Special Education Teacher Leaders: Supports for Speech-Language Pathologists

by

Jacqueline Kreiter Kotas

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The Undersigned Faculty Committee Approves the

Dissertation of

Jacqueline Kreiter Kotas

Special Education Teacher Leaders: Supports for Speech-Language Pathologists

Ian Pumpian, Chair
Department of Educational Leadership

Nancy Frey
School of Teacher Education

Deanna Hughes
Private Practice Research Director, San Diego/Faculty California State University, San Marcos in Communication Disorders

Douglas Fisher
Department of Educational Leadership

MARCH 21, 2012
Approval Date
DEDICATION

I would like to thank all of my friends and family who supported me through this journey. It was only with your love, prayers, and many days of childcare help that I succeeded. I especially dedicate this dissertation to my young daughter. She was my inspiration to continue and persevere even on the darkest days. May she live her life to the fullest and know she can accomplish all her dreams in her own future no matter what life brings her way.
ABSTRACT

Extensive research has shown the positive effects teacher leadership has on student success (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009). The examination and deployment of teacher leader models within schools is becoming a commonly accepted practice; however, few studies have examined teacher leadership in special education as a whole (Bays & Crockett, 2007; Billingsley, 2007; Boscardin, 2007) or more specifically in the field of speech language pathology (SLP). Some research exists to show that supporting SLPs in teacher leader roles has yielded positive outcomes (Ritzman & Sanger, 2007). The current investigation was a qualitative study. In order to obtain a representative sample of participants, surveys examining SLP responsibilities and leadership roles were distributed to 230 school-based SLPs in a Southern California school district. A usable return rate of 62% was achieved. Based on responses to the surveys, select participants who met leadership conditions were invited to participate further. Next, individual interviews with 10 principals and 10 SLPs were conducted to obtain rich descriptions of participants’ experiences with SLP site-level leaders within elementary schools. Specifically, the study examined supports and barriers of SLP site-level leaders and how principals supported SLP site-level leaders within inclusive service delivery models. The qualitative data was analyzed using a constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Marshall & Rossman, 2006) in the coding and interpretation of the data from each set of interviews. An inductive process was used for building data into broad themes then a generalized mutual supposition of supports and barriers as related to SLPs emerged (Creswell, 2009). The data revealed similarities in leadership roles between SLP leaders and teacher leaders as defined in prior literature as well as evolving roles of SLP leaders
during service delivery within inclusive models. Recommendations of leadership practice for providing effective supports and minimizing barriers across school site, state, and national levels for SLP leaders were generated.
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CHAPTER 1—INTRODUCTION

School administration leadership is known to have a direct effect on the performance of students at the individual, school, and district levels (Cotton, 2003; Gentilucci & Muto’s, 2007; Leithwood, Jantzi, & Jantzi, 2008; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). Many school reforms have been based on this concept; yet, there remains a need to further examine leadership practices which promote educational advancements for students with disabilities along with those students without disabilities (Boscardin, 2007). The need for this examination of practice has increased as a result of the philosophical, legal, and operational shift of special educational service delivery moving into inclusive models. This movement further impacts the traditional roles, responsibilities, attitudes and supports for principals, teachers, and specialized professionals working in public schools.

Background of the Study

Many professionals contribute to the success of public school children including the principal, general education teachers, and specialized professionals. Among these specialized professionals are Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs). SLPs typically work within the special education system providing services to children exhibiting a communication impairment which adversely impacts school performance. The 1970’s legislation of the Education for all Handicapped Children Act Public Law 94-142 (U.S. Department of Education, 2007) mandated that all children receive a “free and appropriate education” which expanded the number of SLPs working in public schools as well as the roles they play. According to the American Speech Language and Hearing Association (ASHA), present day school-based SLPs are
key players in reform efforts in elementary and secondary schools by focusing on helping students with a wide range of speech–language-related problems to meet performance standards. Their work includes prevention, assessment, intervention, and program design efforts that are integrated within a school. The educational reform movement has ushered in a new era of accountability for student outcomes by all educators, thereby requiring a significant focus on data collection and analysis and compliance for the SLP. (ASHA., 2010c)

Moreover, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation (U.S. Department of Education, 2007) has directed principals to assume higher levels of school-wide accountability and services for special education students. The influence on NCLB legislation within school systems has been well documented and will not be the focus of this investigation (Bays & Crockett, 2007; Cox, 2008; Ehren & Whitmire, 2005; Eilers & Camacho, 2007; Green, 2008; Smith, 2009; Vannest, Mahadevan, Mason, & Temple-Harvey, 2009). Rather, this investigation focuses on supports as well as challenges for principals and SLP leadership in school reform.

**Statement of the Problem**

Principals are the site leaders responsible for supervising both the business of managing a school as well leading school faculty in improving instruction for all students. As principals have assumed greater responsibilities as instructional leaders, they in turn have increased opportunities for teachers to take leadership roles. Extensive research has shown positive effects teacher leadership has on student success (Avolio, Walumbwa & Weber, 2009; Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, 2008; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999; Rogus, 1988; Spillane, Halverson,
Diamond, 2001; Witziers, Bosker, & Krüger, 2003; York-Barr, & Duke, 2004). As such, the examination and deployment of teacher leader models within schools is becoming a commonly accepted practice. In contrast, there are few studies that examine teacher leadership in special education as a whole (Bays & Crockett, 2007; Boscardin, 2007; Robicheau, Haar, & Palladino, 2008; Sindelar, Brownell, & Billingsley, 2010; York-Barr, Sommerness, Duke, & Ghere, 2005). Research regarding enhancing and recognizing leadership roles of specific professionals within the special education system is even sparser. Nonetheless, a few studies have been conducted examining school administrators perspectives toward SLPs and their programs in public schools (Phelps & Koenigsknecht, 1977; Ritzman & Sanger, 2007; Tomes & Sanger, 1986; Sanger, Hux, & Griess, 1995; Signoretti & Oratio, 1981). The results of these studies show that supporting SLPs in teacher leader roles has yielded positive outcomes. Moreover, researchers in the field of speech-language pathology (Justice, 2006; Moore-Brown, 1991; Troia, 2005) have identified potential leadership opportunities for school-based SLPs within the framework of inclusive service delivery models such as Response to Intervention (RtI).

**Purpose of the Study**

The intent of this study was to identify the perceived supports and barriers for school-based speech-language pathologists assuming leadership roles in public schools. An examination of these supports and barriers, allowed the researcher to draw conclusions regarding best practice in development of specific recommendations for administrators to advocate and facilitate speech-language pathologists as special education leaders in schools encompassing school-wide reforms; encouraging academic success for all children.
Research Questions

In order to address some of the gaps in educational research, this study sought to document and analyze perceptions from speech-language pathologists and principals regarding leadership support and/or leadership opportunities for SLPs. Three questions proposed to guide this study were the following:

1. What Speech Language Pathology leadership supports and barriers do Speech Language Pathologists and Principals perceive to be present in schools?
2. What job factors influence the Speech Language Pathologists’ and Principals’ perceptions of Speech Language Pathology leadership supports?
3. How are Speech Language Pathology leadership roles evolving within inclusive school-wide intervention programs?

The author reviewed transdisciplinary leadership research from the fields of education, speech-language pathology, and psychology. Primary themes, including perceptions, knowledge, skill and teacher leadership traits, as identified from leading investigations on teacher leaders (Angelle & Schmid, 2007; Robicheau et al., 2008; York-Barr, Sommerness, Duke, & Ghere, 2005) were examined, particularly as they related to the leadership roles speech-language pathologists (Moore-Brown, 1991; Nelson, 2007) currently assume within schools along with administrative supports.

Principals are accountable for the success of all children even as they encounter persistent challenges within the traditional dual-system of general education and special education. Due to sparse research on leadership in special education, exploratory descriptive studies are warranted to delineate the issues. In order to support effective reforms, investigators need to define the complexities of special education as well as
examine perceptions and leadership supports in place for speech-language pathologists in schools.

Methodology

This study incorporated a qualitative approach. The primary objective of the study was to explore school-based speech-language pathologists’ and principals’ attitudes toward administrative supports and barriers for inclusive leadership within school-wide reform efforts. Individual interviews with principals and SLPs were conducted to investigate to obtain rich descriptions of participants’ experiences regarding SLP leadership.

Limitations

Generalizations of the study were constrained due to limited geographical participates which included only speech-language pathologists and principals working in elementary level schools in Southern California. In addition, the inclusive models varied per school experience and influenced the outcomes.

Significance

This study provides educational leaders and policy makers with crucial information for building leadership capacity during school reform efforts. Most notably, the supports currently in place for speech-language pathologists were evaluated. While there is an abundance of literature on the positive effects of teacher leadership in general education, research is lacking for leadership contributions provided by special education professionals and effects on school-wide achievement. Through the use of qualitative research methods, this study adds to the paucity of research on leadership of speech-language pathologists working in public schools. This study provides findings that may
not only influence future research, but should also impact the roles and practices assumed by site principals and specialized instructional personnel.

Definition of Terms

*American Speech Language and Hearing Association (ASHA)*: ASHA “is the professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 140,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists, speech-language pathologists and speech, language, and hearing scientists” (ASHA, 2010a).

*Caseload*: a caseload is defined as being based only on the number of actual students served clinically (ASHA, 2010a).

*Certificate of Clinical Competence (CCC)*: CCC is a certificate given to SLPs upon completion of intensive master level coursework and a national examination related to speech-language pathology academic and clinical knowledge (ASHA, 2010b).

*General Education*: A typical classroom and curriculum intended in which the majority of students do not have an identified disability.

*Response to Intervention (RtI)*: A scientific approach that monitors how well a student responds to research-based instruction and guides educational decision-making (Klotz & Canter, 2008).

*Special Education*: Educational programs and services designed for children with disabilities as specified by IDEA (U.S. Department of Education, 2007).

*Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP)*: qualified services providers for children with communication impairments (ASHA, 2005).

Workload: workload is based on the number of students served as well as one’s additional duties (ASHA, 2010a).

Organization of the Research

The report of the study is organized into five chapters. Chapter One has provided the introduction to the study including the background information, purpose, significance of research, limitations, and definitions. Chapter Two provides a conceptual framework of the study with a review of relevant literature concerning speech-language pathologists in schools, legislation, attitudes, school cultures, and leadership theories. Chapter Three delineates the research design, participants, instrumentation, as well as procedures for data collection and analyses. Chapter Four presents study results containing qualitative analyses of the interviews. Chapter Five provides a summary and discusses findings from key research questions. The final chapter also offers recommendations for implementation and future research.
CHAPTER 2—REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Leadership in K-12 education historically rested with the principal (Goor, Schwenn, & Boyer, 1997). The principal set the cultural tone at the building site and managed the organization of the school. Principals’ duties included evaluating performance of classroom teachers and staff; creating supports for teachers to utilize; guiding instructional practice by assisting teachers to develop additional competencies; building teacher leaders as well as hiring and firing teachers when appropriate.

Principals have traditionally assumed different roles and responsibilities in supervision and support of general education versus special education faculty. In the past, special education professionals were not a primary concern and/or responsibility for principals due to the dual educational tracks of general education and special education. Despite often being responsible for hiring or evaluating related services personnel (Rapport & Williamson, 2004), in many cases, administrative responsibilities associated with special education were appointed to designees as opposed to the principal being directly involved (Bays & Crocket, 2007; Cooner, Tochterman, & Garrison-Wade, 2004; Schetz & Billingsley, 1992). Commonly, site special education personnel were governed by a separate special education hierarchical administrative system. There was a district level special education director who supervised various program specialists, who in turn supported special education faculty at several school sites. The program specialist’s role sometimes mirrored that of a site principal as the program specialist would provide specific trainings for special education faculty, mentor special education faculty, and many times be the administrative representative at Individual Education Plan (IEP) meetings; often in place of a site principal. Thus, many special education professionals
such the speech-language pathologist (SLP), school psychologist, and resource specialist teachers were hired, supported, supervised as well as evaluated by others and received perfunctory attention from the site principal.

However, the passage of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) began to change the administrative roles in American public schools. The principal has become directly responsible for school-wide accountability for sub-groups (e.g., special education, second language learners, etc.) and therefore; assumptions, expectations, and new roles emerged which challenged previous instructional as well as supervisory responsibilities and practices. Thus, principals are confronted with how best to support all faculty members; general and special education professionals at schools sites due to shifting roles, policies, and instructional goals.

More recently, school administrators have new opportunities to consider and value important contributions others may offer toward realizing their vision to raise student achievement. In fact, contemporary educational leadership models promote distributed leadership (Spillane et al., 2001; Vernon-Dotson et al., 2009). Teacher leadership contributes to school-wide collaboration, a positive school culture, distribution of an ever increasing array of academic, social and operational responsibilities, as well as refined curriculum development including renewed enthusiasm for teaching (Angelle & Schmid, 2007; Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, 2005; Fullan, 2009; Kaufman & Stein, 2009). While there is a plethora of teacher leadership research, empirical research literature addressing special education teacher leadership roles remain nominal (Billingsley, 2007; Boscardin, 2007; Voltz, 2001; Zaretzky, Moreau, & Faircloth, 2005). Furthermore, special education teams are comprised of not
only classroom teachers, but also uniquely trained professionals including; speech-
language pathologists (SLP), school psychologists, resource specialists, teachers of the
hearing and/or vision impaired, audiologists, social workers, nurses, occupational and
physical therapists as well as counselors and other professionals with even more distinct
expertise such as augmentative and alternative communication and technology. These
professionals perform vastly different functions and their contribution to the school as a
whole is not well described in literature. Thus research in this area could inform a variety
of stakeholders about special education leadership; and, as it relates to the present study,
administrative supports for the leadership roles speech-language pathologists may
assume.

Transdisciplinary leadership research from the fields of education, speech-
language pathology, and psychology will be reviewed in this chapter. Primary themes,
including perceptions, knowledge, skill and teacher leadership traits, as identified from
leading investigations on teacher leaders (Angelle & Schmid, 2007; Robicheau et al.,
2008; York-Barr, Sommerness & Ghere, 2005) will be examined, particularly as they
relate to the administrative supports and leadership roles speech-language pathologists
(Moore-Brown, 1991; Nelson, 2007) currently assume within schools.

Principals are accountable for the success of all children even as they encounter
persistent challenges within the antiqued dual-system of general education and special
education. Due to sparse research on special education teacher leaders, exploratory
descriptive studies are warranted to delineate the issues. In order to support effective
reforms, investigators need to define the complexities of special education and examine
perceptions and leadership supports in place for speech-language pathologists in schools.
Speech Language Pathologists in Schools

Demographics

Currently, 13.6% of American students receive special education services. Moreover, 5.4% of children are identified as having speech and language impairments (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2010). Speech and language impairments are among the second highest qualification criteria for special education following specific learning disability (U.S. Department of Education, 2010b). In 2002, 56.3% of all preschoolers, and 18.9% of students aged 6-12 served under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) were identified as having speech language impairments (Edgar & Rosa-Lugo, 2007). The numbers of students with speech and language impairments is sizeable and their performance will have a significant impact on the school-wide performance of most comprehensive schools. The primary employment setting for speech-language pathologists is in public schools. This was supported by a 2009 survey put forth by the American Speech Language and Hearing Association in which 53% of the 2849 nationally certified SLPs surveyed cited public schools as their work setting (ASHA, 2009). Thus, there are many SLP professionals in the public schools who can contribute to the reform efforts for advancing education for all children.

Legislation

In 1996, IDEA encouraged schools to hire qualified service providers for children with communication impairments and those professionals are specially trained speech-language pathologist (ASHA, 2005; Rosa-Lugo, Rivera, & Mckeown, 1998). The American Speech Language Hearing Association is the agency which provides national
certification for speech-language pathologists, thus those with ASHA certification are deemed most qualified. ASHA sets the gold standard for ethical practice of speech-language pathologists working in schools with regards to workload, caseload, roles, and responsibilities which may often be more stringent than those set forth by state licensure agencies and/or credentialing agencies.

Speech-language pathologists play a necessary role in public schools, helping to develop, coordinate, and deliver individual education plans (IEPs). Moreover, speech-language pathologists assist principals to fulfill the education requirements set forth by NCLB. Serving as key members of the special education team, they provide students highly specialized and unique interventions. Yet there is a well-known shortage of speech-language pathologists in public schools (Rosa-Lugoet et al., 1998). Results from a 2008 ASHA Schools Survey revealed that 71% of ASHA-certified speech-language pathologists indicated shortages of SLPs in their school districts which increased from 62% in 2004 to 68% in 2006 and continues to grow. The U.S. department of Labor Statistics ranked SLP employment at 17th out of 20 for largest growth occupations averaging 7-13% growth rate through 2016 (ASHA, 2010a). Due to the critical need for SLPs in public schools, it underscores the importance for further understanding how they contribute to school-wide reform efforts encouraged by NCLB.

Given the movement of local schools to forego the dual educational systems in place of an inclusive model of education for all children, SLPs have much to offer principals in way of specialized instructional practices to assist in raising school-wide performance. However, there is little empirical research describing the roles, perceptions, and leadership traits of speech-language pathologist in public schools in which to guide
principals in how best to include and further develop SLPs leadership roles in school-wide reform efforts.

**Special Education Background**

**No Child Left Behind (NCLB)**

NCLB has shifted the focus of principals to ensure accountability for all students including sub-groups related to special education. Special education was originally developed in the nineteenth century within medical institutions to teach children identified with mental illnesses and behavior problems (U.S. Department of Education, 2007). Then in the 1970’s special education was overtly brought into public schools to teach children with disabilities who had otherwise been excluded from education in less restrictive environments as mandated by PL 94-142 (Pardini, 2002; U.S. Department of Education, 2007). Special education has since undergone countless reform efforts spurred by local, state, and national authorities concerned about educating children with special needs. As special education has grown and evolved, the impact in, and engagement of, general education has increased. Although the term special education is now widespread in education and discussed at school sites, there remains a nebulous understanding of the infrastructure of the system by many educators, administrators, and parents (Lashley, 2007). New concepts and practices are constantly being questioned, thwarted or convoluted with past practices and assumptions. As a result, the transition from a dual system to a unified system continues to present challenges.

Special education traditionally differed from general education due to the type of instruction utilized with children to accommodate their learning needs. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) of 2004 defined “special
education” as *specially designed instruction* denoting that the curriculum and/or delivery method of teaching is modified based on the individual needs of each learner; moreover, modifications may include slower pacing, repetition of content, and employment of different intervention strategies (Bays & Crockett, 2007; U.S. Department of Education, 2010a). Regardless of the child’s qualifying disability, the goal is for all children to receive a free appropriate public education (Singer, 1992) containing high quality teaching in order to progress toward the state and national level educational standards in accordance with the No Child Left Behind Act.

Special education and general education programs, including the roles of administrators, teachers, and support professionals, have undergone major changes due to these accountability initiatives (Bays & Crockett, 2007; Boscardin, 2007; Cox, 2008; Edgar & Rosa-Lugo, 2007; Goor, Schween, & Boyer, 1997; Lashley, 2007; Sindelar et al., 2010; Smith, 2009, U.S. Department of Education, 2010a; Vannest et al., 2009; Webb, Bessette, Smith & Tubbs, 2009). A provision of NCLB purports that school leaders take responsibility for providing access to inclusive education for all children rather than relying on separate education (Webb et al., 2009). Simply stated, the principal is accountable for the performance of all students and each subgroup of students. This increased accountability has been coupled with the principal’s responsibility to be the instructional leader for the entire school including all the programs and services offered. Thus principals are taking on greater supervisory roles for special education professionals in schools. Moreover, the conversion from a managerial perspective to an instructional perspective, including how best to develop teachers, requires a significant shift in focus and skill for principals (Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement,
Administrative reinforcement is not uniformly defined given the various dimensions of support possible, yet the terms “supervision” and “instructional leadership” are often interchanged within educational literature (Bays & Crockett, 2007; Schetz & Billingsley, 1992). Furthermore, a principal’s instructional vision influences support for quality special education teachers by way of teaching expectations and the principal’s own view of disability (Bays & Crocket, 2007).

Special education is a major accountability challenge for principals (Warger & Aldinger, 1987), especially for many whom have had minimal training in special education instructional practices and/or legal considerations. Due to reforms initiated in the 1980’s and extending to the present, principal leadership responsibilities have shifted from managerial to instructional concerns (Goor et al., 1997; Fullan, 2009). Thus, principals are expected to know, not only how to run schools, but also how to improve curriculum and increase instructional effectiveness for both general and special education. Bravenec (1998) surveyed 100 elementary and 100 secondary principals from 20 educational service regions in Texas on knowledge of special education. She found that 50-75% of principals surveyed expressed frustration about their responsibilities related to supervising/evaluating special education programs likely influenced by having little to no training for determining quality special education services. There are major legal liability and culpability implications for principals, as well as general and special educators if mistakes are made within special education processes (Webb et al., 2009). Principals need to understand the historical background of special education along with current practices in order to facilitate effective school programs (Cooner et al., 2004).
Despite recent improvements in principal preparation programs, research continues to reveal an absence of special education-related knowledge on the part of school leaders (Cooner et al., 2004; Webb et al., 2009). Administrators reported they were unprepared for guiding their special education teachers due to challenges related to laws, service delivery, and teaching pedagogies (Cox, 2008; Danielson, 2007; Fullan, 2002; Goor et al., 1997; Lashley, 2007; Martin, Hilgard, & Bower, 1974; Robicheau et al., 2008; Webb et al., 2009; Zaretsky et al., 2005). Moreover, principals are overwhelmed by the number, diversity and severity of special education children in their schools, as well as the intense and persistent focus required to provide strong leadership for the instruction of children with high-incidence disabilities (Cooner et al., 2004). SLPs work directly with children who experience a range of special education service needs, and design specialized programs for service delivery based on intervention needs and legal issues per child.

**Attitudes Toward Special Education**

Cox (2008) surveyed 103 middle school principals in South Carolina to investigate perceptions and attitudes related to special education as a result of the passage of NCLB. The findings support that while principals generally agreed inclusive education was important; nonetheless, due to lack of training they felt it was not actualized in many schools. This finding has major research and programmatic implications for what may be needed to advance the field. One avenue principals utilize to encourage inclusive programs is to support teachers in becoming leaders at their sites for sharing instructional practices. York-Barr et al. (2005) qualitatively examined teacher leadership in special education. They interviewed 8 special education teachers from different school districts,
sites, and settings using a reflective inquiry process from focus group interviews and written responses of participants. Participants engaged in two sessions each lasting approximately 6 hours each two weeks apart. The first finding from the York-Barr et al. (2005) study revealed that special educators performed extensive and overlapping responsibilities clustered across four roles (1) developing student programs, (2) coordinating and implementing programs, (3) designing and providing direct instruction to students; and (4) managing and developing the skills of paraprofessionals. Respondents identified eight general categories of daily activities: direct instruction with students, communication with other staff, working with paraprofessionals, preparation of instructional lessons, unscheduled or unexpected issues such as last minute plan or staff changes, general school duties such as bus duty, non-instructional paperwork obligations, and lunch duty. Additional findings for special educators include the need for: (a) a vision of collaborative relationships to provide learning opportunities for all students, (b) better school schedules to accommodate for the predictable annual cycles of work and peak times not currently considered (c) highly supportive site and central office administration, and (d) consistent teaming to develop on-going relationship at a single building site to build shared responsibility.

One finding emerged as central to all others for inclusion; leadership. Special education leadership requires high levels of professional competence for instruction, communication, and management (York-Barr et al., 2005). The authors described the “inter-connected levels” (p. 207) that special educators negotiate on a daily basis which are essential for promoting academics for all children (York-Barr et al., 2005). Special educators move between three over-lapping levels dynamically as necessary for
managing the caseload; thus, the levels are not static. The levels are comprised of (a) the organizational level of practice which involves the power, politics and influence of the entire school culture, (b) the team/collegial level of practice which involves building relationships to bridge goals between general and special education needs, and (c) student level of practice which requires competent specialized teachers (York-Barr et al., 2005).

School Culture

Perceptions of professionals can be reinforced and/or weakened depending on the school culture. Hoy and Miskel (2004) explained that disagreements exist about whether culture is “conscious and overt or unconscious and covert” (p. 165) in nature. Multiple cultures can exist within one school; the organizational culture, teacher culture, student culture, and parent culture. With respect to supporting SLPs, school effectiveness related to leadership within the school and teacher culture will be highlighted here.

Organizational climate relates to how the organization functions as a whole unit and practices that arise to influence the attitudes and behaviors of members in the organization (Hoy & Miskel, 2004). Researchers have proposed conceptual frameworks for explaining school culture (Boleman & Deal, 2008; Firestone & Wilson, 1985; Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2004). Hoy and Miskel (2004) described three types of school culture (1) culture of efficacy, which promotes high student learning; (2) culture of trust, which requires stakeholders to be vulnerable; (3) culture of control, which relates to teacher’s perceptions that their efforts have a positive effect on student performance. Halpin and Croft (1962) developed a reputable questionnaire named Organizational Climate Descriptions Questionnaire (OCDQ) which is used to measure aspects of interactions within an organization.
Culture can be a considerable barrier (York-Barr, & Duke, 2004) to school performance. Teachers may experience isolation based on the school culture (York-Barr, & Duke, 2004). Leaders manipulate culture within an organization by arranging events that shape the experiences of the followers (Ogawa & Bossert, 1995). Eilers and Camacho (2007) performed a mixed-methods study to examine changes in school culture. A single elementary school case study design for observations along with teacher and district surveys generated the data across two years. The authors found that culture as a whole was the key to positive changes in school collaboration, teacher professionalism, and use of evidence-based practices in classrooms. Thus, research evidence advocates that positive school culture leads to improved student outcomes. Therefore, one must consider the organizational culture and overall influence on the dichotomous systems of general education and special education programs that exist in schools. Inclusive school culture is critical for successful leadership (Webb et al., 2009).

**Inclusion Models**

Historically, integrated service delivery models have been discussed since the 1970’s and since have been slowly evolving into actual practice within schools (Elksnin & Capilouto, 1994). Many schools have now begun to implement Response to Intervention (RtI) which is a model for monitoring in-depth progress and is often used as a problem-solving method to determine interventions needs of under-achieving students. Welch (2009) used the *Four Frames Leadership* model to observe leadership decisions of six principals implementing RtI in high schools. Welch (2009) found that in order to successfully implement RtI, administrators must provide leadership that encourages collaboration among staff. In addition, Lay (2007) examined leadership skills of 10
principals during the implementation of RtI and found a positive correlation of principal behaviors to student outcomes within the RtI model. Leadership in special education is difficult and influenced by micro and macro political elements, notwithstanding student needs and teacher training, experience, and willingness (Bays & Crockett, 2007). Effective leaders believe that all children can learn and that teachers can teach a wide range of students (Cooner et al., 2004; Goor et al., 1997). With the movement toward inclusion, SLPs may have increased opportunities to participate in leadership roles and contribute to the school culture.

**Leadership Theories**

In general, the function of leadership is to assist in accomplishing goals, whether the goals are set for individuals or organizations as a whole (Ogawa & Bossert, 1995). Educational research denotes assorted results on how school leadership is linked to student achievement (Witziers et al., 2003). Additionally, educational leadership is required for the management and instructional functions of running schools and, as such, should create new opportunities for teachers and support personnel to fully participate (Moore-Brown, 1991). Spillane et al. (2001) described instructional leadership as the means by which school leaders define and complete their tasks while engaging with others. Hoy and Miskel (2004) caution that researchers continue to dispute the definition of “leadership”, thereby evaluating leadership outcomes is challenging.

Many types of leadership have been described within educational scholarship. Early research on leadership examined the influential personnel whom others followed in an organization (Hoy & Miskel, 2004). The majority of leadership studies in education focused on senior level executives, i.e. school principals and district superintendents...
(Ogawa & Bossert, 1995). Through this lens, researchers investigated aspects related to individual leaders including: personality traits and motivational skills (Hoy & Miskel, 2004). As opposition grew to the idea that leadership was purely innate, researchers launched investigations to examine situational factors (Hoy & Miskel, 2004). Neither of the two early perspectives fully explained leadership, therefore additional theories emerged. Specifically, researchers began to further explore leadership behaviors and styles which lead to the development of new leadership questionnaires, surveys, and models.

More recently, Hoy and Miskel (2004) reported on the ever-changing views of leadership from just an individual leader to that of an organization as a leader. Yet even the concept of leadership in schools continues to evolve with several related yet separate patterns. As the intent of this paper is not to provide a historical overview of all leadership research, theoretical frameworks most salient to school leadership are integrated.

Research literature is replete with concepts of organizational leadership (Fullan 2009; also Pounder, Ogawa, & Adams, 1995), collaborative leadership also known as shared, parallel, or distributed leadership (Gruenert, 2005; Spillane et al., 2001) and teacher leadership (Angelle & Schmid, 2007) within schools; all of which have reported various outcomes for school performance. Leadership concepts will now be more fully explored based on current literature.

**Organizational Leadership**

Most assumptions about leadership espouse that leaders are specific individuals who possess identifiable traits for making change happen (Hoy & Miskel, 2004).
Researchers have traditionally applied the technical-rational or top-down approach when examining leadership in schools (Ogawa & Bossert, 1995).

A brief review reveals that from the 1920’s until the early 1960’s the principal’s role in school organizations was seen as managerial which yielded a top-down style of authority with a focus on creating uniformity in teaching practices, a secure educational environment, and maintaining quality control (Ackerman & Mackenzie, 2007). The 1960’s brought changes to the role of the principal by adding the concept of curricular leadership which was a movement that extended into the 1970’s purporting that in order for schools to succeed, principal leadership was required. The 1980’s and 1990’s brought forth more expectations that principal’s continue to absorb school responsibilities including managing buildings and budgets, leading curriculum and behavior supports, evaluating teachers and staff, upholding community relations, and ensuring effective instructional programs. Thus the social, political, and community expectations advocating the command and control approach to school leadership became complex; as such, in many cases principals were dismayed by the responsibilities and had limited success improving educational performance for all children (Ackerman & Mackenzie, 2007; Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008).

Therefore, diverse leadership models emerged for school leaders. Transactional leadership was dominant advocating that subordinates (i.e. teachers) would be motivated by rewards (Marzano et al., 2005). One model included vertical teaming, described as the principal managing a team in a formal manner with a hierarchical authority for problem solving; thereby, allowing for input from teachers while the principal retained authority (Somech, 2008). Leadership practices continued to move away from the singular
approach to more inclusive approaches. Leadership theories evolved and transformational administrative styles bridging collective knowledge and social communities of teams were formed to assist principals in making decisions (Printy, 2008, Robinson et al., 2008). Formation of task-design teams; whereby, the principal organized and interacted with groups of teachers who held high levels of expertise to solve particular school issues provided opportunities for all team members to contribute to the solution (Carson, Tesluk & Marrone, 2007; Somech, 2008). Thus, school leadership began to be dispersed throughout the organization resulting in a flattened leadership models and changing culture for many schools. Integrative models of leadership are now present in schools more than ever before; and with the passage of NCLB, school leaders are expected to build highly inclusive educational programs that support academics for all children.

Ogawa and Bossert (1995) examined organizational leadership applied to schools. Organizational leadership is considered a systematic and relational phenomenon within organizations that is centered on the idea that leadership occurs through social interaction networks (Boleman & Deal, 2008; Hoy & Miskel, 2004). The philosophy is derived from the human capitalistic sociological perspective and is also referred to as the institutional theory. Although the concept has been present since the 1960’s, application to educational frameworks has been sporadic. Ogawa and Bossert (1995) summarized that in order to fully support educational practices, researchers should be sensitive to the flow of leadership within organizations and they also need to examine the micro-structures based on social influence.
Collaborative Leadership

In addition, administrators have engaged in alternative styles of leadership including collaborative; otherwise known as parallel, shared decision-making or distributed leadership. This form of leadership is fluid and focused on the reciprocal nature of the process (Avolio et al., 2009; Hoy & Miskel, 2004). Spillane et al. (2001) further explained it as a process in which there are both formal and informal leaders, and leadership as a whole is “stretched over” (p. 23) leaders, situations, and events. Watson and Scribner (2007) further discussed social interaction as one of the critical elements. Collaborative leadership in schools supports a partnership between principals and teachers for making decisions which is important to schools due to their complex problems and wide-spread tasks to be completed (Eilers & Camacho, 2007; Hoy & Miskel, 2004; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). One purpose of collaborative leadership is to encourage more teacher participation by serving as a learning model and creating opportunities for teacher leaders. A primary criticism of collaborative research is due to the lack of agreement on its definition (Avolio et al., 2009). A second limitation to collaborative leadership is that sparse research has clearly defined the organizational climate of teams (Carson et al., 2007). Although the outcomes of research regarding collaborative leadership have varied, and implementation requires considerable changes to the school structure in order to allow for time, space, and teacher access; the framework is widely utilized in public schools (Danielson, 2007; Dozier, 2007; also York-Barr & Duke, 2004).
**Teacher Leadership**

York-Barr and Duke (2004) provided a comprehensive review of twenty years of research on teacher leadership. The collective literature data were primarily qualitative case-studies yielding descriptive constructs rather than explanatory theories. Most studies focused on formal teacher leadership positions yet omitted an explicit definition of teacher leadership, thus limiting the possibilities for comparative research analyses. York-Barr and Duke (2004) shared a three-part evolution of teacher leadership from assistant administrative managers to instructional leaders then to re-creators of school culture.

Teacher leader roles evolved as administrators sought to empower teachers. According to York-Barr and Duke (2004) teacher leadership work positively influences three school components: the individual teacher, collaboration or team participation, and development of the entire organization. Teacher leadership roles can be formal or informal. Formal roles (i.e., leading teams, organizing professional developments, mentoring, etc) are most dominant in the research. York-Barr and Duke (2004) identified seven specific essentials related to teacher leaders. First, they defined teacher leaders as: being respected by other teachers, having an orientation to learning, and possessing leadership capabilities. Second, the authors suggested that leadership work is valued, visible, negotiated, and shared among those who are the intended targets of their leadership. Third, they noted certain conditions were crucial in assisting leaders: including a supportive culture, supportive principal, time, resources, and professional development opportunities. They further identified a means of teacher leadership influence which meant maintaining a focus on teaching and learning, establishing trusting
relationships, and interacting through formal and informal points of influence. Next, the authors identified targets of teacher leadership influence comprised of individuals, teams or groups, and organizational capacity. Lastly, they remarked that intermediary outcomes of teacher leadership and student learning represented the ultimate purpose of teacher leadership work which was to have a positive impact on teacher learning and classroom practices.

Moreover, these roles create hierarchies among teachers potentially resulting in mild tensions due to shifts in social networks (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Informal roles of teacher leaders are often embedded into a teacher’s daily task. As such, one may be easily recognized as a leader by peers thus leading to more collegially work.

Collective literature supports that teacher leaders commonly have two years of experience teaching, embrace authentic teaching, promote learning among their peers, and hold a positive perspective for the future (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Benefits for teacher leaders include exposure to new information, potential decrease of teacher attrition due to increased job satisfaction, and interpersonal growth due to relationship shifts within social networks. York-Barr and Duke (2004) concluded that additional research is needed regarding teacher leadership in the following areas:

- extensions of their own theory of action for teacher leadership,
- grounded research studies to expand theoretical constructs to inform practice,
- more clearly defined roles of principals in relation to teacher leaders,
- detailed descriptions of teacher leader contexts at various school levels, and;
- well defined studies attending to domain gaps in the current literature on teacher leadership.
West (2008) performed a study in which she examined supports for ethnically diverse teacher leaders in Southern California. She administered the 2001 Katzenmeyer and Moller Teacher Leadership School Survey (TLSS) which categorized teacher leadership into seven distinct dimensions. West (2008) examined survey results from 67 teacher leaders based on either white or diverse ethnicity. Her results showed that the means for white teachers were higher on 5 of the 7 teacher leadership characteristics and that white teacher leaders felt more supported by their principals than ethnically diverse teacher leaders. Moreover, administrators generally provided professional development for teachers yet teacher leaders desired additional specific training for leadership. Recognition and opportunities for teacher leadership were also identified as contributing factors for these teacher leaders. Thus, factors impacting teacher leaders have been identified based on characteristics and ethnicity, yet research regarding teacher leadership in special education remains nominal.

Jones (2009) administered an electronic survey to examine K-12 administrator’s attitudes toward speech-language programs in public schools in Florida. She found administrators generally held a favorable attitude toward SLPs with a greater positive consensus by middle school administrators. She concluded that although out-of-field supervision may occur for SLPs, most administrators held a favorable perspective. However, the amount of administrative support, types of supports, and administrator’s ability to provide specific supports for building leaders among SLPs is unknown.

**Special Education Leadership Barriers**

In general, educational research literature lacks detailed descriptions or explanatory theories for how leadership occurs for special education as a whole within
schools. With the intention of addressing this need, Bays and Crockett (2007) performed a study in which they generated a grounded theory describing how instructional leadership was actualized across three school districts with regard to special education. Thirty-eight participants from 9 elementary schools participated in individual interviews. Interviewees included general and special education teachers, principals, as well as directors of special education. During the five month period, researchers spent 3-5 days at each school conducting interviews and observations related to the provision of special education services until saturation of sampling occurred. The authors identified specific factors that influenced special education service delivery for students including: principal’s knowledge, supervisory practices, and interactions with special education professionals. Each of these areas will be discussed in detail further within this paper.

Billingsley (2004) performed a meta-synthesis about attrition in special education utilizing 19 articles. She found four factors contributed to attrition in special education teachers including (1) teacher characteristics and personal factors, (2) teacher qualifications, (3) work environment factors, and (4) affective reactions to work. Due to training and certification differences between classroom special education teachers, and SLPs, special education classroom teachers often leave special education to return to teaching in general education (Billingsley, 2004) while SLPs do not. Within the field of special education, SLPs are at a higher risk for leaving school employment (Billingsley, 2004; Edgar & Rosa-Lugo, 2007; Singer, 1992). Edgar and Rosa-Lugo (2007) surveyed 3,068 SLPs across Florida to examine perceptions of those working in public schools. The authors found that while 40.6% of the respondents favored their school assignments, five recurrent themes were identified that negatively contributed to SLPs working in
schools. The five themes identified included: paperwork (42.1%), caseload (31.2%), school setting (26.7%), salary (24.1%), and misunderstanding of the SLP’s role (18.3%).

Moreover, speech-language pathologists working in public schools are strongly encouraged by ASHA to use Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs) by performing a dual role of researcher and clinician. To further examine actual implementation of EBPs, Meline and Paradiso (2003) surveyed 27 SLPs representative of five geographic regions within the United States who were nationally certified by the American Speech Language and Hearing Association. The authors concluded that schools need to better support speech-language pathologists as clinician-researchers in order to push educational change forward for children with communication impairments. Specifically, in order to improve special education services, teachers and administrators must alter their view of the SLP’s role in education, improve collaboration efforts, and provide the necessary support to ultimately enhance student success for all children (Moore-Brown, 1991).

Whereas principals face a general set of new issues and challenges for supporting and engaging special educational staff in leadership roles, they are faced with additional challenges with respect to SLPs. Specifically, SLPs experience unique challenges for working in schools. Most significantly is the fact that many SLPs may be responsible for serving children from more than one school. Therefore, team interaction can be limited as extensive travel time may be required leaving little planning time and extremely large caseloads (Rapport & Williamson, 2004). Additional factors relate to excessive paperwork, limited clerical assistance, limited access to technology, and the absence of administrative support (Rapport & Williamson, 2004; Woltmann & Camron, 2009).
In sum, attrition of SLPs in schools is particularly troublesome due to the high percentage of children served by SLPs and the extreme shortage of SLPs currently in schools (Edgar & Rosa-Lugo, 2007; Iacono, Johnson, Humphreys & McAllister, 2007; Katz, Maag, Fallon, Blenkarn, & Smith, 2010). Thus, schools may need to revisit SLP workloads considerations for SLPs assigned to multiple sites and supports in order to maintain those presently working in schools as well as to fill the many vacancies in schools across the nation and meet the legal requirements set forth by IDEA and NCLB for serving children with communication difficulties (Edgar & Rosa-Lugo, 2007; Moore-Brown, 1991).

There is a vast shortage of speech-language pathologists in public schools. A main factor to the shortage is the absence of advancement opportunities for SLPs in schools (Katz et al., 2010; Rapport & Williamson, 2004). SLPs as a collective group of professionals have taken an active role in building leadership amongst themselves at local, state, and national conferences to disseminate quality research on school-based topics, promote evidence-based practices in schools, and collaborate with politicians as well as school officials regarding legal and caseload/workload concerns. In the school settings, SLPs often assume supervisory roles directing special education aides and/or speech-language pathology assistants (SLPAs).

Special education leaders work parallels the concept and practice of teacher leaders described in literature (Rapport & Williamson, 2004; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Yet, there is minimal research examining leadership in special education. For administrative and district policies including salary determination, general school responsibilities, and union representation, SLPs are often placed within the same category
as classroom teachers. Thus enhancing the understanding for leadership of speech-
language pathologists in schools may lead to all children, not only those with special
needs benefiting from improved inclusive instruction.

**Summary**

Chapter two highlights the need for speech-language pathologists working in
public schools, emphasized the legislation impacting service delivery models, and
reviewed leadership theories and inclusive program models utilized by principals to
facilitate academic gains for all students. Given the plethora of research on educational
leadership, teacher leadership and the more limited research on special education, there
remains a gap in literature for examining the roles of service providers such as SLPs in
schools and their leadership contributions. While researchers have provided commentary
on the need for more studies examining special education in schools (Billingsley, 2007;
Boscardin, 2007; Gallagher, Swigert, & Baum, 1998; Goor et al., 1997; Nelson, 2007),
only a few studies have begun to explore special education leadership via focus groups
(Lashley, 2007; Voltz, 2001; York-Barr et al., 2005; Zaretsky et al., 2005) or case studies
(Ritzman, Sanger, & Coufal, 2006).

Furthermore, NCLB has increased pressure for schools to have well-qualified
special education teachers and related service providers as well as set forth directives to
principals who are accountable for inclusive programs leading to success for all children.
More recently, researchers initiated investigations on RtI (Lay, 2007; Welch, 2009)
which may act as a point of convergence for general education and special education
leadership. Due to the shifting responsibilities for principals to oversee the blending of
inclusive education, the known benefits of teacher leadership in general education, as
well as the current critical shortage of SLPs in public school settings (Edgar & Rosa-Lugo, 2007; Woltmann & Camron, 2009), this study exploring the perceptions of school-based SLP leadership supports provided by principals adds to the body of literature in education as well as promotes dialogue for the evolving designs of integrated programs including blended leadership opportunities for general and special education professionals in public schools.
CHAPTER 3—METHODOLOGY

The present study contributes to the literature on leadership for special education professionals, particularly school-based speech-language pathologists. Moreover, the purpose of the qualitative study was to explore how SLPs and principals perceive the supports SLPs receive for assuming roles as site-level leaders; also known as teacher leaders.

Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) designed a survey instrument called the Teacher Leadership School Survey (TLSS) which delineated specific categories of organizational systems of school culture that positively contribute to building school-wide leadership capacity. The survey identified detailed types of supports most commonly provided for teacher leaders including: increased time, professional development, encouragement, rewards and recognition. The present study incorporated theoretical elements derived from the teacher leaders support categories identified in the Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) survey.

In order to extend the literature on teacher leadership into the realm of special education, the supports identified for teacher leader were analyzed from the perspective of both speech-language pathologists and principals.

Specific questions addressed include:

1. What Speech Language Pathology leadership supports and barriers do Speech Language Pathologists and Principals perceive to be present in schools?

2. What job factors influence the Speech Language Pathologists’ and Principals’ perceptions of Speech Language Pathology leadership supports?
3. How are Speech Language Pathology leadership roles evolving within inclusive school-wide intervention programs?

With the intention of providing a deeper understanding of the complex dimensions influencing site-based leadership in special education, specifically that of speech-language pathologists, theoretical sampling (Creswell, 2009) was used for the basis of participant selection for persons sharing common experiences of providing or supervising speech-language services for children in public schools. Individual interviews were conducted among school-based speech-language pathologists and with district principals whom supervise speech-language pathologists. In examining leadership supports related to speech-language pathologists in the schools, the goal of data analysis was to utilize grounded theory methods and identify categories and themes from the data and their relationship (Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

Site and Context

The present research was an exploratory study conducted in a Southern California school district. At the time of the study the district served 131,541 children enrolled in grades K-12. The district was comprised of 118 elementary schools (K-8), 24 middle schools, 26 high schools, 13 atypical schools, and 45 charter schools. The district served an ethnically and socio-economically diverse population. The student population ratios for ethnic diversity was disaggregated as follows: 45.7% Hispanic, 23.9% White, 11.8% African-American, 6.0% Filipino, 5.1% Indo-Chinese, 3.3% Asian, .4% Native American, .8% Pacific Islander, 3.1% Multi Racial. Moreover, 30.2% of the district population included English learners, and 59.1% were eligible for free or reduced meals. Additionally more than 25,954 students participated in Gifted and Talented Education
(GATE), 9,745 students came from military families, and 16,062 students received special education services.

Moreover, the district had a proactive speech language pathology department within special education services. In fact, the SLP department was identified as a model program across the state and had received over 70 visitors interested in learning about the administrative and programmatic organization for supporting school-based SLPs (J. Taps, personal communication, December 6, 2011). For 10 years, the district had a lead speech language pathologist who coordinated with a leadership team of senior speech language pathologists to provide professional development workshops and disseminate crucial legal, ethical, and licensure information to the practicing SLPs within the district. Specifically in the time period of interest for the present study, the lead position was eliminated and the 6 senior SLPs coordinated trainings and meetings. During the year of the study, the SLP department sponsored 144 hours of highly relevant professional development workshops for SLPs with topics addressing the following: SCERTS autism model, English Language Learners, Response to Intervention (RtI), implementation of the Systematic Analysis of Language Transcripts (SALT) Lab, and others. Lastly, given the district-wide reform movement toward inclusion, the district central office provided various professional development workshops related to inclusion for all staff members throughout the district (J. Taps, personal communication, December 6, 2011).

**Participants Selection**

**Speech Language Pathologists**

Following a brief overview of the study presented at a district SLP sponsored meeting, speech-language pathologists who provide special education services to students
in the district (PreK-12) were invited to participate in the study. A short background
survey [Appendix A] with an adjoining consent form [Appendix B] was disseminated to
all in attendance (N = 244) with the exception of the SLP leadership team members (N =
6). The 16-item survey consisted of background questions such as degree(s), gender,
languages spoken, school level(s), professional certification(s), years of experience,
contract status (i.e., number of days at site(s) based on percentage) to gain demographic
data as well as job roles and responsibilities related to leadership, caseload, and inclusive
practices utilized in the school setting for the 2010-2011 year aligned to those identified
by the American Speech Language and Hearing Association for school-based SLPs to
clearly reflect the SLPs experiences in schools.

Upon collection, the surveys were reviewed and sorted to determine the selection
of interview candidates for the study. The selection process began with elimination of
surveys completed by those other than SLPs such as speech language pathology assistants
or teachers. Thus, from the 230 district SLPs present, there were 170 surveys returned
(74%) and of those; 141 were entirely complete resulting in a usable return rate of 62%.
Of the 141 potential candidates, 80 (57%) volunteered to participate in hour-long
interviews. From the pool of 80, candidates were excluded based on credential (i.e.,
speech pathologists in their clinical fellowship year holding a preliminary credential),
SLPs not employed in the district for the target school year, and SLPs at a site less than
one year due to maternity leave; resulting in 64 potential candidates. Surveys were further
analyzed for those SLPs who participated in inclusion practices, identified themselves as
a site-leader based on a pre-determined definition (i.e., derived from teacher leadership),
contract status (i.e., part-time/full-time) and site-level (i.e., elementary, middle, high).
In accordance with the theoretical sampling methods (Creswell, 2009), and in order to capture natural interrelations of shared experiences, only SLPs who had a 60% (i.e., corresponding to three days a week) or greater contract remained in the pool. Moreover, the elementary level was the most common site for SLPs with part-time assignments (i.e., multiple schools) and those with full-time status (i.e., 100%) at a single site; therefore, SLPs who exclusively served middle or high schools for the target year were excluded. The remaining 33 candidates were divided into two sub-groups based on contract status (i.e., minimum of 60% (N = 18) and 100% (N = 15). Within the part-time group of 18 potential candidates, 5 SLPs indicated they held leadership roles at their multiple school sites; and thus, they were invited to participate in the face-to-face interviews. From the full-time group, 5 of the potential 15 candidates were randomly selected by the draw of a number to participate in the interviews. In sum, the inclusion criteria portrayed 10 fully credentialed SLPs, self-identified as site-level leaders, serving elementary students within inclusive models during the target school year, half of whom held at least a 60% contract (part-time) and half who held a 100% contract (full-time).

The researcher initially contacted each potential SLP candidate by email to extend an invitation for the interview. The researcher then followed-up with a phone call within one week if no response had been returned. Further email correspondence occurred to arrange a convenient day, time, and confidential location for the interviews. All 10 initially selected SLPs contacted agreed to participate in the interviews. Table 1 denotes demographics of SLP participants.
Table 1.

Demographics of Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs)

<table>
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<th>Measure</th>
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<th>Full-Time SLPs Interviewed</th>
<th>Part-Time SLPs Interviewed</th>
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</thead>
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<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree: Master</td>
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<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
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</tr>
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<td>20%</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Three</td>
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<td>60%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 -15 Years</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15+ Years</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Shared Level: Elementary</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-identified as a site-leader:</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued)
Table 1

*Demographics of Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>SLPs Surveyed (141)</th>
<th>Full-Time SLPs Interviewed (5)</th>
<th>Part-Time SLPs Interviewed (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students served on IEPs at primary site:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-50</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-60</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60+</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusion models:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary site</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary &amp; Non-primary site</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of non-IEP kids served:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-20</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Principals

In order to gain a cross perspective of SLP site-level leadership within inclusive programs, the researcher also interviewed principals. The rationale for including principals was to gain additional data to inform administrative practices. Principals are responsible for evaluating SLPs’ performance; yet, many principals have received little knowledge and/or training specific to SLPs in a school setting. Therefore, leadership supports and barriers may be different for SLPs than those experienced by general education teachers and influence how principals foster leadership capacity school-wide.

Of the SLPs who met the inclusion criteria (N = 33), 10 were invited to participate in the face-to-face interviews. The remaining 22 SLPs were not interviewed; however, they formed the pool from which their corresponding principals from target school year could be extended invitations to participate in the study. In order to capture a broad view on SLP leadership and to promote confidentiality, trust, and honest communication, the researcher intentionally did not match principals directly to those SLPs interviewed but rather matched principals from the remaining pool of SLPs not interviewed. As in the selection process used with the SLPs, the potential principals were divided into two sub-groups (i.e., those who supervised SLPs with a part-time contract, and those who supervised SLPs with a full-time contract). Five elementary principals were then randomly selected from each sub-group and invited to participate in the interview.

Principals were initially contacted via email with a brief description of the study and a request to respond if interested. The researcher then followed-up with a phone call within one week if no response had been returned. One principal from each sub-group declined participation; therefore, the researcher randomly selected by another draw of the
number a replacement for each from those remaining sub-groups and repeated the invitation process. Further email correspondence occurred to arrange a convenient day, time, and confidential location in which to hold the interview. In sum, 12 elementary principals were contacted to achieve the desired goal of 10 principals who supervised fully credentialed SLPs who self-identified as leaders serving elementary students within an inclusive model. Five of the principals supervised SLPs with a part-time contract, and 5 principals who supervised SLPs with a full-time contract, all of whom were fully credentialed SLPs, self-identified as site-level leaders serving elementary students within inclusive models during the 2010-2011 school year.

On the day of the interview, principals signed the consent form. In addition, each principal completed an 8-item background survey [Appendix C] to obtain demographic data for the following items: degree(s), gender, professional certification(s), years of experience as principal at the school site of interest, the school Academic Performance Index score, school size, and how the principal obtained knowledge regarding working with special education professionals. Table 2 denotes demographics of all participants.

**Interview Constructs**

In order to better understand the organizational system(s) and school-wide culture for leadership, the initial interview question related to specific leadership concepts generated from the Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) *Teacher Leadership School Survey (TLSS)*. The dimensions included *focus, recognition, autonomy, collegiality, participation, open communication, and a positive environment*. The TLSS has been used by Katzenmeyer
Table 2.

Demographics of Participants Interviewed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Principals of Full-Time SLPs</th>
<th>Principals of Part-Time SLPs</th>
<th>Full-Time SLPs</th>
<th>Part-Time SLPs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary School API</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>700-799</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>800-899</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;900</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary School Enrollment:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;400</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>401-500</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>501-600</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>601-700</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;900</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and Moller for various research studies collectively including more than 5,000 teachers; moreover, the dimensions identified in the TLSS have been found to positively describe characteristics of schools in which teacher leadership is abundant and flourishing. It has also been used in expanding teacher leadership literature by examining various types of teacher leaders (Salazar, 2010; West, 2008). A detailed description of the leadership dimensions by Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001, p. F77-78) of support follows:

**Developmental Focus:** Providing teachers assistive guidance and coaching to advance new knowledge and skills.

**Recognition:** Recognizing teachers for their roles and contributions to the school. It should include specific processes for acknowledging effective work, mutual respect, and compassion for other teachers.

**Autonomy:** Encouraging teachers to be innovative and implement improvements by removing barriers and allocating needed resources.

**Collegiality:** Providing time for collaboration related to instructional and student learning factors such as planning, observations, discussions, and sharing strategies.

**Participation:** Facilitating active involvement of teachers in decision making, planning and input for critical resolutions related to teacher, student, and school success.

**Open Communication:** Disclosing appropriate information related to teacher, student, and school business among teachers in an honest and open manner without blame.

**Positive Environment:** Sustaining a level of teacher job satisfaction in the work setting depicting respect among teachers, students, parents, and administrators.

The original questions on the TLSS survey were framed in relation to the job roles and responsibilities of general education classroom teachers; thus, the original survey was
not necessarily designed to be administered with non-classroom faculty. Moreover, the roles and responsibilities of special education professions, specifically speech-language pathologists, differ from that of classroom teachers. Specifically, SLPs work with special needs children who exhibit a variety of communication impairments and who require distinctly different teaching paradigms. Therefore, SLPs may provide special education services using various models of intervention including push-in, pull-out, consultation, and/or a mixture as best meets the needs of the student being served. Moreover, SLPs may be assigned to more than one school setting during the week; thereby, increasing the challenge for principals to provide some supports. Thus, it was necessary to gather additional data relevant to that of the school-based speech-language pathologist.

Overall, specific interview questions were designed for each set of professionals; principals and SLPs. All questions explored leadership aspects; yet, the exact nature of individual questions were purposely designed to account for the differing professions with a few of the same questions asked of both professionals. For both sets of professionals there were three main sections comprised of five semi-structured guiding probes for a total of 15 interview questions.

**Content Validity and Reliability**

Solid content validity has been established for the TLSS as an entire instrument with internal consistency (Cronbach Alpha) reliability ranging from .83 to .93 per leadership dimension (Salazar, 2010; West, 2008); and while only the leadership definitions were used in the present study and not the TLSS 49-item instrument, the concepts themselves reflect leadership descriptions repeatedly denoted in the literature. In further effort to obtain content validity on the survey and interview questions, each set
was provided to a practicing SLP and principal not employed in the target district and feedback was integrated to clarify questions.

**Data Collection Procedures**

In an effort to gain a broad understanding of leadership supports for SLPs working with special needs children in public schools and in keeping with current exploratory collection procedures; the researcher used a qualitative method. Prevalent data collection techniques employed in relevant literature made use of interviews, discussion groups, surveys or questionnaires, and document reviews. Triangulation of varied data sources reduce biases and risks identified with a singular approach (Creswell, 2009; Marshall & Rossman, 2006) and have been cited in literature by many experts on research methodology.

The researcher conducted individual interviews using a self-reflective inquiry process, which has been found in the literature to allow for a rich description of a participants’ perspective (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). The participants were given opportunities to share detailed examples of supports and/or barriers for SLPs serving within inclusive models. The focus of each interview was to maintain a positive and supportive environment for exchanging information and to avoid negative influence or implications given the different positions of authority and/or power. It was surmised that each professional could respond differently to the questions; and as such, provide more honest reflections in homogeneous groups. Potential hindrances to individual interviews include that one’s comfort and trust may influence a participant’s true response. The researcher utilized an interview guide method for conducting semi-structured interviews
Much research with school-based SLP’s has been performed with the use of surveys (Phelps & Koenigsknecht, 1977; Jones, 2009), while research on teacher leadership has been shaped from use of surveys and focus groups. Specifically, interview methods have been utilized to examine teacher leadership (Printy, 2008; Spillane et al., 2001; Vernon-Dotson et al., 2009; Watson & Scribner, 2007) as well as experiences of special education professionals (Warger & Aldinger, 1987; York-Barr et al., 2005; Zaretsky et al., 2005). Thus, utilization of a qualitative approach (Creswell, 2009; Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Patton, 1990) with homogeneous populations yielded a greater scope as well as more in-depth understanding of the supports in place for school-based SLPs.

Speech Language Pathologists

Sparse research is available on leadership in special education, and even less is known about the lived experiences of those professionals who provide and/or evaluate service programs. Therefore, individual interviews allowed for data to be derived in a natural setting as well provide a framework for participation elaboration of multiple realities (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). The purpose of the interviews was to acquire a multifaceted understanding of the supports in place for school-based SLPs by allowing time for expansion of responses and sharing of personal stories by the participants in support or opposition of leadership opportunities realized. The individual data was collapsed into four distinct groups and compared across participants to determine

The researcher followed the university policy as well as the school district policy for performing research as set forth by the school board by completing necessary Institute Review Board procedures to ensure confidentiality for secure data management practices. The researcher met with the senior district speech-language pathologist and district research committee to explain the purpose of the study. Once permission was granted by all necessary, the researcher attended a district meeting for SLPs in which the study was explained. Those interested in participating completed a brief background survey to determine concurrence with the eligibility criteria. The eligibility criteria included the following: (1) the SLP identified themselves as a site-level leader, (2) the SLP participated in an inclusive service delivery model for the 2010-2011 school year at their primary site, (3) the SLP worked at the primary site for 60% or greater of their assigned time, (4) the SLP was fully licensed by the state of California, and (5) the SLP held the ASHA Certificate for Clinical Competence. Upon review all background surveys, 10 school-based SLP were invited to partake in the interviews [Appendix D].

**Principals**

A second set of interviews were held with 10 district principals. Chapter 2 of this study referenced the increasing role of the principals are assuming in the supervision of SLPs and how this increase is part of a shift for special education functioning as a parallel service system to general education. Given these new roles and increased supervisory responsibilities, it was proposed that principal reflections would provide a very important and possibly different perspective than that of the SLPs. Moreover, these data might
provide rich insights into site processes that are effectively facilitating and/or inhibiting leadership opportunities for SLPs within the inclusive program models.

As part of the demographic portion of the survey, SLPs were asked to note their participation in an inclusive model at their primary school site. From the pool of remaining SLP candidates, schools that offered inclusive programs were determined. Individual principals were then contacted by email and phone to be invited by the researcher to participate in the interview. The principals were asked to respond to specific teacher leadership factors during the interviews [Appendix E]. The researcher asked semi-structured questions (Patton, 1990) and allowed time for principals to describe their perceptions of supports and barriers experienced by SLP site-leaders.

All participants signed consent forms that further explained the purpose of the study, confidentiality of the sessions, and how the data was secured. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed utilizing pseudo names for marking speakers. The researcher also took field notes to denote specific reactions, body language, or additional information that could not be obtained by recording alone (Creswell, 2009). Each interview was held at a neutral site and lasted approximately one hour. The time period for all interviewed took place over an 8-week period.

**Data Analysis and Management Procedures**

In order to maintain confidentiality, all data was electronically entered into a database using numerical markers to denote respondents rather than actual names. Qualitative data was analyzed using a constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Marshall & Rossman, 2006) in the coding and interpretation of the data from each set of interviews. An inductive process was used for building data into broad themes then
a generalized mutual supposition of supports and barriers as related to SLPs emerged (Creswell, 2009). During the coding process, transcripts of interviews, along with field notes, were initially reviewed line-by-line in response to the specific interview questions to determine patterns and insights as well as analytical notations made. Through extensive repeated study, concepts representing SLP site-level leadership phenomena were drawn from the data then similar units of meaning were identified. Thus, data were saturated and specific open coded themes were acknowledged then organized into larger categorical constructs. Comparisons were then made across main categories and underlying themes in order to also to identify the interrelatedness of each (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

**Credit Worthiness**

Personal understanding is relative; thus, multiple perspectives were obtained to examine the SLP site-level leadership phenomenon from various points of view. Multiple sources of data were obtained from participants who formed four distinct experiential groups: Principals who supervised SLPs with a full-time assignment at the site, Principals who supervised SLPs with a part-time assignment at the site, SLPs with a full-time assignment at the site, and SLPs with a part-time assignment at the site with all SLPs who self-identified as site-level leaders and delivered educational services within an inclusive model. The researcher maintained rigor in data collection, cross-checked transcripts with field note observations, utilized a third party for transcription of recorded interviews and performed line-by-line reliability for consistency. A researcher log was maintained to document decisions. In order to minimize subjectivity for interpretations, the researcher thoughtfully self-analyzed using heuristic inquiry (Patton, 1990) and
searched for alternative explanations, examined alternate opinions, and maintained ethical standards.

**Limitations of the Study**

The current study included limitations for consideration. The scope of the study was also restricted by the geographical location of Southern California as well as by the inclusion of only one school district. Participation was voluntary; therefore, not all professionals who have experience with SLP site-level leadership opportunities within inclusive service delivery may have chosen to partake in the study.

Additionally, the researcher is a speech-language pathologist who performed student clinical training within the same district 10 years earlier. After that time, the researcher was employed in a different school district. Moreover, the researcher currently works as a university clinical supervisor training graduate students in speech pathology; consequently, many former university students have since been hired as speech-language pathologists by the district where the study occurred. The researcher has professional collegial relationships with some of the speech-language pathologists and principals who participated in the study. The researcher’s familiarity may have impacted the validity of participant responses. The influence of this familiarity was not addressed specifically as attempts to further restrict participants may have resulted in unintentional problems.

Caution was taken during data collection and analyses, to mitigate potential biases given the researcher’s training and prior experience as a school-based SLP. Moreover, in an effort to minimize some of the limitations of the sample size, self-report, and utilization of a single school district, the researcher utilized techniques to obtain further comparative data. The researcher obtained rich qualitative data and field notes to draw
forth the answers to the questions posed regarding site-level leadership of school-based SLPs in order to add to the body of educational and social research.
CHAPTER FOUR—RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to investigate site-level leadership of Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs) servicing children within inclusive service delivery models in elementary schools. Educational literature depicts teacher leadership, one form of site-level leadership, widely studied in elementary schools. However, site leadership in regards to special education professionals serving in elementary schools has received little attention. The present study was designed to add to this literature-base by examining issues pertaining to leadership of SLPs on inclusive elementary sites.

In depth individual interviews were held with principals and SLPs to collect perceptions of leadership of SLPs on inclusive elementary school sites. Points of convergence and dissonance were identified in relationship to prior research on leadership. Site-level leadership (i.e., similar to teacher leadership) was defined as “the ability to collaborate effectively with colleagues for the purposes of influencing change, increasing teacher expertise, and improving student and teacher learning” (Salazar, 2010, p. 66). York-Barr and Duke (2004) developed a theory of action of “Conceptual Framework for Teacher Leadership” (p. 278) in which they identified seven major components based on their findings from the literature. After a review of the raw data from the transcripts of the present study along with preliminary analyses, the researcher discovered that the emerging notions regarding SLP leadership coincided with the themes described in York-Barr and Duke’s (2004) conceptual framework of teacher leadership. Thus, as depicted in Table 3, the researcher aligned the York-Barr and Duke’s framework to the study’s research questions and then used the framework as a structural means to organize the data into leadership categories and themes. York-Barr and Duke’s (2004)
Table 3.

*Data Matrix*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Literature Based Categories &amp; Themes</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. What SLP leadership supports and barriers do SLPs and Principals perceive to be present in schools? | [Teacher] Leaders  
- Respected as teachers  
- Learning Oriented  
- Leadership Capacity | Supports for SLP Leaders  
Barriers for SLP Leaders |
| | Leadership Work  
- Valued  
- Visible  
- Negotiated  
- Shared | Supports for SLP Leadership  
Barriers for SLP Leadership |
| 2. What job factors influence the SLPs’ and Principals’ perceptions of SLP leadership supports? | Conditions  
- Supportive Culture  
- Supportive Principal & colleagues  
- Time  
- Resources  
- Development Opportunities | SLP Conditional Supports  
School site  
District  
National  
SLP Conditional Barriers  
School site  
District  
National |
| 3. How are SLP leadership roles evolving within inclusive school-wide intervention programs? | Means of Leadership Influence  
- Maintain a focus on teaching & learning  
- Establish trusting & constructive relationships  
- Interact through formal & informal points of influence | SLP Leadership Means |

(continued)
Table 3.

Data Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Literature Based Categories &amp; Themes</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Targets of Leadership Influence</td>
<td>Individuals</td>
<td>SLP Leadership Influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teams or Groups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organizational Capacity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediary Outcome of Influence</td>
<td>Improvement in teaching &amp; learning practice</td>
<td>SLP Leadership Outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Individual Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Group Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Organizational Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Learning</td>
<td>Improved student learning</td>
<td>SLP Leadership Social Student Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Academic Student Learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The data is presented by research question, categories and themes from scholarly literature and corresponding findings of the present study, which arose from the participants during interviews. The researcher triangulated multiple sources of data to compare perspectives and sources based on the same units of inquiry (Marshall & Rossman, 2006).
Research Question 1: What Speech Language Pathology Leadership Supports and Barriers do Speech Language Pathologists and Principals Perceive to be Present in Schools?

[Teacher] Leaders

The first major category from teacher leadership literature relates to how others perceive a person’s specific leadership disposition (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). The opinion of administration and colleagues for determining a site-level leader is based on being respected as a professional, having a positive attitude as a continual life-long learner, as well as showing the potential to cultivate leadership knowledge and skills. Individuals who meet the above criteria are embraced in the literature as “teacher leaders”. Table 4. depicts the data matrix for research question one.

Table 4.

Data Matrix for Question One.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Literature Based Categories &amp; Themes</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What SLP leadership supports and barriers do SLPs and Principals perceive to be present in schools?</td>
<td>[Teacher] Leaders</td>
<td>Supports for SLP Leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Respected as teachers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learning Oriented</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leadership Capacity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leadership Work</td>
<td>Supports for SLP Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Valued</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Visible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Negotiated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shared</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training</td>
<td>Barriers for SLP Leaders</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Support for SLP Leaders

In the present study, the leadership themes of respect, being learning oriented, and demonstrating leadership capacity for SLPs as site-level leaders consistently emerged from by both principals and SLPs. Specifically, 8 of the 10 principals discussed how SLPs were respected by teachers at their sites. When provided the definition on teacher leaders, one principal who has two SLPs assigned to the site stated “you’re describing my two SLPs” (P 9).

In addition, principals often referenced site-level SLP leaders as “the expert” in their content as demonstrated by one principal with a full-time SLP, “people trust her expertise, so they will go to her” (P 4). Moreover, another principal with a full-time SLP concurred by providing the statement:

I’m a big believer in the SLP has a lot of knowledge that our regular teachers do not have so coming from that belief system is like, ‘well, I know you have your caseload, but you’re the expert here on language acquisition and here are some children that we’re having trouble with and these are the interventions we’ve provided to them, what suggestions can you give? (P 9)

Similarly, 9 of the 10 SLPs also mentioned how other teachers and/or the principal viewed them with respect. In particular the concept of respect was reiterated from a part-time SLP who said, “it’s really important having a principal who respects your professional opinion and understands our role, who gives you the opportunity to really excel in our area of expertise and not be micromanaged” (SLP 47). A full-time SLP concurred by giving the statement, “it’s nice to have a principal whose open to let people do their jobs and gives them credit too” (SLP 19).
All 10 of the SLPs positively discussed characteristics related to being a life-long learner including attending specific site and/or district sponsored professional developments, traveling to conferences sponsored by both organizations directly related to the field of speech pathology such as the California Speech Language and Hearing Association (CSHA) and/or the American Speech Language and Hearing Association (ASHA) as well as professional development specific to their role in the school community related to content areas including language, reading, leadership, and/or inclusion.

The third theme that arose was on leadership capacity. Leadership capacities occurred in both formal and informal roles. In fact, 6 of the 10 SLPs and 4 of the 10 principals related SLP leadership work to that of being a “mentor” or “cheerleader” for others on campus, at times, including the principal him or herself, teachers, teacher aides and speech-language pathology assistants as well as student interns (e.g., SLP graduate student clinicians, and SLP clinical fellows) and parents. As stated by a principal with a part-time SLP, “the SLP was one of the biggest cheerleaders that kept encouraging her own colleagues because I couldn’t have done that by myself” (P 6).

In the words of a full-time SLP, “…with the changing climate, more inclusion and collaboration, I’ve realized what a huge part of our job leadership is and how powerful that would be for our students if done effectively” (SLP 9). Some SLP site-level leaders held positions as team leaders on both formal (e.g., instructional leadership teams, professional learning committees, school committees, student study teams, union representative, school site council, open house, etc.) and informal committees (e.g., social planner). Moreover, a principal with a full-time SLP reported, “I do see her as a leader on
this particular site. She’s so knowledgeable. She knows her job. She has patience to work with other people and is a great team player, so positive” (P 5).

**Barrier for SLP leaders**

A primary obstacle revealed in regards to SLP leadership was when a principal did not acknowledge or respect an SLP as an expert in their field which then negatively influenced the perceptions of teachers with whom the SLP was trying to work with at the site. This notion was capture in the words of different SLPs, “principles could be more aware that SLPs are part of their team” (SLP 35) and “I have been at sites where I have not had a principal who valued what I do or my level of expertise and so was not in favor of me doing presentations or consulting with the staff” (SLP 48).

Another obstacle that was repeatedly mentioned across all components of leadership was the allotment of time an SLP was assigned to a particular site. SLPs may be assigned to multiple schools whether they have a full-time or part-time contract. Typically, the allotment of time an SLP is assigned to a particular school is based on the number of children being served on Individual Education Plans (IEPs) at the target school and this number may fluctuate from year to year; thus, influencing one’s involvement at a site. Both principals and SLPs mentioned the notion of time assigned to sites regardless of full-time or part-time status when discussing SLP leadership. In the words of an SLP with a part-time contract:

…It is important to really look at how our roles as SLPs have changed over the years and how our demands have become so much greater because our roles have expanded. It’s not just the teacher who works on the lisp anymore and with our roles expanding, our time to allocate to those roles has not expanded. (SLP 46)
The challenge of SLP assignment was shared by principals as demonstrated in the words of one principal “we are very fortunate to have [our SLP] on site [full-time] but that can definitely impact…a person can be so qualified but does not have the time to be able to take on some of those [leadership] roles” (P 5). As further stated by a principal with a full-time SLP, “…one of the important factors is the time on campus because if somebody’s there one day a week, they’re not necessarily going to be seen as an expert by the staff because they are just not known well enough” (P 4). Also reiterated by another principal “we’re lucky to have our SLP five days a week (P 1).

**Leadership Work**

The second category described by York-Barr and Duke (2004) is based on the nature of the leadership work. Specifically, the authors stated that the work of leaders is valued by others, that leaders are visible on the school site, and that the work itself is shared among teachers. While the first two points related to site-level leaders, the concept of shared or distributive leadership must be set forth by the school principal along with the idea of negotiating site-level leadership. Findings regarding distributed leadership will be discussed in more detail under research question two which relates to conditions of leadership work.

**Support Findings for SLP leadership**

Of the 10 Principals, 7 of them discussed how the SLP was valued for leadership work and 4 of the 10 SLPs stated others valued their work as site-leaders. One principal with a full-time SLP placed a high value on the leadership work of her SLP by stating, “I wish we could have an extra few hours in the day, because…I wish I could make the SLP my assistant principal because you know…whoa, but I wouldn’t want to take her out of
the role she’s in” (P 5). Another principal with a part-time SLP reported, “it feels like we
[SLP and Principal] are building a safety net that catches staff, students, and families” (P
3). Interestingly, from the full-time SLP group, only one SLP as well as one principal out
of 10 specifically mentioned the need for the SLP to be visible on site. Nonetheless, all
20 participants addressed collaboration or shared work. As one principal with a full-time
SLP stated:

We are looking at the SLP not only her expertise, but the expertise of the
transdisciplinary team where we can better our general education side for the
betterment of all students not just the students we’ve been trained to teach. (P 10)

**Barrier Findings to SLP leadership**

From the part-time groups comprised of 10 participants total, 3 SLPs and 3
Principals discussed SLP visibility as a factor for leadership work, unlike only 2 from the
group with full-time SLP positions; thus, it seems that for those who are or have part-time
SLPs, visibility is a greater challenge. In discussing leadership work, a part-time SLP
replied, “there are a lot more SLP leadership activities than people are aware of” (SLP
45). Moreover, none of the 20 participants directly discussed SLP leadership related to
negotiations between the principal and SLP or others, but rather that it was more likely
assumed to be part of the SLP job. “Well, we’re expected to do everything” (SLP 47).
SLPs also reported that many principals did not discuss, much less negotiate, leadership
roles with the principal at sites. In regards to collaboration, principals and SLPs discussed
possible obstacles could be from the administration as in not setting the tone for
distributed leadership and/or from the personality of the potential site-leader as stated by
a principal with a full-time SLP:
…If administration is willing to create or does a really good job of seeking that involvement then you are going to have that piece but you are going to also have that personality or willingness from the SLP to join onto that conversation. (P10)

Yet, even when shared work or collaboration is encouraged by the principal, the personalities of each person influences implementation as demonstrated by statements from a part-time SLP, “the teacher should expect a lot more collaboration and group work from their colleagues” (SLP 45).

**Research Question 1: Findings Summary**

Specific supports were identified which endorsed that SLPs leadership characteristics followed suit with those themes identified for teacher leaders. The first support for SLP leaders included respect, which was repeatedly identified by both principals and SLPs in the study. The second support included that 100% of the SLP leaders saw themselves as life-long learners, yet principals did not address this point explicitly. The third support of leadership capacity was present but to a lesser degree with SLPs identifying that leadership capacity was not frequently discussed by site principals. Moreover, less than half the principals acknowledged providing leadership capacity specifically for SLPs. Barriers also emerged for SLP leaders in particular due to lack of principal recognition as well as complex challenges related to multiple site assignments and/or time constraints.

In regards to SLP leadership work, consistent support for the need to collaborate was identified by 100% of participants (both principals and SLPs). While the majority of principals reported they valued the work of SLP leaders, less than half of the SLPs described feeling valued by their principal(s), indicating a less consistent support.
Visibility emerged as a barrier for part-time SLPs and principals supervising part-time SLPs but not for full-time SLPs.

Thus, findings from question one suggest that in order for SLP leadership to exist in schools, certain factors must intersect. First principals should provide specific supports to SLPs, such as identifying the SLP as an expert, valuing the SLP’s work in the school environment, and building capacity for leadership to occur which allows respect from teachers to further develop. Moreover, SLPs should take ownership for leadership by being learning oriented and visible on campus. The notion of visibility related to caseload conditions will be further addressed in question two. When these factors are limited or absent, SLP leadership falters.

**Research Question 2: What Job Factors Influence the Speech Language Pathologists’ and Principals’ Perceptions of Speech Language Pathology Leadership Supports?**

**Conditions**

Under the category of conditions, York-Barr and Duke (2004) described five themes. Those themes include: *Supportive Culture, Supportive Principal and Colleagues, Time, Resources,* and *Opportunities*. The conditions proposed by York-Barr and Duke (2004) related specifically to school sites; yet, additional themes also appeared to influenced SLP leadership. Table 5 depicts the data matrix for research question two.

**SLP Conditional Support Findings**

Data from the current study showed that SLP leadership was impacted by three levels of conditional supports; school site conditions, district conditions, and national conditions. Thus, supports will be discussed across each of these levels. Throughout the
Table 5.

Data Matrix for Question Two.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Literature Based Category &amp; Themes</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. What job factors influence the SLPs’ and Principals’ perceptions of SLP leadership supports?</td>
<td>Conditions</td>
<td>SLP Conditional Supports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supportive Culture</td>
<td>School site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supportive Principal &amp; colleagues</td>
<td>District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Development Opportunities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

participant interviews, elements for each of York Barr and Duke’s (2004) themes related to leadership conditions were present with variable frequency. Findings will be reported next pursuant to each of the themes related to school site conditions.

**School Site Conditions**

Literature indicates that organizational structure is critical in creating a supportive culture and typically it is the principal who sets the tone for how that culture is built, maintained, and influenced by the members of school, often through the use of distributed leadership practices. Support by the principal and colleagues may be extended via formal and/or informal structures, with *time, resources, and the opportunity* to develop leadership skills identified across educational leadership as three main factors influencing leadership conditions. Educational research advocates a significant way that principals influence school culture is through the use of distributed leadership practices.
**Distributed Leadership.** Across the 20 participants interviewed, data indicated that principals varied in their use of distributed leadership practices. From the perspective of the 10 SLPs, 5 (50%) identified that the principal explicitly discussed distributed leadership among the faculty, while 5 SLPs (50%) shared that it was not overtly stated by the principal. Affirmative statements from SLPs included, “our principal I think is very good at doing the distributed leadership…she described it towards the beginning at the staff meetings” (SLP 46) and “[the principal] shared [a] vision for the mission of our school” (SLP 36). From the perspective of the principals, 9 of the 10 (90%) shared that they openly discussed distributed leadership with their faculty as noted by the excerpt, “…wherever I go I talk about leadership, what I always stress with teachers or anyone who works on campus is… when I talk about teachers, that includes my SLP and everything else, is that this is their school” (P 9).

**Supportive Culture.** All 20 participants (100%) referenced the need for a supportive culture in order for SLP site-level leadership to exist. So as to better understand each school culture and what was perceived as supportive, the participants were instructed to listen to the leadership dimensions developed by Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) and asked to rank order, from highest to lowest, the dimensions as present within the culture of their school. Each of the seven dimensions was identified as the top ranking by at least one participant with *Positive Environment* noted as the most highly ranked dimension by 6 of the 20 participants, comprised of 3 principals and 3 SLPs. In the words of SLPs, “[the principal] also would encourage team building kind of exercises for the teams and provided time…they worked the schedule out so that there were times every week for the teams to meet” (SLP 35), and “there’s a positive environment that
everyone’s working together to try to make everything work no matter what’s going on (SLP 47). Principals concurred with the concepts by stating “…what we strive for as a school is a positive environment with all stakeholders not only employees, but the parent community involvement related to the students” (P 8). Another principal further explained this:

As an administrator, you have to keep that in the back of your head. That’s one part of creating this positive environment is you know your role, you see yourself as open and supportive yet you have to…I have to acknowledge and keep reminding myself that there are many levels and you have to allow those things to happen… this positive environment, just so much of it is transparency. (P 2)

The next most frequent dimension identified across all participants was *Collegiality* which was mentioned by 5 of the 20 participants, consisting of 1 SLP and 4 principals. For the SLP the concept of collegiality was directed toward the special education team, “We were given time for that. I participated in monthly staffings with my special education team being the teacher, adapted physical educator, [and] physical therapist. The psychologist wasn’t on site that day, [nor the] occupational therapist. We had regular staffings” (SLP 19). For the principals, the concept of collegiality was noted by the following examples, “collegiality is the most important. Because I believe that we’ve got to work together and support one another or else we’re not going to make it through this” (P 6) along with another example provided by a principal who stated:

…We met last year every week with SLPs and the larger tier two and tier three…as far as our tiers were concerned, everyone that’s involved in both tier two and tier three interventions met every week. It is through that meeting that
we argue, we laugh, we sort things out, we monitor students. And that’s the space. If I didn’t provide that space, everyone would still be working in the SLP office and resource teacher’s office in the counseling department and this is the time I bring in all of those key players of people that are providing interventions just like our SLP does, but to different students. This is where we use expertise and some really good conversations happen in there. (P 9)

The third highest ranking dimension Developmental Focus followed with references made by 2 SLPs and 1 Principal. One SLP provided an example when saying, “We had to…for example, in the Instructional Leadership Team, come up with innovative ideas, researched based ideas to help find a focus in our school” (SLP 36).

The sole principal who ranked this dimension highest stated:

There needs to be an instructional focus that is consistent for a long period of time usually about a year, if not longer and then you can build onto that, but whatever you do should go from that. When we started with our focus we looked at student assessment results. We took feedback from the teachers about what do you see students struggling with and I coupled that with my observations in classrooms and we developed the focus from that. (P 4)

The leadership dimensions Recognition and Open Communication tied with 2 mentions each only by SLPs. Acknowledgement by the principal was demonstrated in statements, “[the principal] always starts them [staff meetings] off very positive with a lot of recognition, I think which makes people want to do it more” (SLP 46). Also, “… [at] the opening that we have at the beginning of the year is the biggest [recognition]. You know [the principal] goes in and sets the tone and recognizes each department, the occupational
therapist, the physical therapists, the SLPs [and] the classroom teachers” (SLP 21). The theme of open communication was described by the SLPs in the following ways:

The principal made it very clear that we disclose all our special education information to each teacher by participating in the professional learning communities. We’re also involved in that and we are encouraged to use our emails. We are encouraged to provide notes and go back-n-forth and we often meet. It seems we have a culture at our school where we meet together informally and discuss things pretty easily. (SLP 20)

Moreover, another SLP described, “it was a need to have open communication and initially, to better establish the goals of the administration and to see what the needs of the faculty and staff were” (SLP 7).

Lastly, leadership dimensions of Autonomy and Participation were not ranked by SLPs but only one principal with a full-time SLP and one principal with a part-time SLP as the highest dimension. One principal who ranked the autonomy highest shared insights upon arriving to the school:

So the first thing that I wanted to do was encourage innovation and implement improvement things like that. But the barriers when I saw that, it’s what struck me right away because if you don’t create that risk-free environment and an environment of learning you are not going to accomplish any of the others [dimensions]. (P 1)

A different principal discussed participation by saying, “from the parents, students, to the custodial, to the lead teachers, everyone needs to have their opinion
heard” (P 10). Table 6 depicts aggregated and disaggregated principal and SLP rankings of the top leadership dimensions influencing school culture.

Table 6.

*Top Ranking Leadership Dimension Influencing School Culture*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>All Participants (n =20)</th>
<th>SLPs (n =10)</th>
<th>Principals (n =10)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive Environment</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collegiality</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developmental Focus</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Communication</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Leadership dimensions based on Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001).

The researcher also analyzed the supportive cultural findings as it related to subgroups of participants based on contract time. There was a combination of both SLPs and principals supervising SLPs from both contract groups who ranked the top three leadership dimensions, yet this was not the case for all dimensions. Within the factor of *Positive Environment*, both full and part-time SLPs as well as Principals supervising full and part-time SLPs ranked it as the highest factor. In regards to *Collegiality*, one full-time SLP gave this dimension the highest mark, while 4 principals supervising both full and part-time SLPs identified this dimension as the highest rank. For *Developmental Focus*, a
single SLP from each full and part-time group along with one principal who supervised a full-time SLP ranked this dimension highest.

Although Recognition was deemed important by SLPs from both the full and part-time groups and Open Communication emerged as the top ranking by only full-time SLPs, none of the principals ranked either of these dimensions as the highest. In contrast, none of the SLPs ranked Autonomy or Participation highest, yet Autonomy was ranked highest by one principal with a full-time SLP, and Participation ranked highest by one principal with a part-time SLP.

Supportive Principal and Colleagues. The aspect of conditions influencing site-level leadership related to the support of the principal and colleagues. All 10 (100%) of the SLPs mentioned that principal support was crucial in order for them to be site-level leaders, and the majority of principals (90%) also mentioned it with the exception of one principal with a full-time SLP. From the perspective of the SLPs, support was identified by different aspects including: (a) general support, “I think our principal has been very supportive when I have an idea of something we would like to share with the staff she’s been very supportive”; (b) personal learning, “our principal actually went with me and some of our team members to the special education summer institute” (SLP 20); and (c) building collaboration, “...she really goes to bat for us...she does a marvelous job cause she understands the point of view of general educators, of helping us communicate to them like why they might not be understanding of what we’re [meaning] so she really helps you” (SLP 21).

Of the 10 principals, 7 (70%) reported that they held an “open door” policy in which faculty including SLPs could meet them to receive support as exemplified by one
principal, “If you have an issue, you have a concern, you have a comment, come to my door” (P 1).

**Time.** The theme of time emerged from all 20 participants (100%). While each of the participants referenced time; perceptions differed as to what seemed to influence the SLP’s time. The primary discussion related to the SLP’s contractual time and allocation of assignment to a particular school such as being available to attend meetings and participate in school-wide conversations as discussed previously. While most of the SLPs identified that Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) occurred at their sites, only 5 (50%) identified that accommodations at the site were made to include them while the other 5 SLPs (50%) reported that time conflicts interfered. A highly successful accommodation included schools being flexible with the schedule such as holding PLCs on days and times when the SLP was not already servicing children and/or allowing the SLP to float among PLCs to collaborate as needed.

Yet despite the contractual time, how the time was managed was a secondary factor related to use of a master school-wide schedule. A supportive example of a coordinated schedule was displayed with the remark, “the staff gets together and presents their needs and concerns and the principal, the administrators collaborate with them to make sure that they have that time available” (SLP 7).

**Resources.** In regards to resources for SLP site-level leadership, 6 of the 10 SLPs (60%) and 7 of the 10 Principals (70%) referenced this theme. For the SLP sub-groups, it was mentioned by 3 of the 5 (60%) for each group (i.e. full-time/part-time). One principal with a full-time SLP described her work space, “we have an office for her, a beautiful
office for her where it’s comfortable and she creates the office so it looks like a classroom and it’s very welcoming” (P1).

Developmental Opportunities. The final theme proposed by York-Barr and Duke (2004) which also emerged in the present study related to opportunities for SLP leadership work to occur at the school site. A total of 4 of the 10 SLPs (40%), two from each contract group discussed the opportunities in place for them to hold leadership roles. SLPs had different opportunities with some being general, such as explained by one SLP, “[the principal] is very supportive but she really hasn’t formally told us to be leaders” (SLP 9). Yet, other SLPs held specific positions within formal structures such as Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), Instructional Leadership Teams (ILTs), School Site Council or union representatives as noted by one full-time SLP, “They come and look for support here because they know I have a direct connection with the ILT Team, so they look for me for support” (SLP 36).

The theme of opportunities was discussed in general by 7 of 10 (70%) principals, with pattern revealing 4 of 5 (90%) for principals of full-time SLPs, and 3 of the 5 (60%) for principals with part-time SLPs. Principals often referred to the fact that they did not delegate but rather provided leadership “space” for SLP leadership to occur through the formal structures of PLCs, ILT, and other school committees as in the example by a principal who shared, “I don’t know if I distinctly have [provided leadership opportunities]… all I can say is I hope that I’ve provided enough space at school for them to activate that [leadership] whenever…(P 9)”. Moreover, many principals agreed it was the SLP’s personality or initiative for taking ownership for site-level leadership. Only one
principal explicitly stated a process for coaching and encouraging the SLP to assume a site-level leadership position at the school as noted in the example:

I encourage them to become more and more involved as leaders so when they do meet with the PLC groups which is their grade level group, it is very specific… so what [the SLP] is doing is, she participates in the PLC then eventually will become the leader of the PLC. (P 1)

**District Conditions**

While the building of site-level leaders, whether teachers or other professionals, may be most influenced by the conditions at an individual school site, leadership in general may also be supported at the higher organizational level of the district. Specifically, positive support of the SLP department within special education for the district was referenced by 9 of the 10 (90%) SLPs. Both full and part-time SLPs identified specific supports from the department included encouraging SLPs to develop leadership skills. One SLP stated, “I think our role as being leaders really hasn’t come directly from the principal, it’s more from our department [which] I feel is more empowering us to be leaders at our site” (SLP 9). The SLP department encourages leadership by way of SLPs participating in district level PLCs as remarked by one SLP, “[at] the district level too, we have communities” (SLP 7). In addition, multiple SLPs acknowledged how the SLP department addressed the challenges of caseload management such as working with administration to change policies and allow for counting children served via Response-to-Intervention (RtI) for articulation problems who are not on formal IEPs to count in the caseload determination. SLPs recognized the district level support as noted in the statement:
Our department has done better this year, I think, about giving us more of a workload caseload versus a numbers caseload to give us a little more time to do collaboration and consultation with everyone. So we’re moving toward that. (SLP 46)

Furthermore, the sentiment that the SLP department provided positive support for increasing the SLPs’ knowledge and competencies across many content areas including leadership by providing professional development was repeatedly found in the data and is highlighted in the excerpt, “I love this district in that my department has great in-services and trainings …so you can have some of the experts in the whole country coming, working with me or I can go to trainings” (SLP 19). Conversely, only 2 of the 10 (20%) principals referenced the district to be supportive in building SLP site-level leaders, as expressed in the following, “our district provides outside support she’s has access to” (P7).

**National Conditions**

A third minor influence specific to nature of the job of SLPs arose related to an organizational systems on site-level SLP leadership. In response to listening to the definition of a leader, one SLP stated, “SLPs are expected actually by ASHA to operate in this [leadership] mode and a lot of research has covered that objective. ASHA has given instructional continuing education programs …so we are expected to operate on school sites within this mode” (SLP 7).
SLP Conditional Barrier Findings

School Site Conditions

As stated above, *culture, supportive principal and colleagues, time, resources, and opportunities* were identified as supportive to SLP leadership. However, these same variables were also used to identify barriers to SLP leadership.

**Non-Supportive Culture.** Two SLPs shared the negative effects on school culture when their principals used minimal distributed leadership practices; “last year … it was a little bit more compartmentalized (SLP 21) and “it wasn’t discussed…I think teachers were kinda feeling disgruntled about not being involved in decision making” (SLP 19). Of the principals interviewed, one shared that “I think everything is just implied. I don’t think anything is necessarily stated” (P 7). When principals did not directly discuss distributed leadership as part of building their school culture, it resulted in perceptions of non-support by the faculty.

**Non-Supportive Principal and Colleagues.** Moreover, all 10 (100%) SLPs identified the presence of conflicting support from either the principal or teachers related to other’s mind-set and/or politics of the school, as noted in the following excerpts, “the hands-off principal really lead the way [such that] everyone was hands off” (SLP 45); also:

> I think one of the bigger things is maybe not having a principal who understands… [and] teachers don’t understand what our role is, what we do so having administration be educated in what it is we actually do, what are our responsibilities, and what are our obligations. (SLP 46)
In addition to a principal not having a clear idea of the work of SLPs, if they had limited knowledge of special education it negatively influenced the work environment for SLP leaders, as noted in the words of a full-time SLP, “sometimes principals want to micromanage” (SLP 21). Support from teachers can also be limited as described by an SLP assigned to multiple school sites, “sometimes I think teachers are misinformed about what our roles are and [they] inform us on ways we aren’t meeting their needs or our students’ needs” (SLP 46).

Issues describing how SLPs do not have substitutes, and that they are required to meet the legal time obligations of service delivery; were noted by half the principals (50%) as a barrier since SLPs have no contractual release time for leadership work at the site during the school day. One principal addressed this issue:

We have our ILT meetings during the day because having it an hour or two after school, it’s very fractured. And we need a long period of time so with a teacher you can have a substitute and instruction can go on, but with an SLP …you’re pulled away from your kids. There are no substitute SLPs. (P 4)

Another non-supportive example was provided by a different SLP:

…My concerns weren’t being listened to as far as coordinating services…I begged the principal, please let’s have schedules at the same time so we can kinda coordinate our efforts and work on things that are relevant in the classroom and last year the principal did not want to impose that on the teachers. (SLP 20)

In addition to coordinating time to meet, the poor mindset or attitudes of teachers toward inclusion and SLP services was frequently shared as explained by one SLP, “if teacher’s were interested, they’d let me know but I don’t think they really knew everything that’s
included in the job of an SLP [as] some would say, ‘that kid can speak fine why does he need speech?’ (SLP 46). Furthermore, SLPs’ caseloads were a primary influence on time which was noted as a challenge by both SLPs and principals.

Currently in California, an SLP’s caseload is determined by how many children are served on Individual Education Plans (IEPs), with the district average not to exceed 55 children per SLP (California Department of Education, 2011) rather than a set number of children served as is typical for a classroom or educational (i.e., resource) specialist teacher. This was denoted by comments from SLPs, “I think that our caseloads are extremely high. That cuts down on the amount of time you have to be as collegial as you would like to be and to take the responsibility for leadership” (SLP 7). Principals also referenced caseload as demonstrated by the remark:

The staff is assigned and depending on caseload and tally marks of children, we’re allocated time. So we have no control over that. It’s like ‘Here’s your allocation time–how are you going to make it work?’ If I feel there’s more time needed, then that’s my fight with the Special Ed department and during these times of fiscal crisis, it’s really tough to get more time. I think it’s very difficult for staff to get assigned at multiple sites. (P 2)

Furthermore, 8 of the 10 (80%) principals specifically mentioned caseload concerns. One principal shared how at times there is a negative perception by teachers toward an SLP due to misunderstanding job description and caseload regulations:

There’s almost an animosity of ‘well, you only have to work with three or four kids and I have a whole class load’. This perceived unevenness of caseloads, we really ran into that [mind-set]… so I moved her [the SLP] inside and people can
walk by, they see she’s working with kids. But all the extra stuff that goes with it, all the paperwork, all the testing, all of that… that whole perceived of ‘I have more work than you do’… is a barrier we’re trying to break down. Just the whole, ‘well you don’t understand because you don’t have 24 kids in front of you or 30 kids in front of you (P 4).

Another principal described the influence of time and caseloads with regards to inclusion by saying:

I still think we have a long ways to go. I think one of the missing pieces has been the disconnect between…she’s certainly working on it you know. When we do it all outside of the natural contexts, it doesn’t always overlap in so that’s one of the greatest challenges in terms of time wise is ‘How do I teach it, yet teach it authentically and make that fit?’ (P 7)

In discussions of caseload with the SLPs, 8 of the 10 (80%) described it was the type of populations and the severity of each child’s disability more than the number of children on IEPs that impacted their time as noted in the statement:

Number one would be the make-up of the population that you serve. Because you can have a decent allocation to the site, but maybe you have a population that is really tough and takes up a lot of your time at that site, so I’d say it’s more the make-up of the kids at that school. That would be the biggest thing that probably impacts…as far as job related. (SLP 46)

**Time Constraints.** In addition, SLPs identified that their time on site is influenced by the amount of documentation of services, Medi-Cal billing, high numbers of diagnostic evaluations and IEP meetings for children who do and do not qualify,
training/counseling parents, learning new adaptive communication device equipment including training others to use it for a single child’s use, and preparing vastly different materials across grades (Pre-K to High School), as well as coaching both teachers and principals to use strategies campus-wide. The following remarks denote the findings, “I think we spend lots and lots of time on IEPs and IEP meetings and paperwork. [It] definitely interferes mostly in the time constraints area” (SLP 9), and by another SLP: I’m looking at new technology to figure out…[IEP computer program]…I have moderate to severe students that I didn’t have before. I have one with three devices and he signs, you know it’s like ‘Ok, I don’t know any of these devices and I don’t sign’. On top of everything else we have to do, Medi-Cal billing, whatever, writing reports, you know I see students all day and then (laughs)-there’s no going home. I come back on Sundays to get stuff done. (SLP 47)

**Limited Resources.** SLP’s discussed resource limitations related to various components: (a) office space, “I shared it with several other people so, if I had a distractible child, we ended up using the lunch arbor, library, that kind of thing. Just because it was quieter than my actual room” (SLP 45), or “…you’re at this school this day, this school this day and your taking things back and forth because at a charter, you know, I don’t even have a desk so it makes you work less effectively I think” (SLP 47) and (b) work space proximity to general education teachers: Proximity…if you’re off in your little office in the corner where nobody knows where you are, …here, I get so much foot traffic. People come in, people know who I am just because of where I am. That’s a huge one. (SLP 21)

(c) material availability was highlighted as reported in the statement:
You know having access to the materials that you need, not really knowing how to go about procuring those materials. Like right now, the principal was generous. She has given a couple I-Pads, and I’m like I could use one so she gave us one of the I-Pads to use which is great. And I’ve been able to download free apps on it to my own I-Tunes account, but now we’re coming to the point where we want to, we ought to be able to download an app that would allow more children access to it, like Touch Chat, something that we import pictures, has lots of flexibility, but who’s going to pay for it? Is it the school? Is it our department? Because it is really school supplies, you know. Do I pay for it and they pay me back? (SLP 21)

The resource sentiment was also noted by 3 of 5 (60%) principals supervising part-time SLPs; and even higher at 4 of the 5 (80%) principals with full-time SLPs addressing this theme. Yet principals also discussed resources somewhat differently than did the SLPs. In particular, the idea of resources was related to (a) workspace for SLPs, (b) bringing in an outside expert for staff training, and (c) difficulties with technology.

Another principal concurred feelings of irritation with the technology matters:

As resources are cutting down, and one big frustration is that they’ve [special education] changed to [a computer based IEP program], but we don’t have the technology, we have old technology, let’s put it that way and it’s taken not only our SLP, but she said, ‘It took me a whole day to complete an IEP, that’s ridiculous’. (P 5)

**Limited Opportunities.** The next area identified as a problem related to the SLP leaders having few chances to participate in leadership positions at the school site. In fact
one full-time SLP shared that participation was restricted by stating, “a barrier… I think the opportunity for us to join committees. [Teachers] have grade level meetings and I don’t know when they are. That would be nice to know. The district has opportunities but not really so much here [school]” (SLP 21). For SLP leaders with multiple site assignments they shared that they didn’t have opportunities to attend staff meetings with the entire faculty as the meetings were often held on days they were not at that particular site. This limited visibility also reduced the possibility of SLPs leaders giving informative presentations to the entire staff especially on topics of inclusion or specific strategies that could benefit the teachers who now have children with autism in their classes for perhaps the first time.

**Non-Supportive District Conditions**

While SLP leaders shared positive views of the district support and in particular the SLP department, 3 of 10 (30%) principals discussed a prevalent issue of SLPs having to negotiate between “two bosses” with directives given by the district (i.e., including the SLP department) and/or by the site principals which at times may have been in conflict with one another. This was seen in a statement made by one principal:

> The whole paradigm of special education is a shift, a shift from who truly oversees and who places the SLPs. Again, it’s controlled by the district in terms of what your allocation is then the service time to a school so I think it was a catch-22 caught between who’s managing the SLP. Is it a site leader [principal] or is it the district? And unfortunately we would be the evaluator but it felt like we were the last in the mix to really have any of the say in terms of how we use the position. There are constraints, but there needs to be a clear shift. Is it going to be
[principal] site-based leadership or … is how we use our SLP going to be with a program manager of transdisciplinary services? (P8)

**Non-Supportive National Conditions**

At the national level, frustration was noted due to the complexities of special education policies and the actual implementation at school sites which for some was more difficult. One full-time SLP leader related a discussion about the schools transition from a Student Study Team (SST) approach to the Response to Intervention (RtI) approach. The SLP leader was the recipient of the teacher’s irritation as noted by her recount of the teacher’s words, “Look, I’m doing everything I can. This kid still isn’t working. Now you’re telling me to give it six more weeks?” (SLP 21).

**Research Question 2: Findings Summary**

The findings from question two suggest that there are both conditional supports and barriers present across all three contexts including the site, district, and national levels which influence SLP leadership in elementary schools. In addition, the views differ between SLPs and principals based on contextual conditions.

At the site school level principals who overtly discuss distributed leadership by fostering a positive school culture of leadership, encouraging peer relationships among faculty, and providing time and resources for collaboration to transpire build as well as maintain SLP leaders at their schools. When school site conditions were limited either by the principal or teacher confusion about the work of the SLP leader, and/or lack of time, resources, and opportunities, then SLP leadership was marginal and lead to the SLP working in isolation and/or not being recognized for their work at the site.
In regards to the district level conditions, the findings from question two suggest that SLPs perceived receipt of solid support for building SLP leadership through the SLP department. However select principals struggled with what seemed to be contrary directives given from the district for SLP leadership and responsibilities including provision of services compared to the principal’s vision for their school.

Lastly, there appeared to be positive supports for SLP leadership provided by ASHA the national organization for SLPs. Yet the national special education policies and interpretation of them either by district and or school administration, at times such as assignments to sites, presented a challenge for SLP leaders for gaining cooperation to integrate such policies into the school vision.

**Research Question 3: How are Speech Language Pathology Leadership Roles Evolving Within Inclusive School-Wide Intervention Programs?**

**Means of Leadership Influence**

As reported by York-Barr and Duke (2004), leaders perform three distinct influential behaviors which set them apart from other teachers. In particular they maintain a focus on teaching and learning, establish trusting and constructive relationships in addition to interacting through formal and informal points of influence. Table 7 depicts the data matrix for research question three.

**SLP Leadership Means**

The data from the present study revealed a high agreement among SLPs and principals for how SLP site-level leaders conduct activities that mirror those found in the teacher leadership literature. In fact, all 20 (100%) of the interviewees identified the consistent attention on teaching and learning portrayed by SLP leaders. One principal
Table 7.

Data Matrix for Question Three.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Literature Based Categories &amp; Themes</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 3. How are SLP leadership roles evolving within inclusive school-wide intervention programs? | Means of Leadership Influence  
Maintain a focus on teaching & learning  
Establish trusting & constructive relationships  
Interact through formal & informal points of influence | SLP Leadership Means |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Literature Based Categories &amp; Themes</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|                    | Targets of Leadership Influence  
Individuals  
Teams or Groups  
Organizational Capacity | SLP Leadership Influence |
|                    | Intermediary Outcome of Influence  
Improvement in teaching & learning practice | SLP Leadership Outcomes  
Individual Level  
Group Level  
Organizational Level |
|                    | Student Learning  
Improved student learning | SLP Leadership on Learning |
reported how they encouraged teachers and supported them at their own comfort level to build trusting relationships as noted in the statement:

It takes a lot to change the mindset that ‘these kids coming don’t sort of belong’ so I did a lot of talking to teachers about research studies and helping them by providing all kinds of visuals for the classroom. (SLP 47)

SLP leaders’ experiences regarding building trusting relationships within inclusion models varied beginning with emerging relationships as in the comment:

Being able to bring in kids not on IEPs but who have problems with a lesson to my small group in the classroom would be beneficial but getting to the point the teacher lets me do that is a different story. (SLP 35)

More well developed relationships were also reported as displayed by the statement, “we’re co-planning once a month rotations within the classroom where we have an opportunity to model and demonstrate for para-professionals, teachers, and other professionals too” (SLP 21).

Lastly, between the SLPs and principals, there was a different pattern observed in the data regarding the formal and/or informal nature of SLP leadership work. From the SLP perspective, 8 of the 10 (80%) equally represented by sub-groups, discussed their influence across formal and informal avenues. In the words of one full-time SLP, “I think being leaders is changing toward more inclusive practices for special education students, brainstorming ways to support all kids not just kids on IEPs along with ways to deliver a continuum of interventions for students” (SLP 9).

However, only 5 of the 10 (50%) of principals described SLP leadership in such ways that represented influential markers. A common idea that spanned the principals’
data is reflected in the following remarks, “It was harder for the SLP because people were in a mindset and didn’t necessarily believe in this inclusion model system” (P 3) and:

I think her willingness to be in there and be a support, be an observer, help brainstorm interventions, not even interventions but behaviors of the teachers, interactions between students and teachers, with a teacher who was unsure of how to work with a student. So I think her just being there was like, ‘yes, there’s a resource I can go to’. (P 5)

**Targets of Leadership Influence**

In accordance with York-Barr and Duke (2004), leaders inspire people across three primary societal interactions including the individual level, the team or group level, and the larger organizational level. A site-level leader’s influence may occur at any level and the impact of the influence will likely differ based on the various dynamics related to the interactions.

**SLP Leadership Influence**

Analyses of the present study data indicated that in fact, targets of SLP leadership spanned across individuals, groups, and the community. The data showed that all 20 interviewed participants (100%) concurred that SLP leadership had a direct influence at the individual level by working one-on-one with principals, teachers, teacher aides/assistants, elementary students, graduate students in training, and parents. In the words of one principal, “I think her biggest leadership role is really working with the teachers one-to-one and comforting them and listening” (P 5).

Moreover, 19 of the 20 (95%) interviewees, mentioned how the SLP leadership work influenced various collective groups of people. The construct of organizational
influence was present but with less frequency as only 9 of the 20 (45%) participants
(comprised of 5 SLPs, and 4 Principals) spoke of SLP leadership at the organizational
systems level. As noted by the words of one principal regarding SLP leadership influence
on parents and teachers:

“[The SLP] does take a leadership role and several parent comments, positive
comments to say that she has been so helpful, ‘she really helped me’. Teachers
coming in and saying, ‘I heard what she was saying but I couldn’t really
implement… or I couldn’t hear what she was saying and I went to my classroom.
It took a couple of days and I did what she said and oh my gosh! I’m so excited
because the child is doing it!’ (P 5)

The same principal went on to discuss the SLP site-leader’s influence on student
clinicians at the site by saying, “she has taken the leadership to get the interns and things
like that which is also helpful and what a great teacher. I mean she’s just amazing. If I
was a student, I’d love to work with her!” (P 5). In respect to SLP leadership and
inclusion, one principal shared “yea, there are a lot of growing pains. Elementary
teachers, some of them can be very…they have a lot of ownership of their classroom
(P 4).

Community influence emerged as a high marker resulting from SLP leadership
different than in the conceptual framework on teacher leadership developed by York-Barr
and Duke (2004). The current study revealed that parents and community partners
frequently seek out the SLP for assistance for advice and support for both school and
often for non-school related functions such as medical or social assistance.
Intermediary Outcome of Influence

York Barr and Duke (2004) reported that the outcome of teacher leadership is improvement in teaching and learning by those in the environment. For the other teachers working with the teacher leader, external effects may include: growth in one’s teaching knowledge and skills such as the ability to plan and/or execute better designed lessons, and improved classroom behavior management. Moreover, internal changes may lead to increased confidence, improved job satisfaction, enhanced job evaluations and teaching longevity.

SLP Leadership Outcomes

Findings from the current study showed that 19 of 20 (95%) participants (comprised of 9 SLPs and 10 Principals) discussed SLP leadership regarding the effects on teaching. Interviewees described both external and internal changes ensuing for various key school stakeholders. SLP leadership influence on teaching pedagogy was different depending on the recipient of the interaction with the SLP. Thus, findings will be shared across key stakeholders as revealed in the data.

Individual Level

York-Barr and Duke (2004) discuss the outcomes on individuals. The data from the present study delineated different outcomes based on the individual’s title.

Principals. Many principals have assumed roles as instructional leaders at their sites, in such role, they are providing the means and opportunities for teachers to increase their knowledge which is typically centered around a content area like reading, math, or academic standards. However, given the transition to full inclusion models for education,
principals who may have cursory knowledge or skills for working with special needs children are struggling to lead their teachers for instructional purposes.

Thus, principals meet this need to support their teachers by hiring an outside consultant to train the staff and/or use their own school resources, often the special education team, to train teachers. Findings from the data showed that 8 of 10 (80%) principals relied on the SLP for teaching them specific strategies for working with children with special needs within the general education environment, especially during potential school-wide events or when managing discipline issues. “I’ll often look to … an SLP to say ‘Would you please share what you’ve heard’, so I invite their opinions (P 2).

Furthermore, SLP site-leaders discussed how they worked with their principals to accomplish school-wide goals as explained in the following statement:

What I usually do is research, you know review of literature, to support what I’d like to do and it’s usually something they’re [administration is] trying to accomplish on site like the push in model and then I provide both the principal and the staff that I might be working with the bibliography and some readings to show that SLPs are indeed in the schools operating in that mode and at that level. (SLP 7)

**Teachers.** Both SLPs and principals most frequently discussed the influence on teacher pedagogy. In light of administration, classroom teachers and designated instructional service providers, such as SLPs are considered equal counterparts. However, there are many distinct differences in job responsibilities as well as pre-service educational training experiences that surface when schools move to an inclusion service model. The integration of children with significant special needs into a general education
setting requires thoughtful consideration by teachers for curriculum planning, managing perhaps new or more severe behaviors, and modification of instructional practices to meet the needs of all learners in the classroom. For many general education teachers, having a student with more significant special needs in their classroom was a new experience and one in which they had not received specific training for during their educational preparation courses. Moreover, SLP site-leaders who were often trained within a medical or clinical mode of service delivery also had to adapt and quickly integrate far more inclusive teaching practices into their interventions then they may have done in past years. From the SLP perspective, findings revealed “with inclusion, teachers were able to expand their teaching pedagogy” (SLP 7). In agreement, another SLP reported:

I’ve changed some teachers’ minds. I hope I’ve won them over a little bit with having push-in services. Our principal has definitely noticed. And she even mentioned this year that they really want to focus on moving some of their basic students into proficient with their comprehension so she asked if I could do some push-in lessons in classrooms with students that don’t even have IEPs to help support their comprehension development. (SLP 9)

One SLP site-leader described how she created an environment for influencing teachers:

Definitely by building partnerships in the classroom. Helping teachers dissect their data and looking into where we need to move on next with these group of students. Differentiating the curriculum. I do Story Talk in the classroom. I take the data while the teacher is teaching. I walk around with my flip camera …
seeing who’s engaged, who’s not engaged and also helping them in their
scheduling to making sure they have time for small group guided instruction.
(SLP 36)
Furthermore, principals collectively described the SLPs’ influence on teachers’
own learning as shown in the statement:
[By] being head of the leadership team and really on the one-on-one side of
working with teachers, with some of our students that display autistic behaviors. I
think that’s the most challenging because it’s the behaviors that become
disruptive to a regular education teacher and not knowing how to communicate.
And she’s [SLP] really gone in and said ‘We need to try this, this and this.’ She’s
great at putting the picture cards together and using all of the nonverbal cues that
teachers need to use and training the teachers and the program assistants. (P 5)

**Group Level**

York-Barr and Duke (2004) discussed influence within teams or groups. The
influence of SLP leaders was also positive for those when group or teaming was possible.
In addition, the data from the present study revealed an influential outcome on parents

A significant area of influence which emerged related to SLP leadership on
parents and the community-at-large. While teachers typically hold at least two parent-
teacher conferences with parents per school year, special education professionals are
required to hold at least one formal meeting with the parents of all children served on
IEPs. However, many parents of children with speech/language problems often seek out
the SLP for multiple formal and informal meetings due to the changing needs of a child
to aid their communicative performance and ultimately the child’s school success. One SLP relayed how she acts as a liaison not only between teachers and parents, but also between parents and community partners as shown by her words, “I have a feeder school and relationships with the physicians at the local clinic who know the roles of SLPs in schools so families look to me to help” (SLP 36). Moreover, many principals concurred with the positive influence SLP site-leaders had on parents as noted in the remarks:

I’m so used to having her around. Last year was her first year here, so she jumped on that role and then she does do parent workshops for the preschool. So those were about once every six weeks. Even in IEP meetings when the parent would come in and say ‘Well I don’t know what to do at home.’ And she’d say, ‘come in on Wednesday’ and she would make…she would put them [parent] into the IEP plan and she would say ‘I will meet with you one day a week after school for one hour and I will teach you how to work with your child at home’. (P 5)

Another principal remarked on the community involvement of the SLP site leader by saying:

She has taken a very active role in establishing a gardening club here at the school and …she just wants to go beyond what her role of an SLP is and get more into the community involvement piece. I know she feels very strongly about making certain that we provide for opportunities for kids beyond just the nine to three routine. (P 10)
Organizational Level

York Barr and Duke (2004) discussed the final influential outcome related to the school organization as a whole. The data from the current study showed that this level of influence was noted by the service models SLP leaders utilized at the schools.

SLP Leadership on Service Models. Findings from the data revealed that inclusion of children with special needs into general education programs occurred within many different models. While all 20 (100%) participants reported that every child on IEPs was enrolled in general education classes, the amount of time, frequency, and provision of support services such as speech therapy vastly differed. SLP services were provided within small group encounters both within and outside of the general education classroom sometimes only with other children on IEPs and other times with children not on IEPs but who demonstrated academic language weaknesses. Across all 20 participants, specific programs models were utilized at school sites; however, the frequency of implementation differed based on individual needs of the children served. The SLP inclusion service models ranked in order of most to least frequently utilized:

5. Consultation with teachers for modifications to materials, instruction, and environment,
6. Push-in for individual children and/or groups within the classroom for children on IEPs only,
7. Speech Improvement Class/Speech RtI,
8. Pull-out in small groups and/or individually,
9. Co-planning lessons with teacher for rotations or centers,
10. Whole class co-teaching based on content standards,
11. Academic RtI tiers 2 and 3 with children not on IEPs (i.e., *Power Hour*),
12. School-wide supports (i.e., lunch buddies, social clubs, etc.); and
13. Learning labs.

To embody the academic supports to teachers, SLPs discussed when and how they integrated core content into their intervention programs as noted below, “I have purposefully evaluated each student based on whether they could be served in the classroom for speech-language needs” (SLP 9). One SLP stated, “I don’t believe in taking kids out of a language rich environment, but some kids need the quiet and the slow pace and the rigid control over the environment” (SLP 45) while another described an instance of how the consultation model worked, “the teacher picks out the academic focus and the activity then the occupational therapist, physical therapist, and speech therapist come together to problem solve how to support the activity” (SLP 21). Lastly an example was noted regarding the highest level of collaboration for inclusion, “I do some co-teaching with the teachers. The kids that get language only, on their IEP, I go into their classroom, I push-in. And I see my kids and I also see some of her kids that are at-risk” (SLP 36).

The words of one principal further captured the variety of ways SLP leaders practice inclusive service delivery:

[By] going into the classrooms, conducting groups in the classrooms, doing pull out’s when she needs to but she does a lot of work inside the classrooms. [By] talking with teachers about things that are going to be helpful [and] talking to parents about things that are going to be helpful in moving the child forward. One year we had something called *Power Hour* and she actually conducted groups of
both kids on her caseload as well as kids not on her caseload to deepen reading comprehension. (P 6)

**SLP Leadership Roles.** The role of a mentor or coach was most prevalent; and, in particular relation to analyzing teacher’s data and providing feedback regarding teaching strategies. Of the 10 SLPs, 9 (90%) explained the importance of assisting teachers with the data analyses as part of their SLP leadership work. These two statements transcended the SLPs sub-groups, “Teachers are really good at gathering their data. It’s the exploring the data and applying it where they ask for help” (SLP 36) and “I go in and do lots of observations, take notes, give them suggestions but again it can be tricky depending on the teacher, some are more open so I try to model more than anything” (SLP 47).

From the perspective of principals, 6 of the 10 (60%) concurred as their statements reiterated the work SLP site-leaders did in helping teachers to improve their teaching effectiveness for including children with IEPs into their classrooms. One principal described the work by saying, “lots of teacher coaching, lots of teacher consultation and also providing supports for children beyond their caseload… but I have seen them co-plan with the teachers using whatever the teacher is using which is the unit of inquiry” (P 9). Furthermore, the following statement represents the theme expressed by many principals:

I wouldn’t say it’s necessarily co-teaching, but she does shared reading with the younger grades and that could be with the whole group, but she models for the teachers how to do a shared reading and includes the child in, so she does that on a weekly basis. When she does a pull out group, she has several pull-out groups as
well, but modeling…she’s really into modeling and really great. I wish you could have an opportunity to see her. Then following up with the teacher ‘After you watched me, can you do it…how did that feel to you?’ ‘Do you think that is something you can take on in the future?’ She does a lot of that. (P 5)

Findings from the data supported that SLP leadership roles are continuing to evolve within the school-wide movement toward inclusion. In particular, SLPs discussed how they would be interested in providing a greater frequency of formal professional developments to their staff, parents, and community as noted by one SLP:

I could see myself doing an in-service on all of the different disabilities. We call it “Ability Awareness” but doing a disability awareness training and incorporate…let them [teachers] know what an SLP, does in that training. I don’t think letting them know what we do has to be longer than five minutes, but I think I could see myself doing anti-bullying…something with anti-bullying, I don’t know exactly what yet, but you know it just goes so well with the ‘Circle of Friends’ thing that I could see anti-bullying and… And then also something with modified curriculum just letting them know that modified curriculum can be as simple as having the student do five problems instead of ten. It doesn’t mean they don’t learn the concepts and they don’t have to put the time in, but they could do fewer. I think a lot of teachers hear modify curriculum and go ‘Well, that’s not fair’. So, just educating teachers that kids learn in different ways. (SLP 35)

Other SLPs perceived the roles expanding for being in the classrooms and being a mentor to general education teachers as shared by these words, “we can really provide great strategies for working with kids, showing teachers that a lot of these kids just think
differently and they can learn but [the students] process the information differently” (SLP 19).

From the perspective of principals, the most frequent role related to inviting the SLP leader on formal committees, in particular the ILT, which may require some restructuring of their current meeting procedures as denoted in the following statement, “I would like to see her [SLP] become part of the ILT so she can continue to represent that special education student and how to help them” (P 4).

**Student Learning**

The final teacher leader category identified by York Barr and Duke (2004), and the one they considered to be the most important reason for teacher leaders was the improvement on student learning. They specially noted that the goal of leaders was to increase student engagement resulting in observable positive academic change.

**SLP Leadership on Learning**

Finding from the preset study revealed that all 20 (100%) participants reported that SLP site-leaders had a positive and direct influence on student achievement. Differences emerged on the type of gains students made when working with an SLP site-leader, in particular, advancement in social skills and academic skills.

**Social Student Learning.** In particular, improvements in social skills were referenced by all 10 (100%) SLPs and 9 of the 10 (90%) principals. A comment by one SLP captured a repeated theme, “...the change that I’ve seen is in the level of confidence and participation that the kids have gained from the push-in services (SLP 9) which was conferred by another SLP by her words, ‘less negative behaviors in the classroom too
because now they know they’re not segregated’ (SLP 36). In general, principals concurred with the social differences seen in kids working with SLP site-leaders:

She’s certainly working on social skills, so she’s a point person for all of the IEPs and their work on social skills so she’s coordinating that and working on language at the same time. That happens in both the formal program and informal programs…she and another teacher are RtI. (P 7)

In addition, “My SLPs are great about doing ‘Lunch Bunches’ where kids are just having natural conversations with each other and I just think it’s so wonderful to do that. Again, [she is] looking out for the best interest of the children” (P 2).

**Academic Student Learning.** Within the premise of academic achievement, 9 of the 10 (90%) SLPs and 6 of the 10 (60%) principals acknowledged this theme. One SLP site-leader described how she collected evidence of student learning, “when I came here I started the **PALs** with [a Kindergarten group]…we have data…and were able to demonstrate to the classroom teachers the growth and the impact that had [on] all of the childrens’ learning” (SLP 7). In the words of one principal, “what we’ve found is that if we frontload some of these ideas through speech therapy that the students will then come in and be set up for better success in the classroom” (P 10).

**Research Question 3: Findings Summary**

The data from question three further develops the picture of SLP leadership. In regard to leadership means, 100% of the participants (both SLPs and principals) agreed that SLP leaders focus on teaching and student learning, and build trusting relationships with key stakeholders. While, 80% of SLPs reported their leadership occurred via formal and informal avenues, they concurred that the majority happened through informal
channels. Yet, only half of the principals reported SLP leadership via informal or formal opportunities at the school.

In relationship to influential targets, there was 100% agreement between SLPs and principals that SLP leadership positively influenced the school culture at individual levels such as working with teachers one-on-one. There was 95% agreement that SLP leaders influenced teams at the school; and, 45% agreement that SLP leaders influenced the school at the organizational level. SLPs leaders often simultaneously performed the roles of mentor, cheerleader and data analyst to guide principals, teachers, parents, and students.

In regards to leadership outcomes, there was 90% agreement (including all principals and 9 SLPs) that SLP leaders had a direct effect on teaching pedagogy at the school site. The effect was noted in how the SLP leader increased the knowledge of the principals for working with children with special needs by teaching them specific strategies, and how the SLP leaders taught individual teachers strategies for working with children with special needs which they then incorporated into their classrooms.

The final area of influence for SLP leaders was found by improvement in student learning in which there was 100% agreement by SLPs and principals. In particular, all SLPs and the majority of principals reported student growth in social skills. Additionally, 90% of SLPs and 60% of principals reported direct positive influence on student academic performance.

Thus, the findings from question three suggest that SLP site-leaders focus on improving instructional practices, and foster formal and informal relationships. Moreover, SLP leaders influence was denoted across administration, teachers, parents
and students as well as community partners. Most importantly, SLP leadership work yielded a direct affirmative effect on student performance for both children with and without IEPs by the provision of multiple service delivery models.

**Conclusions of Results**

During this study, qualitative evidence was analyzed from individual interviews of SLPs and principals in order to investigate site-level leadership of SLPs teaching children within inclusive service delivery models in elementary schools. Points of convergence and dissonance were identified for each of the three research questions.

For question one, the data showed that SLP leadership mirrored that of teacher leadership; however, specific supports and barriers determined the degree to which SLP leadership was assumed in elementary schools. Supports necessary included that principals recognize the SLP as an expert, value the SLP’s work in the school environment, and provide formal opportunities for SLPs to take one leadership positions. In addition, SLP leaders were life-long learners; however, limited visible was a major barrier to SLP leadership.

For question two, the data showed that conditionals supports and barriers were present across three situational contexts including the site, district, and national levels. Specifically conditions were influenced by a principal’s use of distributed leadership practices at the site level, clear communication between the district and principals at the district level, and site assignment factors directed from national agencies. In addition, the views differed between SLPs and principals based on situational conditions.

For question three, the data showed that SLP leadership themes paralleled that of teacher leadership themes including the presence of leadership means, targets, outcomes,
and improved student learning. While both SLPs and principals showed 100% agreement for how SLP leaders used leadership means and increased student performance to focus on teaching, there was mild variance between them regarding leadership targets and leadership outcomes.

Overall, results of a thematic analysis of interview responses related to experiences of the speech-language pathologists and principals supervising speech-language pathologists who identified themselves as leaders suggested that SLP leadership does exist in schools. Furthermore, SLP leaders perform leadership activities whether full or part-time; yet, the extent of influence and outcomes is effected by situational conditions and educational policies. The next chapter will offer conclusions based on the data analyses, provide a discussion of the scope of this research within educational scholarly literature and propose recommendations for application to current practices of SLPs and principals as well as future research.
CHAPTER FIVE—DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine site-level leadership in relationship to Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs) working within inclusive service delivery models in elementary schools. Extensive appraisal of prior research left unanswered questions that showed the need to elicit perspectives to explore the stories of those in the actual experience (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Existent educational literature classically addressed site-level leadership in reference to teachers, and more often teachers in general education; while teachers in special education and/or related service providers within special education was limited.

Chapter one presented an introduction to the present study. Chapter two provided the scholarly background for the study. Chapter three presented the methods and limitations for the study. Chapter four presented results of a thematic analysis of interview responses related to experiences of the speech-language pathologists and principals supervising speech-language pathologists who identified themselves as site leaders. This chapter will present an evidence-based interpretation within a comparative context detailing (a) Speech-Language Pathology leadership; (b) Factors influencing SLP leadership; and (c) Evolving roles for SLP site-leaders, as well as recommendations for policy and practical applications, and suggestions for future research. The categories and themes identified in this study parallel and extend the current body of knowledge on site-level teacher leadership by addressing professionals within the field of special education. In particular, York-Barr and Duke’s (2004) conceptual framework of teacher leadership and York-Barr, Sommerness et al. (2005) findings of special education teacher leaders
provide solid reference points from which to compare the outcomes of SLP leadership found in the current study.

Comparative Context

The findings from York-Barr and Duke’s (2004) along with York-Barr et al. (2005) studies are detailed in Chapter two, and referred in subsequent chapters throughout the document. York-Barr and Duke’s (2004) conceptual framework for leadership states that (a) Teacher Leaders are respected by other teachers, have an orientation to learning, and possess leadership capabilities; (b) Leadership work is valued, visible, negotiated, and shared among those who are the intended targets of their leadership; (c) Conditions exist including a supportive culture, supportive principal, time, resources, and professional development opportunities; (d) A means of teacher leadership influence is present for maintaining a focus on teaching and learning, establishing trusting relationships, and interacting through formal and informal points of influence; (e) Targets of teacher leadership influence encompass individuals, teams or groups, and organizational capacity; (f) Intermediary outcomes of teacher leadership and (g) Student learning are the primary reasons for the leadership. York-Barr et al’s (2005) focus group study with various special educators identified three clusters including: (a) Nature of the work of special educators (i.e., extensive and overlapping roles and responsibilities, complex and dynamic patterns of daily work, predictable annual cycles of with peak times not well accommodated; (b) Special educators demonstrating leadership functions (i.e., vision and relationships for effective practice, and high levels of professionalism in the competence, instructional, communication, and management domains); (c) Differentiated support realized from others (i.e., site and central office
administrative understanding and support, collaborative partnerships for program implementation and support; and resources that enable special educators to leverage time and expertise). The data from this study was analyzed through the lens of the York-Barr and Duke (2004) conceptual framework for teacher leaders to examine points of convergence or dissonance for a homogenous population of special educators as opposed to general education teachers and/or a heterogeneous group of special educators. Data from both SLPs and principals were utilized to triangulate the evidence.

**Nature of the Leadership Work**

York-Barr and Duke (2004) found that teacher leaders present with specific characteristics, means, and outcomes of site-level leadership work. In the present study, data from both SLPs and principals showed that the work of SLP site-level leaders closely reflected that described in literature on teacher leaders. The present study found that effective SLP leadership is similar to the findings in teacher leadership including a need for: a supportive culture, supportive principal, time, resources, and professional development opportunities. Also, the other factors including allotment of time assigned to a school, dedicated time for leadership work, work space environment and access to materials remains a significant challenge for SLP site-leaders and should be seriously considered by site principals who want to succeed integrating special education services.

SLP site-level leaders spend a considerable amount of time building relationships that extend from working directly with a student, to collegial relationships with peers, a reciprocal relationship of respect with the principal, as well as gaining trust from the families and medical professionals within the community. Through their work, SLP leaders can assist principals in improving instructional practices of teachers and assist all
children succeed in inclusive settings, as noted by one principal, “I have to say she’s [the SLP] incredibly professional, so I really look to her to give me guidance of what she needs. Other than that I leave her alone and let her work her magic and she does” (P 5).

**Factors Influencing SLP Leadership**

York Barr et al. (2005) found that specific conditions either support or hinder leadership work. The similar site level variables were found to influence SLP leadership in addition to district and national components. Factors will be discussed per context.

**Site Level**

The components influencing SLP leadership include principals use of distributed leadership practices to build a positive school culture and attitudes, time (in regards to site assignment and a coordinated school-wide planning schedule), and opportunities. When teachers know the principal supports inclusive practices and expects teachers to collaborate with the SLP leader then the attitudinal barrier is greatly diminished. For example, when trust and respect is modeled by the principal, SLP leaders can transform the attitudes of colleagues as demonstrated by the words of one SLP:

I think there’s been a dramatic shift, some teacher’s concepts of the SLP were that they just worked in this separate room, shut the door, and did magical speech things. Now the whole staff is seen as part of the community and not isolated.

(SLP 9)

Another high agreement between the York-Barr and Duke (2004) and York-Barr et al. (2005) studies and the present study was that educators as well as SLPs felt support when the administrator understood the job of the SLP and the complex scope of practice
SLP leaders work is highly variable and requires extensive time. These results were similar to the results of the study by York-Barr et al. (2005) in which special education leaders were found to expend much time developing individual study programs, coordinating program implementation for all students, designing and providing instruction to students as well as directing and developing the skills of paraprofessionals. However, it was the principals who stated that they valued the work of SLP leaders but less than half of the SLPs reported they felt valued by their principals as instead they discussed how the district administrators valued their work. Thus, this is an area where principals could more overtly acknowledge their SLP leaders and the work they do for the site.

**District Level**

The current study showed that SLP site-leaders also positively benefited from support by the SLP department within special education. This concurred with the results of York-Barr et al. (2005) study which referenced central office support. However, unlike the York-Barr et al. (2005) study, the present study found that there is a perceived challenge for SLPs having to meet the demands of two different entities, the expectations of the site-principal and those of the district.

**National Level**

While the York-Barr and Duke (2004) study did not reference national factors related to teacher leadership, the York-Barr et al. (2005) study did include special education policy factors in relationship to special education leaders. In the present study,
national supports were identified through the American Speech Language and Hearing Association and barriers were highlighted with regard to the execution of special education policies in schools.

Inclusion and SLP Leadership

Inclusion

SLP site-level leaders are often the chief persons responsible for developing and implementing inclusive practices and/or RtI programs at the school sites due to their expertise and knowledge of how to work with special needs children, despite their own caseload obligations. SLP site-leaders frequently took the role of a cheerleader to positively influence teachers hesitant to implement inclusive practices as well SLP site-leaders mentored teachers by taking data, assisting with the interpretation of behavioral data, and modeling specific techniques to aid the teacher with improved classroom management for the child with special needs.

The story of SLP leaders demonstrates the dynamic process of transitioning to inclusive models at the site level is captured by the following sequence of statements: “it’s been a journey getting teachers to see commonalities between the SLP and what’s happening in general education” (P 3). While inclusion takes many steps for schools, the hopes are for sustainability as noted by one principal:

We have had many structures where we’ve had [SLPs] outside and the classroom teachers weren’t very aware of what was going on. Now the realities are that we’re servicing both students that are on IEPs and are in speech improvement classes side by side in a sense that this child may only need a few weeks of service, while this child is going to need years of service. We’re breaking down
the walls between the classroom and the office in a sense that we’re really going to need to be responsible for a long-standing program and so when administration changes over, you have a really strong decision making model where the SLP is very much involved in that when the new administration comes in. There are really very few things that need to be changed in a sense because there should be a very strong instructional program that’s providing very high academic gains. We want to make certain that this continues beyond the current administration and it is owned by the staff members and the community so that it can continue. (P 10)

**Evolving Roles of SLP Leader**

The findings showed that for principals who utilized distributed leadership practices, support was typically in place for SLP leaders and as such, SLP leaders initiated discussions to help alter the school culture or disarmed negative mindset related to inclusion. Therefore, the role SLP site-leaders as a change agent will likely remain (Marzano et al., 2005). Change may occur in relation to job responsibilities, scheduling options, as well as analysis of school-wide data and designing school-wide programs to service children with and without IEPs.

Secondly, SLP leaders worked directly with teachers who seemed resistant to change by providing research, analyzing data, developing teacher and/or student specific classroom materials and enhancements, co-planning lessons, and demonstrating improved teaching practices within an inclusive model. Throughout the interviews, participants repeatedly discussed the need for even greater inclusion and collaboration of the SLP site-leaders with many more teachers and across grade levels; thus, continuation and
expansion within their role as a mentor encompassing that of relationship builder, cheerleader and coach to general education teachers is foreseen. Moreover, both principals and SLPs denoted the need to address school-wide schedules and reconsider opportunities for formal leadership positions, specifically on the Instructional Leadership Team.

Thirdly, the sharing of their expertise via formal presentations to teachers, families, and at community events is likely to magnify. While many SLP leaders currently provide workshops to parents, less opportunity has been afforded to them in order to present to their colleagues at the sites; yet, principals may begin inviting this opportunity more often.

Finally, SLP site-leaders were shown to be initiate takers. Therefore, as schools continue on their journey of inclusion, current SLP leaders will continue to contribute by writing and securing specific grants to cover expenses for improved inclusive practices such as a sensory classroom. Plus SLP leaders often oversee the work of others. Therefore, SLP leaders may take on additional managerial and supervisory roles at the site-level.

What Lessons can be learned about SLP Leadership?

Lesson #1

SLP leadership flourishes in schools when certain factors are present. First principals must provide specific supports to SLPs, such as identifying the SLP as an expert, valuing the SLP’s work in the school environment, and building capacity for leadership to occur which allows respect from teachers to further develop. Moreover,
SLPs need to take ownership for leadership by being learning oriented and visible on campus.

**Lesson # 2**

Conditional supports and barriers are present across site, district, and national levels which influence SLP leadership in elementary schools. In addition, the views differ between SLPs and principals based on contextual conditions. Perceived factors identified:

**At the Site Level**
- Principals use of distributed leadership practices
- School culture (supportive principal and colleagues)
- Accommodations for the SLP’s time, resources, and leadership opportunities

**At the District Level**
- Support for SLP Leadership work
- Consistency of district message to SLPs and Principals

**At the National Level**
- SLP assignment to schools based on number of students on caseload
- Special education policies regarding inclusion

**Lesson # 3**

SLP site-leaders focus on improving instructional practices, and fostering formal and informal relationships that influence administration, teachers, parents and students as well as community partners. Most importantly, despite recent evolving SLP leadership
roles and varying inclusive service delivery models, SLP leadership results in improved academic success for both children with and without IEPs.

**Recommendations**

This study examined Speech Language Pathology (SLP) site-level leaders who assumed common leadership practices within inclusive models within a single school district. The study therefore is narrow in its scope and application beyond the specific context of the study is restricted. Hence, it would be beneficial to expand the scope of investigation and further explore the findings of this study. Changing responsibilities have increased opportunities for SLPs to participate in leadership roles, contribute to the school culture and influence student academic success (Justice, 2006; Ukrainetz, 2006). Therefore specific recommendations can be offered to ensure that SLP leadership is further acknowledged and developed among SLPs working in elementary schools.

**Site Level Recommendations**

Principals must utilize distributed leadership practices and encouraged leadership as a whole in order to set the tone for the entire school. Foremost, principals must increase their own knowledge and understanding of special educations policies and the effects on SLP responsibilities. Given that there is often only one or possibly two SLPs at a given school site and clear understanding of job responsibilities is not assured, the atmosphere makes a significant difference for the ease or challenges the SLP leader may encounter in building relationships and providing services for children. Thus, it is incumbent upon administrators to increase their own knowledge of the special education policies and job responsibilities as well as to be the instructional school-wide leader for addressing the attitudes, knowledge, and skills of teachers who may have limited training
for working with children with special needs within inclusive models. Training may occur through formal and informal channels for both principals and teachers. A place to begin would be discussing leadership and expectations directly with the site SLP then move forward based on the needs of the school and the resources available. This would also include recognizing the directives to SLPs from the national, state, and district agencies then identifying how they are congruent or incongruent with the principal’s immediate vision for the school.

This study results also lead to a recommendation that principals should afford SLPs with time for collaboration with fellow teachers in formal and informal avenues. Thus, it would behoove administrators to consider the options for how to best provide time to SLPs to engage in leadership work collaboratively with colleagues using a master planning schedule while also meeting their legal obligations for servicing children on individual education plans.

Another recommendation supported by this study is that, principals should increase the SLP site-leader’s participation on decision-making committees or groups. These groups may include review of curriculum programs, Response-to-Intervention, and Instructional Leadership Teams.

Results also indicated that increased access to resources and materials supports SLP leadership. Given the declining budget and financial stress on schools, the topic of resources is problematic. Nonetheless, in order for SLP leaders to efficiently complete the complex demands of the entire school within an inclusive model, they need to have a reasonable space in which they can assess children with limited interruptions, administer intervention when needed outside of the classroom, have access to materials including
curriculum, specialized equipment (e.g., applications for Ipads, voice simulators, etc.) and up-to-date technology to support computer documentation software. Thus, the suggestion would be for principals and SLP leaders to evaluate the work conditions together then determine possible school-wide or district-wide solutions.

**District Level Recommendations**

Existent research supports that teachers identified as leaders enjoy benefits including: exposure to new information, potential decrease of teacher attrition due to increased job satisfaction, and interpersonal growth due to relationship shifts within social networks (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Given the extreme shortage of SLPs practicing in the public schools, policy and practice mechanisms for continuing to build SLP leadership capacity would greatly enhance the district’s mission and may be advantageous for recruitment, and retention of SLPs within the district. In addition, information between the district and principals should be clearly shared to eliminate the perception of competing directives to SLPs. Additionally, district personnel should negotiate with the national policy makers to address the issues of workload determinations rather than just caseloads based on the average number of children served.

**National Level Recommendations**

National as well as district administrators and policy makers should explore modifications in assignments and/or contracts to support SLP leadership work for increasing the SLP’s time at a single school site. Assignments considerations should reflect leadership workload responsibilities including all children at a school site not just those on IEPs, potentially resulting in elimination of multiple site assignments to meet the changing school needs for collaboration due to inclusive models, Response-to-
Intervention, and legal requirements for the provision of speech pathology services in elementary schools.

**Future Research**

Extensive research has been completed on the topic of teacher leaders with conclusions denoting positive outcomes for the recipients of such leadership work including the schools, teachers, and students (Avolio et al., 2009 Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, 2008; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999; Rogus, 1988; Spillane et al., 2001; Witziers et al., 2003; York-Barr, & Duke, 2004).

Moreover, published research on teacher leadership with respect to special education has only recently emerged (Bays & Crockett, 2007; Boscardin, 2007; Billingsly, 2007; York-Barr et al., 2005); thus, accompanying research examining leadership across greater breadth and depth of special education professionals is warranted. A greater understanding of the specific leadership roles and situations is required to provide a pivotal link of site-level leadership to increased student achievement.

In particular, given the typical unequal gender representation of principals and SLPs in school settings, it is important to perform research to determine the influence of gender in regards to principal leadership and style as well as those who assume site-level leadership responsibilities. In addition, further studies which examine diversity of principal and SLP personnel (i.e., ethnicity, cultural, linguistic, etc.) in relationship to site-level leadership is suggested to further determine how leadership may be utilized and received given the ever growing diverse student populations in schools. Thus, additional quantitative studies investigating specific aspects of site-level leadership regarding principals and SLPs is warranted to add to the existent educational literature.
Moreover, longitudinal studies examining the sustained effects of leadership with regard to SLPs and other special education professionals may better inform practice, especially as schools continue to transition to inclusion models. Additionally, program evaluation studies are merited to determine the best points of intersection for the various professionals and their leadership roles across the different types of inclusion programs including Response-to-Intervention, co-teaching models, and trans-disciplinary teaching models, especially as they relate to academic and life skills necessary for the 21st century and beyond.

**Concluding Remarks**

Educational literature denotes the benefits for site leadership as it relates to teachers, and the current study extends leadership to special education professions; specifically Speech-Language Pathologists. The research evidence showed conclusively that the work of SLP site-level leaders within inclusive models is vastly different than the traditional model of service delivery; whereby, children were only served in small groups outside of classrooms. Inclusive models require that SLP leaders negotiate multiple dimensions of work simultaneously as the expert, the influencer, the change agent, the negotiator and the data analyst (Marzano et al., 2005) during formal and informal leadership opportunities across both vertical and horizontal powers of position. While SLP leaders may not necessarily hold a formal title as a leader on site, their actions, roles, and responsibilities confer that they are leaders in their own right. They work across multiple levels of the school organization by effectively collaborating with colleagues. They increase teacher knowledge and skills as well as improve student performance in academic and social accomplishments. Thus, the present study underscores need for
conceding the work of SLP site-leaders and recognizing the shift in their scope of work related to inclusive practices and contribution to the school for supporting all children at the school. Leadership by special education professionals is promising and greatly benefits the entire school system. Nonetheless, there remain challenges across the district and sites which prevent special education leaders from reaching their full potential. Policy makers and school leaders are needed who will provide guidance, implement procedures and share resources required to support the type of professional practice that will ultimately benefit the entire school through the work of SLP leaders.
REFERENCES


http://cnx.org/content/m18123/1.1/


Appendix A

Speech pathologist’s background survey

Your participation is greatly appreciated! Survey Code______

PARTICIPANT SCREENING INFORMATION

You are invited to participate in a research study examining site-based leadership involving Speech-Language-Pathologists in the public schools. Please answer all questions based on last year’s (2010-2011) assignment to ensure an accurate screening process for preliminary data. Please read then sign the consent form from SDSU and return all documents.

------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

FOR CONFIDENTIALITY PURPOSES, ALL NAMES/SCHOOLS WILL BE CODED PRIOR TO ENTRY INTO A SECURED DATABASE

------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

1. What is your gender?

☐ Male
☐ Female

2. What was your occupation within the district in 2010-2011?

☐ Speech-Language Pathologist
☐ Classroom Teacher (General Ed, Special Ed, DHH)
☐ Principal
☐ Speech-Language Pathology Assistant
☐ Did not work for the district

3. How many years of employment in the occupation selected above had you completed in the district by 2011?

☐ 1-2
☐ 3-6
☐ 7-10
☐ 10-15
☐ 15+

4. What was your highest completed educational level in 2010-2011?

☐ Bachelor's Degree
☐ Master's Degree
☐ Doctoral Degree
5. What type of credential(s) did you hold in 2010-2011? (Mark all that apply):

- [ ] California License
- [ ] American Speech Language and Hearing Certificate of Clinical Competence (CCC)
- [ ] Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC)- Clear Clinical or Rehabilitative Service Credential
- [ ] Professional Services Certificate for Bilingual/Multicultural Populations
- [ ] Clinical Fellow/Registered Professional Experience
- [ ] Other (please specify)

6. Did you provide services in a language other than English?

- [ ] No
- [ ] Yes (please specify language)

7. Provide your 2010-2011 site assignment(s) and school information per site as applicable:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% at school</th>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Level (Elem, Middle, HS)</th>
<th>Principal’s Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(e.g., 1 day = 20%)</td>
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</table>

8. For the purpose of this study, site-level leadership is defined as “one who has the ability to effectively collaborate with colleagues for the purposes of influencing
change, increasing teacher expertise, and improving student and teacher learning.”

Do you consider yourself to have been a leader in 2010-2011?

☐ YES
☐ NO
9. Indicate the leadership role(s) you held in 2010-2011. (Mark all that apply):

- [ ] Supervised a Clinical Fellow
- [ ] Supervised a graduate student intern/clinician
- [ ] Supervised a Speech Language Pathology Assistant (SLPA)
- [ ] Supervised a speech/special education aide
- [ ] Managed Student Study Team Meetings
- [ ] Provided professional development workshops/in-services
- [ ] Member of Instructional Leadership Team (ILT)
- [ ] Informal Leader at school site
- [ ] Grade Level Representative
- [ ] School Site Council Member
- [ ] Committee Member
- [ ] Union Representative
- [ ] PTA Officer
- [ ] California Teachers Association representative
- [ ] CSHA officer/chairperson
- [ ] CSHA committee member
- [ ] ASHA officer/chairperson
- [ ] ASHA committee member
- [ ] Other (please specify) _______________________
- [ ] None

10. Indicate your weekly professional responsibilities/activities. (Mark all that apply):

- [ ] Paperwork (IEPs, lesson plans, Easy Tracker, etc.)
- [ ] Supervision of other personnel
- [ ] Direct Service for therapy
- [ ] Direct Service for assessments
- [ ] Consultation with teachers
- [ ] Collaboration with classroom teachers
- [ ] Service/Academic support given to general children (RtI, speech Improvement Class, Power Hour, etc.)
- [ ] Site level meetings (staff, committee, etc.)
- [ ] Individual Education Meetings
- [ ] Student Study Team/Problem Solving Meetings
- [ ] Bus/lunch/recess/morning duty
- [ ] Fundraising/promotional events (e.g., promoted better speech and hearing month)
- [ ] Other (Please Specify) _____________________
11. Indicate if you participated in an **inclusive model** (defined as having worked with children with IEPs in the classroom and/or provided intervention to general education children not on IEPs). (Mark all that apply):

- [ ] At the primary school-site (*site assigned to the most if split among schools*)
- [ ] At the non-primary school-site (*site assigned to less than primary site if split among schools*)
- [ ] Did not participate in an inclusive model

**Please answer the following questions based on your primary site** (*most assigned time for 2010-2011*)

12. What was the number of children you served on Individual Education Plans for 2010-2011 at the primary site?

- [ ] 10-20
- [ ] 20-30
- [ ] 30-40
- [ ] 40-50
- [ ] 50-60
- [ ] 60+

13. Which disorder was **most** represented by the population you served?

- [ ] Language Impairment – Not related to Autism
- [ ] Language Impairment – Autism related
- [ ] Speech/Phonology Impairment
- [ ] Voice
- [ ] Fluency
- [ ] Hearing Loss
- [ ] Augmentative and Alternative Communication
- [ ] Other (please specify)
14. What was the percentage per severity category for children with I.E.P.s on your caseload?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MILD</th>
<th>MODERATE</th>
<th>SEVERE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ 10-20%</td>
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<td>□ 10-20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ 20-50%</td>
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<td>□ 50% or more</td>
<td>□ 50% or more</td>
<td>□ 50% or more</td>
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15. Which service delivery models/programs did you participate in at the primary site? (Mark all that apply):

□ Pull-Out
□ Push-In (co-teach/collaboration in classroom with general education teacher)
□ Consultation/Co-planning (with teachers)
□ Co-treatment (with another interventionist: OT/PT/SLP)
□ Speech Improvement Class
□ Response-to-Intervention (RtI)
□ Power Hour/Learning Lab
□ Direct service in a Self-Contained special education classroom
□ Other (please specify)

16. What was the number of children you served weekly who were not on Individual Education Plans?

□ 1-5
□ 5-10
□ 10-20
□ 20-30
□ 30-40
Would you like to be contacted to voluntarily participate in an individual interview to discuss supports/barriers for Speech-Language Pathologists in site-based leadership?

☐ No
☐ Yes; If Yes, please provide the following contact information:

Name:_________________________________________________________

Email: ______________________________ Phone #: ______________

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS SURVEY. PLEASE SIGN THE SDSU CONSENT FORM
Appendix B

Consent to act as a research subject
San Diego State University

Consent to Act as a Research Subject

Special Education Teacher Leaders: Supports for Speech-Language Pathologists.

You are being asked to participate in a research study. Before you give your consent to volunteer, it is important that you read the following information and ask as many questions as necessary to be sure you understand what you will be asked to do.

Investigators: The primary researcher is Jacqueline Kreiter Kotas, a doctoral student in Educational Leadership at San Diego State University. Her advisor is Dr. Ian Pumpian an SDSU professor in Educational Leadership.

Purpose of the Study:
The purpose of this study is to examine perceptions of school-based Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs) and Principals to investigate teacher leadership as it relates to Special Education professionals. The leadership supports and barriers will be examined to make suggestions on how to support and encourage Speech-Language Pathologists as leaders at their respective sites. The involvement of SLPs in the school reform process is important to the academic success of all students, especially those with special needs. The aim is for 10 Speech Pathologists who participated in an inclusive service delivery model program in the district and 10 Principals who supervised SLPs within the model during the 2010-2011 school year to participate in individual interviews.

Description of the Study:
"Screening Procedures": To determine if you are eligible to participate, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire about your participation/supervision of an inclusive service delivery model for the 2010-2011 school year as well as background demographics related to your position. Background questions will ask about years of experience, types of programs at the school, number of children in the programs, training experiences, etc. specific to your position. If you are not eligible to participate, the information obtained from you during the screening will be omitted from the study and shredded to protect your privacy. Your participation in the study includes the completion of a one-time individual interview with the researcher for approximately one hour. The interview will be digitally recorded and transcribed. A transcript of the interview may be made available to you. If you wish to revise your comments, you may do so. The interview will be scheduled at your convenience at a neutral site. It will not interfere with your school responsibilities.

Risks or Discomforts: Your choice to participate will not be reported to your supervisor or any district personnel. Due to the nature of the questions asked, you may feel discomfort while responding to the interview. You have a right to skip a question or refuse to answer any question. You may choose not to participate and/or withdraw from the questionnaire or interview at any time either temporarily or permanently without any penalty. Should you permanently withdraw from the interview your information will not be transcribed or otherwise used. If you do not wish to participate, please inform the researcher any time during the study.

Institutional Review Board
SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY
Approval Expires: 8/8/2012
Study Number: 677083
Benefits of the Study: The benefit to the participants may be that it stimulates your thinking and others' regarding teacher leadership as it relates to both general and special education. This study will contribute to the limited data on teacher leaders in special education. I cannot guarantee, however, that you will receive any benefits from participating in this study.

Confidentiality: Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent allowed by law. Your identity and your school will remain confidential. All information collected in this study is confidential. Participation in this study is voluntary. There will be no reports made, filed or distributed which list or describe who elected to, or not to, participate in any aspect of this study. Responses will be kept confidential using pseudonyms and coding for you, your school, and anyone mentioned by you.

You need to be aware that, the main researcher is a Speech-Language Pathologist and SDSU university clinical supervisor who has trained some speech pathology graduates who may now work in the district. However, the researcher is collecting information for the sole purpose of completing this doctoral study. The researcher will not use, share, or disseminate any information that could be attributed to a specific participant. The researcher will not use any information disclosed through this study to take any administrative action or to share the information with another administrator. The district will not be named in the published document. District officials approved this research proposal, and may receive a copy of the dissertation. Data and findings in the final dissertation document will not include specific school sites or names of individuals. The results will be aggregated and reported based on various work-related demographics and leadership groupings.

The researcher is conducting this study independent of the district. The recordings and documents will be secured in the researcher's private independent office during the study. The recordings and transcripts will not be shared with any district personnel at any time. Interview recordings will be locked in a secured office. Only the researcher, her committee, and/or approved authorities (i.e. research assistants/transcriptionist) will listen and transcribe the information provided. Data from the recordings will be analyzed following qualitative methods and excerpts from the recordings may be published using pseudonyms for confidentiality. Transcripts will be provided to participants upon request. All information will be coded and entered into a data file. All identifying information will be stored in a locked file cabinet (and password-protected computer) in a locked office and destroyed after completing the research including all recordings erased.

Incentives to Participate: Your participation in the study is voluntary. If you choose to participate in the interview, you will receive a $5 gift card at the completion of the interview. In the event that you permanently withdraw from the interview you will not receive the gift card and all your data will be disposed by shredding unused documents and/or erasing of the recording.

Costs for Participation: Your cost for this participation is minimal and dependent on transportation to the location for the interview.

Institutional Review Board
San Diego State University
Approval Expires: 8/8/2012
Study Number: 677083
Voluntary Nature of Participation: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your choice of whether or not to participate will not influence your future relations with San Diego State University or the school district. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and to stop your participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are allowed.

Questions about the Study: If you have any questions about the research now, please ask. If you have questions later about the research, you may contact Jacqueline Kreiter Kotas, by phone (619-594-3915), by email (jkreiter@mail.sdsu.edu) or by mail (5500 Campanile Dr. San Diego, CA 92182-1518). You may also contact the researcher's advisor, Dr. Ian Pumplin by phone (619-594-1950), or by email (ipumplin@mail.sdsu.edu).

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact the Division of Research Affairs at San Diego State University (telephone: 619-594-6622; email: irb@mail.sdsu.edu).

Consent to Participate: The San Diego State University Institutional Review Board has approved this consent form, as signified by the Board's stamp. The consent form must be reviewed annually and expires on the date indicated on the stamp.

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this document and have had a chance to ask any questions you have about the study. Your signature also indicates that you agree to be in the study and have been told that you can change your mind and withdraw your consent to participate at any time. You have been given a copy of this consent form. You have been told that by signing this consent form you are not giving up any of your legal rights.

Name of Participant (please print)

Signature of Participant ___________________________ Date __________

Signature of Investigator ___________________________ Date __________

Institutional Review Board

SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY

Approval Expires: 8/8/2012
Study Number: 677083
Appendix C

Principal background survey

Your participation is greatly appreciated!                                       Survey Code______

**PRINCIPAL INFORMATION**

*Background/Work Related Demographics* - Please provide me with information about you to help me analyze data regarding leadership.

1. What is your age?

- □ 20-29
- □ 30-39
- □ 40-49
- □ 50-59
- □ 60+

2. Your gender?

- □ Male
- □ Female

3. Educational Level

- □ Bachelor's Degree
- □ Master's Degree
- □ Doctoral Degree
4. List the type of credential(s) you currently hold?

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

5. Number of years employed as a Principal in your current school setting?

☐ 1-2
☐ 3-6
☐ 7-10
☐ 10-15
☐ 15 +

6. What is your school's enrollment?

☐ Less than 400
☐ 401-500
☐ 501-600
☐ 601-700
☐ 701-800
☐ 801-1000
☐ 1000+

7. What is your school’s API?

☐ 500-599
☐ 600-699
☐ 700-799
☐ 800-899
☐ 900+
8. Where have you received knowledge related to working with special education professionals?

☐ University Program
☐ School District Professional Development workshops
☐ Independent Study
☐ On-the-job training at school site
☐ Other (please specify)

______________________________________________________________

Thank you very much for completing this survey!
Speech Language Pathologist Interview Protocol

The researcher gave the following introduction at the start of the interview & provided a written definition of “leadership” for reference.

Thank you for agreeing to meet with me today, and thank you for allowing me to conduct this study of non-administrative site-level leadership as it relates to SLPs. Current research provides evidence of a link between “teacher leadership” as one form of site-level leadership that yields positive results in school reform efforts. For this study, a site-level leader is defined as “one who has the ability to effectively collaborate with colleagues for the purposes of influencing change, increasing teacher expertise, and improving student and teacher learning” and it this concept of leadership that will be examined with respect to SLPs. Little is known about non-administrative site-level leadership with regards to special education. This study attempts to understand the perceptions and structures that support or inhibit the development of speech language pathologists as site-level leaders in schools as well as their impact on student achievement. I’m going to ask you some open-ended questions using the definition above for leadership as it relates to SLPs. Your comments will be kept confidential. By sharing your experiences, you will help me better understand site-level leadership in your school and help me examine ways in which effective principals incorporate or challenge norms and structures to provide opportunities and supports for active, ongoing leadership for school-based SLPs. I’d like to ask your permission to record our interview. The recording will help me more accurately represent your ideas and views. The content will only be shared with my dissertation committee. Comments from the
recording used in reporting study results will be shared in a way that protects your confidentiality. Do I have your permission? May I begin?

A. Research Question: What SLP leadership supports and barriers do SLPs and Principals perceive to be present in schools?

For the purpose of this study, I’d like to also review a specific term used in the questions:

Distributed Leadership, which is explained as a process in whereby there are both formal and informal leaders, and leadership as a whole is “stretched over” leaders, situations, and events encouraging a partnership between principals and teachers for decision making.

A1: Describe how the principal discussed site-level shared/distributed leadership with you?

- Probe: a) Developing reciprocal relationships,
  b) Shared purpose,
  c) Involving everyone in school-wide conversations,
  d) Leadership sustainability via multiple means of participation?

A2: Prior studies in distributed leadership have identified school-wide dimensions that positively correlate to site-level leadership. Please listen to the definition for each leadership dimension, then rank each one in order of those you perceived to be most encouraged by your principal at your site, with 7 being most and 1 being least. {A written list was provided for reference}

Developmental Focus: Providing faculty assistive guidance and coaching to advance new knowledge and skills.

Recognition: Recognizing faculty for their roles and contributions to the school. It should include specific processes for acknowledging effective work, mutual respect, and compassion for other teachers.
Autonomy: Encouraging faculty to be innovative and implement improvements by removing barriers and allocating needed resources.

Collegiality: Providing time for collaboration related to instructional and student learning factors such as planning, observations, discussions, and sharing strategies.

Participation: Facilitating active involvement of faculty in decision making, planning and input for critical resolutions related to teacher, student, and school success.

Open Communication: Disclosing appropriate information related to faculty, student, and school business among teachers in an honest and open manner without blame.

Positive Environment: Sustaining a level of job satisfaction in the work setting depicting respect among faculty, students, parents, and administrators.

A3: For the purpose of this study, site-level leaders is defined as “one who has the ability to effectively collaborate with colleagues for the purposes of influencing change, increasing teacher expertise, and improving student and teacher learning.” How might this definition apply to school-based SLPs?

A4: What supports, if any, were in place for building leadership capacity/opportunities for you?

A5: What barriers, if any, existed for an SLP assuming leadership responsibilities at the site?

A6: Is there anything else you’d like to share with me regarding site-level leadership supports/barriers at your school?
• Probe: Additional follow-up questions may be generated to clarify and/or expand on the interviewee’s responses.

B. Research Question: What job factors influence the SLPs’ and Principals’ perceptions of SLP leadership supports?

For the purpose of this part of the study, I would like you to discuss job factors including certification/degree, years of experience, expertise, etc. which may impact leadership opportunities/decisions at your site.

B1: What factors do you think most contributed to being a site-level leader? Which ones were most and least important for you?

• Probe: Degree, certification (national/topic), years of experience teaching, years @ school site, prior evaluations, content/instructional expertise, past leadership experiences in the school and/or in other related organizations?

B2: Given the unique instructional parameters driven by IEP regulations, how then if at all, did job-related factors influence an SLP’s opportunity to engage in site-level leadership?

• Probe: School assignment (single/multiple), employment status, types/severity of populations served, content/instructional expertise?

B3: How were teachers involved in making decisions at your school last year? As the SLP, how were you involved in the decision making process?

• Probe: Consensus process, how instructional time is used, how the school is organized?

B4: What type of professional development activities/accommodations have been provided by the principal regarding inclusive or collaborative school-wide models for SLPs, teachers, and/or other staff?

• Probe: How did you select the topics? How did you encourage sharing of information learned to all faculty? (i.e., Professional Learning Communities, Grade teams, Professional development, retreats, etc.)
B5: Were you involved in leadership roles/positions outside of the school? If so please describe?

- Probes: Requested by an administrator, self-initiate

B6: Is there anything else you’d like to share with me regarding factors influencing site-level leadership at your school?

- Probe: Additional follow-up questions may be generated to clarify and/or expand on the interviewee’s responses.

C. Research Question: How are SLP leadership roles evolving within inclusive school-wide intervention programs?

Given the movement for school-wide accountability and increasing student success for all children both in general and special education programs, we will discuss effects of intervention models transitioning to inclusive formats.

C1: What type of inclusive service programs did you participate in at your site and what roles/tasks were performed? Do you consider these roles to demonstrate leadership? If so how, and if not, how come?

- Probe: Consultation, Push-in (whole class, rotation, small group, co-teaching), Learning lab/center, Response-to-Intervention?

C2: Within inclusive programs, describe how you influenced others on your staff last year? Other teachers? Administrators?

C3: Within inclusive programs, how have you contributed to increased student learning?
C4: How did the principal encourage you to take risks in trying new techniques or ideas in order to improve your practice and student learning?

- Probe: Supports/challenges (facility, teacher collaboration, time), presentation of in-services during staff meetings, etc.?

C5: What site-level leadership roles/responsibilities for SLPs, if any, do you consider to be evolving out of inclusive intervention programs at your school?

C6: Is there anything else you’d like to share with me regarding effects of inclusive programs and site-level leadership at your school?

- Probe: Additional follow-up questions may be generated to clarify and/or expand on the interviewee’s responses.
Appendix E

Principal interview protocol

**Principal Interview Guide**

{The researcher gave the following introduction at the start of the interview & provided a written definition of “leadership” for reference}

Thank you for agreeing to meet with me today, and thank you for allowing me to conduct this study of site-level non-administrative leadership as it relates to SLPs. Current research provides evidence of a link between “teacher leadership” as one form of site-level leadership that yields positive results in school reform efforts. For this study, a site-level leader is defined as “one who has the ability to effectively collaborate with colleagues for the purposes of influencing change, increasing teacher expertise, and improving student and teacher learning” and it this concept of leadership that will be examined with respect to SLPs. Little is known about site-level (i.e. non-administrative) with regards to special education. This study attempts to understand the perceptions and structures that support or inhibit the development of speech language pathologists as site-level leaders in schools as well as their impact on student achievement. I’m going to ask you some open-ended questions using the definition above for leadership as it relates to SLPs. Your comments will be kept confidential. By sharing your experiences, you will help me better understand site-level leadership in your school and help me examine ways in which effective principals incorporate or challenge norms and structures to provide opportunities and supports for active, ongoing leadership for school-based SLPs. I’d like to ask your permission to record our interview. The recording will help us more accurately represent your ideas and views. The content will only be shared with my dissertation committee. Comments from the recording
used in reporting study results will be shared in a way that protects your confidentiality. Do I have your permission? May I begin?

A. Research Question: What SLP leadership supports and barriers do SLPs and Principals perceive to be present in schools?

A1: Describe how you discussed site-level shared/distributed leadership at your school?

- Probe: a) Developing reciprocal relationships,
  b) Shared purpose,
  c) Involving everyone in school-wide conversations,
  d) Leadership sustainability via multiple means of participation?

A2: Prior studies in distributed leadership have identified school-wide dimensions that positively correlate to site-level leadership. Please listen to the definition for each leadership dimension, then rank each one in order of those you perceive to be most encouraged by you at your site last year, with 7 being most and 1 being least. {A written list was provided for reference}

Developmental Focus: Providing faculty assistive guidance and coaching to advance new knowledge and skills.

Recognition: Recognizing faculty for their roles and contributions to the school. It should include specific processes for acknowledging effective work, mutual respect, and compassion for other teachers.

Autonomy: Encouraging faculty to be innovative and implement improvements by removing barriers and allocating needed resources.

Collegiality: Providing time for collaboration related to instructional and student learning factors such as planning, observations, discussions, and sharing strategies.
Participation: Facilitating active involvement of faculty in decision making, planning and input for critical resolutions related to teacher, student, and school success.

Open Communication: Disclosing appropriate information related to faculty, student, and school business among teachers in an honest and open manner without blame.

Positive Environment: Sustaining a level of job satisfaction in the work setting depicting respect among faculty, students, parents, and administrators.

- Probe: Describe what (highest ranking dimension from list above______) activities looked like at your site and what the SLP’s participation was in such activities?

A3: Based on the definition of a site-level leader as “one who has the ability to effectively collaborate with colleagues for the purposes of influencing change, increasing teacher expertise, and improving student and teacher learning”. How might this definition of leadership apply to the roles/functions of the school-based SLP at your site last year?

- Probes: Type of tasks performed, instructional or non-instructional, delegated by principal or self-initiated,

A4: What supports, if any, were in place for building leadership capacity/opportunities for the site SLP?

A5: What barriers, if any, existed for the SLP for assuming leadership responsibilities at the site?

A6: Is there anything else you’d like to share with me regarding site-level leadership supports/barriers at your school as it relates to the SLP?

- Probe: Additional follow-up questions may be generated to clarify and/or expand on the interviewee’s responses.

B. Research Question: What job factors influence the SLPs’ and Principals’ perceptions of SLP leadership supports?
For the purpose of this part of the study, I would like you to discuss job factors including certification/degree, years of experience, expertise, etc. which may impact leadership opportunities/decisions for the SLP at your site.

B1: What job-related factors have you considered when delegating a teacher to a site-level leadership position? Which ones were most and least important for you? How were they the same/different for the SLP?

- Probe: Degree, certification (national/topic), years of experience teaching, years @ school site, prior evaluations, content/instructional expertise, past leadership experiences in the school and/or in other related organizations?

B2: What job-related factors influenced your decision when considering the SLP for a site-level leadership position? Workload?

- School assignment (single/multiple), employment status, types/severity of populations served, content/instructional expertise? Service program/curriculum development, alignment of IEP goals to standards, committees, other school-wide duties?

B3: How was the SLP involved in the decision making process at the school and was it the same or different from other site leaders?

- Probe: Consensus process, how instructional time is used, how the school is organized?

B4: What type of professional development activities/accommodations have you provided regarding inclusive or collaborative school-wide models for SLPs, teachers, and/or other staff?

- Probe: How did you select the topics? How do you encourage sharing of information learned to all faculty? (i.e., Professional Learning Communities, Grade teams, Professional development, retreats, etc.)

B5: Are you aware if the SLP was involved in leadership roles/positions outside of the school? If so please describe?

- Probes: Requested by an administrator, self-initiate
B6: Is there anything else you’d like to share with me regarding job-factors influencing site-level leadership for SLPs at your school?

- Probe: Additional follow-up questions may be generated to clarify and/or expand on the interviewee’s responses.

C. Research Question: How are SLP leadership roles evolving within inclusive school-wide intervention programs?

*Given the movement for school-wide accountability and increasing student success for all children both in general and special education programs, we will discuss effects of intervention models transitioning to inclusive formats.*

C1: Describe the SLP’s site-level leadership, if any, with respect to last year.

C2: Within inclusive programs, discuss the SLP’s influence, if any, on other staff? Other teachers? Administrators? Parents?

C3: Within inclusive programs, discuss how the SLP contributed or not to increased student learning?

C4: Discuss how you provided opportunities for the SLP to take risks in trying new techniques/ideas in an effort to improve their practice and student learning?

- Probe: Supports/challenges (facility, teacher collaboration, time), presentation of in-services during staff meetings, etc.?

C5: What site-level leadership roles/responsibilities for SLPs, if any, do you consider to be evolving out of inclusive intervention programs at your school now?
• Probe: Consultation, Push-in (whole class, rotation, small group, co-teaching), Learning lab/center, Response-to-Intervention?

C6: Is there anything else you’d like to share with me regarding effects of inclusive programs and site-level leadership for SLPs at your school?

Probe: Additional follow-up questions may be generated to clarify and/or expand on the interviewee’s responses.