes considerably (DuFour, 2004). While the principal’s impact on student achievement is indirect, the teachers’ impact on student achievement is greater than any other school-controlled factor (Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Leithwood, et al, 2004; Tucker, Stronge, Gareis, & Beers, 2003).

However, a risk exists that PLCs may effectively create “more of the same” (Kruse & Louis, 1997; Lavie, 2006). Second order change, or double loop learning, is required to actually create organizational learning (Scribner, et al., 1999). This process consists of detecting and correcting errors (Argyris & Schon, 1978), generating new insights and knowledge (Hedberg,
1981), using feedback from organizationally specific historical events in future decision making (Levitt & March, 1988), and changing behavior through the process of information gathering and sense making (Huber, 1991). An additional risk to PLC implementation is the potential negative impact to whole-school functionality (Kruse & Louis, 1997). As teachers build strong connections within their PLC, they may lose connections to peers on other teams, and begin to make decisions based on the needs of their team, rather than the school as a whole (Kruse & Louis, 1997). Finally, a heavy emphasis on PLC development may ignore the micro-political dimensions of teacher autonomy within a collective community, and underemphasize the important role and needs of the individual (Scribner, et al., 2002).

Given the tension that exists between PLCs, individual autonomy, and the school organization as a whole, it is important to closely monitor the health of PLCs. Five types of discourse have evolved around PLCs functionality, including cultural discourses, school effectiveness and improvement discourses, school-as-community discourses, and critical discourses. While each approach the idea of improvement in a unique and value-laden way, each framing of PLCs shares a focus on common vision and goals (Lavie, 2006). This strong tie to student learning goals can be a powerful force in improving instruction.

One possible framework for observing the relative functionality of PLCs is the use of discourse analysis (Scribner, Sawyer, Watson, & Myers, 2007; Sawyer, 2006). Searle (1976) identified five types of speech acts, including: representatives, expressive utterances, directives, commissives, and declarations. Observing the use of these types of speech demonstrates two purposes for teams: to find or to solve problems; the specific orientation of a team impacts creativity in problem solving and the team’s leadership capacity (Scribner, et al., 2007). Teachers may need additional coaching in monitoring conversational dynamics, which lead to or
subvert effective collaboration, and principals need to help establish clarity of purpose and appropriate levels of autonomy so teams can engage in effective problem-finding and problem-solving activities (Scribner, et al., 2007). Clearly, there is a role for the principal in assisting teachers in the development of strong PLC practices (Huggins, et al, 2011).

Mattos (2008) argues schools should align their culture and structures to PLC characteristics, including a common mission and vision, collaborative culture, collective inquiry, action orientation, continuous improvement, and a focus on results. Challenges principals may face include implementation errors, such as implementing only part of the PLC model, treating PLC characteristics as a checklist, or failing to embed PLC practices in every school practice (Mattos, 2008). Like other models, without implementation integrity, results will be mixed at best. Instructional leadership demands that principals develop a deep understanding of PLC best practices, assess current practice in their school, and begin an ongoing cycle to improve implementation of these practices (Mattos, 2008). This work must occur, even when new policies and practices are unpopular, because student learning cannot be left to chance.

Organization theory states teams “are the fundamental learning unit in modern organizations,” (Senge, 1990, p. 10) and at the heart of PLCs is the concept of teachers as learners (Kruse & Louis, 1997; Scribner, Hager, & Warne, 2002; Senge, 1990; Smylie & Hart, 2000). Professional learning communities promote collaboration, decrease teacher isolation, and support improved professional practices, which improves educational outcomes (Leithwood, et al., 2002; Louis, Marks, & Kruse, 1996; Scribner, Cockrell, Cockrell, & Valentine, 1999). Using organizing principles to lead PLC development and improvement is beneficial. This requires an awareness of both the need for immediate change, and long-term commitments to shared learning, professional growth, and systemwide improvement (Fullan, 2001). Growth is linked to
organizational culture, and includes five critical elements: 1) shared norms and values, including collectively agreed on professional beliefs; 2) focus on student learning; 3) reflective dialogue among colleagues; 4) deprivatization of practice, which includes continuous reflection and requires interaction with and feedback from colleagues; and 5) collaboration (Louis, et al., 1996; Scribner, et al., 1999).

The Importance of Trust

The nature of PLCs within a building are impacted by the school climate (Price, 2012; Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008; Williams, Persaud, & Turner, 2008). Research indicates principals are central to shaping climate and culture variables, including shared leadership, trust, and collective efficacy, and that positive school climate can help meet the challenge of student achievement (Blase & Blase, 2002; Price, 2012; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008; Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008).

Before strong PLCs will materialize within a building, and teachers will be willing to follow the advice of the principal on matters of instructional practice within their individual classrooms, a principal must pay considerable attention to the climate and culture of the building. While teachers may be professional, collaboration will not occur without trust (Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008; Williams, Persaud, & Turner, 2008; Price, 2012). Principals are key to developing a sense of shared responsibility in their school, and positive relationships are a building block required for successful PLCs and positive mentoring relationships (Blase & Blase, 2002; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008; Price, 2012; Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008).

Within the school context, supportive principal behavior and faculty trust are significantly correlated in both elementary and secondary schools (Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008). Trust can be defined as “the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party
based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party” (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995, p. 712).

In a meta-analysis of studies on antecedent factors of trust, three were consistently identified: ability, benevolence, and integrity (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995). The outcome of trust is the establishment of a risk-taking relationship (Mayer, et al., 1995), which may result in willingness to work collaboratively within a PLC or try a new strategy within one’s own classroom. Trust is impacted by interactional frequency, shared decision making, and strength of affective ties, and becomes increasingly necessary as work shifts to self-directed teams, or PLCs (Price, 2012; Mayer, et al., 1995). Principals foster trust through consistent support of teachers’ work, proactive conflict management, and shared leadership (Youngs & King, 2002), all of which can exist within the framework of PLCs. These same strategies used in dyad interactions will improve the relationship between the principal and the individual teacher, which may allow the principal to push for effective participation in PLCs. To increase trust, a principal must operate with honesty and integrity, be available to staff, demonstrate authentic concern for staff members, communicate and listen, encourage innovation, share decision-making, and make sure the basics are taken care of for teachers (Buffum, 2008). Research on trust indicates positive relationships result from transparency, competence, benevolence, and reliability, and that trust remains a strong predictor of student achievement (Leithwood, Patten, & Jantzi, 2010).

A principal can also have a negative impact on the level of trust in a building. Barriers to establishing and maintaining trust are top-down, authoritarian decision-making, ineffective communication, a lack of follow-through, and failure to remove teachers who are ineffective (Blase & Blase, 2002; Buffum, 2008). In general, the principal’s actions will set the tone for
whether trust will exist between members of the staff, as well as between staff and students, families, and community members.

As already noted, considerable research speaks to the impact a principal has in a school. While influence on student achievement may be indirect, leadership directly influences climate and culture in a variety of ways. One path of influence is the Emotions Path, which consists of feelings, dispositions, and affective states of faculty, both individually and collectively (Bolman & Deal, 1991; Leithwood, et al., 2010). Collective teacher efficacy (CTE) and trust in colleagues are two factors, as conceptualized by Leithwood, Patten, and Jantzi (2010), and both contribute to student success. Leadership also influences the organizational path, and relates to structures, cultures, policies, and standard operating procedures, which may include structured PLCs. Notably, research on leadership behaviors that support PLCs tends to focus on “quiet support, rather than bold, visibly transformational action” (Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008, p. 483), although competing research demonstrates a more significant role is necessary to change teacher practice (Huggins, et al, 2011). Collective leadership, which can operate within the structure of PLCs, has significant effects on teacher capacity and learning; such learning is significantly related to student achievement (Leithwood & Mascall, 2008).

**School Climate and Culture**

In order for teacher capacity and learning to be impacted within the PLC environment of a school, reflective dialogue and deprivatization of practice must occur; neither lasts long without positive school climate and culture. It is important to recognize the role that context plays in shaping colleague relationships, including principal-teacher relationships. Instructional leadership requires laying the groundwork for challenging existing instructional practices, which includes paying attention to building climate and culture.
Instructional leadership requires different skills at a comprehensive high school, versus a small elementary school (Leithwood, et al, 2004). Principals must be savvy about the organizational context in which they find themselves, as well as hone a deep understanding of their unique student population. As the policy climate continues to evolve, principals must focus on creating and sustaining a competitive school, empowering others to make important decisions, developing and implementing strategic-improvement plans, and, most importantly, from an instructional leadership framework, providing instructional guidance (Leithwood, et al, 2004).

Theories within organizational studies, social psychology, and sociology support the notion that positive interpersonal relationships, such as those built on trust, explain variation in outcomes (Price, 2012). A positive climate is significantly related to students exceeding expectations; conversely, a negative climate inversely impacts achievement, as teacher work performance suffers and collegial relationships are damaged (Blase & Blase, 2002; Williams et al., 2008). According to management literature, principals can directly and indirectly influence teachers’ professional commitment through enhancing support and cohesion; one method to enhance such support is through development of effective PLCs. Social psychological literature focuses on the link between personal commitments and productivity, further linking the use of PLCs to potential increases in student achievement. As initiatives continue to stack up, from Common Core State Standards, Next-Generation Science Standards, and Smarter Balanced Assessments, to new teacher and principal evaluation systems, it is important to consider how stress affects teachers and students alike. Positive relationships lead to satisfaction, cohesion, and commitment on the part of PLC members, which allow teams, or the school at large, to tackle reform initiatives successfully (Price, 2012). The issue of trust is critical, if members of the organization are to call attention to failures, in order to then do better.
Social-Emotional Learning

Trust is a critical component not just in developing collaborative relationships between staff, but also in developing the necessary relationships between school personnel and students; positive relationships are necessary for academic learning to take place (Noam & Fiore, 2004). Such relationships in a school community establish a safe learning environment for students (Benard, 1991). In addition, high levels of trust contribute to a climate in which capacity for emotional intelligence can be increased, thereby helping students to become more trustworthy. Emotional intelligence includes five key areas of learning: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills (Goleman, 1995). It can be defined as “the ability to perceive and express emotions, to use emotions to facilitate thinking, to understand and reason with emotions, and to effectively manage emotions within oneself and in relationships with others” (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2000, as cited in Northouse, 2013, p. 27). Emotional intelligence, also known as interpersonal intelligence, is not a fixed commodity (Gardner, 1993). Skills can be taught, modeled, and practiced to improve students’kself-awareness, social awareness, self-management, and relationship management, all of which are critical in professional and personal relationships (Covey, 1989; Keyser, 2014). As teachers hold high expectations for learning and allow students to participate in meaningful ways, students contribute to the school community and practice responsible decision-making, allowing for emotional intelligence growth and academic achievement (Benard, 1991).

Social-cognitive theory recognizes that personal, environmental, and behavioral characteristics interact to influence one another, and this interaction affects future cognitions, dispositions, and behaviors of individuals (Bandura, 1986). Clearly, the school environment influences students in areas of motivation to participate, persevere, and work with others. In
fact, a school’s environment “significantly affects organizational performance, which in turn affects subsequent perceptions and decisions,” (Scott, 2003, as cited in DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2005, p. 61) as individuals respond to, interpret, create, and change the environment (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1982).

Student self-efficacy has a role to play. Self-efficacy is the belief an individual has that he or she has the capacity to successfully complete a task (Bandura, 1986). Efficacy is developed through cognitive and affective processes (Schell, et al., 1995). Beliefs are show to impact motivation and achievement, as high self-efficacy leads to persistence and increased effort to solve a problem (Schunk & Miller, 2002, as cited in Martin & Dowson, 2009). The efficacy of the adults in a school is also important. Teachers’ self-efficacy impacts the learning environment they create for their students, and leads to engagement in school-wide initiatives for improvement. Self-efficacy can be increased through actual performance, vicarious experiences, such as interactions with a role model, and positive verbal reinforcement from others (Bandura, 1977). Each of these factors may be systematically built into an effective PLCs practice within a school. Problem solving and supportive communication help individuals increase their sense of self-efficacy, and increased efficacy then leads to more effective problem solving, creating a positive upward spiral (Bandura, 1993). Through a strong PLC environment, teachers can support each other in increasing self and collective-efficacy, and this in turn will support student learning, including affective learning surrounding the nature of teamwork and collaboration (Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2000; Lee, Dedrick, & Smith, 1991). Strong positive beliefs held by the adults in the school bleed over into the beliefs of the students in the school. Existing evidence shows teachers’ collective efficacy “can be a stronger predictor of student achievement than students’ socioeconomic status” (Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008, p. 467).
Social-emotional learning, or affective education, is a necessary component to address issues of self-efficacy, as well as problems of violence perpetrated on students at the hands of their peers. Arguments for the promotion of health, including social-emotional health, as a strategy for societal improvement are both conceptual and empirical (Durlak, 2000; Hanson & Austin, 2003; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Wyman, Cowen, Work, Hoyt-Meyers, Magnus, & Fagen, 1999). If schools desire to increase students’ ability to be successful in school and become productive members of society, there must be an intentional focus on affective education. Such instruction builds habits of mind, such as cooperation and perseverance, positively impacts health, and combats factors that negatively impact student academic performance, such as truancy, drug and alcohol abuse, and bullying (Civic Enterprises, 2013; Hyland, 2014). Further, a negative social-emotional environment is a barrier to academic achievement, as crime, violence, and antisocial behavior adversely affect student learning (Benard, 2004; Hanson & Austin, 2003; Pianta, et al, 2008). There is a critical need to change how we educate students. “If the current educational system doesn’t change to better address the needs of our diverse students, higher standards and more tests alone will not enable them to learn” (Darling-Hammond, 2000, p. 6).

However, as mandated curriculums continue to expand, and budgets continue at basic-needs levels, schools find themselves caught between outside political pressures and the stressful demands of caring for students with increasing struggles related to poverty, mental health, and violence (Hootman, Houck, & King, 2003). While academic standards continue to drive the primary national conversation about what is taught in schools, the potential value of affective education is worthy of discussion. A brief overview of negative incidents involving youth in the recent past is illustrative.
A call to action.

In June 2014, a gunman opened fire at Seattle Pacific University, one more incident in a long line of gun violence on school and university campuses, causing President Obama to declare school shootings are becoming the “norm” (CNN, 2014). While a lone gunman, or in the case of the Columbine High School tragedy in 1999, two gunmen, may seem extreme, violence against our students is a daily occurrence. As recently as this past October, Washington State reeled with the news that five teenagers, four victims and one perpetrator, died after a shooting incident at Marysville Pilchuk High School in Marysville, Washington (NBC News, 2014).

The NCES Indicators of School Crime and Safety 2012 report indicates that while nonfatal violent victimizations of K-12 students are on the decline, 749,200 violent victimizations, including 89,000 serious violent victimizations, such as rape, sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault, occurred in 2012 (NCES, 2013). Perhaps considered less of a threat by the criminal justice system, but in many cases just as devastating to students, bullying and cyber-bullying have reached epic proportions. The 2011 School Crime Supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey indicates that 27.8% of students age 12 to 18 reported being bullied at school, while 9% of students reported being cyber-bullied (US Department of Justice, 2011).

These statistics are quite shocking, and have led the State of Washington and local school districts to attempt to address the issue of crime against students. In 2002, Washington passed a state law prohibiting harassment, intimidation, and bullying in Washington schools, and required school districts to develop and implement anti-bullying and harassment policies, including cyber-bullying in a 2007 amendment. While districts prohibit such behavior, and in many cases, require some form of anti-bullying education, the Discipline Task Force Presentation of 2012-
2013 Data indicated 16,322 reported incidents of bullying in Washington State during that school year alone (OSPI, 2013).

Schools have the power to protect students, to encourage their talents, and to improve their emotional intelligence, in order to “permanently alter the developmental trajectories of children” (Katz, 1997, p. 96). Resilience builds positive relationships, improves self-awareness and self-regulation, and improves coping and problem-solving skills (Morrison & Allen, 2007). Change efforts are rarely smooth, and social justice theory recognizes change may be met with resistance, particularly from staff members whose core values conflict with this student-centered and holistic health approach. School leaders must develop critical consciousness, which requires a deeper knowledge of self and an abiding belief in what is possible, so that they, too, can be more mindful in their role, and serve as role models to others (Delpit, 2012; Taylor, Gillborn, & Ladson-Billings, 2009; Theoharis, 2007).

**Resilience and student achievement.**

The importance of mindfulness in student achievement, especially the cognitive process of resilience, is increasingly documented in the literature. Resilience research has demonstrated all students have an innate capacity for resilience, and that specific characteristics of schools impact the development of personal strengths; these personal strengths are associated with healthy development and successful learning (Benard, 2004). Building resiliency is crucial not just for academic achievement, but for social-emotional health (Wadsworth & Santiago, 2008). Resiliency can be promoted through school protective factors, such as caring adult relationships, high teacher expectations, and meaningful student participation (Benard, 2004). Effective strategies also include the intentional building of “self-efficacy, and motivation to meet challenges, … along with strong beliefs that are communicated to students about the possibilities
life has in creating meaning” (Masten, Herbers, Cutuli, & Lafavor, 2008, p. 4). These factors positively impact the school environment, combating low student engagement. Again, the power of positive relationships cannot be overstated (Lumpkin, 2007; Noddings, 1992). Outcomes of resilience include personal strengths in four categories: social competence, problem-solving, autonomy, and a sense of purpose (Benard, 1991, 2004). These strengths allow the vast majority of “at risk” youth to become responsible citizens with fulfilling lives, overcoming hardships faced during adolescence (Benard, 2004). In the seminal study by Werner and Smith (2001), the impact of protective factors outweighed the impact of risk factors for the vast majority of students. Only one in six adults who were classified as at-risk during youth were “struggling with chronic financial problems, domestic conflict, violence, substance abuse, serious mental health problems, and/or low self-esteem” in mid-life (Werner & Smith, 2001, p. 37).

Resilience research represents a paradigm shift, particularly incongruous with the current “failing” state of affairs in education. While social scientists invest time in demonstrating how risk factors lead to negative outcomes, resilience research demonstrates how protective factors buffer individuals from long-term negative outcomes (Werner & Smith, 2001). It is an additive theory which allows practitioners to focus on the process of improving student learning, and to approach significant challenges with optimism. “Ultimately resilience is a process of connectedness, of linking to people, to interests, and ultimately to life itself” (Benard, 1991, p. 6). It allows a paradox of realism and idealism to happily coexist.

In general, resilience research borrows from concepts of mindfulness interpreted through a philosophical lens. In the Eastern tradition, individual mindfulness focuses on nonjudgmental observation, impartial watchfulness, non-conceptual awareness, present-time awareness, nonegoistic alertness, goalless awareness, and awareness of change (Gunaratana, 2002, p. 139-
While the terminology is quite different, parallels can be drawn between individual mindfulness and organizational mindfulness, as both are centrally focused on the idea of attention. Eastern and Western thought are not exclusive, but can instead be viewed as “complementary epistemologies” (Kabat-Zinn, 2003, p. 147). However, it is interesting to note that in the Eastern tradition, there is an understanding that both mindfulness and mindlessness serve a purpose in better understanding the world around us, while the Western tradition focuses on avoiding mindlessness (Weick & Putnam, 2006).

**Mindfulness**

A school which focuses on building resilience and mindfulness helps individuals to feel connected and valued, and this is as important for the adults who work in schools as for the children who attend them. Mindfulness is a necessary condition for trust to be sustained (Hoy, Gage, & Tarter, 2006), and strong, positive relationships within the organization must be realized before real, lasting change in student outcomes can occur (Fullan, 2001). Mindfulness and emotional intelligence are necessary to perform the duties of an educator well, and to cope with the stress of the job (Fullan, 2001). Stress management is a key element of an individual’s Emotional Quotient (EQ), alongside intrapersonal skills, interpersonal skills, adaptability, and a sunny outlook (Stein & Book, 2000). EQ can be improved through mindfulness practice, allowing an educational practitioner to better connect with students, as well as reduce their own stress.

**The Ethics of Mindfulness**

Social-emotional learning, including mindfulness and resilience in schools, is an ethical issue, and requires nothing short of social change. While factors which influence student achievement abound, such as family and economic characteristics, schools have a substantial
opportunity to positively impact students’ academic achievement and social-emotional health. While children in poverty may come to school having seen and heard 30 million fewer words than their middle class counterparts, and may score 60% lower in cognitive performance, challenging, engaging, and intentional instruction which increases resilience is more important to long-term student success (Goodwin, 2010). In Hattie’s (2009) synthesis of meta-analyses, teacher-student relationships demonstrated a greater impact on student achievement (d=.72) than family socioeconomic status (d=.57), parental involvement (d=.51), student engagement (d=.48), or teacher expectations (d=.43). There is ample evidence relationships and the school environment impact student outcomes (Hamre & Pianta, 2005; Liew, Chen, & Hughes, 2010), and resilience theory requires us to pay attention to these parts of our environment in order to intentionally help students build on their strengths, improve their emotional intelligence, and support them on their path to self-actualization.

All students deserve the opportunity to develop their potential, and for those deemed at-risk, schools have the power to reinforce systemic barriers or provide a haven from the larger system. Cultural ecological theory asserts the performance of at-risk students depends on how society and the school treat at-risk students, and how students respond to interventions and the educational program (Ogbu & Simons, 1998). Culturally unresponsive education may lead to disenfranchisement or symbolic discrimination; instead, teachers should begin by building trust through positive relationships, show students they believe in them and value their culture, and that they can retain their identity throughout the schooling process (Delpit, 1995; Deschenes, Cuban, & Tyack, 2001, Morales, 2008; Ogbu & Simons, 1998). Unlike other approaches to schooling, culturally responsive education recognizes the gifts and talents each student brings to school; like resiliency, it is also an additive model. In contrast, deficit theories require students
to compromise culturally through assimilation. Resilience theory and critical theory are complementary approaches.

Promoting culturally responsive education and social-emotional health in schools requires social justice leadership. Social justice leaders consistently work to create culturally responsive settings for all students, and work towards closing the achievement gap by strengthening student support structures, strengthening school culture, and increasing staff capacity to navigate change successfully (Theoharis, 2007). Social justice involves “reclaiming, appropriating, sustaining, and advancing inherent human rights of equity, equality, and fairness in social, economic, educational, and personal dimensions” (Goldfarb & Grinberg, 2002, as cited in Theoharis, 2007, p. 5, italics added). A focus on mindfulness, particularly increasing resilience, can help educators tackle the challenges facing schools and at-risk students. In addition, a mindful awareness of existing opportunity gaps can aid in targeting support structures. Social justice leadership requires school transformation, from culture to individual teacher practices, and is built on a foundation of respect, caring, recognition, and empathy.

Mindfulness and Health

One way to increase mindfulness is through purposeful practice of non-deliberative meditation. While the practice of meditation that is receiving much attention in public education is based on Buddhist teachings, mindful meditation can be practiced without a religious element. Time is spent in “moment-to-moment awareness of perceptible mental states and processes … continuous, immediate awareness of physical sensations, perceptions, affective states, thoughts, and imagery;” it is participant-observation of oneself (Grossman, Niemann, Schmidt, & Walach, 2003, p. 36). Through committing to mindfulness practice, an individual begins to accept the world as it is, resulting in increased clarity of thought. Benefits to the individual include reduced
stress, lowered blood pressure, improved memory, and decreased incidence of depression and anxiety (Kabat-Zinn, 1990).

In the 1970s, Kabat-Zinn established the Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program to alleviate suffering associated with chronic pain. His program has been used in countless settings to help individuals cope with physical, psychosomatic, and psychiatric disorders. In a meta-analysis of existing studies, researchers found a consistent effect size of 0.5, \( p < .0001 \), which suggests MBSR is effective in helping those in difficult situations cope (Grossman, et al, 2003). Clearly, working in a school is a challenging situation which often requires strong coping abilities. Mindfulness training is taking off in business settings, too. Google offers a regular mindfulness course, which provides employees used to a frenetic work pace the emotional buffer to cope with their demanding jobs (Kelly, 2012). Apple, General Mills, Target, and Aetna are on board, too. The results of corporate mindfulness courses are reductions in stress, as well as curbing reflexive, emotional reactions; mindfulness leads to wiser decision-making and increases individuals’ ability to let go of initiatives that are not beneficial in favor of increased time on valuable pursuits. It is a work productivity optimization too.

**High Reliability Organizations (HROs)**

The concept of mindfulness is re-conceptualized in the Western tradition as cognitive processes; these processes are widely implemented in successful High Reliability Organizations (HROs), which are instructive to schools seeking greater reliability in student performance. HROs are organizations which must guarantee success; failure is not an option. HROs include professions such as air traffic controllers, emergency room physicians and nurses, nuclear power plant operators, and naval aircraft carrier personnel. Mistakes carry grave consequences, and this heightened sense of responsibility has led to the development of predominating attitudes, evident
in successful implementation of cognitive processes common among employees at all levels within the organization. These cognitive processes are defined as a “combination of ongoing scrutiny of existing expectations, continuous refinement and differentiation of expectations based on newer experiences, willingness and capability to invent new expectations that make sense of unprecedented events, a more nuanced appreciation of context and ways to deal with it, and identification of new dimensions of context that improve foresight and current functioning” (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001, p. 42). Organizational mindfulness, therefore, focuses on preoccupation with failure, a reluctance to simplify, sensitivity to operations, a commitment to resilience, and deference to expertise (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2006). Each of these cognitive processes is designed to increase reliability in the system, to avert mindlessness which may lead to catastrophic failure.

In studying consistent achievement, which may also be termed reliability, literature on HROs is particularly instructive. Individuals and organizations seeking strategies for improvement often look outside their own discipline for answers; taking a closer look at HRO practices may benefit the field of education, and ultimately, our students. HROs “take a variety of extraordinary steps in pursuit of error free performance,” resulting in fail-safe operations (Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 1999, p.84; see also Bellamy, Crawford, Marshall, & Coulter, 2005; Stringfield, 1995; Stringfield, 1998). This attitude permeates high-risk HRO industries. Consider if this level of attention were focused on a student failing math. While poor math instruction will not result in the student’s death, the high-stakes nature of education today warrants considerable effort be expended to address the problem, and that all individuals involved be willing to bring attention to the failure and exhibit a willingness to learn more about the failure and the system in which it occurred. Whether schools are able to harness the benefits
of HRO theory will depend on their ability to effectively implement the identified cognitive processes.

**Preoccupation with failure.**

Attention paid to failure does not exclude attention paid to success. However, HROs guard against complacency which may result from too much emphasis on success (Miller, 1993; Starbuck & Milliken, 1988). Two examples which demonstrate the need for preoccupation with failure are the Challenger and Columbia shuttle accidents. After the launch failure which caused the deaths of seven crew members, the Rogers Commission investigated and issued a report on the causes of the Challenger accident. While the report concluded the cause of the accident was the failure of a pressure seal in the right Solid Rocket Booster, the Commission also cited the contributing cause of flawed decision-making, notably, “a propensity of management … to contain potentially serious problems and to attempt to resolve them internally rather than communicate them forward” (Rogers Commission, 1986, p. 18). NASA’s culture of dismissing potential failures later contributed to the deaths of seven additional astronauts in the Columbia shuttle accident. While the physical cause of this accident was a breach in the thermal protection system caused by a piece of foam that separated shortly after launch, the Columbia Accident Investigation Board stated, “the NASA organizational culture had as much to do with this accident as the foam” (Columbia Accident Investigation Board Report, 2003, p. 97). The report continued to state that the overconfident attitudes of managers and engineers, coupled with pressure to remain quiet, contributed to organizational causes of the disaster (Columbia Accident Investigation Board Report, 2003, p. 177, 192).

In successful HROs, members are on high alert for small signs of potential problems. Unheeded, these “weak signals,” or “near-miss events,” may lead to catastrophe (Weick &
Sutcliffe, 2006). As such, recognition of small errors which help avert larger crises are often rewarded (Landau & Chisolm, 1995; Rochlin, 1993; Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 1999; Westrum, 1992). In one case, an engineer even received a bottle of champagne after reporting he may have caused a short circuit that resulted in an out of control missile (Westrum, 1992)!

Within the context of schools, systems which allow for recognition of “weak signals” may include the use of formative and summative assessment, collaborative examination of student work in PLCs, teacher reflection, and ongoing scrutiny of school-wide data through the maintenance and use of information databases focused on attendance, discipline, grades, perceptions, and other schoolwide data (Bellamy, et al, 2005; Stringfield, 1995, 1998).

Purposeful identification of mistakes as standard operating procedures, particularly at the classroom level, and an attitude of gratitude for those that report errors, would provide evidence of an educational organization’s preoccupation with failure. This cognitive process could also play out in a shared belief in the importance of monitoring and attending to small failures, as well as commitment to the belief that school failure is catastrophic (Stringfield, 1995, 1998).

**Commitment to resilience.**

However, even with an intentional alertness to potential failures, errors will occur. When such failures arise, HROs bounce back quickly, correcting problems early and adjusting systems to avoid similar problems in the future (Hoy, Gage, & Tarter, 2006; Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005). Beyond just correcting errors, HROs take this concept one step further by assuming errors will occur. This assumption leads HROs to build in fail-safes as a control; when one part of the system collapses, the organization as a whole is not handicapped (Weick, et al, 2005). This constant reorganization to improve processes requires a habit of continuous learning within the organization.
This commitment to ongoing learning fits well with predominating school ideology. However, educators must pay more than lip service to their role as continuous learners. Intentional professional development, with ongoing opportunities for retraining and improvement, combined with serious performance evaluations which provide ongoing feedback in performance, indicate a commitment to resilience within the school (Stringfield, 1995, 1998). Willingness on the part of principals and teachers alike to continually reorganize is necessary to avoid the stagnation which leads to unexpected failures. This can be a challenge, as over time flexibility fatigue may begin to set in. The principal can help set the tone for resilience through her attitudes, words, and actions.

**Deference to expertise.**

HROs indicate that mindfulness requires a deference to expertise. Persons with the most knowledge in a given situation should have decision-making authority, regardless of traditional decision-making hierarchies which may exist within the organization. With each decision, who has authority changes, depending on the knowledge each individual brings to the problem (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001). Mindfulness which results in keen awareness of who is best able to address a problem. Understanding that no one person has all the answers, and that knowledge and clear thinking do not automatically follow titles or seniority, organizations which practice this cognitive process do not become gridlocked by ceremony or etiquette.

Within an educational organization, this cognitive process is easily engaged at multiple levels, although clearly to varying degrees depending on the specific organization under review. Teachers may defer to students through shared decision-making. Principals may embrace distributed leadership practices, rather than top-down, authoritarian structures. Central office administrators, including superintendents, may admit individuals in the building have
considerably more knowledge about teaching and learning issues. However, in practice, this
deferece to expertise does not always surface. Teachers may insist on teacher-led decisions and
policies. Principals may refuse to recognize others’ specialized knowledge. Central office
administrators may believe “father knows best,” leading to top-down initiatives. However, in all
three cases, failure is guaranteed, as overconfidence in one’s own abilities can lead to
complacency, which will lead to system failures (Collins, 2005). While school districts, and
HROs, are hierarchically structured, value must be placed on each level by its supervising entity
in order to maintain proactive communication, which allows for the implementation of the
identified cognitive processes (Stringfield, 1995, 1998).

**Reluctance to simplify.**

While value and decision-making authority is accorded to each level within the
organization, HROs resist accepting the convenient answer and avoid quick categorization of
data. HROs understand simplifications in systems may not allow the organization to see new
developments which signal future failure (Miller, 1993). When examining data, multiple causes
and consequences of a troubling data point must be investigated. Skepticism and alternative
viewpoints are welcomed and cultivated (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001).

Wise school leaders welcome alternative viewpoints, as well, because it signals
recognition that a range of perspectives is necessary to diagnose complex problems (Hoy, Gage,
& Tarter, 2006). A desire to know more may decrease short-term efficiency, but lead to higher
reliability overall (Stringfield, 1995, 1998). Evidence an educational organization is employing
a reluctance to simplify might include norms and processes which value all voices being heard, a
focus on process rather than outcomes in shared decision-making, and a continuous search for
additional underlying causes of an identified problem. Less efficient systems may signal some degree of this cognitive process at work in a school.

**Sensitivity to operations.**

Finally, solving complex challenges requires a focus on the “real work” of an organization. Sensitivity to operations challenges an organization to pay attention to the front line, and keeping all levels of the system informed through ongoing communication (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2006). Where frequent, open communication occurs, trust and respect increase, which allows for even more open communication.

Within the realm of schools, Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) can significantly increase a school’s sensitivity to operations. Through frequent, focused discussion on teaching and learning, the front line of the school, failures can be brought to light and addressed. The PLC model could be synonymous with a sensitivity to operations. According to DuFour (2004), the purpose of PLCs is to ensure that all students learn, and that interventions which are timely, directive, and based on intervention rather than remediation are systematically provided to all students. A culture of collaboration requires deprivatization of teaching practice, and a laser-like focus on results which is continually challenged through thoughtful analysis of data (DuFour, 2004). This cycle of investigation and intervention keeps the attention of those in the school focused on the real work of educational organizations – teaching and learning.

**Applying Mindfulness in a School Context**

As an organizational system, it is appropriate for schools to look to organizational theory for potential solutions to ongoing challenges. The inability of schools to meet the needs of all students has led to ever-increasing, punitive accountability measures. This “stick” approach to change has had limited success in raising student achievement. Instead, policy makers and
others might consider how other organizations achieve high reliability. Schools employing the practices of HROs could result in decreased failure and increased student success.

It is possible to apply HRO theory to educational organizations. If HRO processes were applied in schools, a relentless curiosity about potential and existing sources of failure for students would exist. When mistakes were made, individuals or groups would draw attention to these failures, in an effort to prevent future, more catastrophic, failure. Such admissions would be met with gratitude from peers and superiors, as it would present an opportunity for organizational learning. In seeking answers to address failures, school personnel would remain open-minded to a host of contributing factors, and not jump to conclusions. Identifying a single cause, or “silver bullet,” is likely to be a mistake in an educational context, due to the complex nature of the system. Complicated problems rarely have simple solutions, and digging deep to find the root causes of an issue are necessary to solving a problem (Bauer & Brazier, 2012). Faculty would instead seek and analyze as many details as possible, using multiple sources of data to inform their thinking, decision-making, and action. All work within the organization would be finely tuned to the real work of schools – teaching and learning. This work occurs in classrooms, therefore a heightened awareness of each individual student’s strengths, challenges, and performance on learning targets would result from close scrutiny. When failure occurred, principals and teachers would quickly rebound, rather than languish in negative emotions, such as blame or hopelessness. Understanding their role as learners within the system, school staff would seek to expand their own knowledge in order to address each student’s needs. Finally, within the structures of the school, decision-making would occur by those with the most relevant knowledge in a given situation, which may or may not be those with traditional authority. To
address micro-failures quickly, teams of teachers and/or other school personnel would mobilize quickly to avert a larger disaster.

Looking at instructional leadership through the lens of mindfulness provides new measures on which a principal might measure positive growth within his or her school. A principal can model the cognitive processes in order to assist members of the organization in adopting them into their own educational practice. Maintenance of information databases may allow principals and schools to monitor for “weak signals” which indicate a larger failure on the horizon (Bellamy, Crawford, Marshall, & Coulter, 2005; Stringfield, 1995, 1998). In addition, by continuously attending to small failures evident within the data, the principal demonstrates the serious nature of larger failures (Stringfield, 1995, 1998). The principal also plays a significant role in setting norms which allow individuals to employ a reluctance to simplify, which may result in richer decision-making. In addition, the principal can maintain sensitivity to operations through steadfast support of PLCs within the building, which include setting supportive schedules, providing professional development on effective collaboration, and holding teams accountable for their collaborative work. As the formal leader, the principal will set the tone for the building in terms of resilience and deference to expertise. By viewing setbacks as learning opportunities, cheerleading when necessary, and promoting shared decision-making, the principal encourages others to approach their own work with resilience and a willingness to learn from others.

Consider how these processes might apply to PLCs. As PLCs examine student data, they are constantly on the look-out for individual student failure. Through honest deprivatization of practice, they are also on the look-out for their own failures. One teacher may help all of his or her students meet a particular learning standard, while other teachers struggle. Through honest
reflection, and an eye towards failures, the team can assist each other in implementing interventions so that all of the students meet the standard. In discussions surrounding a teacher’s failure to succeed with an individual student, the PLC would not jump to a simple answer, or blame a scapegoat, such as poverty or difficult parents. Instead, the team would be reluctant to find the simple, single solution, and dig deeper, through an ongoing process of data collection and analysis. Effective PLCs are sensitive to operations, which means they spend time focused on DuFour’s guiding questions, and not on other issues which take up time in schools – at best, logistics, at worst, complaining. As the PLC faces challenges, they continue to tackle them, demonstrating resilience through a positive attitude and willingness to learn. Finally, individual teachers within the PLC would defer to expertise, learning from each other in order to better serve all of their students together, and sometimes even deferring to students, who may know best why an instructional strategy is not working for them. The principal would also defer to teachers’ expertise, as appropriate, and not dictate top-down, authoritarian measures.

Mindfulness is also strongly associated with school climate and trust. By encouraging the reporting of mistakes as standard procedure, particularly at the classroom level, and demonstrating thankfulness for error reporters, principals both promote trust and encourage a preoccupation with failure. A welcoming attitude towards alternative viewpoints further promotes trust, allowing for both synergy and innovation to develop (Covey, 1989). Diagnosing complex problems requires a team approach, and an emphasis on shared decision-making processes will ultimately improve both outcomes and attitudes (Hoy, Gage, & Tarter, 2006; Price, 2012). As principals promote this culture of collaboration, and PLCs increase their effectiveness in maintaining a results-focused mindset, both trust and resilience will positively benefit the school climate (DuFour, 2004; Williams et al., 2008). Finally, trust is increased and
climate is improved as organizational members defer to each other’s expertise. This may be accomplished in PLCs, but also through intentional professional development where members of the organization share their learning with others, as well as ongoing opportunities for retraining and improvement (Stringfield, 1995, 1998).

Trust is also built over time, and principals may need significant time in a school to establish the requisite level needed to significantly impact student achievement (Hargreaves, Moore, Fink, Brayman, & White, 2003). The degree to which mindfulness is beneficial may depend on additional factors, such as the nature of the task environment and the degree of expertise of the individual engaging in the task (Dane, 2011). While Weick supports cognitive processes in order to avoid mindlessness, 100% mindfulness may be counterproductive. While mindfulness literature generally strongly supports increased mindfulness, there may be a tipping point. Too much mindfulness could create errors through excessive attention focused on less important tasks (Dane, 2011). While mindfulness benefits the individual by encouraging conscious awareness of one’s own thoughts, beliefs and emotions (Kabat-Zinn, 2005), this may actually cause harm to the organization. Increased reliance on gut feelings, or intuitions, may result in decision-making errors, particularly for novice practitioners, who risk misinterpreting data in the environment (Dane & Pratt, 2007, 2009; Hogarth, 2001; Kahneman & Klein, 2009; Klein, 1998). Research indicates a continuum of development exists over the first several years of the principalship, ranging from one to eight years (Day & Bakioglu, 1996; Hargreaves, et al, 2003). Novice principals frequently struggle to manage the overwhelming demands of the job and struggle to maintain focus on instructional leadership tasks (Spillane & Lee, 2013). Increased experience allows principals to more effectively utilize distributed leadership in order to prioritize instructional leadership tasks, and sharpens a principal’s ability to accurately
observe and attend to distinctions and multiple perspectives (Johnson, Uline, & Perez, 2011; Langer, 1997; Marczynski & Gates, 2013; Ross & Gibson, 2010). More experienced principals may better be able to utilize mindful instructional leadership practices.

**Conclusion**

Research is beginning to demonstrate that applying HRO concepts to school organization holds promise for real change (Laporte & Consolini, 1991). Within the education system, mindfulness has been shown to produce a wide range of benefits for teachers and students on an individual level. For teachers, interventions aimed at increasing mindfulness led to improved focus and awareness, greater responsiveness to student needs, and enhanced classroom climate, all of which impact student outcomes. For students, results included strengthened attention and concentration, reduced anxiety, and enhanced social and emotional learning. It seems intuitive that, “When teachers are fully present, they teach better. When students are fully present, the quality of their learning is better” (Schoeberlain and Sheth, 2009, as cited in Hyland, 2014, p. 288). Further, research indicates that mindfulness can be cultivated, and that increased mindfulness leads to increased health and well-being (Baer, 2003; Brown & Ryan, 2003; Frank, Jennings, & Greenberg, 2013). In sharp contrast, short-term, hurried work handicaps teachers from engaging in reflective practice, resulting in a negative attitude towards learning and students (Bryk, Camburn, & Louis, 1999; Rosenblum, Louis, & Rossmiller, 1994).

As teams tackle reforms, there will be both successes and failures. Schools, and the individuals within them, must be resilient. There is likely no end in sight for policy-driven, largely top-down initiatives, and educators must meet the demands of their communities, as well as meet the diverse needs of their students. Resilience is one aspect of mindfulness, and by looking at instructional leadership through the lens of mindfulness, we might better understand
how to increase resilience, as well as other cognitive processes which increase success and decrease failure.

Mindfulness clearly has the potential to positively impact instructional leadership practice, including principal influence on PLCs’ functioning and school climate, however, this lens is still relatively new in the literature. Each of the areas of literature above hold lessons for student learning and may assist principals in improving their instructional leadership, which ultimately impacts student achievement. However, expanded research connecting instructional leadership and the constructs of mindfulness cognitive processes may prove fruitful in supporting practitioners in furthering their understanding of how to improve student achievement using mindfulness practices. This literature demonstrates a clear need to develop an instrument which principals may use to assess current levels of mindfulness in their instructional leadership practice. A quantitative research study to measure current principal mindfulness practices in instructional leadership is warranted.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Exploring instructional leadership through a mindfulness lens holds promise for improved outcomes for both adults and students in schools. In order for this concept to reach fruition, principals need tools to understand current levels of mindful instructional leadership, as well as concrete examples of how to apply mindfulness processes in the context of instructional leadership. This quantitative study discusses the development and analysis of the Principal Resilience for Educator and Student Success (PRESS) instrument, including comparison to the Cognitive and Affective Mindfulness Survey – Revised (CAMS-R), an existing mindfulness tool. Comparison allows for establishment of initial instrument validity. To investigate both the validity of the developed instrument and the concept of mindful instructional leadership, the following distribution of schools was examined and tested:

1. Variability of self-reported mindful instructional leadership of principals results in a normal curve.
2. Variability of self-reported mindfulness of principals results in a normal curve.
3. A principal’s self-reported mindful instructional leadership correlates to a principal’s self-reported mindfulness in general.

This chapter discusses the study’s methodology, and begins with a rationale for the use of a survey methodology design. The next section describes the group process utilized for tool development, followed by procedures employed to conduct the study. Attention is paid to the sampling frame and sampling procedures, and discussion of instrumentation addresses both the PRESS and the CAMS-R tools. The third section outlines the data analysis, including explanation of the data, definition of the variables, and discussion of both the descriptive and
inferential analysis. Research ethics adhered to in the study are summarized. Finally, limitations are explained, followed by the chapter summary.

**Survey Methodology**

When conducting research, various factors should be considered before selecting a specific methodology. The researcher must think about the nature of the research problem, her own personal experiences, strengths, and limitations, and the audience for the completed study (Creswell, 2009). In order to examine relationships among the identified variables and work towards generalizable findings, survey methodology was selected for this study. As such, standards of reliability and validity were required. Survey data can support essential operation decision-making. “When systems are run very hard or fast, it is important to have constant feedback on their performance in order to maintain stability of the larger system” (Dillman, 2002, p. 480).

Survey methodology is reductionist, and requires narrowing an infinite number of potential variables to a small set which can be controlled. By reducing ideas into small, testable questions and hypotheses, and through careful design and selection of statistical procedures, one hopes to answer questions and hypotheses through careful scrutinizing of the relationships between and among the identified variables. The underlying purpose of survey research is to generalize from a sample to a population with regards to a characteristic, attitude, or behavior in an identified population, which then assists in planning and decision-making (Babbie, 1990). Such an approach is often required to address social problems, and it “can be used effectively in educational reform efforts” (McNamara, 1994, p. 139). A number of data collection methods may be employed, but regardless of the type of data collection, attention to several critical
components is needed before data collection begins, including procedures, sampling, instrumentation, analysis, ethics, and limitations.

A Doctoral Professional Learning Community

This survey study addressed the following questions: 1) To what degree do principals self-report mindful instructional leadership practices?; 2) To what degree do principals self-report their own mindfulness?; and, 3) What is the relationship between mindful instructional leadership and mindfulness in general, as self-reported by principals? Addressing these research questions required the development of a new measurement tool. In order to conduct a robust process, a team of Educational Leadership doctoral students from various work contexts was convened. Professional and personal interest in the mindful instructional leadership project varied by team members, and enhanced the collaborative process. Members included principals from the elementary and secondary levels, a central office administrator, and a university faculty member. Research interests included central office awareness of building level practices, differences in principal practice based on length of time in the profession, links to student achievement scores on state-mandated assessments, impact of mindfulness on PLC practices, and links between principal mindful instructional leadership and principal mindfulness in general.

Team members began the process of new tool development by investigating various conceptions of instructional leadership, and after careful deliberation, the team selected to use the Association of Washington School Principals Leadership Framework. Ultimately, those involved in the mindful instructional leadership project desired to have colleagues within the state see the significant applicability of mindfulness to current principal practice. In addition to research instructional leadership, PLC best practices were also investigated to determine links between PLC practice and successful instructional leadership. Finally, a review of HRO
literature was necessary to understand mindful cognitive processes that could improve instructional leadership practice. Through alignment of constructs within each of these bodies of literature, a conceptual understanding and a clear picture that these bodies of literature were interconnected was developed (Figure 2).

Figure 2 – Mindfulness in education framework

After development of the literature framework, the team drafted survey questions aligned to both the AWSP Leadership Framework criteria and the mindful cognitive processes outlined in the HRO literature. Refinement of the survey questions and final tool are discussed in the Instrumentation section, below.
Procedures

Survey methodology was selected to investigate the research questions, both for its appropriateness for investigating principal behaviors and for its ability to generate quantifiable and generalizable data. Following a review of the literature, a 40-item question bank was collaboratively developed to synthesize the major concepts from instructional leadership and mindful cognitive processes. This question bank was then refined through an iterative process to a set of pilot questions, and inputted into Qualtrics as the Principal Resilience for Educator and Student Success (PRESS). This required a number of decisions to develop the specific items, as well as selection of response scales, and appropriate cover letters (Dillman, 1978). Both behavior questions, which address frequency, and attitude questions, were necessary to address the research questions; both types of items are suited for bipolar scale responses (Schaefer & Presser, 2003; Schwarz, 1999).

Pilot, or field testing, followed to establish content validity, and hopefully lead to improvement in questions, format, and scales within the instrument (Creswell, 2009; Schwarz, 1999). A pilot test need not be on a large-scale, as targeted collection of data will provide feedback which can be incorporated in the final instrument. To pilot test the PRESS survey, each member of the research team distributed the surveys to a minimum of two principals, with a goal to include individuals with perceived high and low mindful instructional leadership practices. After analyzing this data, the team identified which items best delineated practice, and reduced each of the instruments to the minimum number of items needed to accurately describe practice. In addition, feedback collected on the relative ease of format and unclear items was utilized to improve respondent comprehension of the final instrument.
With the instrument development completed, the final survey and other study documents were submitted to the Institutional Review Board, along with an outline of the studies for each team member. With the studies qualified as exempt, the team prepared to launch the statewide survey.

Data files available from the State of Washington Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction’s (OSPI) website were utilized to identify members of the population for the study. A random, stratified sample of K-12 public schools was selected from the population. Based on the list of selected schools, the team utilized online resources to confirm or secure updated principal names, as well as obtain principal e-mail addresses for the survey launch. Principal names and e-mail addresses were entered into the Qualtrics database, a software program used for online surveys, along with the revised survey instrument. For schools which could not be located online, a random replacement school was selected from the original population.

The survey administration protocol was developed after careful consideration of increasing response rates. A mode of self-administered surveys was selected; perhaps the most ubiquitous form of data collection in organizational studies (Kraut, 1996). Web-based surveys are inexpensive to use and result in quick data collection (Bachmann, Elfrink, & Vazzana, 1996; Kittleson, 1995; Mehta & Sivadas, 1995; Simsek & Veiga, 2001; Sproull, 1986; Swoboda, Muhlberger, Weitkunat, & Scheneeweib, 1997). Research on mail, phone, face-to-face interviewing, and e-mail surveys has found the most influential determinant of response rate is the number of contacts between the researcher and the potential respondent (Dillman, Clark, & West, 1994; Goyder, 1985, 1987; Heberlein & Baumgartner, 1978; Mehta & Sivadas, 1995; Scott, 1961). While there is some conflicting research, e-mail surveys have resulted in higher response rates, with questionnaires completed more fully and returned more quickly, than paper
questionnaires (Dillman, 1991; Schaefer & Dillman, 1998). According to Anseel, et al (2010), response rates increased through the use of advanced notice, salience, personalization, use of identification numbers, and sponsorship. These protocols are well documented to increase response rates. Notification can include the sponsor, contact information for questions about the survey, an expected date to receive the survey, and a statement regarding confidentiality (Emery, 1995; Mehta & Sivadas, 1995). University sponsorship, in particular, increases response rate (Bruvold, Comer, & Rospert, 1990; Fox, Crask, & Kim, 1988). A four-phase administration process, consisting of the advance-notice, distribution of the survey approximately one week after the initial contact, a follow-up sent four to eight days after the survey, and a final follow-up sent approximately three weeks after the initial survey, is recommended (Dillman, 1978). The first follow-up is sent to all respondents and non-respondents, thanking them for their participation, and reminding those who have not yet completed the survey to do so (Simsek & Veiga, 2001). The second follow-up is sent only to non-respondents, with a third copy of the questionnaire, for one last opportunity to participate (Dillman, 1978; 1991). A modified four-phase protocol was adopted for this study.

Participants were contacted via e-mail with a cover letter explaining the study with an invitation to participate (Appendix C). A small percentage of e-mails were invalid; in such cases, a random replacement school was selected and its associated principal was contacted. Partial and non-respondents were e-mailed a follow-up request approximately one week after the initial contact. A third e-mail was sent to partial and non-respondents approximately two weeks after the initial contact, with a letter specific to the school level, either elementary or secondary. A fourth and final attempt was made by e-mailing partial and respondents approximately three weeks after the initial contact. The survey was closed one month after the initial invitation.
At the time of closing the PRESS survey, all principals who completed the survey in its entirety were sent an e-mail with a letter inviting participation in a follow-up survey, the *Cognitive and Affective Mindfulness Survey – Revised* (CAMS-R). A second e-mail was sent approximately one week after the initial e-mail to partial and non-respondents. A third and final e-mail inviting participation in the CAMS-R survey was sent approximately two weeks after the initial CAMS-R invitation. The survey was closed one month after the initial invitation.

Data collected from the surveys automatically populated the Qualtrics database, and was then exported to the IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 22. The file was merged with school demographics data from the OSPI data file, as well as state assessment information available in an additional OSPI data file. The merged data set was inspected for missing items. In the case of survey responses, a missing item was replaced with the median value from the Likert-type scale. Demographics of respondent and non-respondent schools were compared. Finally, descriptive and inferential analysis was completed.

**Population and Sample**

A sampling frame was developed to identify the population and representative sample for the study. In this study, the target population is K-12 public school principals in Washington State. All public schools serving students in grades pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade were identified utilizing the state’s Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) School Report Card database for 2014, available to the public for accountability purposes. This data file was imported into the SPSS program. Juvenile justice, alternative programs, charter school, and home-school affiliates were excluded. The remaining 2,097 schools within the state were sorted by the variable “grade_span” to create three groups or strata. The first stratum, given the attribute “elementary,” enrolled students in Pre-Kindergarten through sixth grade, or some
arrangement of these grade levels. The second group was given the attribute “intermediate” and included schools that enrolled students in sixth through eighth grades, as well as the “comprehensive campuses” (e.g., grades 1-12 or grades PK-8). The third group of schools, that we termed “secondary,” included schools with enrollment of students in grades 9 through 12 or some configuration of these grades. The number of schools in each stratum was calculated and a percentage generated using the total number of schools. Fifty-eight percent of the schools were elementary, 26% were intermediate, and 16% were secondary schools. The calculated percentages were then used in drawing a proportional stratified random sample for the state’s public schools. McNamara’s (1994) formula for determining sample size necessary for representativeness was utilized, with a 5% margin of error and a confidence level of 99%. Stratification was used to ensure the proportion of principals selected at each level matched the population (Babbie, 1990; Fowler, 2002; Miller, 1991). The total number of schools, and the associated principals, selected for the sample was 505, which was then divided using the proportion of schools for each stratum discussed above. This representative sample of regular public schools in the state included 293 elementary, 131 intermediate, and 81 secondary schools.

Based on the above power analysis, a random selection process was utilized to identify the schools for the study. Utilizing a random selection process allows for greater generalizability of study findings (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2009). For the stratified, random sample of schools, demographic data made available by OSPI included each school’s unique OSPI identification number, district name, school name, total school enrollment, grade levels served, percent of students by ethnicity, percent of students by gender, and percent of students who qualify for free and reduced price meals. This data file was merged with OSPI data files containing student performance measures. These included passing rates for reading assessments.
administered at 4th, 7th, and 10th grade, math assessments administered at 4th, 7th, and 9th grade, and science assessments administered at 5th, 8th, and 10th grade. The final merged file was imported into the SPSS program for data management and analysis.

**Instrumentation**

When using an existing instrument, validity and reliability of scores may be described from prior use. However, if a new instrument needs to be developed, multiple components are required. These include the specific items. In addition, scales used to measure the items on the instrument must be selected, such as continuous scales which represent a range of opinion, for example “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree” (Dillman, 1978). The actual format and design of the instrument should be clear, simple, and as brief as possible to answer the research questions (Simsek & Veiga, 2001). Pilot or field testing the survey may aid in establishing content validity, and hopefully leads to improvement in questions, format, and scales within the instrument (Creswell, 2009; Schwarz, 1999). The researcher should share how many individuals tested the instrument, and how their feedback was incorporated in the final instrument revisions. For this study, two instruments were utilized. The *Principal Resilience for Educator and Student Success (PRESS)* was developed for the study; the *Cognitive and Affective Mindfulness Scale-Revised (CAMS-R)* was a previously tested instrument.

**Principal Resilience for Educator and Student Success (PRESS)**

In developing an instrument to measure mindful instructional leadership, literature on instructional leadership and mindful cognitive processes was reviewed. To generate potential items, each member of the collaborative research team developed questions to measure instructional leadership practices, as defined by specific elements in designated criteria within the AWSP Leadership Framework. Questions were developed for each element in Criterion 1:
Creating a Culture, Criterion 3: Planning with Data, Criterion 5: Improving Instruction, and Criterion 8: Closing the Gap, of the AWSP Leadership Framework. Questions were then aligned with one of the five mindfulness cognitive processes identified in HRO literature (see Table 1).

Table 1

**PRESS Items Aligned to Mindful Instructional Leadership**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRESS Item</th>
<th>Mindfulness Process</th>
<th>AWSP Criteria</th>
<th>Supporting Literature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Solicit from staff solutions to instructional problems.</td>
<td>C) Deference to Expertise</td>
<td>5. Improving Instruction</td>
<td>Bauer &amp; Brazer (2012); Blase &amp; Blase (2002); Cannon &amp; Edmondson (2001); Copland (2003); DiPaola &amp; Tschannen-Moran (2005); Hoy &amp; Tarter (2011); Knoll &amp; Van Dick (2013); Leithwood &amp; Mascall (2008); Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, &amp; Wahlstrom (2004); Price (2012); Scribner, Hager, &amp; Warne (2002); Tschannen-Moran &amp; Hoy, (1998); Wahlstrom &amp; Louis (2008); Fullan (2001); Weick &amp; Sutcliffe (2001); Weick &amp; Sutcliffe (2006); Weick, Sutcliffe, &amp; Obstfeld (1999); Youngs &amp; King (2002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Raise concerns about student learning with staff.</td>
<td>A) Preoccupation with Failure</td>
<td>1. Creating a Culture</td>
<td>Bauer &amp; Brazer (2012); Bellamy, Crawford, Marshall, &amp; Coulter (2005); Cannon &amp; Edmondson (2001); Copland (2003); DuFour (2002); DuFour (2004); Kruse &amp; Louis (1997); Leithwood &amp; Mascall (2008); Miller (1993); Price (2012); Rogers Commission (1986); Scribner, Cockrell, Cockrell, &amp; Valentine (1999); Starbuck &amp; Milliken (1988); Stringfield (1995); Stringfield (1998); Weick &amp; Sutcliffe (2006); Weick, et al (1999)</td>
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Table 1 (continued)

**PRESS Items Aligned to Mindful Instructional Leadership**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(4) Look for little signals when talking with students about how they are feeling.</td>
<td>B) Commitment to Resilience</td>
<td>5. Improving Instruction</td>
<td>Bryk and Schneider (2002); DiPaola &amp; Tschannen-Moran, 2005; Hoy &amp; Tarter (2011); Hoy, Gage, &amp; Tarter (2006); Leithwood, Patten, &amp; Jantzi (2010); Stringfield (1995); Stringfield (1998); Tschannen-Moran &amp; Hoy, (1998)</td>
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<th>AWSP Criteria</th>
<th>Supporting Literature</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(7) Lead data driven dialogues with teachers to keep the conversation</td>
<td>E) Sensitivity to</td>
<td>3. Planning with Data</td>
<td>Bauer &amp; Brazer (2012); Bellamy, et al (2005); Copland (2003); DuFour (2002); DuFour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aligned to Mindful Instruction Leadership</td>
<td>Operations</td>
<td></td>
<td>(2004); Fullan (2001); Kruse &amp; Louis (1997); Leithwood, et al (2004); Price (2012);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(8) Feel heightened tension before going into a meeting that involves</td>
<td>B) Commitment to</td>
<td>5. Improving</td>
<td>Blase &amp; Blase (2002); DiPaola &amp; Tschannen-Moran (2005); Hoy, et al (2006); Leithwood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(9) Wonder what needs to be done to improve student performance.</td>
<td>D) Reluctance to</td>
<td>8. Closing the Gap</td>
<td>Hoy &amp; Tarter (2011); Leithwood &amp; Jantzi (2008); Miller (1993); Scribner, Sawyer,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Simplify</td>
<td></td>
<td>Watson, &amp; Myers (2007); Stringfield (1995); Stringfield (1998); Weick &amp; Sutcliffe</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(2001); Weick &amp; Sutcliffe (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(10) Help my teachers use data to improve their teaching.</td>
<td>E) Sensitivity to</td>
<td>4. Aligning</td>
<td>Bauer &amp; Brazer (2012); Bellamy, et al (2005); Copland (2003); DuFour (2002); DuFour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Operations</td>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>(2004); Fullan (2001); Hallinger &amp; Heck (1996); Kruse &amp; Louis (1997); Leithwood, et</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(11) Treat similar student infractions in a consistent way.</td>
<td>D) Reluctance to</td>
<td>1. Creating a Culture</td>
<td>DiPaola &amp; Tschannen-Moran (2005); Hoy &amp; Tarter (2011); Leithwood, et al (2010);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Simplify</td>
<td></td>
<td>Miller (1993); Scribner, et al (2007); Stringfield (1995); Stringfield (1998);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Weick &amp; Sutcliffe (2001); Weick &amp; Sutcliffe (2006); Weick, Sutcliffe, &amp; Obstfeld (2005)</td>
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**PRESS Items Aligned to Mindful Instructional Leadership**

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<th>Supporting Literature</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(14) Parents of students in trouble are dismissive of school's responsibility for all students.</td>
<td>D) Reluctance to Simplify</td>
<td>7. Engaging Community</td>
<td>Miller (1993); Senge (1990); Stringfield (1995); Stringfield (1998); Weick &amp; Sutcliffe (2001); Weick &amp; Sutcliffe (2006)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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(continued)
Table 1 (continued)

**PRESS Items Aligned to Mindful Instructional Leadership**

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<th>Mindfulness Process</th>
<th>AWSP Criteria</th>
<th>Supporting Literature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(19) Know what needs to be done to improve the performance of students in my school.</td>
<td>D) Reluctance to Simplify</td>
<td>5. Improving Instruction</td>
<td>DuFour (2002); DuFour (2004); Fullan (2001); Hoy &amp; Tarter (2011); Leithwood &amp; Jantzi (2008); Leithwood &amp; Mascall (2008); Miller (1993); Scribner, et al (2007); Stringfield (1995); Stringfield (1998); Weick &amp; Sutcliffe (2001); Weick &amp; Sutcliffe (2006); Youngs &amp; King (2002)</td>
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In developing the items for the PRESS, decisions were made on two types of questions: events or behaviors, and evaluations or attitudes (Schaefer & Presser, 2003). Events or behaviors questions focused on definitions, reference periods, response dimensions, such as
frequency or dates of occurrence, and response categories, such as ratings or rankings. Evaluations or attitudes questions focused on decisions around the use of bipolar scales, for example, extremely negative to extremely positive, or unipolar scales, for example, not at all positive to extremely positive. The use of a bipolar rating scale was used for some items in the PRESS, as mindfulness is a bipolar construct. For behaviors, items 1 – 10 utilized a Likert-type scale to measure frequency of occurrence reflecting recent experience, from rarely (1) to very often (5). For beliefs, items 11 – 20 used Likert-type scales to indicate degree of agreement, from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) (Appendix A).

Individual demographic data was also sought for the respondents, to compare survey results for various demographic categories, as well as to compare respondents and non-respondents. As a result, demographic questions were included at the end of the survey. Specifically, principals were requested to identify their gender, ethnicity, number of years in the principalship, number of years in current position, and highest level of education attained.

Research on self-administered surveys suggests the visual design of the instrument is also important in obtaining unbiased answers (Schwarz 1995, 1996; Schwarz, Strack, & Mai, 1991). Self-administered questionnaires, including those that are web-based, are composed of four languages: verbal/words, numeric/numbers, symbolic, and graphical modes of communication; each of these needs to be coordinated to create an instrument more similar to an interview-type experience, which reduces confusion (Dillman, 2002). Couper (2001) reported on three experiments specific to web-based surveys, in an effort to determine optimum design. Respondents who were reminded of their progress throughout the instrument returned the survey at a 5% higher response rate; increased download time required for the progress indicator may have been a factor in the relatively small difference. In comparing a survey with one item per
screen versus several items per screen, grouping caused minimal increased correlation among the items. The benefit to grouping items was significantly decreased completion time for respondents, which resulted in fewer skipped items. Finally, using radio buttons versus typing numeric responses into a box did not significantly impact response time, but requiring respondents to type in an answer resulted in more skipped items (Couper, Traugott, & Lamias, 2001). Based on this research, the new and existing instruments were inputted into Qualtrics, a web-based survey platform which allows for customization to include the use of a progress reminder, multiple items per screen, and the use of radio buttons.

**Cognitive and Affective Mindfulness Scale-Revised (CAMS-R)**

In addition to the PRESS, all participants who completed the PRESS were invited to complete the CAMS-R survey. In selecting the CAMS-R as a comparative tool to the PRESS, consideration was given to length, as well as relative universality of the described tasks (e.g., It is easy for me to concentrate on what I am doing; I can accept things I cannot change; I am easily distracted). Given the audience of public school principals, other tools geared more at individuals practicing mindfulness were deemed less approachable and potentially off-putting. For example, the *Kentucky Inventory of Mindfulness Skills* (KIMS) contains more than twice as many items, including such statements as “I notice how foods and drinks affect my thoughts, bodily sensations, and emotion.” The specificity not tied to instructional leadership tasks could potentially result in decreased completion rates.

Reliability and validity for the CAMS-R has been established through numerous studies. The goal of Feldman, et al, (2007) was to design a measure of mindfulness that was brief, but captured the breadth of the mindfulness construct. Four components of mindfulness were included: attention; present-focus; awareness; and, acceptance. A bank of 35 items was
generated based on expert review of both philosophical writings and clinical applications of mindfulness, and included 18 items from the original *Cognitive and Affective Mindfulness Scale* (CAMS). Additional items considered included selections from the *Mindful Attention Awareness Scale* (MAAS), the *Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory* (FMI), the *Kentucky Inventory of Mindfulness Skills* (KIMS), and the *Toronto Mindfulness Scale* (TMS), however, researchers selected to create 17 new items for the CAMS-R to more precisely capture the identified four factors, listed above.

Data were collected from a sample of 548 diverse, university students to test the initial 35-item instrument. A correlation matrix guided item reduction; 20 items were retained for confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). After analyzing item loadings, items were eliminated in a series of iterative factor models. A final model was a good fit to the data ($\chi^2(50)=81.04, p=.004$; RMSEA=.050; SRMR=.051; CFI=.95). Skew and kurtosis were examined for each of the 12 retained items; the data did not significantly depart from the assumption of normally distributed scores. Internal consistency was acceptable. The remaining 12-item instrument was titled the *Cognitive and Affective Mindfulness Scale-Revised* (CAMS-R) (Appendix B). Findings from its use support the use of a single total mindfulness score, with higher internal consistency, although the instrument adequately sampled the four identified domains of mindfulness.

**Data Analysis**

Before addressing the study’s questions, data were examined from the random stratified sample to determine the representativeness of the sample. School variables were compared between selected and non-selected schools in order to determine the degree of sample generalizability. Comparison variables included total student enrollment, percent of minority students, and percent of students qualifying for free and reduced price meals.
Given the multiple instruments used in the study, a multistage data analysis was used. Data from each survey tool was imported into SPSS for statistical analysis. Prior to data analysis, all variables were examined for missing values, outliers, linearity, and normality. Because Likert-type scales are ordinal in nature, missing survey item values were replaced by the median score. Frequency analysis assisted in identifying potential outliers. Microsoft SPSS allowed for examination of the linearity and normality for each item. Reverse-scored items were then reversed. Factor scores and total MIL scores were calculated for the PRESS using principal responses. To calculate the PRESS factor scores, item scores for each item in the associated factor were summed and converted to a percentage of the total possible factor score. This percentage was multiplied by 100 to create a standardized score, allowing comparison of scores across the factors. To create the MIL score, all PRESS item scores were summed and converted to a standardized score utilizing the same process as the factors. A mindfulness score for the CAMS-R was also calculated.

The second phase of analysis compared factors within and between the PRESS and CAMS-R instruments. Correlations between PRESS factors were run, as well as between PRESS factors and the single Mindful Instructional Leadership (MIL) score. Correlations between the MIL score and the CAMS-R mindfulness score were also calculated. The last and related procedure included exploring the respondents and non-respondents to the CAMS-R using the MIL and PRESS factor scores to assessed potential response bias as well as scores on variables provided by OSPI on the schools of respondents and non-respondents.

Descriptive Analysis

To address the descriptive purposes of the study, analysis was conducted on principal and school demographic variables. Specifically, school variables included level of school, total
enrollment, percentage of minority students, and percentage of students participating in free and reduced price meals and the student achievement data including the variables of 5th grade proficiency levels on the MSP reading, mathematics, and science exams. Principal variables included gender, years in principalship, and years in current position. In addition, principal variables included the specific instrument items on the PRESS and CAMS-R. Further, the mindful cognitive processes factor scores on the PRESS, the mindful instructional leadership MIL score, and the overall CAMS-R mindfulness score were examined for the sample. For each variable, measures of variability and central tendency were calculated, including a frequency distribution, mean, median, and standard deviation. The descriptive analysis addressed the study’s second and third research questions.

**Inferential Analysis**

To address the fourth research question, correlations were performed to compare the overall mindfulness scores from the PRESS and CAMS-R tools to determine to what degree principal mindfulness influences principal mindful instructional leadership. Response rate, potential response bias, and descriptive statistics for each of the variables were assessed for each instrument (Fowler, 2002; Leslie, 1972). Each item was analyzed for measures of central tendency and standard deviations. School level and principal level demographic variables were also used to examine the nature of how principals self-rated their mindful instructional leadership. The interpretations from the analysis provides the next steps in tool refinement as well as information for providing guidance to practitioners and policy makers regards about the study results.

**Ethics**

Throughout the study, research ethics have guided the process. Five ethical guidelines
exist in survey research; these are in many ways quite similar to ethical guidelines for all research. A goal of no harm to respondents served as the foundation, along with voluntary participation. Confidentiality protocols were followed, in order to promote the integrity of research and develop trust between respondents and the research community (Isreal & Hay, 2006; Sarantakos, 2005); this required the identity of respondents not be disclosed. The researcher also has an obligation to identify the purpose of the research and any sponsors associated with the research, as well as accurately report the methods and findings to the professional community (McNamara, 1994; Sarantakos, 2005).

These guidelines have been adhered to throughout the study. Plans to minimize harm have been reviewed and preapproved by the Washington State University Institutional Review Board (IRB). Anonymity was not possible in this study, but confidentiality was assured in the survey cover letters to promote trust, as well as to obtain legitimate data from the surveys (Isreal & Hay, 2006; Sarantakos, 2005). In addition, the purpose and sponsors of the research were identified in the cover letters, which accompanied the surveys (Creswell, 2009; McNamara, 1994; Sarantakos, 2005). Opportunities for reciprocity have been explored, including sharing the results of building data with principals and central office personnel (Creswell, 2009; Punch, 2005). Finally, data analysis provided an accurate account of the collected data and avoided omissions or falsification (Creswell, 2009). In writing and disseminating the research, biased language was avoided, potential repercussions on certain audiences was anticipated, and the study procedures were sufficiently detailed. Authorships will be provided to individuals who substantially contributed to any publications which result from the study. At the close of the study, data will be kept for five years, then destroyed to prevent any future misappropriation.
Delimitations and Limitations

Survey research, like all forms of research, has its own limitations. In selecting any methodology, there are certain trade-offs which exist. A large-scale, national survey was outside the budget of this researcher. With smaller-scale surveys, such as this study, there are several types of error which may occur. Sampling error, nonresponse error, and measurement error may impact the study’s ability to generalize its findings. Combined with coverage error, which may occur if the pool of potential respondents is missing portions of the population, total survey error may make the results of the research untenable (Visser, et al, 2000). Securing a high response rate may be difficult to control. However, in this study, risks were minimized through the use of a random, stratified sample and careful scrutiny of differences between respondents and non-respondents. Attention was paid to differences between PRESS sample respondents and non-respondents, as well as CAMS-R respondents and non-respondents. Both comparisons were satisfactory. Bias and inaccurate self-reporting still present risks, although items were carefully created to remove respondents’ ability to select socially-desirable answers. It is assumed participants responded honestly to both survey instruments. Another concern is that data produced through this survey may lack the details or depth needed to truly understand the constructs being investigated (Kelley, Clark, Brown, & Sitzia, 2003). Because of its limited focus and pre-identified variables, important constructs may be missed. Due to these limitations, educational policy should not be built on survey research alone. However, a great deal may be learned from strong survey research, allowing for application of findings in educational practice, as well as contributing to an appropriate foundation on which to build policy.

The major delimitations of this study were set by the sampling frame, which limited the population from which the sample was drawn to Washington State principals serving in regular
K-12 public schools. The findings of the study pertain to Washington; these findings may not pertain precisely to schools in other states. Findings of this study need to be replicated in other states to confirm the observed correlations and predicted contribution of principal individual mindfulness on mindful instructional leadership. In addition, alternative schools, including online programs, home-school cooperatives, and juvenile detention centers were not included. A further limitation which resulted from the sampling frame was the inability to contact principals for whom online school contact information was not available. This resulted in random replacement of some of the originally selected schools. The other major limitations of this study are heavy reliance on self-reported data, which may be biased and/or inaccurate, and an acceptable, but not high, response rate.

**Conclusion**

It is easy to conduct a survey of poor quality, but much more challenging to conduct one of value. Careful consideration of the method’s purpose, critical components, and limitations, however, revealed it was the most appropriate to answer the stated research questions. Data were collected from a random stratified sample of 168 K-12 public school principals in Washington State. Skew and kurtosis were examined for each of the items, with generally normally distributed scores. Factor analysis demonstrated a good fit to the data, with factors identified with the AWSP instructional leadership criteria. With thoughtful planning and analysis, it is hoped this survey research adds to the scholarly literature on the topic of instructional leadership and mindfulness and is of value to practitioners. This chapter discussed the rationale for the selected methodology, reviewed the study procedures, sampling, and instrumentation, and described the methods of analysis. The next chapter will present the results of the study.
CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

The continued drive to improve schools requires investigation into new pathways which may lead to success for all students. Mindful instructional leadership is a pathway worthy of a closer look. The purpose of this study was to describe instructional leadership practices within K-12 schools through a mindfulness lens, as well as to compare mindful instructional leadership with a more general conception of individual mindfulness among K-12 public school principals. This both provides a starting point for self-assessment, as well as guidance on specific processes which may aid principals in increasing mindfulness in order to improve academic and affective student outcomes. In order to move forward in applying mindfulness cognitive processes to principals’ instructional leadership practices, a valid and reliable tool for assessing such practice was necessary.

This chapter presents the results of the PRESS and CAMS-R surveys, and is organized to address the research questions. The first section addresses the sample and response rates. Data related to the PRESS survey are presented in the second section. Information on respondents is shared, including professional variables and relevant school data. Next, a comparison of respondents to non-respondents is completed to address response rate concerns. No hypothesis testing between respondents and non-respondents was conducted due to the alpha error inflation rate. Item analysis and factor analysis were conducted, and an explanation of the Mindful Instructional Leadership (MIL) single factor score is included. In the third section, data related to the CAMS-R survey are presented, including descriptive analysis of respondents and related school data, comparison of respondents and non-respondents, and item analysis. Next, the fourth section presents inferential statistics comparing the PRESS MIL score to the CAMS-R
mindfulness score. This addresses the final research question, and also supports validity of the developed PRESS tool. Finally, the fifth section provides a brief discussion of the findings and a chapter summary.

**Sample and Response Rate**

The target population was K-12 public school principals in Washington State. Using OSPI data files, 2,097 schools were identified. Each school was categorized as elementary, intermediate, or secondary, based on the grade levels of students served. To ensure an appropriately stratified sample, the number of schools in each category was calculated. The resulting percentage was used to determine the number of schools from each stratum necessary for the sample, as shown in Table 2. Using McNamara’s (1994) formula for representativeness, a total sample of 505 schools was selected, with a 5% margin of error and a confidence level of 99%. A random selection process was utilized to identify the sample schools. Online contact information was used to identify the principals for each randomly selected school. If no online information could be obtained, the school was randomly replaced with another school from the same stratum. Selected principals received the PRESS survey; respondents to the PRESS survey also received the CAMS-R survey.

Table 2

*Sample and Number of Respondents*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Elementary</th>
<th>Intermediate</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sample</td>
<td>293 (58%)</td>
<td>131 (26%)</td>
<td>81 (16%)</td>
<td>505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRESS</td>
<td>78 (47%)</td>
<td>51 (30%)</td>
<td>39 (23%)</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAMS-R</td>
<td>37 (66%)</td>
<td>18 (32%)</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To assess the representativeness of the sample drawn, school demographic data was compared between the sample and the population. Student variables examined included school size, percentage of students participating in free/reduced lunch programs, percentage of minority students, percentage of special education students, and percentage of transitional bilingual students. In addition, teacher variables, including students per classroom teacher, average years’ educational experience, and percentage of teachers with at least a master’s degree, were considered. The statistics for both student and teacher variables evidence minor differences between the selected sample and the average regular public school in Washington State, as shown in Table 3. Relatively large standard deviations for total enrollment, percentage of students participating in free/reduced lunch programs, and percentage of white students can be attributed to the variability of the population, as well as the variability captured in the sample. Smaller standard deviations for percentage of students in special education programs and percentage of students identified as transitional bilingual indicate less variability among schools in both the population and the sample. The data suggests the average school in Washington State is moderate in size, with considerable range evident between the smallest to largest schools. The data also suggest the average school serves approximately 45% of students in free/reduced lunch programs, 14% of students in special education programs, and 9% of students in transitional bilingual programs. In addition, approximately 46% of Washington State students are designated as minorities. On average, the teachers employed in regular Washington State schools have 11 years of experience, with over 70% holding at least a master’s degree.
Table 3

*Comparison of Sample to Population School Variables*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Enrollment</td>
<td>505</td>
<td>2079</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>486</td>
<td>477</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Free/Reduced Lunch</td>
<td>505</td>
<td>2079</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% White</td>
<td>505</td>
<td>2079</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Special Education</td>
<td>505</td>
<td>2079</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Transitional Bilingual</td>
<td>505</td>
<td>2079</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher Variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student-Teacher Ratio</td>
<td>491</td>
<td>1777</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avg. Years Experience</td>
<td>505</td>
<td>2070</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% with Masters</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>1775</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The sample drawn was also compared to the population utilizing student assessment data. The State of Washington collects data on the percentage of students meeting specific proficiency levels in reading, mathematics, and science, at specified grade levels; collected data is available online through the State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. In reviewing the data for state-mandated assessments in reading, mathematics, and science given at the 5th and 10th grade, a large number of schools were missing key data points. As a result, only 5th grade data comparing proficiency rates between the selected sample schools and the state population for the
2013-2014 school year are included in Table 4. Passing rates include both students with a previous passing score, as well as students earning their first passing score in the given subject. Even when considering only the 5th grade data, a number of schools in both the population and the sample did not have valid data, impacting the N for all analyzed variables. Despite this challenge, measures of central tendency and variability were examined to assess the accuracy of the sample drawn as compared to the population’s metrics on the student achievement variables. The smaller standard deviations observed for 5th grade reading scores indicate less variability than for 5th grade mathematics or 5th grade science scores in both the population and the sample. Fifth grade students in the average Washington school met proficiency targets at a rate of 70.2% in reading, as measured by the grade Measurements of Student Progress (MSP) exam. Students in the average school from the selected sample met proficiency targets at a rate of 72.10% in 5th grade reading, just slightly higher. A slightly higher proficiency rate was also observed in mathematics, with 62.26% of 5th grade students in the average sample school meeting standard, as compared to 61.19% of 5th grade students in an average Washington school. In science, there was little difference observed, with an average 5th grade pass rate of 64.73% for Washington schools and 64.69% for schools within the sample. The limited review of student achievement data does provide additional evidence of representativeness of sample.
Table 4

Percentage of 5th Grade Students Meeting Proficiency on State Achievement Tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading 5th</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>617</td>
<td>72.1</td>
<td>70.2</td>
<td>74.2</td>
<td>72.2</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math 5th</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>631</td>
<td>62.2</td>
<td>61.1</td>
<td>63.7</td>
<td>62.2</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science 5th</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>1011</td>
<td>64.6</td>
<td>64.7</td>
<td>67.1</td>
<td>67.2</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In considering representativeness of the results, it is important to also consider response rate. For online surveys, a response rate of 40% is average. Response rates for the PRESS survey ranged from 26.6% to 48.1% for the three groups of principals, with an overall response rate of 33.3%. The overall response rate for the CAMS-R survey was also 33.3%. While this is slightly lower than anticipated, comparison of respondents to non-respondents is addressed for both surveys in their respective analysis sections. Response rates for both the PRESS and CAMS-R instruments are included in Table 5.

Table 5

Response Rates by Strata

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey</th>
<th>Elementary</th>
<th>Intermediate</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRESS</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
<td>38.9%</td>
<td>48.1%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAMS-R</td>
<td>47.4%</td>
<td>35.3%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To address the second research question, *How mindful are principals in instructional leadership as self-reported?*, data from the PRESS survey were imported into SPSS for statistical analysis, including principal demographic data, school demographic data, and respondent scores by item. All variables were examined for missing values, outliers, linearity, and normality. For each variable, measures of variability and central tendency were calculated, including a frequency distribution, mean, median, and standard deviation. Missing survey item values were replaced by the median score. Reverse-scored items were reversed for the purpose of calculating factor scores and an overall Mindful Instructional Leadership (MIL) score.

**PRESS Respondent Demographic Data**

Descriptive analysis was conducted on respondents’ school demographic variables. Specifically, school variables included student variables of total enrollment, percentage participating in free and reduced price meal programs, percentage minority, percentage special education, and percentage transitional bilingual, teacher variables of students per classroom, average years’ educational experience, and percentage with at least a masters degree, and student achievement variables of percentage passing state-mandated assessments in reading, mathematics, and science as measured on the 5th grade MSP exam. From the selected sample, 78 elementary, 51 middle school, and 39 high school principals responded, for a total *n* of 168. For respondents, the average number of years in the current position was 6.2 years, with an average of 9.7 years in the principalship.

To address generalizability of the survey results, demographics were compared between PRESS respondents (P) and the overall sample (S), as shown in Table 6. On average, respondent principals worked in schools that were slightly larger in total enrollment, with smaller
percentages of minority students and students identified as transitional bilingual, than schools in the sample at large. However, on average the percentage of students in special education programs and free/reduced lunch programs revealed little difference between respondents and non-respondents. In addition, teacher variables indicated little difference between respondents and non-respondents for student-teacher ratio or average years’ experience. Respondent schools had slightly more teachers with at least a masters degree, with an average of 74% as compared to 72% for the sample. For state achievement scores, less than 1% difference was observed between respondent and non-respondent schools in comparing the percentages of students meeting standard in reading, mathematics, and science on the 5th grade MSP exam. Overall, comparison of the two groups demonstrates substantial similarity and alleviates concerns regarding a slightly below average response rate.

Table 6

PRESS Respondents Demographic Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Variables</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Enrollment</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>505</td>
<td>605</td>
<td>550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Free/Reduced Lunch</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>505</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% White</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>505</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Special Education</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>505</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Transitional Bilingual</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>505</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued)
Table 6 (continued)

PRESS Respondents Demographic Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher Variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student-Teacher Ratio</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>491</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avg. Years Experience</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>505</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% with Masters</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>State Achievement Variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>71.5</td>
<td>72.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>62.3</td>
<td>62.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>64.7</td>
<td>64.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* P = PRESS Respondents; S = Sample.

**PRESS Item and Factor Analysis**

For each PRESS item, the mean, median, and standard deviation were calculated. For items 1 – 10, which measure frequency, a four-point scale was used; the scale ranged from “Rarely” (1) to “Very often” (4). For items 11 – 20, which measure respondent attitudes, a five-point scale was employed; the scale ranged from “Strongly disagree” (1) to “Strongly agree” (5), with the mid-point as “Neither agree nor disagree” (3). On average, respondents reported behaviors and beliefs associated with consistency, capturing four of the top five items. These included average scores of “Agree” for treating similar infractions in the same way ($M = 4.3$, $SD = 0.7$), knowing what needs to be done to improve student outcomes ($M = 4.0$, $SD = 0.6$), and recognition that compliance is big part of the job ($M = 3.7$, $SD = 0.9$). Behaviors and beliefs
associated with interpersonal relationships demonstrated willingness to invest time in others, as demonstrated by an average of “Sometimes” for “I tire of dealing with the same problem teachers or students” ($M = 2.1$, $SD = 0.8$) and “Disagree” for “When teachers react defensively to criticism, I ignore their reactions” ($M = 2.2$, $SD = 0.7$), as well as “Agree” for “I ask a lot of questions when I meet with parents of students” ($M = 3.8$, $SD = 0.6$).

Each item was associated with a mindfulness cognitive process and an AWSP leadership framework criterion. To calculate a factor score for each mindfulness cognitive process, like items were grouped. Participant scores for each item within a factor were added and converted to a percentage of the possible total score to create a scale score. The resulting percentage was multiplied by 100 to create a standardized score and allow for comparison across factors.

The first cognitive process, preoccupation with failure, was associated with items 2, 3, 12, 15, and 17; data related to this process are shown in Table 7. Means for these items ranged from 2.1 to 3.6, with the lowest score for the item “My first impressions of what’s happening in a classroom are frequently wrong” ($M = 2.1$, $SD = 0.7$). Over 75% of principals selected “Disagree” or “Strongly disagree” for this item. No principals selected “Strongly agree” for this item, and only 1.2% selected “Agree;” this item showed the least amount of variance of any PRESS item. This result is not surprising, as many principals have participated in considerable professional development to address issues of classroom practice. In fact, the current evaluation process under Washington State’s Teacher-Principal Evaluation Program (TPEP) demands principals make data-based decisions about the effectiveness of a teacher in as little as 60 minutes of observation per year. An additional item which demonstrates less mindful behavior is “My school’s student achievement data accurately represent what our students have learned,” with 63.7% principals selecting “Agree” or “Strongly agree” ($M = 3.6$, $SD = 0.9$). On the other
hand, principals reported mindful behavior in expressing empathy for teachers, with 89.3% reporting this behavior “Often” or “Very often” ($M = 3.3, SD = 0.7$), and in raising student learning concerns with staff, with 91.7% reporting this behavior “Often” or “Very often” ($M = 3.3, SD = 0.6$). However, despite these positive mindful instructional leadership practices, the overall factor score for this cognitive process was 59.7, the second to lowest average among the five processes. Cronbach alpha for the 5 items for the 168 respondents was 0.1 and indicates respondents did not respond with consistency across the items.

Table 7

**PRESS – Preoccupation with Failure**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>$N$</th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>My school's student achievement data accurately represents what our students have learned.</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>When things are not going well in improving a teacher's performance, I tend to dwell on what I could have done better.</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I express empathy for a teacher who is having a difficult day.</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I raise concerns about student learning with staff.</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>My first impressions of what's happening in a classroom are frequently wrong.</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total Factor Score | 168 | 59.7 | 60.9 | 7.8 |

The second cognitive process, commitment to resilience, was associated with items 4, 6, 8, and 18; data related to this process are shown in Table 8. Overall, principals demonstrated mindful instructional leadership through a moderately strong commitment to resilience,
particularly in relation to working with students. Means for these items ranged from 2.1 to 3.8. High scores on positively worded items indicate principals are in tune with students’ feelings, with 72.0% selecting “Agree” or “Strongly agree” on item 18, “When a student insults me, I stop the conversation so he or she can calm down” \((M = 3.8, \text{SD} = 0.8)\), and 94.6% selecting “Often” or “Very often” on item 4, “I look for little signals when talking with students about how they are feeling” \((M = 3.6, \text{SD} = 0.6)\). Principals demonstrated less commitment to resilience with an average response of “Sometimes” for item 6, “I tire of dealing with the same problem teachers or students” \((M = 2.1, \text{SD} = 0.8)\). This may indicate less principal mindfulness when working with adults, as opposed to students, as both groups are included in the item. This possibility is further substantiated by an average response of “Sometimes” for item 8, “I feel heightened tension before going into a meeting that involves a conflict with staff” \((M = 2.1, \text{SD} = 0.9)\). Despite potential discrepancies in mindful instructional leadership when working with staff versus students, overall principals reported high mindfulness on the cognitive process of commitment to resilience, second only to the process of deference to expertise, with a factor score of 72.7. Again, low internal consistency of scores was evident as Cronbach’s alpha was 0.2 for the 4 items.

Table 8

**PRESS – Commitment to Resilience**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>(N)</th>
<th>(M)</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>(SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>When a student insults me, I stop the conversation so he or she can calm down.</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I look for little signals when talking with students about how they are feeling.</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued)
Table 8 (continued)

**PRESS – Commitment to Resilience**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I tire of dealing with the same problem teachers or students.</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I feel heightened tension before going into a meeting that involves a conflict with staff.</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total Factor Score | 168 | 72.7 | 70.6 | 8.5 |

The third cognitive process, deference to expertise, was associated with items 1, 16, and 20. Principals reported the highest degree of mindful instructional leadership on this cognitive process, with a factor score of 78.1. Means for the individual items ranged from 2.2 to 3.8, as shown in Table 9. Respondents indicated high mindfulness in parent interactions, with 72.4% of principals selecting “Agree” and 7.7% of principals selecting “Strongly agree” for item 16 ($M = 3.8$, $SD = 0.6$); this data point is not surprising, given the nature of principal-parent relationships.

The AWSP Leadership Framework recognizes the important role of working proactively with parents in principal instructional leadership, measuring principal proficiency for components on communicating with the community to promote learning and on partnering with families and the school community. In working with school staff, principals indicated strong mindfulness in soliciting solutions to instructional problems from staff, with 91.7% of principals selecting “Often” or “Very often” ($M = 3.3$, $SD = 0.6$) on item 1. This is an expected result, given the loose-tight nature of school leadership and the ubiquitous nature of PLCs today. Whether implemented with fidelity or not, the widespread use of a PLC model in schools creates a system of greater shared leadership, including decision-making processes. In addition, principals
reported paying attention to staff reactions, with an average response of “Disagree” for item 20, “When teachers react defensively to criticism, I ignore their reactions” ($M = 2.2$, $SD = 0.7$). Only 1.2% of principals selected “Agree” or “Strongly agree” for this item. The scores of principals across the three items were not stable, as assessed by a 0.1 alpha coefficient. With the split foci of the questions about deference to parents and teachers as experts the low consistency perhaps should not be surprising.

The AWSP Leadership Framework promotes mindful instructional leadership related to this cognitive process, deference to expertise, through measurement of facilitating collaborative processes for continuous improvement (element 1.3), creating opportunities for shared leadership (element 1.4), assisting staff in using data (element 3.4), assisting staff in aligning curriculum, best practice, and assessment (elements 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3), assisting staff in developing student growth plans (element 5.2), and partnering with families and the community (elements 7.1 and 7.2). Combined, these elements make up one-third of the AWSP Leadership Framework elements. This may account for principals’ attention to these instructional leadership tasks.

Table 9

*PRESS – Deference to Expertise*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>$N$</th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Factor Score</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>78.1</td>
<td>78.6</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

92
The fourth cognitive process, reluctance to simplify, was associated with items 9, 11, 13, 14, and 19. This factor received the lowest overall score, at 50.3, as indicated in Table 10. This score represents a greater degree of mindlessness on the part of principals. It is not surprising principals succumb to simplification, reporting agreement with item 13, “Compliance is a big part of my job” \((M = 3.7, \text{SD} = 0.9)\). In addition, 94.1% of principals “Agree” or “Strongly agree” they “treat similar student infractions in a consistent way” \((M = 4.3, \text{SD} = 0.7)\). Principals generally believe they “know what needs to be done to improve the performance of students in my school,” with 87.5% selecting “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” \((M = 4.0, \text{SD} = 0.6)\) for item 19. Each of these scores indicate lower levels of mindful instructional leadership. This may be due to overreliance on past experience, or implementation of building, state, or district driven initiatives to streamline educational processes within the school. Responses to item 9 are somewhat inconsistent with this factor’s trend, with 57.1% of principals selecting “Often” or “Very often” in response to the statement, “I wonder what needs to be done to improve student performance” \((M = 2.6, \text{SD} = 0.9)\). Despite the more mindful score for this item, overall, principals did not report high levels of mindfulness for the process of reluctance to simplify. While this may be viewed negatively, the sheer volume of work associated with the principalship today demands some simplification of routine tasks and daily occurrences. This process may be an area for growth, if districts are willing to encourage principals to slow down decision-making in order to practice more mindful instructional leadership. The noted inconsistency in the description above is evident in the 0.2 alpha coefficient that was calculated for the 5 items that make up this factor.
Table 10

**PRESS – Reluctance to Simplify**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>$N$</th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11 I treat similar student infractions in a consistent way.</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 I know what needs to be done to improve the performance of students in my school.</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Compliance is a big part of my job.</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 I wonder what needs to be done to improve student performance.</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Parents of my students who have gotten into trouble are dismissive of the school’s responsibility to look after the welfare of all students.</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Factor Score

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>$N$</th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>168</td>
<td>50.3</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The fifth and final cognitive process, sensitivity to operations, was associated with items 5, 7, and 10; each of these items is associated with the primary work of an instructional leader, staying focused on teaching and learning. Data for this process indicate principals as a group are moderately mindful, with means ranging from 2.7 to 2.9, as shown in Table 11. Overall, the vast majority of principals reported engaging in the identified activities “Sometimes,” “Often,” or “Very often.” For item 10, assisting teachers in using student data, 98.2% of principals indicated one of the above responses. This is a mindful activity, and aligns with expected outcomes, given the heavy focus on the use of student data to improve teaching and learning outcomes in Washington’s TPEP process and the AWSP Leadership Framework. Additionally, 96.5% of principals selected from the same response choices for item 7, leading data driven dialogues with
teachers to keep the conversation on track. This also maintains focus on the primary operations of school, teaching and learning. The AWSP Leadership Framework and Washington’s TPEP model both demand principals engage in data driven dialogues with teachers, encouraging use of the mindfulness process of sensitivity to operations. At the same time, principals may have interpreted keeping the conversation “on track” as working towards a predetermined outcome, which is a less mindful practice. It is difficult to know which part of the item principals responded to, use of data driven dialogues or keeping the conversation on track. Item 5 is also potentially problematic; 55.4% of principals indicated they “Often” or “Very often” give directives to teachers or students who have repeatedly made mistakes. Giving directives is not a mindful practice, however, willingness to engage in a conversation which may potentially cause conflict is a mindful practice. If principals are giving directives in the interest of creating a fail-safe environment for students, this indicates mindful instructional leadership. If, however, principals are giving directives because they are fed up with failure on the part of other individuals and are no longer willing to engage in mindful processes, including commitment to resilience, deference to expertise, and/or reluctance to simplify, this indicates mindlessness. These items demonstrate the challenge in determining what mindful instructional leadership looks like in practice. In contrast to the other four factors, the score reliability for the three items was 0.9 for sensitivity to operations, which is more than satisfactory in terms of internal consistency.
### Table 11

**PRESS – Sensitivity to Operations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I help my teachers use their student data to improve their teaching.</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I lead data driven dialogues with teachers to keep the conversation on track.</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I give directives to teachers or students who have repeatedly messed up.</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Factor Score</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>64.7</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comparing the five factor scores assists in determining which mindfulness cognitive processes principals already utilize and which processes may be areas for growth. For example, the average score for deference to expertise was $M = 78.1$ (SD = 8.4), while the average score for reluctance to simplify was $M = 50.3$ (SD = 8.2). Given the team environment of school administration today, it is not surprising principals actively rely on knowledge from others with educational expertise. Literature on the positive impact of effective PLC practice is pervasive, as is literature on instructional leadership, distributed leadership, and teacher leadership. Principals in general are utilizing the cognitive process of deference to expertise to a moderately high level. Concurrently, principals are seeking ways to simplify, underutilizing the cognitive process of reluctance to simplify. Given the sheer demands of the principalship, it is not surprising principals choose to engage in this process less frequently. However, slowing decision-making and continuing to ponder a multitude of explanations, options, or possible actions could aid principals in increasing their mindful instructional leadership practice, ultimately resulting in
better decisions. In order for this to occur, districts may have to consider what policies are in place that encourage simplification, as well as what tasks could be removed from principals’ responsibilities in order to allow for more thoughtful decision-making practices. Further, demands placed on principals as a result of state policies is worth consideration.

Misunderstanding of the role of failure by principals, as well as districts and state officials, may also be impacting practice. While principals reported moderately high levels of mindfulness for commitment to resilience ($M = 72.7$, $SD = 8.5$), they reported only moderate mindfulness for preoccupation with failure ($M = 59.7$, $SD = 7.8$). Principals appear able to overcome failure and bounce back once failure occurs, but reported being less focused on rooting out potential failures before they reach catastrophic levels. Given the high-stakes environment of education, driven by federal and state accountability policies, principals may be less willing to draw attention to failure within their schools. Increased understanding of the importance of looking for and calling attention to small failures, in order to avert larger failures, is needed.

While utilizing the individual factor scores is helpful in identifying some specific areas for growth, some studies indicate a single mindfulness score may be more appropriate for measuring individual mindfulness than the use of factor scores (Feldmen, et al, 2007). To generate a summative mindfulness score for the PRESS survey, all PRESS item scores were summed and converted to a standardized score utilizing the same process as the individual factor scores. The resulting Mindful Instructional Leadership (MIL) score accounts for instructional leadership practices aligned to the mindful cognitive practices, including preoccupation with failure, commitment to resilience, deference to expertise, reluctance to simplify, and sensitivity to operations. For the 168 PRESS respondents, the average MIL score was $M = 63.2$ ($SD = 4.3$), as shown in Table 12. This indicates mindfulness in particular processes, with some room for
growth in specific practices of mindful instructional leadership. The alpha coefficient of 0.3 was calculated for the 20 items that make up MIL score for the principals who responded.

Table 12

**PRESS Factor Scores**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRESS Factor</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deference to Expertise</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>78.1</td>
<td>78.6</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment to Resilience</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>72.7</td>
<td>70.6</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensitivity to Operations</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>64.7</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preoccupation with Failure</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>59.7</td>
<td>60.9</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reluctance to Simplify</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>50.3</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIL Summative Score</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>63.2</td>
<td>63.3</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Cognitive and Affective Mindfulness Scale – Revised (CAMS-R)*

To address the third research question, *How mindful are principals in general as self-reported?*, data were collected using the previously developed CAMS-R tool. All PRESS respondents were invited to participate. Of the 168 PRESS respondents, 56 completed the CAMS-R survey.

**CAMS-R Respondent Demographic Data**

Descriptive analysis was conducted on school demographic variables for CAMS-R respondents. Specifically, student variables included total enrollment, percentage participating in free and reduced price meal programs, percentage minority, percentage special education, percentage transitional bilingual. Teacher variables included number of students per classroom, average years’ educational experience, and percentage with at least a master’s degree. School
achievement variables included percentage of students meeting or exceeding proficiency in reading, mathematics, and science on the 5th grade MSP exam. From the 168 PRESS respondents invited to complete the CAMS-R survey, 37 elementary, 18 intermediate, and 1 high school principals responded, for a total $n$ of 56. Response rates for both elementary and intermediate principals were average to good, at 47.4% and 35.3% respectively. However, the high school principal response rate was only 2.6%. Overall, the response rate was 33.3%.

Demographics data were compared between CAMS-R respondents and PRESS respondents to address generalizability of the survey results. Comparison of the two groups demonstrated high degrees of similarity. For several characteristics, CAMS-R and PRESS respondents had near identical averages, such as 50% free/reduced meal program participation for CAMS-R respondents and 49% free/reduce meal program participation for PRESS respondents. Results of the comparison between CAMS-R respondents (C) and PRESS respondents (P) are displayed in Table 13. For CAMS-R respondents, the average years’ experience in the principalship was 9.4 years, with an average of 4.7 years in the current position. In comparing CAMS-R respondents’ school achievement data, respondents’ schools demonstrated an average pass rate of 70.6% for reading, 64.1% for mathematics, and 65.6% for science, as measured by 5th grade MSP exams. These proficiency rates are substantially similar to the PRESS respondents’ scores, which include both respondents and non-respondents to the CAMS-R survey. PRESS respondents’ schools averaged pass rates of 71.5% for reading, 62.3% for mathematics, and 64.71% for science.
Table 13

*CAMS-R Respondents Demographic Data*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>C</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Variables</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Enrollment</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>455</td>
<td>605</td>
<td>445</td>
<td>477</td>
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<td>424</td>
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<tr>
<td>% Free/Reduced Lunch</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% White</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>% Special Education</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>% Transitional Bilingual</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td><strong>Teacher Variables</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Student-Teacher Ratio</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avg. Years Experience</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% with Masters</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>74</td>
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<td>74</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
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<td><strong>State Achievement Variables</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>70.60</td>
<td>71.53</td>
<td>73.10</td>
<td>73.20</td>
<td>13.80</td>
<td>14.65</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>64.10</td>
<td>62.35</td>
<td>63.70</td>
<td>65.00</td>
<td>14.60</td>
<td>18.56</td>
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<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>65.60</td>
<td>64.71</td>
<td>65.40</td>
<td>66.59</td>
<td>16.30</td>
<td>16.82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. C = CAMS-R Respondents; P = PRESS Respondents.*
CAMS-R Item and Factor Analysis

CAMS-R items were analyzed individually; the CAMS-R survey also produces a single mindfulness factor score which was also analyzed. For each item and for the single factor score, means, medians, and standard deviations were calculated, as shown in Table 14. The CAMS-R utilizes a four-point scale, ranging from “Rarely / not at all” (1) to “Almost always” (4). In general, principals reported attitudes of acceptance, as demonstrated by both the highest average and lowest average items. These included the most common response of “Often” for the statements “I am able to accept the thoughts and feelings I have” ($M = 3.3$, $SD = 0.7$) and “I can accept things I cannot change” ($M = 3.2$, $SD = 0.7$), the response of “Sometimes” for “I am preoccupied by the future” ($M = 2.0$, $SD = 0.6$), and the response of “Rarely” for “I am preoccupied by the past” ($M = 1.5$, $SD = 0.5$). It is positive that principals spend limited time ruminating, as demonstrated by item 7, and this may be linked to a commitment to resilience. Principals also reported a high ability to stay focused on the present moment, with 87.5% responding “Often” or “Almost Always” to item 11 ($M = 3.2$, $SD = 0.6$), as well as 75% reporting an ability to maintain concentration “Often” or “Almost Always” on item 1 ($M = 3.0$, $SD = 0.7$). This trend may relate to a sensitivity to operations, or maintaining focus on what is deemed important. However, slightly fewer principals reported they are able to pay close attention to one task for an extended period of time, with 60.7% responding “Often” or “Almost Always” on item 12 ($M = 2.8$, $SD = 0.9$). This is actually higher than anticipated given the sometimes frenetic pace of the principalship. The response appears to align with item 6, “I am easily distracted,” as only 3.6% of principals reported “Almost always” and 23.2% reported “Often” ($M = 2.1$, $SD = 0.8$). Cronbach’s alpha of 0.8 was observed for the 18 items that make up the CAMS-R, which reflected an appropriate level of internal consistency.
Table 14

*CAMS-R Items and Summative Factor Score*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I am able to accept the thoughts and feelings I have.</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I can accept things I cannot change</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I am able to focus on the present moment.</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I can tolerate emotional pain.</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>It’s easy for me to keep track of my thoughts and feelings.</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>It is easy for me to concentrate on what I am doing.</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I can usually describe how I feel at the moment in considerable detail.</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I try to notice my thoughts without judging them.</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>I am able to pay close attention to one thing for a long period of time.</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I am easily distracted.</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I am preoccupied by the future.</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I am preoccupied by the past.</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mindfulness</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In looking at the CAMS-R overall mindfulness score, principals scored an average of 36.8. This is a slightly higher degree of mindfulness than demonstrated by non-clinical samples reported by Feldman and his colleagues (2007). In a sample of 250 university students, a mean of 33.69 was reported; a second sample of 298 university students resulted in a mean of 34.11.
Standard deviations for this study, as well as both previous samples, were similar, ranging from 5.10 to 5.50. It may be that the additional education and work experience of individuals in the principal sample result in increased personal mindfulness. Determining the source of the difference between the current sample and prior research samples is beyond the scope of this study. However, regardless of the cause, higher mindfulness scores on the CAMS-R have been linked to lower distress, higher well-being, increased cognitive flexibility, and improved problem solving. Notably, this problem solving orientation is described as approaching problems as unique situations, without relying on habitual responses (Feldman, et al, 2007). These positive outcomes offer additional support for the value of mindfulness for principals, who serve in a high-stress, high-stakes profession.

**MIL and Mindfulness Comparison**

The final research question, *What is the relationship between mindfulness in instructional leadership and mindfulness in general as self-reported by principals?*, addressed whether a relationship existed between mindful instructional leadership and the construct of mindfulness in general. Ultimately, this study sought to know if principal mindfulness influenced principal mindful instructional leadership. Correlational analysis compared factors within and between the PRESS and CAMS-R instruments. Prior to calculating Pearson $r$ correlations, assumptions were met and checked. Both variables were normally distributed and the assumption of linearity was not markedly violated; a scatterplot demonstrated a moderately positive linear relationship with no extreme outliers. Correlations between PRESS factors, the PRESS single Mindful Instructional Leadership (MIL) score, and the CAMS-R Mindfulness score are shown in Table 15. Each of the PRESS cognitive process factors were positively related to the single MIL factor at a statistically significant level, with correlations ranging from low for the process of sensitivity
to operations ($r = .24, r^2 = .06, p < .01$) to moderate for the processes of reluctance to simplify ($r = .61, r^2 = .37, p < .01$) and preoccupation with failure ($r = .60, r^2 = .36, p < .01$). In comparing the PRESS cognitive process factors to the CAMS-R mindfulness score, statistically significant results were found only for the process of reluctance to simplify ($r = .32, r^2 = .10, p < .05$).

However, in comparing the PRESS single MIL score to the CAMS-R mindfulness score, results indicate a moderate correlation ($r = .42, r^2 = .18, p < .01$), indicating that as principal mindfulness increases so does principal mindful instructional leadership (MIL). This also further substantiates the use of a single mindfulness score as opposed to individual cognitive process factor scores.

Table 15

**PRESS and CAMS-R Mindfulness Factors Correlations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mindfulness Factor</th>
<th>Preoccupation with Failure</th>
<th>Commitment to Resilience</th>
<th>Deference to Expertise</th>
<th>Reluctance to Simplify</th>
<th>Sensitivity to Operations</th>
<th>Mindful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MIL</td>
<td>0.60**</td>
<td>0.56**</td>
<td>0.46**</td>
<td>0.61**</td>
<td>0.23**</td>
<td>0.42**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preoccupation with Failure</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.20*</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment to Resilience</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.21**</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deference to Expertise</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reluctance to Simplify</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>0.32*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensitivity to Operations</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Pearson = Pearson correlation; Sig. = Significance (2-tailed).

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 tailed).*

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the study’s results in relation to the research questions, including a narrative and details of the descriptive data analyses, as well as the correlation analysis comparing the PRESS factor scores, PRESS single factor MIL score, and the CAMS-R single factor mindfulness score. From an initial sample of 505 K-12 Washington public schools, 168 principals responded to the PRESS survey, resulting in a 33.3% response rate. Respondents included 78 elementary, 51 intermediate, and 39 secondary principals; overall, respondent principals averaged 6.2 years in their current position, with 9.7 years in the principalship. PRESS respondents administer schools with an average enrollment of 605 students, 49% of whom are served by free/reduced lunch programs. In addition, the average PRESS respondent’s school serves 37% minority students, 13% special education students, and 9% transitional bilingual students. Teachers within these schools had an average of 12 years’ experience, with 74% holding a master’s degree or higher. For elementary schools only, the average pass rate for state achievement tests ranged from 62% in 5th grade math to 71% in 5th grade reading.

From the PRESS respondents, 56 completed the CAMS-R survey, for a response rate of 33.3%. CAMS-R respondents administer slightly smaller schools on average, with a total enrollment of 455 students. Of these, 50% participate in free/reduced lunch programs, 49% are minority, 14% are served by special education services, and 10% are transitional bilingual. Teacher and state achievement variables were not significantly different between CAMS-R respondents and PRESS respondents.

Data analysis by PRESS factor score, with factors aligned to mindful cognitive processes, resulted in poor internal consistency, with the exception of sensitivity to operations. However, principal responses on individual items are instructive as to which mindful instructional
leadership processes principals as a group employ more frequently. Overall, principals reported high MIL in working with students, with the exception of routine responses to student discipline issues. Principals as a group also reported high MIL when collaborating with parents. When working with teachers, principals reported considerable variation in MIL. For example, by and large principals paid attention to staff reactions and showed empathy to colleagues. However, principals reported sometimes struggling to cope with conflict, frustration in dealing with “problem teachers,” and reliance on first impressions of classroom instruction. Conflicting responses were given to “knowing” what needs to be done to improve student performance, and “wondering” what to do to improve student performance. The MIL summative score, which combined all PRESS items into one score, resulted in an average score of 63.2, with a standard deviation of 4.3.

On the CAMS-R survey, respondents average single item score ranged from 1.5 to 3.3 on a four-point scale. Principals as a group reported an ability to frequently maintain focus and remain present-oriented. In addition, principals reported acceptance for their own thoughts and feelings, as well as acceptance that some things are beyond their control. The CAMS-R provides a single mindfulness factor score; principal respondents’ average score was 36.8, with a standard deviation of 5.1. This result is slightly higher than other non-clinical samples previously reported.

Correlation analysis demonstrated positive correlations between each PRESS factor score and the PRESS MIL score; however, only the PRESS factor score of reluctance to simplify correlated to the CAMS-R mindfulness score. In comparing the PRESS MIL score to the CAMS-R mindfulness score, results demonstrate a moderate alignment to the previously validated CAMS-R tool, indicating that a principal’s general mindfulness does contribute to a
principal’s MIL. Further, this indicates the organizational mindfulness constructs initially applied in HRO contexts may be related to more traditional individual mindfulness indicators. The analyses help to answer the study’s research questions. In the final chapter, implications of the results are discussed, including recommendations for further study.
CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

This chapter provides a conclusion for the dissertation. The first section addresses an overview of the study, with a review of the research questions. The second section highlights the key findings of the study. The final section discusses the study’s implications, including applications for practice and recommendations for further research.

Overview

Pressure for school reform and improved student academic achievement have continued to grow, creating increased demand for educators to seek additional levers for school improvement. While many schools have been declared “failing,” such designations are based on limited measures of success. Considering additional measures, including those focused on mindful instructional leadership, may provide a more comprehensive look at the current levels of student, school, and principal achievement. Additionally, such tools may provide principals and districts guidance to make substantive changes to practice, which ultimately may benefit students’ academic achievement, as well as the social-emotional growth of both students and staff. This study focused on the potential lever of principal mindful instructional leadership laying the foundation for further study concerned with school improvement.

As instructional leaders, principals have a unique ability to impact students and teachers through a mindful focus on Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and the overall climate and culture of their schools. Both PLCs and climate and culture have been repeatedly linked to student achievement (Brown & Duguid, 1995; Bryk, Camburn, & Louis, 1999; DuFour, 2004; Louis, Marks, & Kruse, 1996; Scribner, Cockrell, Cockrell, & Valentine, 1999; Scribner, Hager, & Warne, 2002; Smylie & Hart, 2000). As these areas have already been shown to significantly
impact student performance, utilizing a mindfulness lens in the areas of PLCs and school climate and culture and may allow principals to increase the effectiveness of these strategies in their schools, resulting in greater potential benefit for students.

In addition, a school environment which includes an explicit emphasis on emotional intelligence, including mindfulness and resilience, benefits both students and adults within the school system. Positive interpersonal relationships build and sustain trust, a necessary component for effective group functioning (Fullan, 2001; Hoy, at al, 2006). Increased emotional intelligence on the part of the principal allows her to better serve the other adults within her organization; this is a necessary component of effective leadership (Blase & Blase, 2002; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008; Mayer, David, & Schoorman, 1995; McDonald, 2012; Price, 2012; Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008; Youngs & King, 2002). For principals, a focus on mindful instructional leadership may also open the door to greater individual mindfulness, which may assist a principal in meeting the increasingly stressful challenges of the job. Increased resilience allows individuals to cope with difficult situations, and leading a building is, after all, sometimes a “full catastrophe” experience (Grossman, et al, 2003; Kabat-Zinn, 1990). Increasing one’s own mindfulness may provide positive personal benefits; mindfulness training has been shown to reduce stress, decrease reactive behaviors, and improve decision-making (Kelly, 2012). Helping principals become more effective through increased awareness of the benefits of mindful cognitive processes benefits both students and adults in the organization.

Current principal evaluation systems in Washington State are aware of the importance of positive interpersonal relationships, school climate and culture, PLCs, and student emotional safety in schools (Kipp, et al, 2014). The requirements of the AWSP Leadership Framework address not only academic concerns, but also affective concerns. This instructional leadership
framework is built on the coupled nature of the cognitive and affective domains of school. These two realms cannot truly be separated (Lang, 1998); both are inherently a part of schooling. By intentionally connecting the cognitive and affective domains of school with an eye towards improvement, the potential power for positive change is multiplied.

Instructional leadership requires principals take responsibility for student learning (Louis & Wahlstrom, 2011; Stein & Nelson, 2003). This includes investing time in classrooms, assisting teachers in further development of their instructional skills, creating a data-rich environment, and assisting others in utilizing data to improve practice (DuFour, 2004; Marzano, et al, 2001). It also requires modeling strategy implementation (Leithwood, et al, 2010). Principals can have significant impact through ensuring effective PLC implementation (DuFour, 2002; Huggins, et al, 2011; Mattos, 2008). This requires a bedrock of trust and collective efficacy (Blase & Blase, 2002; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008; Price, 2012; Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008). Climate and culture variables can be improved through increased understanding of emotional intelligence, and principal commitment to resilience and mindfulness.

Tying mindful processes to instructional leadership may help further define what mindful instructional leadership looks like, and how a principal can employ such an approach within his or her context. HRO literature provides guidance into the application of mindfulness in an organizational context, although this is largely outside the domain of public education. Weick and his colleagues (2006, 2001) define mindfulness as specific cognitive processes which limit or eliminate mindlessness, including preoccupation with failure, commitment to resilience, deference to expertise, reluctance to simplify, and sensitivity to operations (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2006). While these processes help avoid catastrophic failure in high-risk industries, less is
known about how they may impact student success (Bellamy, Crawford, Marshall, & Coulter, 2005).

To address practice, identifying specific mindful instructional leadership processes becomes necessary. The purpose of this study was to develop and describe instructional leadership practices within K-12 public schools through a lens of mindfulness. The study addressed the following research questions: 1) What mindfulness cognitive processes are evident in literature on principal instructional leadership? 2) How mindful are principals in instructional leadership as self-reported? 3) How mindful are principals in general as self-reported? and 4) What is the relationship between mindfulness in instructional leadership and mindfulness in general as self-reported by principals?

HRO theory reconceptualized as an instructional leadership model is applicable and relevant for educational organizations. By addressing mindful instructional leadership and its measurement, this study connects mindfulness cognitive processes and instructional leadership and provides a tool for principal self-assessment, professional development, and growth. Through creation of the PRESS tool and utilization of the preexisting CAMS-R tool, principals have the ability to self-assess their own mindful instructional leadership and mindfulness in general. Self-assessment can provide a snapshot of current practice, allowing for recognition of strengths and areas for growth. The findings bring us closer to understanding how mindful instructional leadership may be a viable model for improved student and staff outcomes.

Findings

The research findings can be generalized to regular public K-12 schools in Washington State as a result of the stratified random selection process utilized to identify the sample. While overall response rates for both the PRESS and CAMS-R were slightly low at 33.3%,
demographic comparisons between PRESS respondents and the sample, as well as between CAMS-R respondents and non-respondents, demonstrated substantial similarity. Statistical analysis of the PRESS respondents’ school variables confirmed the means conform to the parameters of Washington’s K-12 school population. Analysis of the population revealed the average school serves 486 students, with 45% participating in free/reduced lunch programs. Overall 46% of students are identified as minority. The average school serves 14% of students in special education programs, and identifies 9% of students as transitional bilingual. In comparison, PRESS respondents’ schools average a slightly higher enrollment of 605 students, with 49% served by free/reduced lunch programs. For PRESS respondents’ schools, 37% of students are identified as minority. These schools serve 13% of their students in special education programs, and identify 9% of students as transitional bilingual. Teachers within schools identified in the population had an average of 11 years’ experience, with 73% holding a master’s degree or higher, as compared to 12 years’ experience and 74% holding a master’s degree or higher in PRESS respondents’ schools. Comparison of elementary school achievement data was similarly consistent, with schools within the population averaging pass rates of 70% for 5th grade reading, 62% for 5th grade mathematics, and 64% for 5th grade science. PRESS respondents’ schools had average pass rates of 71% for 5th grade reading, 62% for 5th grade mathematics, and 64% for 5th grade science.

Additional analysis of the CAMS-R respondents’ school variables confirmed the means conform to the PRESS respondents’ school variables. CAMS-R respondents’ schools averaged 455 students enrolled, with 50% receiving free/reduced lunch services. Minority students made up 39% of the student population. In addition, these schools served 14% of students in special education, and identified 10% of students as transitional bilingual. Teachers in CAMS-R
respondents’ schools had the same average years’ experience, with a slightly higher degree of teachers holding a master’s degree, at 76%. Finally, student achievement scores were similar, with 70% meeting proficiency targets in 5th grade reading, 64% in 5th grade mathematics, and 65% in 5th grade science. In considering subgroups of respondents, it is interesting to note secondary principals responded at the highest rate for the PRESS survey, at 48%, but had the lowest response rate for the CAMS-R survey, at only 2.6%.

In analyzing HRO cognitive processes as separate factors, principals as a group averaged the highest degree of mindfulness for the process of deference to expertise. Principals agreed they sought information from parents regarding their students, and stated they often solicited solutions from teachers regarding instructional challenges. Principals also by and large reported interpersonal awareness with regards to noticing staff reactions. Each of these items also had the smallest standard deviations (SD = 0.6) reported on the PRESS tool, indicating less variability among the respondents. Overall, this indicates principals as a group are generally successfully employing this cognitive process within their instructional leadership practices. This may be a result of a focus on shared leadership models in principal training and professional development, or experience gained while participating in a leadership team model, which is frequently employed as part of a strategic improvement plan. Further, PLCs have become ubiquitous, and encourage principals to work with teachers in developing solutions to instructional challenges. While seeking input does not necessarily mean these practices are leading to effective interventions, it is promising that principals are not utilizing directive leadership models. By deferring to expertise, principals pool the resources of the individuals within their schools in order to achieve better outcomes for students.
Principals as a group also reported a relatively high degree of mindfulness for the cognitive process of commitment to resilience, especially when such practice was directly connected to working with students. Almost universally, principals reported frequently looking for small signals to determine how a student is feeling, and as a group, principals agreed they recognize when students are upset and choose to address the situation. This practice is positive, as it models for others a resilient approach to working with students. However, principals reported some fatigue in dealing with difficult students or teachers, and overall reported sometimes experiencing increased tension when addressing a staff conflict. A greater degree of variability was observed in the conflict item (SD = 0.9), indicating some principals are able to approach conflict positively, while others struggle with this task. Conflict resolution may be an area in which principals may seek additional training, in order to increase their mindful instructional leadership.

Principals reported moderate mindfulness with regards to a sensitivity to operations. This process was operationalized as a continued focus on data-based decision-making. Principals as a group reported frequently assisting teachers in using data and leading data-driven conversations with teachers. However, for teachers and students who repeatedly made mistakes, over half of the principals reported giving directives as a routine response to address the issue. Each of these items had moderate variability, ranging from SD = 0.7 to SD = 0.8, indicating some range in frequency of these actions on the part of individual principals. Willingness to continue tinkering to improve student and teacher performance, based on data, may be an area of growth for some principals.

Another area for growth may be deeper thinking about potential signs of future failure. Principals reported a strong belief in their own first impressions of classrooms, and nearly two-
thirds of principals agreed their school’s student achievement data accurately represented what students have learned. Both of these practices are akin to a horse wearing blinders. Remaining open to additional data, particularly data which conflicts with an initial determination, may allow principals to recognize harbingers of deterioration. Given the demands to “fix” failing schools, it is perhaps surprising principals so willingly accept achievement data at face value. On the other hand, given the almost exclusive attention paid to achievement data as a measure for school and principal success, perhaps principals simply accept this data at face value because it is the yardstick by which they are measured. Other items linked to the cognitive process of preoccupation with failure revealed more mindful instructional leadership. Principals collectively reported they often raise student learning concerns with staff, and express empathy for teachers. Both practices support school improvement.

As a group, principals demonstrated the least mindfulness with relation to the cognitive process of reluctance to simplify. This finding is not surprising, given the magnitude of the principal’s job today. Systems are put in place to make routine decisions, creating both a degree of consistency across the organization and providing time for investment in other tasks, including higher-risk decision making. Principals reported treating student infractions consistently, and acknowledged compliance is a part of the principalship; less than 15% disagreed with the latter. Curiously, the vast majority of principals reported they “know” what needs to be done to improve student performance, but two-thirds of these principals also reported they sometimes “wonder” what needs to be done to improve student performance. This may be an indication that many principals have mindful tendencies, but given the complexity of the organization some simplification is unavoidable. If principals are to reduce simplification in order to more widely
view school performance, districts will need to reduce the workload, or at a minimum, encourage more reflective decision-making.

With regards to principals’ mindfulness, results from the CAMS-R are revealing. Principals reported an ability to stay present-focused, with approximately 75% able to often exhibit concentration, minimize distractions, and stay focused on the present moment. In general, principals did not report preoccupation with either the past or the future. The majority reported intrapersonal awareness, responding positively to keeping track of their own thoughts and feelings, with abilities to both verbalize and accept those thoughts and feelings. Finally, principals as a group reported tolerance for emotional pain and acceptance of things beyond their control. These results indicate principals as a group exhibit many mindful cognitive processes.

Findings from the correlation analysis of the PRESS individual factors, PRESS summative MIL score, and the CAMS-R mindfulness score reveal that positive relationships exist between all factors. The study identified positive correlations at a statistically significant level between each of the PRESS individual factors and the PRESS summative MIL score. The CAMS-R mindfulness score did not correlate to a statistically significant level with any of the PRESS factor scores, with the exception of reluctance to simplify. However, the CAMS-R mindfulness score did positively correlate to a statistically significant level with the PRESS summative MIL score. Such findings indicate that a single mindfulness factor score is perhaps more appropriate than individual cognitive process factor scores, as Feldman and colleagues (2007) have indicated. An additional explanation could be that items were misidentified with the individual cognitive process factors. Poor reliability of the scores for the factors, with the exception of sensitivity to operations, may indicate items were mislabeled. This may have been a result of the challenge of writing items and determining agreement on the identified factor for
each item with a group or researchers, relying both on the literature and varying professional work contexts. Exploratory factor analysis would help determine if a set of factors do exist among the PRESS items; such a study would allow for increased understanding of whether HRO mindfulness cognitive processes do in fact align with mindful instructional leadership.

Overall, the MIL score measured by the PRESS tool was a moderate 63.2. It is worth noting the average mindfulness score of 36.8 for CAMS-R respondent principals was slightly higher than other non-clinical groups, and may indicate the PRESS score of 63.2 is an acceptable starting point. The reported mindfulness of principals as a group may be a result of additional education, age, job experience, or even a predisposition that leads individuals to the principalship. There is room for growth, however, how much growth is optimal is unresolved. It is not clear whether a goal of 100% mindfulness is appropriate for principals. Mindfulness may support or detract from task performance based on certain conditions, potentially including one’s level of expertise (Dane, 2011).

**Implications**

This study adds to this body of research by extending our understanding of how mindful cognitive processes may be applied to principal instructional leadership. The current study examined existing levels of principal mindful instructional leadership, as well as principal mindfulness in general, among regular K-12 public school principals in Washington State. Additionally, the study examined if the two constructs were connected. The results suggest a small, but significant, connection exists between individual mindfulness and principal practices. Implications include both applicability of the findings to practice, as well as recommendations for future research.
Applicability to Practice

This study, in collaboration with additional researchers, produced the PRESS tool, an instrument that provides assessment of principal mindful instructional leadership. This assessment tool is of substantive benefit to principals, to assess and reflect on their own mindful instructional leadership practices. The study and PRESS tool highlight ways in which cognitive processes are present in improvement of teaching and learning practices. Specific items highlight ways in which principals can be more mindful, and draw attention to instructional leadership tasks which may benefit from a more mindful approach. For example, attentiveness to the emotional state of individuals with whom principals interact may allow principals to better empathize, seek understanding of diverse perspectives, and ultimately make more successful and effective decisions. Increased use of the mindful cognitive processes of preoccupation with failure, reluctance to simplify, sensitivity to operations, commitment to resilience, and deference to expertise may improve school processes and outcomes at the organizational level. Utilizing a mindfulness lens may also positively impact the individuals within the organization through stress management, improved health, and decreased reactivity.

This study also highlights the use of the CAMS-R tool for principal assessment of mindfulness in general. Mindfulness has been shown to result in numerous positive benefits for individuals, and this study draws attention to this concept within the context of public education, specifically for individuals in the principalship. Overall, principals as a group self-reported slightly higher mindfulness than other non-clinical groups. Given the demands of the principalship, increased awareness and application of mindfulness may be necessary to further promote coping. While principals reported frequently engaging in mindful thinking, such as present-time focus, acceptance for things that cannot be changed, and recognition of their own
feelings, these thought processes could be utilized more frequently through intentional mindfulness practice. As leaders, principals have both an opportunity and a burden to model mindfulness for teachers and students. A goal of living a mindful life is important for each of us, to experience more joy and be more present in the lives of those around us. Helping students reach their full potential is an important goal of public education, and it extends beyond just academic content. Social-emotional learning can be taught and developed, for both adults and children. If we desire to have socially aware adults in our society, we must model these skills for our students, and provide intentional instruction and opportunities for practice.

**Future Research**

The current study only examined principals working in typical K-12 schools in Washington State. Similar studies conducted in alternative, private, and detention facilities, as well as in other regions, could help determine if the findings are universal. Findings of this study will need to be replicated in other states to confirm the observed correlations and predicted contribution of principal individual mindfulness on mindful instructional leadership. Given the low response rate of secondary school principals on the CAMS-R survey, it would also be beneficial to repeat the study with secondary principals utilizing a combined survey model. High school principals demonstrated willingness to complete one survey; by combining both instruments, a new survey administration may result in a better response rate, and therefore a more accurate picture of existing practice. Prior to implementation of similar studies, further refinement of the tool could improve the reliability of the PRESS survey. Additional areas of instructional leadership may need to be included to provide a fuller picture of mindful instructional leadership.
Another topic worthy of exploration is further study on the impact of years in the profession on principal mindful instructional leadership. More experienced principals may better be able to utilize mindful instructional leadership practices. Research identifies differences in principal practice during initiation and development phases (Day & Bakioglu, 1996; Hargreaves, et al, 2003; Spillane & Lee, 2013). What role do principal preparation programs, principal socialization practices, or principal professional development play in helping principals develop MIL? What other variables determine a principal’s degree of MIL as assessed by the PRESS tool? Each of these areas could be explored individually or collectively.

Finally, a more detailed examination of the optimal degree of principal mindful instructional leadership is needed. If 100% mindfulness is not the goal, where is the tipping point at which further mindfulness slows operations to an unacceptable level? Positive benefits for the individual resulting from increased mindfulness must be weighed against potential harm to the organization (Dane, 2011). Overemphasis on awareness may result in too much focus on unimportant data, as the expense of important data. Comparison of the PRESS MIL scores to additional variables may shed light on whether such a tipping point exists. Such an analysis may reveal which aspects of mindfulness most accurately predict student outcomes. In addition, comparisons to factors known to increase student learning, such as trust, positive climate and culture, and effective PLCs, may also help identify which mindfulness processes are most valuable within the context of education.

Ultimately, further research on mindful instructional leadership will assist educators, specifically principals, to improve outcomes for students. A mindful approach to school leadership may reduce failure in both academic and affective measures. The cognitive domains of school already receive a great deal of attention, including considerable attempts to measure
student academic success. This study draws attention to additional outcomes which are connected to the success of a school. Increased understanding of mindfulness may increase our individual and collective ability to be resilient, to face the challenges of school and life with grit and perseverance. It is hoped this study’s findings further continue the conversation into the potential benefits of a principal’s personal mindfulness on the health and wellbeing of their school, the students and teachers within their school, and in their own lives.
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Appendix A

*Principal Resilience for Educator and Student Success (PRESS)*

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**Principal Resilience for Educator and Student Success**

Instructions: Below is a brief collection of statements about principal instructional leadership practices and beliefs. Please select the frequency of occurrence that best reflects your recent experience at School:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Very Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I solicit from staff solutions to instructional problems.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I raise concerns about student learning with staff.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I express empathy for a teacher who is having a difficult day.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I look for little signals when talking with students about how they are feeling.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I give directives to teachers or students who have repeatedly messed up.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I tire of dealing with the same problem teachers or students.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I lead data driven dialogues with teachers to keep the conversation on track.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I feel heightened tension before going into a meeting that involves a conflict with staff.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I wonder what needs to be done to improve student performance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I help my teachers use their student data to improve their teaching.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Using the Likert scale on the top row, please indicate the degree to which you agree with each statement. Select the response that reflects your recent experience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I treat similar student infractions in a consistent way.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>My school's student achievement data</td>
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<tr>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Undecided</td>
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<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>accurately represents what our students have learned.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compliance is a big part of my job.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parents of my students who have gotten into trouble are dismissive of the school's responsibility to look after the welfare of all students.</td>
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<tr>
<td>When things are not going well in improving a teacher's performance, I tend to dwell on what I could have done better.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I ask a lot of questions when I meet with parents of students.</td>
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<tr>
<td>My first impressions of what's happening in a classroom are frequently wrong.</td>
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<tr>
<td>When a student insults me, I stop the conversation so he or she can calm down.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I know what needs to be done to improve the performance of students in my school.</td>
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<tr>
<td>When teachers react defensively to criticism, I ignore their reactions.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Please provide the following demographic information:

**Your gender:**
- Female
- Male

**Your ethnic/racial identity:**
- White
- Black
- Hispanic origin
- Asian or Pacific Islander
- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Multiracial

**Number of years in principalship:**
Number of years at current school:

Highest degree earned:
- Masters
- Doctorate

I would like to receive a summary of the study findings:
- Yes
- No

Thank you, ${m://FirstName} ${m://LastName} for taking these few minutes to answer our questions. Your participation is appreciated.
Appendix B

*Cognitive and Affective Mindfulness Scale-Revised (CAMS-R)*

### CAMS-R

*Instructions:* Below are a number of brief statements about your cognitive processes. Please respond to each item by selecting the response that most accurately reflects your experience at work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Rarely/Not at All</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Almost Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is easy for me to concentrate on what I am doing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I am preoccupied by the future.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I can tolerate emotional pain.</td>
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<td>I can accept things I cannot change.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I can usually describe how I feel at the moment in considerable detail.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I am easily distracted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I am preoccupied by the past.</td>
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<tr>
<td>It's easy for me to keep track of my thoughts and feelings.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I try to notice my thoughts without judging them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I am able to accept the thoughts and feelings I have.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I am able to focus on the present moment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I am able to pay close attention to one thing for a long period of time.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C

Survey Announcements and Invitations

Principal Resilience for Educator and Student Success (PRESS) Invitations

First Invitation
Dear ${m://FirstName} ${m://LastName},

One of the top priorities for principals in K-12 education today is developing effective teachers who demonstrate high-quality instruction. We are serious about this priority – and we need your help to guide our efforts. We are inviting you to participate in a study on instructional leadership in Washington’s schools. The Principal Resilience for Educator and Student Success (PRESS) survey will take less than 10 minutes of your time, which we know as school leaders ourselves, is valuable.

The survey asks for your opinions on a range of topics, such as student motivation and staff collaboration. We will use the results of the survey to help identify current instructional leadership practices in our schools, as well as opportunities for improvements that might make our schools even better at meeting the needs of our students.

PRESS is available now and can be accessed by following the link: ${l://SurveyLink?d=Take the PRESS}

Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:
${l://SurveyURL}

We will share with you our summary of findings from principals across the state. The survey administration, data analysis, and report preparation will be overseen by Washington State University. WSU routinely works with confidential data and will respect and protect your identity. Results will only be reported in summary form – in no case will it be possible to determine an individual’s identity or responses.

In addition, all respondents will be entered into a drawing for a $25 gift card. Further, we can provide those who respond with aggregated results from a companion teacher survey administered to some of your school’s teachers. Your participation is completely voluntary, but we hope you take the time to share your opinions. For results to be meaningful and useful, everyone needs to participate and give their honest and thoughtful answers.

If you have any questions about the survey, please feel free to contact Gordon Gates, resilientschools@comcast.net. Thank you in advance for sharing your opinions with us. We look forward to analyzing and sharing the results on your continuous efforts to improve education within our state.
Sincerely,

Joshua Meek, Principal, Moses Lake School District
Kevin Peterson, Principal, Mead Public Schools
Jenny Rodriquez, Principal, Delta High School
Ken Russell, Assistant Superintendent, Mead Public Schools
Gary Spencer, Doctoral Student, Washington State University
Gordon Gates, Professor, Washington State University

Follow the link to opt out of future emails:
${l://OptOutLink?d=Click here to unsubscribe}$
Second Invitation for Partial / Non-Respondents
Dear ${m://FirstName} ${m://LastName},

We want to know how your practice reflects components of the AWSP Leadership Framework. Please complete the Principal Resilience for Educator and Student Success (PRESS) survey, which will take less than 3 minutes of your time. Your responses will remain confidential.

PRESS is available now and can be accessed by following the link: ${l://SurveyLink?d=Take the PRESS}

Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser: ${l://SurveyURL}

We will share with you our summary of findings from principals across the state, as well as enter your name in a drawing for a $25 gift card.

If you have any questions about this request, please feel free to contact Gordon Gates at gates@wsu.edu.

Sincerely,

Gordon Gates, Ph.D., Professor, Washington State University
Joshua Meek, Principal, Moses Lake School District
Kevin Peterson, Principal, Mead Public Schools
Jenny Rodriquez, Principal, Delta High School
Ken Russell, Assistant Superintendent, Mead Public Schools
Gary Spencer, Principal, Retired

Follow the link to opt out of future emails:
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Third Invitation for Partial / Non-Respondents – Secondary Level

Input on leading $e://Field/School} requested

Dear ${m://FirstName},

Recently you received an invitation to participate in an important study on instructional leadership. As a high school principal, I know you are bombarded with such requests. Often, I have good intentions about sharing my opinion, but then get busy with other things. I suggest you respond right now, as it will take less than 3 minutes of your time to answer a few questions. Of the principals who started to reply, 87% completed—but I need your input.

**Share your opinion by following the link:** $l://SurveyLink?d=Take the PRESS

I have worked as a teacher and school principal in both the Puyallup and Moses Lake school districts. As a practitioner I know the important contribution that this study will make and am confident that with your participation the findings will provide insight and direction on strengthening school improvement practices. The power of this message, however, is contingent on your involvement.

As promised in previous emails, your identity and that of your school will remain confidential. You were purposefully selected to participate. Therefore, it is important that I gather your input. Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Respectfully,

Josh Meek
Principal
Moses Lake High School
Ed.D. Educational Leadership Candidate, Washington State University

Follow the link to opt out of future emails:
$l://OptOutLink?d=Click here to unsubscribe
Third Invitation for Partial / Non-Respondents – Elementary Level
Input on leading ${e://Field/School} requested

Dear ${m://FirstName},

Recently you received an invitation to participate in an important study on instructional leadership. As an elementary school principal, I often get bombarded with such requests. Just like you, I always have good intentions about sharing my opinion, but then get busy with the demands of the job. I am asking that you take a few minutes of your time to answer 20 brief questions. Of the principals who started to reply, 87% completed—but I need your input.

**Share your opinion by following the link:** ${l://SurveyLink?d=Take the PRESS}

I have worked as a teacher and school principal in both the Spokane and Mead school districts. As a practitioner, I know the important contribution that this study will make and am confident that with your participation the findings will provide insight and direction on strengthening school improvement practices. The power of this message, however, is contingent on your involvement.

As promised in previous emails, your identity and that of your school will remain confidential. You were purposefully selected to participate. Therefore, it is important that I gather your input. Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Respectfully,

Kevin Peterson
Principal
Midway Elementary School
Ed.D. Educational Leadership Candidate, Washington State University

Follow the link to opt out of future emails:
${l://OptOutLink?d=Click here to unsubscribe}
Fourth Invitation for Partial / Non-Respondents – All Levels
Final Opportunity to Provide Input for Instructional Leadership Study

Dear ${m://FirstName},

The deadline for participating in the Principal Resilience for Educator and Student Success (PRESS) study is just a few days away! We have not yet received your responses. Your contribution is completely voluntary, but if you have been meaning to respond, time is running out! To date, over 50% of high school principals and 30% of elementary school principals invited have participated in the study. While that gives us a lot of information, we are missing your opinion, which we believe is important. It will take about 3 minutes of your time to answer our questions. We want to encourage you to make sure your input is included.

Share your opinion by following the link: ${l://SurveyLink?d=Take the PRESS}

Please be assured, your identity and that of your school will remain confidential. You were purposefully selected to participate. Therefore, it is important that we gather your input. Thank you in advance for your assistance and we look forward to sharing our analyzed findings with you.

Respectfully,

Gordon Gates, Professor, Washington State University
Kevin Peterson, Doctoral Student, Washington State University
Josh Meek, Doctoral Candidate, Washington State University

Follow the link to opt out of future emails:
${l://OptOutLink?d=Click here to unsubscribe}
First Invitation
Dear ${m://FirstName} ${m://LastName},

Thank you for your participation in the Principal Resilience for Educator and Student Success (PRESS) study. We received scores from 187 principals—achieving a 40% response rate—from our statewide sample of elementary, middle, and secondary building administrators. We are beginning to analyze these data and will share our results with you shortly. In the meantime, we will be sending gift cards to winners of the drawing.

We’d like to invite you to take part in a brief 12 question follow-up. The results will help us better understand your responses that pertained to your instructional leadership.

Access these few items by following the link: ${l://SurveyLink?d=Take the CAMS-R}

We know how valuable your time is, and responding to the 12 items will take less than 2 minutes to complete. In addition, to show our appreciation for completing this second instrument, your name will be entered into another drawing for a $25 gift card.

Please be assured that your identity will be protected and your individual responses kept confidential. The gathered data will be stored in a secure location, and results will not include any personally identifying information (e.g., name, school, district, etc.). Results will only be reported in the summary form—in no case will it be possible to determine an individual’s identity.

Your participation is completely voluntary. If you have any questions about the request please contact Gordon Gates at gates@wsu.edu.

Thank you in advance for your participation. We look forward to analyzing and sharing the results in our continuous efforts to understand the professional practice of administrators in our state.

Sincerely,

Jenny Rodriquez, Principal, Delta High School
Gordon Gates, Professor, Washington State University

Follow the link to opt out of future emails:
${l://OptOutLink?d=Click here to unsubscribe}
Second Invitation to Partial / Non-Respondents
Dear ${m://FirstName} ${m://LastName},

About a week ago we sent you an email inviting you to participate in the Cognitive and Affective Mindfulness Scale - Revised (CAMS-R). This component of the study is open to K-12 principals who responded to the Principal Resilience for Educator and Student Success (PRESS) instrument. The CAMS-R consists of 12 brief questions that will help us better understand your responses related to your instructional leadership.

Provide your input by following the link: ${l://SurveyLink?d=Take the CAMS-R}

To show our appreciation, all principals who complete this survey will be entered into a drawing for an additional $25 gift card! Thank you for your help!

Please be assured that your identity will be protected and your individual responses kept confidential. The gathered data will be stored in a secure location, and results will not include any personally identifying information (e.g., name, school, district, etc.). Results will only be reported in the summary form—in no case will it be possible to determine an individual’s identity.

Your participation is completely voluntary. If you have any questions about the request please contact Gordon Gates at gates@wsu.edu.

Jenny & Gordon

Follow the link to opt out of future emails:
${l://OptOutLink?d=Click here to unsubscribe}
Third Invitation to Partial / Non-Respondents
How do you relate to your thoughts and feelings? Follow up for Instructional Leaders

Dear ${m://FirstName} ${m://LastName},

Instructional leadership involves supporting teachers to develop new skills and knowledge to advance student learning. Improving instruction can be challenging work. We are asking you to share how you relate to your thoughts and feelings by completing the Cognitive and Affective Mindfulness Scale - Revised (CAMS-R). The CAMS-R consists of 12 brief questions that will help us better understand your responses related to your instructional leadership as assessed using the Principal Resilience for Educator and Student Success tool.

Provide your responses by following the link: ${l://SurveyLink?d=Take the CAMS-R}

To show our appreciation, all principals who complete this survey will be entered into a drawing for a $25 gift card! Thank you for your help!

Please be assured that your identity will be protected and your individual responses kept confidential. The gathered data will be stored in a secure location, and results will not include any personally identifying information (e.g., name, school, district, etc.). Results will only be reported in the summary form—in no case will it be possible to determine an individual’s identity.

Your participation is completely voluntary. If you have any questions about the request please contact Gordon Gates at gates@wsu.edu.

Jenny & Gordon

Follow the link to opt out of future emails: ${l://OptOutLink?d=Click here to unsubscribe}