DISSERTATION

TEACHERS' LIVED EXPERIENCES OF RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP:

A TRANSCENDENTAL PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

Submitted by

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ABSTRACT

TEACHERS' LIVED EXPERIENCES OF RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP:

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Research regarding Responsible Leadership seems to be dispersed, making it difficult to understand the construct's place in leadership literature and the construct's role in theory and practice. There also seems to be a lack of the teacher voice in informing general school leadership and Responsible Leadership of schools. In response, this study intended to address Responsible Leadership from the perspective of middle school teachers. The purpose of the study was to construct a shared essence of five middle school teachers' lived experiences of the phenomenon of Responsible Leadership in order to inform theory and research of the construct as well as middle school leadership practice.

This study was grounded in the constructivist paradigm to understand and analyze description of Responsible Leadership. Descriptive phenomenology served as the methodology. Data were collected and analyzed according to the processes of transcendental phenomenology with an additional use of mental models as tools for meaning making. The theory of Responsible Leadership for Performance (Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004), constructed as a system of inputs, process and outputs, framed the study. The processes of the system in the theory were described as 3Es: effectiveness, ethics, and endurance. Thus, participants were asked to describe Responsible Leadership through each of the 3Es.

The findings from this study represented the participants' shared descriptions of what they have experienced as Responsible Leadership and how they have experienced it in the

context of middle schools in a western state of the United States. Shared textural descriptions of what participants experienced included Responsible Leadership as: diligence for physical presence and engagement in education; opening Responsible Leadership to more people through humility, listening, and building teams; a dedication to development for teachers and formal leadership; taking ownership of the leadership role; showing a genuine care for teachers as people and professionals; consistency in behavior and treatment; fortitude for tough situations; guidance from values and vision; and desirable outcomes for teachers. The shared structural descriptions of how participants experienced Responsible Leadership included: time in the profession, occupational background, leadership exposure, and leadership in formal positions. Additionally, the data were revisited to seek associations between participant descriptions and specifics of the 3Es to inform the Responsible Leadership for Performance theory. This three-pronged analysis led to a shared essence of Responsible Leadership from the lived experiences of the five participants.

Ensuing recommendations are provided for theory, research, and practice. First, suggestions for research include: further inquiry into Responsible Leadership, honoring the value of the teacher perspective, constructing meaning through mental models, and understanding school leadership as a set of parallel systems. Second, implications for informing and refining theory are provided. Last, the practices of multiple stakeholders of the school leadership system are discussed including: state level leaders, formal school leaders, teachers, parents and community members, and those who develop future school leaders.

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I feel these acknowledgements to be inadequate for the roles you all have played in my life. Proverbs 27:17 says that "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another." There is no truer principle to reflect the theme of this journey. Thank you.

DEDICATION

To Harry Whitfield Dodge Jr. who inspired my dream to complete this project. I love you, Grandpa.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Education offers a unique leverage point in maintaining and changing, complex economic and social systems across the globe. Simply put, a systems approach recognizes that we live in webs of interdependence where actions and decisions almost never occur in isolation, so what happens in our schools inevitably affects our society at large (Senge, 2006). Public education in the United States is an extremely large and complex system. Each day across the nation, about 248,000 schools welcome roughly 50.4 million students into their hallways and classrooms (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018). These 50.4 million young people are the future of our nation. In the next two decades, these students will be running companies, developing non-profit organizations, tackling the most complex problems in history, educating their own youth, and leading the country. In a democracy, education is of paramount importance (J. I. Goodlad, Mantle-Bromley, & Goodlad, 2004), and may be, as Nelson Mandela claimed "the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world" (as cited in Strauss, 2013, p. 1).

Leadership has been shown to be a vital component to building and maintaining beneficial systems. The Wallace Foundation (2011), a foundation created to foster improvements in learning for disadvantaged students across the country, explained the role of the principal as leader:

> Education research shows that most school variables, considered separately, have at most small effects on learning. The real payoff comes when individual variables combine to reach critical mass. Creating the conditions under which that can occur is the job of the principal. (Wallace Foundation, 2011 as cited by National Association of Secondary School Principals [NASSP] & National Association of Elementary School Principals [NAESP], 2013, p. 2)

Though formal leadership from the principal is undeniably important, leadership in a school is more complex than a single person with formal title. According to Schmidt-Davis and Bottoms

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(2011), principals acting alone do not make the largest difference, but rather, "teachers and principals working together" (p. 2). Furthermore, one might argue that it is not just teachers and principals working together that makes a difference, but all stakeholders in the school system operating toward the common purpose of educating students well.

The issues school leadership faces are not in short supply: face-to-face and cyber bullying that affect students individually and the school as a whole (Lacey & Cornell, 2016), high proportions of student poverty (Ladd, Noguera, Reville, & Starr, 2016), technology use and the accompanying concerns (Grinshteyn & Yang, 2017; Jones & Mitchell, 2016), plus general student apathy and other negative attitudes (Emmerson-Pace, 2013). Leaders also find themselves on the battlefronts of school vouchers and private versus public education (Eckes & Mead, 2016), standardized testing (Gardner, 2000; Omogbehin, 2014), equitable grading practices (Akins, 2017; Wormelli, 2006), and teacher qualification and pay (DeAngelis & Presley, 2011). Another shift has been in racial demographics of students entering school leaders hallways. Rivkin (2016) found that in the western United States where this study was conducted, student enrollment shifted drastically since the 1960's: Hispanic and Asian total student enrollment increased by 30% and 12% respectively, Caucasian enrollment decreased from near 80% to 40%, and African American enrollment remained stable (p. 4). With the bombardment of new opportunities and inevitable changes, leadership needs to be more dynamic than ever.

As school leaders seek to provide ideal environments for student academic and social-emotional success, they have a multitude of leadership options to learn from to begin to address the challenges before them that range from leader focused to follower focused; from approaches of power to approaches of service. Specific approaches in extant research include: trait theory, situational approach, transformational leadership, authentic leadership, and servant leadership are

all viable options (Northouse, 2016). However, choosing from these approaches creates a dilemma because they each have incredible benefits and inherent drawbacks. However, there may be an extant leadership approach that could allow school leaders to incorporate many approaches into their practice.

One plausible systemic approach comes in the form of Responsible Leadership (RL) and Responsible Leadership for Performance (RL/P) as constructed by White-Newman (1983) and Lynham (1998, 2000, 2002, 2004). RL/P was developed in the 1990's through robust theorizing methods and further refined in the context of South African business during the Apartheid era (Lynham, 1998; Lynham, Taylor, Dooley, & Naidoo, 2006). The processes of RL/P that compliment and beset many of the other approaches are characterized by 3Es: effectiveness, ethics, and endurance. As discussed in chapter 5, each one has relevance to schools who are charged with raising the next generation.

Since RL/P's ingress, other scholars and practitioners have conceptualized RL in various ways but have disregarded the viability of the RL/P theory or the 3Es. Also, the vast majority of extant research resides firmly within the contexts of the business and management (Maak & Pless, 2006; Miska & Mendenhall, 2015). However, across constructions of RL, common themes arise, such as describing RL as a system focused on serving the greater good and opening leadership to diverse stakeholders beyond the boardroom—descriptions that resonate with teachers' hope from school leaders (Bellibas, 2015; Esper & Boies, 2013; Hulpia, Devos, & Van Keer, 2011; Interpersonal communication, 2017; Leech & Fulton, 2008; Maak & Pless, 2006; Yirci, Özdemir, Kartal, & Kocabaş, 2014). So, on the one hand, education leadership is vital to students and American society as a whole and there is a promising system perspective of RL (3Es) that may benefit school leaders. Yet, on the other hand, within extant literature there is

little discussion of RL's (3Es) relevance and conceptualization for systems of school leadership and even less literature on RL (3Es) from the perspective of teachers who are principals most important ally. This study aspires to address this gap.

The Problem

The motivating problem for this study was twofold, as represented in Figure 1.1. The syllogism positions opposing forces opposite one another. The resulting tension is symbolized by
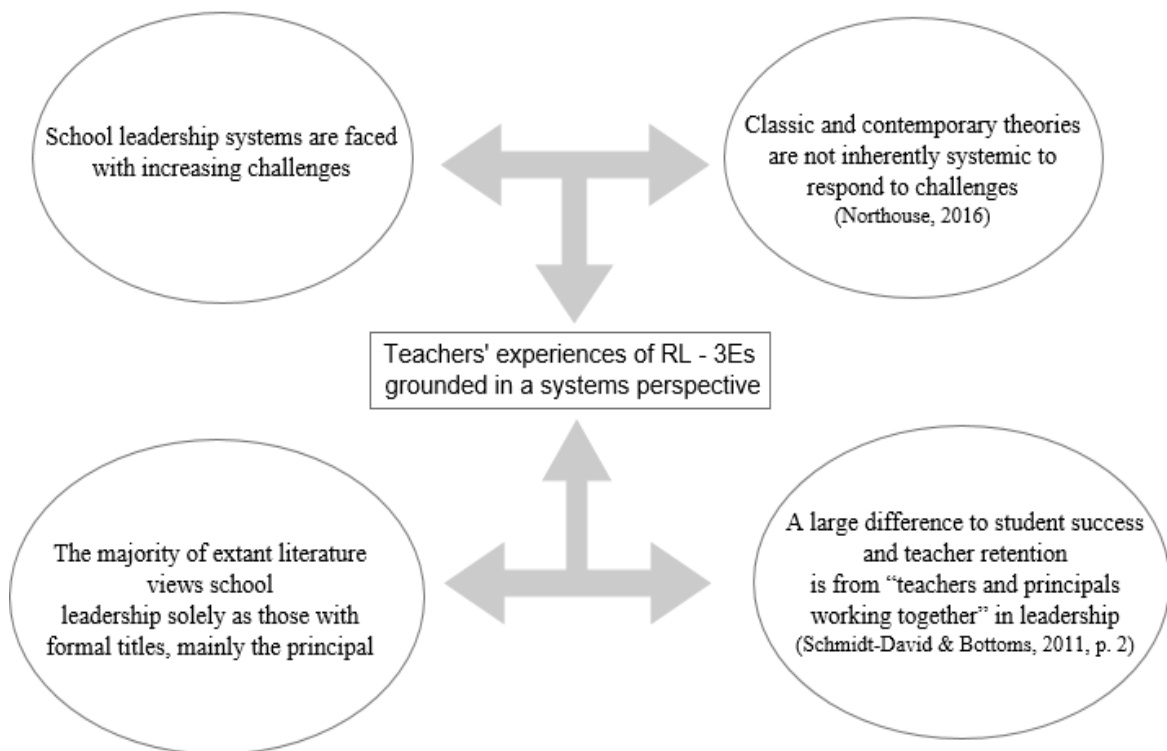
Figure 1.1. The problem syllogism of the study characterized by two opposing forces and the resulting tension that leads to this study.

the arrows that then result in the purpose of the study. First, school leadership often references a specific person—the principal or specific teacher leaders—who act formally or informally to influence others and thus ignores a systemic approach (NASSP & NAESP, 2013). As a result, the totality of leadership comprised of: multiple stakeholders including but not exclusive to formal positions, processes and actions of leadership, and resulting outcomes is inadequately

explored. From the traditional conceptualization of leadership as a single person, the needs and judgements of leadership are almost exclusively described from the perspective of those in authority positions.

An African proverb said that until the lion learns to write, the tale of the hunt will always glorify the hunter. Until other voices in the school system are heard, the tale of leadership will always glorify positional power and ignore other equally impactful stakeholders (Schmidt-Davis & Bottoms, 2011).

Second, teachers are one of the vital informing voices to be heard in the tale of school leadership (NASSP & NAESP, 2013). Not only are they charged with educating our future generations on a day-to-day basis, but we as a nation are also in jeopardy of losing them. Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, and Carver-Thomas (2016) brought to public attention the impending teacher shortage in America and identified three main correlated concerns: (a) demand for teachers is on the rise with an estimated 300,000 more needed by 2020 (p. 1), (b) a short supply of teachers with a 35% drop in educator preparation enrollment between 2009 and 2014 (p. 3), and (c) an alarming 8% teacher attrition rate in the first three years of their career across the country (p. 2). In response to Sutcher et al.'s call to explore the reasons behind the numbers, Burkhauser (2016) found that school leadership behavior is one highly influential variable on teacher retention rates. If school leadership could be better informed from the perspective of teachers' experiences and act in accordance with what they describe as effective, ethical, and enduring, the entire system of education and society as a whole might benefit.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was multi-faceted. Through the use of phenomenological inquiry, I aimed to understand the two problems through construction of a shared essence of

middle school teachers' experiences of RL (3Es) to inform the literature, and further develop, and refine RL and RL/P (Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004). I also hoped to inform the practice of middle school leadership from teachers' experiences and descriptions of the 3Es

First, this study was intended to contribute to the extant bodies of RL and school leadership literature. RL scholarship currently resides in the business and management fields with very few studies branching beyond that to service organizations (Stone-Johnson, 2014; McCullough, 2012). By expanding the understanding of RL (3Es) and RL/P into new contexts, the theory could be informed and refined. School leadership literature will also be further informed with the addition of RL (3Es) and RL/P which, as discussed in chapter 2, compliments and even encompasses many other classic and contemporary leadership approaches.

Second, I hoped readers and practitioners gain a new perspective of the needs of school leadership through the shared essence of teachers' lived experiences of RL (3Es) and might move to take action toward RL (3Es) practices as a result (Lincoln & Guba, 2013). In practice, teachers may be able to reflect on their own lived experiences of leadership and take action toward ideal followership or potential leadership. Practicing school leaders also might be motivated to seek understanding of leadership from their stakeholders to act in best practices of leadership.

This study was not intended to define what RL is (3Es) in schools, but rather, to describe teachers' lived experiences of effective, ethical, and enduring leadership through their own words. If leadership is charged with representing and serving stakeholders while building a strong team for student success, then understanding teachers' experiences offers deep insight to academic literature and school-based praxis.

Research Questions

This research study aimed to construct a shared essence of teachers' experiences of RL in middle schools. Therefore, the following main research question with three clarifying sub questions was appropriate. A second research question was also included in order to seek methodological understanding of phenomenology and the theory of RL/P:

1. How do middle school teachers perceive and describe their experience of RL (3Es) in middle schools in a western state of the United States?

   a. How do these middle school teachers perceive and describe their experience of *effective* leadership?

   b. How do these middle school teachers perceive and describe their experience of *ethical* leadership?

   c. How do these middle school teachers perceive and describe their experience of *enduring* leadership?

2. How does the phenomenological approach to the selected phenomenon of—how middle school teachers perceive and describe their experience of RL (3Es) in middle schools in a western state in the United States—inform the RL/P (Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004) theory?

Three Informing Bodies of Literature

As further discussed in Chapter Two, this study was located among three bodies of literature: RL and RL/P (Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004), classic and contemporary theoretical approaches to leadership (Northouse, 2016), and school leadership from the perspective of teachers. The following sections will briefly discuss these three bodies of literature.

Responsible Leadership and RL/P

Responsible leadership has received cyclical attention in the literature since its ingress in the early 1990s. The earliest signals of RL's construction came from White-Newman's (1993) 3Es, which encompassed three components of responsible leadership: practices of effectiveness, ethical habits, and resources for endurance. This to support the claim that "too often leadership writing and practice have emphasized how to be effective. They need to embrace much more than this singular focus" (White-Newman, 1993, p. 211).

Further research subsequently built upon White-Newman's (1993) work. Lynham (1998, 2000, 2002, 2004) developed a theory of Responsible Leadership for Performance (RL/P) that encompassed the 3Es as the process of a responsible leadership system. RL/P is characterized by "three units which interact in a systemic way to form the inputs, process, and outputs of the leadership system-in-focus" (Lynham, 2000, p. 130). A focused system indicates that "leadership is a purposeful, focused system not an individual or a process managed by an individual" (Lynham, 2002, p. 264). The first unit of the system consists of the inputs to an RL/P system - the considerations for constituency - who are (a) inside or outside, (b) with high or low authority, and (c) high or low impact. The second unit, the processes of responsibleness, are White-Newman's (1993) 3Es: The "three poles for constructing a teepee and providing a common framework" that holds up responsible actions (Lynham, 1998, p. 212). The third and final unit, multi-level outputs of the system, are described as the domains of performance (Lynham, 1998, p. 212). Together, these units provide a systemic perspective of leadership in which they interact with one another, the performance system, and the external environment.

In 2006, business schools began to conceptualize RL for organizations in private industry without reference to RL/P (Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004). In response to leadership

misconduct in the new millennium, Maak and Pless (2006) ignited the new wave of scholarship with their roles model of RL and an edited book titled *Responsible Leadership* (2006). This detailed the roles leaders fill to be responsible at any given time. Maak and Pless' (2006) book is a collection of pieces from prominent scholars in support of their claim that "responsible leadership is one of the most pressing issues in the business world" (p. 1).

Since 2006, RL literature has ranged across fields of study including business, management, health care, and education; however, the motivations behind scholars and practitioners constructing RL and the research methods applied to RL have been consistent across those fields (Filatotchev & Nakajima, 2014; Freeman & Auster, 2011; Maak & Pless, 2006; Maak, 2007). Methodologically, RL has been primarily studied conceptually, without rigorous methods, and empirically through qualitative work such as case studies and interpretive interviews. The motivations for scholars to study RL have been described as a need for open leadership systems to include more people (Berger, Choi, & Kim, 2011; Broadbent, 2015; Dent, 2012; Ketola, 2012; Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2004; Pless & Maak, 2011; Sortie, 2007), to extend leadership focus to the greater good (Siegel, 2015; Waldman, 2011), and to promote leadership with strong ethical groundings (Dassah, 2010; McCullough, 2012; Poff, 2010; Smit, 2013; Voegtlin, 2016). Throughout the cycles of RL's presence in literature, these themes of motivation and means of understanding have remained consistent.

To meet the need for open leadership, extended focus, and strong ethics, RL has been described throughout the extant literature in three distinct ways. First, RL has been associated with ideals of extant approaches including transformational, servant, virtous, and authentic leadership (Bass, 1990; Burton-Jones, 2012; Caldwell, Hasan, & Smith 2015; Cilliers & Coetzee, 2010; Crowley, 2011; George, 2004; Greenleaf, 1970; Miska & Mendenhall, 2015; Patterson,

2003; Reave, 2005; Waldman, 2011). RL has also been described as a contextually bound system of inputs, processes, and outputs toward serving others instead of a great man theory (Berger & Choi, 2011; Kauffman, 1980; Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004; Maak, 2007; Sortie, 2007; Voegltin, 2016). Lastly, RL has been constructed as a set of positive leadership characteristics, actions, and images focused on favorable processes and outcomes (Broadbent, 2015; De Bettignies, 2014; Maak & Pless, 2006; Pless, Maak, & Waldman, 2012; Stone-Johnson, 2014).

The needs for, and descriptions of, RL provide a base of knowledge on which to build. The additional context of middle schools in a western state of the United States can contribute to the growing base of knowledge of RL. Furthermore, because of its robust theorizing approach, RL/P (Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004), provides an appropriate guiding for questions and interview protocol to inform RL systems in middle schools in a western state of the United States.

Classic and Contemporary Approaches of Leadership

The second informing body of literature for this study is an overview of the various classic and contemporary frameworks of leadership. Northouse's (2016) seminal text, *Leadership: Theory and Practice,* provided the foundation to gain an overview of the current state of knowledge in leadership circles. Northouse (2016) conceptualized leadership approaches within two categories: assigned and emergent. Assigned leadership is that given to someone from birth or position; whereas, emergent is a process of leadership that is learned and cultivated. The included classical and contemporary assigned approaches are trait approach (Northouse, 2016, p. 19; Mann, 1959; Stogdill ,1974) and skills approach (Katz, 1955; Northouse, 2016, p. 42). Emergent theories are the norm in today's leadership work and include behavioral leadership (Blake & Mouton, 1985; Northouse, 2016, p. 71), situational approach (Northouse, 2016, p. 93),

path-goal theory (House, 1996; Northouse, 2016, p. 115), leader-member exchange (Gerstner & Day, 1997; Northouse, 2016, p. 137), and adaptive leadership (Heifetx, 1994; Northouse, 2016, p. 258). Finally, the included approaches that resonate most with the extant RL literature are transformational (Crowley, 2011; Kuhnert, 1994; Northouse, 2016, p. 161), authentic (George, 2003; Northouse, 2016, p. 195), and servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1970; Northouse, 2016, p. 225). Examining these classical and contemporary approaches—the popularity of which is evident by the inclusion in Northouse's (2016) text—provides the foundation to understand leadership as a general phenomenon, and specifically, RL as a phenomenon.

School Leadership From the Perspective of Teachers

A search for school leadership literature yielded an overwhelming number of articles, books, periodicals, blogs, and more. However, once the search focused on leadership from the perspective of teachers, the numbers decreased. From this search, it would seem that there is room for further research and practice designed to learn from teachers' experiences of leadership.

Though it has not been a focus of recent work, understanding teachers' experiences and gaining their perspective on what school leadership is and should be indicates important notions. The available research showed that teachers suggested a desire for cultural leadership focused not on the management of teaching praxis, but rather, on creating and maintaining a positive school culture (Bellibas, 2015; Hulpia et al., 2011; Leech & Fulton, 2008; Yirci et al., 2014). Specifically, teachers were more satisfied in their work when formal leadership created strong teams and an environment conducive to collaboration (Grobler, Moloi, & Thakhordas, 2017; McCarley, Peters, & Decman, 2016). Teachers also indicated a desire for minimal management of their technical instructional and curriculum practices in the classroom (Bellibas, 2014, 2015; Lee & Nie, 2017; Yirci et al., 2014). Lastly, teachers desired leadership that was open to them

and other stakeholders (Angelle & DeHart, 2011; Cheng & Szeto, 2016), a deep resonance with RL and RL/P (Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004),. For example, teachers wanted to be recognized and appreciated for the leadership roles they play within a school, even if not formally titled (Alexander, 2010). School leadership, either through purposeful decisions or systemic pressures, is often focused on technical issues of instruction, testing, and scheduling. However, teachers seemed to wish for leadership instead to build strong culture, not micro-manage praxis, and be open to many of the diverse community of stakeholders.

These three informing bodies of literature—RL plus RL/P, classical and contemporary leadership theories, and teachers' perspectives of school leadership—are all apprising in their own right and offer useful insights for general leadership and specific school practices. This study is the first to seek the meaning in the overlap of all three constructs and to do so via a constructivist phenomenological approach.

Methodological Philosophy and Approach

All research is guided by an underlying set of beliefs and assumptions held by the researcher as the researcher searches for meaning (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). These beliefs inform what is considered to be meaningful knowledge and how to best attain it (Lincoln & Guba, 2013). This study was rooted in the philosophical orientation of the constructivist paradigm of inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Lincoln et al., 2011) and executed through the methods of transcendental phenomenology (Moustakas, 1994) to best address the following research questions:

1. How do middle school teachers perceive and describe their experience of RL (3Es) in middle schools in a western state of the United States?

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a. How do these middle school teachers perceive and describe their experience of *effective* leadership?

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2. How does the phenomenological approach to the selected phenomenon of—how middle school teachers perceive and describe their experience of RL (3Es) in middle schools in a western state in the United States—inform the RL/P (Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004) theory?

The Constructivist Paradigm

Paradigm is defined as the "practices that define a scientific discipline at any certain point in time" (Kuhn, 2012, p. xlii). Furthermore, paradigm is "a worldview built upon implicit assumptions, accepted definitions, values defended as truths, and beliefs projected as reality" (Patton, 1997, p. 267). According to Kuhn (2012) and Patton (1997), two renowned scholars, paradigms organize our lives whether or not we recognize it. Paradigms guide what we value as knowledge, and they have shaped scientific research since the beginning of inquiry (Kuhn, 2012; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). A researcher's paradigmatic alignment then influences all aspects of a study. Specifically, the paradigm directs ontological, epistemological, methodological, axiological, and teleological beliefs and defines the purpose for research, as well as the best approaches to knowledge acquisition (Lincoln et al., 2011).

Ontology. The ontological stance of constructivism assumes reality to be relative, local, and dependent on the person living it (Guba, 1990; Lincoln et al., 2011). The experience of RL

(3Es) in schools was assumed to be co-constructed by those living the relative experience themselves; thus, it can differ substantially.

Epistemology. Constructivist epistemology describes meaningful knowledge as transactional and subjectivist and is best found through co-constructed meaning between the researcher and participants (Guba, 1990; Lincoln et al., 2011). Therefore, the teachers' experiences, in combination with the researcher's academic understandings, were assumed to create new and meaningful knowledge.

Methodology. The methodological means to obtain knowledge sought in constructivist inquiry are hermeneutic and dialectic (Lincoln et al., 2011). Typically, seeking the lived experiences of others through hermeneutics and dialectics uses qualitative methods (Angen, 2000). In this study, qualitative methods, and specifically transcendental phenomenology (Moustakas, 1994), were best suited to gain meaningful knowledge.

Axiology. Axiological beliefs inform how we ought to act in acquiring, accumulating, and applying newly generated knowledge (Guba, 1990; Lincoln et al., 2011). The constructivist philosophy and perspective of knowledge assumes that transactional knowledge is instrumentally valuable as a means of social understanding, which is intrinsically valuable (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 111). As a result, I sought co-construction to highlight the voices of the teachers describing their experiences of the 3Es of RL in their middle school context. As a researcher, it was also necessary for me to utilize member and peer checking to ensure my descriptions were consistent with the teachers' personal lived experiences.

Teleology. Constructivist teleology assumes that knowledge is best utilized in informing praxis (Lincoln et al., 2011). The knowledge generated from teachers' experiences of RL (3Es)

will be inform the practice of RL (3Es) in schools for both teachers and formal leaders. Knowledge will also be informing of RL/P (Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004).

These components of this philosophical orientation undergirded the value and process of seeking understanding of teachers' lived experiences of RL in middle schools. The constructivist perspective also informed what questions were asked, of whom they were asked, which data counted toward meaningful knowledge, how data were analyzed, and ultimately what the findings mean for practitioners and researchers.

Transcendental Phenomenology

Phenomenology is, at its core, a wonder-motivated search for the meaning in humans' lived experiences and interactions with objects. It is a study of consciousness from the first-person point-of-view; those that experience the phenomenon first hand offer the truest meaning of it (Moustakas, 1994). Van Manen (2014) regarded that phenomenology is "a method of abstemious reflection on the basic structures of the lived experience of human existence" (p. 26). One puts aside beliefs and assumptions to view the world anew with "the attitude of the epoch, the reduction, and the vocative" (Van Manen, 2014, p. 27). By setting aside our own judgements and presuppositions we hope to find meaning in everyday lived experiences that may otherwise go unnoticed. Although teachers experience the phenomenon of leadership every day, they may not be aware of such experiences. This potentially creates a gap in our understanding of leadership.

Phenomenology as a philosophy has been described and utilized in various forms. Beginning prominently with Husserl (1937/2017) who advocated for pure phenomenology characterized by absolute separation from bias and assumption (Moustakas, 1994). Heidegger (1927/2008) then followed with the need to include interpretations of experience into

descriptions. From these two philosophies arose Jean-Paul Sartre's focus on deliberate reflection of conscious structures, and Merleau-Ponty (1945/2013) who emphasized the role of the physical body in human experience (Smith, 2013). In the past few decades, multiple scholars have continued to conceptualize nuances to both descriptive and interpretive phenomenological inquiry including Moustakas' (1994) transcendental descriptive phenomenology.

Transcendental phenomenology, described in detail in Chapter Three, is a methodology for describing and understanding the essence of lived experience through "disciplined and systematic efforts to set aside prejudgments regarding the phenomenon" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 22). Accordingly, in this phenomenological study, I was not searching to describe a thing such as RL (3Es), but rather, the essence of the experience of that "thing" (Moustakas, 1994). In other words, because transcendental phenomenology is the framework for how the study was conducted, I was seeking to transcend my own assumptions and seek the essence of participants' experiences of RL (3Es) through their own consciousness of thoughts, feelings, and sensual awareness. The method also provided the process for collecting and analyzing data through horizontalization, crafting meaning units, constructing within case structural and textural descriptions of experience, and finally, developing a cross-case shared essence of the experience of RL (3Es).

Theoretical Framework

The tradition of constructivist inquiry and phenomenology is to inductively construct reality from lived experience (Guba & Lincoln, 1985, Merriam, 2002). Furthermore, in pure transcendental phenomenology the researcher must practice epoch and separate themselves from any assumptions and pre-notions of the phenomenon in question (Moustakas, 1994). This is the process of bracketing and suspending "what obstructs access to the phenomenon" (Van Manen,

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2014, p. 215). Given these circumstances, a theoretical framework in this study would be inappropriate because it would potentially provide a structure that obstructs access to the participant's pure descriptions of the phenomenon.

Instead of a framework, RL (3Es) and RL/P (Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004) provided the vocabulary to access the phenomenon. Using the 3Es as a framework bridled the phenomenon to "grasp exclusively singular aspects (essence)" (Van Manen, 2014, p. 27). Isolating the phenomenon with the 3Es of RL and RL/P (Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004) also provided the specificity necessary for the specific research question and effective interview protocol.

Significance of the Study

To measure the significance of the study, it is most useful to examine the paradigmatic criteria for quality. Accordingly, Lincoln and Guba (2013) outlined the criteria of constructivist inquiry that act to measure significance. Ontologically, the significance of the study was to further inform the relative constructions of RL (3Es) in schools for both the participants and the researcher as RL (3Es) "exist only in the minds of the persons contemplating them" (Lincoln & Guba, 2013, p. 39). Second, the study led to enhanced learning through educative authenticity. The participants became more aware of others by reflecting on their own experiences and the constructions of their colleagues. By having the chance to read and examine the final study, participants could expand their own understanding of the experience of RL and gain insightful information. The study also carries catalytic significance defined as the extent to which action in stimulated from the research (Lincoln & Guba, 2013, p. 70) by potentially stimulating action from teachers and school leaders alike to understand and act in more effective, ethical, and enduring ways (Lincoln & Guba, 2013). Finally, this research had tactical or actionable

significance in how it motivated individuals to take action over their experiences (Lincoln & Guba, 2013, p. 70). Individual teachers, participants or readers, school leaders, district personnel, and scholars all have potential to individually act upon the findings from teachers' experience to create or promote RL. Through meeting the criteria of quality outlined for the constructivist paradigm, this research bears potential significance for research and literature, as well as action from groups and individuals.

Researcher Perspective

Moustakas (2004, p.85) deemed it necessary to bracket and set aside, to the fullest extent possible, "our prejudgments, biases, and preconceived ideas about things" through the process of epoch, as described by Husserl (1937/2017). To practice epoch, a researcher must continually practice the skill at each junction of the research process, including collecting and analyzing data as well as constructing shared essence. Unpacking the primary perspectives of the researcher will begin the research process.

This project is situated from a North American, white, male perspective from the "space between" insider and outsider (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009, p. 60). The "space between" has recently been popularized as researchers recognize that their role and identity in relation to the group is dynamic (Kerstetter, 2012). In my case, I am an insider to the teacher community as a past colleague and through my current role that places me within schools on a regular basis. However, I have never held a school leadership position and am not currently a member of the PK-12th grade teaching community, also making me an outsider.

I am highly motivated to work toward improved leadership practices and am partial to believing that the teaching profession and teachers themselves carry a heavy burden and an equally heavy potential for impact on education. As a former middle school teacher, I

experienced what I characterized as top-down leadership approaches, legislators on the top of a hierarchical structure to superintendents, principals, and then teachers. I am hopeful that my experience as a teacher allowed me to remain open to understanding the phenomenon of RL as it exists for teachers now. I also feel that my insider knowledge of the profession allowed me to move past traditional barriers, such as the variance of language and vocabulary use and vocabulary, as well as access to participants.

Leadership has been an intrigue for me since my studies in sport psychology and strength and conditioning. I saw how good and bad leadership formed teams that could reach amazing highs or fall to incredible lows. As a middle school teacher, I worked leadership into each of my courses and asked students to develop their own perspectives and approaches to the phenomenon. I do not carry much notion as to teachers' experiences of RL. Although leadership in general has been a recurring interest for me even prior to my doctoral work, I had not encountered RL (3Es). However, I do carry my own preference for leadership that acts in service of others instead of for the glorification of the great man theories which aligns well to RL (3Es). I also had a previous notion of leadership as a system instead of a person and even used the idea as a main topic of the United States History course I taught to middle school students. Once I came to know RL (3Es) as a formalized theory in RL/P (Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004), I was immediately intrigued and drawn to it. My position in-between insider and outsider as well as my experience which is just enough to gain access but not enough to have deep personal assumptions, I am hopeful was ideal for constructing shared essence.

Ethics

As a researcher, I recognize the "need to protect research participants; develop trust with them; promote the integriy of research; [and] guard against misconduct and impropriety that

might reflect on their organizations or institutions" (Creswell, 2009, p. 87). In protecting the participants and the integrity of research, their privacy was preserved and consent to participate was freely given. No participant should be harmed professionally or otherwise from participation in the study. Creswell (2009) outlined ethical issues that could arise in five areas: (a) the research problem, (b) the purpose and questions, (c) data collection, (d) data analysis and interpretations, and (e) writing and disseminating the research. The five areas will be explained in detail in the following paragraphs.

1. The research problem must identify a problem that is meaningful and beneficial to the participants in the study (Creswell, 2009, p. 88). Though Creswell (2009) recommended a pilot study to establish trust and respect, I was unable to complete such a study. However, as an occupier of the "space between," I have the comfort and knowledge of the participants' field of work which built rapport and common ground prior to conducting interviews.

2. Creswell (2009) stated that the researcher should disseminate the purpose and sponsorship of the study clearly to participants. I did not operate under any sponsorships for this study. I also clearly identified the purpose of the study to participants upon initial contact with them and again in the consent document.

3. Ethical considerations of data collection are numerous. However, to ensure that the collection process was not harmful or unethical I gained approval from the Colorado State University IRB to conduct the study and ensured the consent form was encompassing and well communicated. Creswell (2009, p. 89-90) recommended the following criteria for an informed consent form and data collection, all of which were included for this study: (a) identification of the researcher, (b) identification of CSU as

the sponsoring institution, (c) indication of how participants were selected, (d) the purpose of the research and benefits for participating, (e) notation of risk to the participant which will be minimal to none, (f) guarantee of confidentiality through pseudonyms, (g) assurance that the participant can withdraw at any time, and (h) provision of contact information of the researcher should questions arise.

4. During data analysis and interpretation, I continued the use of pseudonyms for each participant to separate their identities from responses. I also plan to discard recorded data after a reasonable amount of time (5-10 years), as suggested by Creswell (2009). Finally, to ensure an accurate account of the information during interpretation, I member-checked my findings with participants and employed peer-checking with my advisor and Ph.D. peer group.

5. In the writing and dissemination of research, I took proactive steps as I collected and analyzed data through the methods further discussed in Chapter Three. First, I used member-checking and peer-checking to ensure that I did not unintentionally falsify or stretch findings. In transcendental phenomenology and in reaching a shared essence, it could be plausible to identify themes across cases that are not identical or related. In writing the study, I sought to be careful and forthright with displaying details of the design and methods so that other scholars and practitioners can fairly determine its value to them.

These ethical considerations were important to this study and myself because the goal of the study was to learn from the lived experiences of participants, and any harm to the participants during the process would have deteriorated and denied this aim.

Operational Definitions

Education is a complex system with its own language. The following section identifies and defines the operational key terms in this dissertation.

- *School Leadership*: School leadership is operationalized as both formal and informal influence over a school. Traditionally this definition has been focused on principals. However, the literature showed that leadership in a school can come from many other places.

- *Middle School*: Middle school is "a school intermediate between an elementary school and a high school, typically for children in the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades" (Miriam-Webster, 2017).

- *Teacher*: A teacher in this study is a formal position within a school and is defined as, "A person or thing that teaches something; especially: [*sic*] a person whose job is to teach students about certain subjects" (Merriam-Webster, 2017)

Delimitations and Limitations

This study was controlled by delimitations which are boundaries that are within the researcher's control (Mauch & Birch, 1993; Roberts, 2010). The first delimitation was time as the study was bounded to a finite amount of time, within one year from May 2017–May 2018. Second, the location of the study was confined to middle schools in one Midwestern state. Third, to ensure intensity of experience with the phenomenon, participants were selected via criteria including at least three years as a middle school teacher, an interest in the topic, a willingness to participate in interviews, and an agreement to have findings published (Moustakas, 1994, p. 107). These variables were controlled by the researcher to bind the study to an adequate yet finite time, place, and resources.

Limitations are components of the study that cannot be controlled by the researcher yet can influence the generalization of findings and originates from delimitations (Roberts, 2010). Due to proximity and the time-bounded nature of the study and consistent with the constructivist orientation to subjective knowledge, the findings are not to be generalized or replicated. Findings have been constructed in a process that could not be exactly replicated (Lincoln & Guba, 2013) because of the unique interaction between myself as the inquirer and the teachers as co-researchers. To ensure quality of inquiry, I followed the criteria described by Lincoln and Guba (2013): fairness, as well as ontological, educative, catalytic, and tactical authenticity. I also member-checked interpretations throughout the process to ensure that my own constructions of the participant experiences reflected their original descriptions.

Conclusion of Chapter One

Education is a pivotal construct of our nation and its leadership is essential to the success of future generations (J.I Goodlad et al., 2004; Schmidt-Davis & Bottoms, 2011). Research has shown time and time again that teachers carry immense weight in the success of our schools and students (Sutcher et al., 2016), so their voices may provide some of the answers we need to develop and practice successful leadership. Outside of education, RL (3Es) and RL/P offers a more systemic perspective of leadership that encompasses many contemporary and classic leadership approaches. However, school leadership literature often conceptualizes the leader as a single person instead of a system, and more specifically, a leadership performance system within a larger organizational system (Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004) with disregard of RL (3Es); thus, the literature overlooks the perspective of teachers' lived experiences in identifying the needs of leadership within the middle school system. The lessons learned as a result of the study

may inform future related research and catalyze action from both teachers and formal leaders to the betterment of our schools, students, and even society.

Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation is organized in five chapters including references and appendices according to the model outlined by the Graduate School at Colorado State University. Chapter One offers a cursory overview of the study and the purpose for the study. Main headings include: the research problem, research purpose, research questions, an overview of three informing bodies of literature, an outline of the constructivist methodology and transcendental phenomenological method, the theoretical framework, significance of the study, the researcher perspective, ethical considerations, operational definitions, delimitations and limitations, and a conclusion. Chapter Two includes reviews of the extant literature concerning: classic and contemporary approaches to leadership as discussed by Northouse (2016); an integrative review of RL literature and RL/P (Lynahm, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004); and school leadership from the teacher perspective. The chapter also discusses the overlap of each body of literature to each other. Chapter Three outlines the details and assumptions of the constructivist paradigm relative to the study as well as the process of transcendental phenomenology. Major headings include: a review of the research need and questions; the inquiry paradigm; methods of transcendental phenomenology (Moustakas, 1994); site selection; participant selection; description of the participants; saturation of participants; data collection and analysis; quality criteria of authenticity (Lincoln & Guba, 2003); limitations or the methods; and conclusion. Chapter Four outlines the analysis of data and findings from the data for individual participants and across their experiences. Each participant has a brief snap-shot of them and their experience plus a detailed description of their experience though the constructed structural-textural description,

mental models, and essence statements. Each also includes a discussion of their individual

description of the 3Es. The chapter ends with a shared description of essence and the 3Es by

looking across their experiences. Throughout Chapter Four the extant literature examined in

chapter two is integrated as appropriate. Finally, Chapter Five contains: a discussion of the

relevance of findings to the RL/P framework; implications of the findings for future research,

general theory, and practice of middle school leadership; a reflection back to the authenticity

criteria (Lincoln & Guba, 2013); the conclusions, implications for key stakeholders and

leadership, my reflection as the research instrument (Guba & Lincoln, 1981).

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This study exists in the intersection of three leadership constructs: classic and contemporary leadership theory, responsible leadership (RL), specifically Responsible Leadership for Performance's (RL/P) 3Es of responsibleness, and teacher perspectives of school leadership as seen in Figure 2.1. Individually, extant literature concerning each construct offers advantageous insight to understanding the complexity of leadership theory and praxis. Once consolidated, the three construct literature reviews provide the foundation to understand the current state of the body of knowledge informing responsible leadership (3E's) in education organizations.
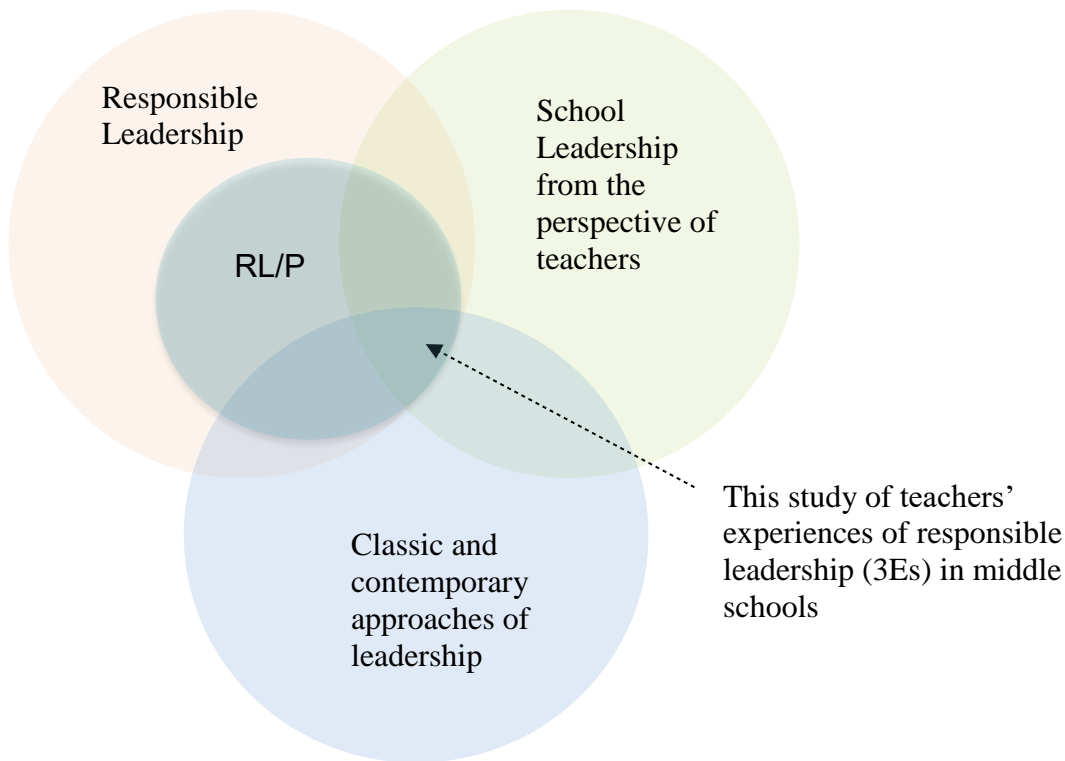
Figure 2.1. Three informing bodies of knowledge on leadership. This study resides in the cross-section of: (a) extant literature on the construct of RL and specifically RL as defined by the 3Es of RL/P (Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004); (b) school leadership from the teacher perspective; and (c) classic and contemporary approaches as described by Northouse (2016).

Northouse's (2016) seminal text, *Leadership: Theory and Practice,* explored the first construct, classic and contemporary approaches of leadership. The second construct, RL, is a perspective that has recently been revitalized in business literature and is associated with other leadership approaches. Within the construct of RL lies RL/P and the 3Es: effectiveness, ethics, and endurance (Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2004; White-Newman, 1983). RL/P, including the 3Es, is the most robust theory of RL and was the guiding theory for the research questions and interview protocol for this study. Lastly, the third construct, teacher perspectives of school leadership, informed the current state of literature within the context of this study. This study existed within the intersection of all three constructs, and considered teachers' lived experiences of the 3Es of RL/P.

This review of literature is organized to address each construct individually and then to examine the intersections between them. The initial access point to the literature was to examine Northouse's (2016) classic leadership approaches to survey popular theories and bracket the overall construct of leadership. Then an integrative literature review on RL (Torraco, 2006) was completed to gain new knowledge about the construct before exploring it within the added context of schools. Next, a review of the recent literature on school leadership from the perspective of teachers was completed. Because of a lack of RL literature specific to the context of middle schools or schools in the United States, studies spanning age groups and geographic regions were included. Finally, in accordance with constructivism, the researcher acted as an instrument of interpretation to locate the overlapping information between each of the three constructs.

Exploring the Three Constructs

Reviewing the extant literature concerning each of the constructs was intended to inform the current study and the gaps that existed. To locate the relevant literature, searches were done separately for each construct. The process for each is described in the corresponding section of this review.

Classic and Contemporary Approaches of Leadership

A seminal text on leadership was consulted to have a better understanding of the current state of leadership theories and approaches. Figure 2.2 situates this search into extant leadership

Responsible
Leadership

School
leadership from
the teacher
perspective

RL/P

Classic and
contemporary
leadership
approaches
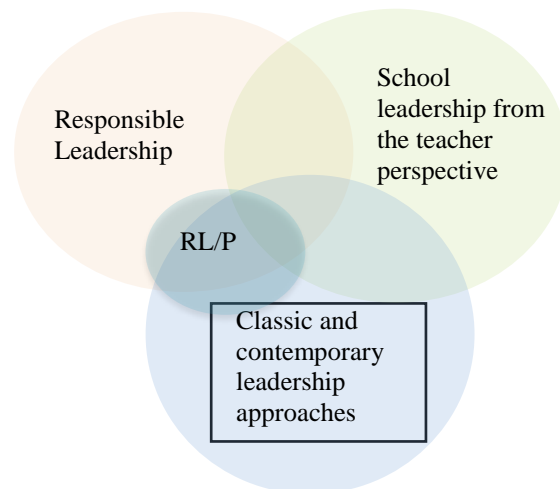
Figure 2.2. Visual on the focus of this current section of classic and contemporary approaches to leadership (Northouse, 2016) represented by the box.

approaches within the literature review represented by the red box. With seven editions of

Leadership: Theory and Practice, Northouse's (2016) leadership work has been lauded for

"bridg[ing] the gap between the often-simplistic popular approaches to leadership and the more

abstract theoretical approaches" (p. xvii). Northouse distinguishes leadership theories on two

divergent characteristics: (a) trait versus process, and (b) assigned versus emergent (p. 7-8).

The first determining characteristic, trait versus process is concerned with *how* one

becomes a leader. Trait leadership is conceptualized as a set of innate characteristics (Northouse,

2016, p. 19). People are believed to harness leadership just as they possess blue eyes or brown hair, for example. Process viewpoints, in comparison, conceptualize leadership existing in the context of interactions of leaders and followers (Northouse, 2016, p. 7). In this way, leadership is available to anyone and can be learned over time (Northouse, 2016, p. 8). The second determination, assigned versus emergent delineates *what* makes a leader. Assigned approaches grant leadership to people because of their formal position or title such as CEO or President. On the other hand, emergent approaches are defined by the way other members of the group view leadership (Northouse, 2016, p. 8). A title or office is not enough for emergent approaches; it must be determined and reinforced by the people it affects.

The theories Northouse (2016) included were discussed as "a complex process" (p. 17) and were equally assigned and emergent (p. 9). Subsequently, a brief exploration of the process approaches to leadership, defined by their inclusion in Northouse's book, one of the most prominent books of the field, provided a means to understand such a massive construct.

Trait approach. Trait leadership approaches are based on the idea of leadership genes passed from generation to generation that defined who could and would lead. Trait approaches offered one of the earliest entries to academic leadership studies and began the inquiry to understand how and why some people lead while others do not (Northouse, 2016, p. 19), postulating that select people are born with innate traits that move them into prominent positions in society, government, military, etc. Recently, trait approaches have regained attention after a couple of decades behind the scenes. For example, charismatic leadership (Zhen, Yuqiang, & Tienan, 2017) postulates a need for leaders to be outgoing and energizing. Northouse (2016), through an examination of research done on trait approaches through the last fifty years discerned six major leadership traits that encompass most of what scholarship defined as

mandatory: intelligence, self-confidence, determination, integrity, and sociability (p. 23). Trait approach literature suggests that these are traits people either have or they do not.

This straightforward approach that theorizes people naturally have or do not have such leadership traits provides clarity to trait over other leadership theories. Contextual factors or followership within the model are unwarranted as "leadership is composed of leaders, followers, and situations but the trait approach is devoted to only the first one of these—leaders" (Northouse, 2016, p. 30).

Skills approach. The skills approach, like trait leadership, is centered solely on the leader. However, instead of focusing on personality characteristics, the emphasis is placed on developed "knowledge and abilities [that] are needed for effective leadership" (Northouse, 2016, p. 42). The initial interest in skills leadership, led by Katz (1955), discerned three basic skills categories. First, technical skills included knowledge and proficiency in a specific type of work. Certain fields tend to place high value on technical skill, such as physician leaders or military personnel who are expected to have lived the experience themselves before they can lead. Second, human skills incorporated the abilities to work with people. Last, conceptual skills outlined the abilities to work with ideas and concepts (Northouse, 2016, p. 44-45). Katz (1955) determined that all leaders should have all three skill types, but some are more important than others depending on the context. For example, a CEO may need mostly the ability to work with people and conceptual skills ,whereas, management may need more technical skill. These skills are focused solely on the leader but delineate from trait approaches as developable or learned capabilities.

Behavioral approach. The behavioral approach shifts the focus from the leader to what the leader does and how the leader acts (Northouse, 2016, p. 71). Leaders combine task and

relationship behaviors according to their context to reach a goal. Much of the research on the behavioral approach culminated in the managerial (leadership) grid designed by Blake and Mouton (1985). The leadership grid assesses appropriate leadership behavior as it concerns production and concerns people (Northouse, 2016, p. 74). The two concerns are plotted on a nine-point grid and leaders are assessed according to the intersection of their levels of concern. For example, a level 1 concern of production with a 9 concern for people results in "country-club management" chartered by leader behavior focused entirely on people and not results (Northouse, 2016, p. 76). The behavior approach was indicative of the first move away from a focus solely on the leader; however, "certain situations may require different leadership styles" and the behavioral approach assumes that simultaneous high concern for people and production is always best (Northouse, 2016, p. 81).

Situational approach. The situational approach assumes that an effective leader is someone who adapts his or her style to the given situation (Northouse, 2016, p. 93). The primary variables accounted for are follower skills and motivations over time. Leaders in the situational approach first diagnose the development of their followers, the situation followers are in, and then apply the proper leadership style accordingly. This adaptation of the leader to the development of their followers separates situational approach from leader-centered constructs and, as will be discussed later, resonates with contextual framing of RL.

Path-Goal theory. The path-goal theory of leadership is concerned with the enhancement of follower performance and satisfaction (Northouse, 2016, p. 115). A leader's job is to provide information or rewards to followers in order to help them most effectively reach their goals. When the path is clear and free of obstruction, followers are theorized to be more motivated and satisfied (House, 1996). With the goal of building or clearing obstacles from the

path as they pertain to the goals of followers, the path-goal approach aims to increase effectiveness and satisfaction simultaneously.

Leadership, according to the path-goal approach, should adjust and adapt behaviors that are the most conducive to their followers' needs and the situation in which they operate. House (1996) determined four leadership behaviors: directive, supportive, participative, and achievement oriented (p. 83). Directive behaviors provide clear expectations for followers' work, timeframe, and how these should be done. The path-goal approach is effective with ambiguous tasks in which followers benefit from clear, decisive leadership. Supportive behaviors tend to the well-being and human needs of followers and are beneficial for repetitive tasks in which followers may feel complacent or apathetic. Participative behaviors are effective for autonomous followers with ambiguous tasks because they encourage follower involvement in decisions and actions through gathering of their ideas and opinions. Finally, achievement-oriented behaviors establish a high standard of performance and holds followers to the standard through consistent improvement to effectively handle challenging tasks (Northouse, 2016, p. 135). The behaviors to eliminate obstacles resonate with the dynamic adjustments required of leadership in the situational approach and RL.

Leader-Member exchange approach. The leader-member exchange (LMX) approach does not focus on the leader or the follower, but rather on the interactions between them (Northouse, 2016, p. 137). LMX assumes that followers are not a collective group, but rather that leaders must approach them as individuals. The relationship between a leader and a follower is the central point of emphasis. Research has found that positive leader-follower interactions are associated with "followers feeling better, accomplishing more, and helping the organization prosper" (Northouse, 2016, p. 157). Leaders are responsible for actively building positive

relationships with followers by building trust and mutual respect. In a meta-analytic review of the theory, Gerstner and Day (1997) found "significant relationships between LMX and job performance, satisfaction with supervision, overall satisfaction, commitment, role conflict, role clarity, member competence, and turnover intentions" (p. 827). However, LMX theory does not yet provide specific leadership actions to build these kinds of relationships nor does it account for contextual factors that may support or interfere.

Transformational leadership. Transformational leadership is one of the most popular approaches to leadership in current research. Scholars from business, psychology, education, healthcare, and more have been engaged with transformational leadership research in the past two decades. At its essence, transformational leadership is a "process that changes and transforms people. It is concerned with emotions, values, ethics, standards and long-term goals" (Northouse, 2016, p. 161). Leaders with charisma and vision are often associated with transformation as it requires an exceptional form of influence to move people toward a goal. Kuhnert (1994) cemented that transformational leaders and their followers act for a common good instead of self-interest.

Overall, the approach does not outline specific behaviors that leadership must take to be transformation, so it incorporates various models such as Kouzes and Posner's (2012) five practices of the leadership challenge to provide behaviors including: modeling the way as an example for others, inspiring shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act, and encouraging the heart. By applying these five principles, leadership is able to transform themselves, their followers, and their organization.

Authentic leadership. As a new area of leadership research, authentic leadership is still in the formative phases of theory. It focuses on the genuine authenticity of leaders and leadership

(Northouse, 2016, p. 195). This desire for authenticity, perhaps catalyzed by recent upheavals in society and business ethics, has been partially discussed in accordance with other active approaches, such as transformational leadership.

Due to the relatively new nature of the approach, there is no single accepted definition of authentic leadership. Instead, scholars are investigating authenticity in two veins of work: (a) the practical approach, and (b) the theoretical approach. The practical approach is described by George (2003) and George and Sims (2007). George, a former executive for Campbells and current professor at Harvard Business School outlined five dimensions of authentic leadership: (a) they understand their purpose, (b) the have strong values about doing the right thing, (c) they establish trusting relationships, (d) the demonstrate self-discipline and act upon their values, and (e) they act from their passion and heart for what they do (George, 2003). By doing these five things, leadership can become authentic to themselves and their followers.

The theoretical approach to authentic leadership is still emerging. Researchers (Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, & Peterson, 2008) have identified four major components of an emergent theory: self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing, and relational transparency (Northouse, 2016, p. 220). The inputs to authentic leadership are suggested to include a leader's positive psychology, moral reasoning, and critical life events that make authentic leadership a firmly grounded process approach. This deep authenticity of the leader themselves and leadership, resonates with RL literature as well in that leadership is not an objective job but rather a deeply personal experience.

Servant leadership. Like most leadership approaches discussed thus far, servant leadership is portrayed from the leader perspective and his or her behavior. However, servant leadership is unique in that it requires leaders to put followers first (Northouse, 2016, p. 225).

Greenleaf (1970) provided the most commonly utilized construction of servant leadership as a natural feeling that one wants to serve others first. From Greenleaf's work, Spears (2002) identified ten characteristics central to being a servant leader, summarized further by Northouse (2016): (a) servant leaders listen to follower input before making decisions; (b) they empathize with followers to ensure their feelings are confirmed and validated; (c) servant leaders heal followers, or make them whole, by caring for and supporting them; (d) servant leaders are aware of their physical, social, and political environments, allowing them to step aside and view their leadership in a broad context, (e) servant leaders motivate followers through "gentle nonjudgmental argument" (Northouse, 2016, p. 228), (f) they conceptualize a vision of their organization and clarify the goals and direction for followers; (g) servant leaders have foresight based on the past and present to look ahead and prepare; (h) they practice stewardship by taking responsibility for the role they have and its responsibilities; (i) they are also committed to the growth of people; and (j) servant leaders build community among followers who then feel safe and connected (Northouse, 2016).

More recently Liden, Panaccio, Hu, and Meuser (2014) theorized servant leadership as a process of: (a) antecedent conditions including context and culture, leader attributes, and follower receptivity; (b) servant leader behaviors from Greenleaf's (1970) work including conceptualizing, healing, followers first, ethical behavior, empowerment, and creating value; and (c) outcomes including follower performance and growth, organizational performance, and societal impact (Northouse, 2016, p. 232). Each of the three components operates to promote leadership that puts the needs of others first. This unique perspective is grounded in historical and literary examples of how self-sacrifice leads to extraordinary positive impact on others in the group.

Adaptive leadership. Adaptive leadership concerns how leaders encourage people to adapt and change line response to alterations in the environment (Northouse, 2016, p. 257). Although theoretical undergirding of adaptive leadership is still forming, anecdotal and descriptive literature beginning with Heifetz (1994) has provided a catalyst for further exploration of the approach. The leader(s) are not necessarily the problem solvers in adaptive approaches; rather, they act as the catalyst for mobilization of people to tackle the problems and provide the spaces and opportunities they need to do so (Northouse, 2016, p. 258). In essence, an adaptive leader is one who takes action toward encouraging others to "address and resolve changes that are central to their lives" (Northouse, 2016, p. 258).

In order for leadership to be adaptive, Heifetz (1994) outlined four perspectives: systems, biological, service orientation, and psycho-therapy. First, a systems perspective assumes that challenges are complex and related to a larger phenomenon that can evolve and change. A biological perspective acknowledges that people evolve as a result of adaptation. Third, a service orientation situates the leader as an expert who uses their skills and knowledge to serve others. Finally, a psychotherapy perspective acknowledges that to adapt, people need a supportive and safe environment and leadership is responsible for creating it (Heifetz, 1994). In praxis, Heifetz (1994) summarized six specific behaviors adaptive leaders practice: (a) getting on the balcony for a macro-level view to gain perspective; (b) identifying adaptive challenges such as work avoidance; (c) regulating distress to help followers change but not be overwhelmed by it; (d) maintain discipline attention and focus through tough work; (e) give the work back to the people after providing some structure; and (f) protect leadership voices from below by being attentive to those who may be marginalized in the organization (as cited in Northouse, 2016, p. 263-271). By

taking these six practical action steps, leaders and their followers can identify, confront, and change challenging situations.

Through exploration of classical and contemporary leadership approaches, a few patterns surface. Firstly, Northouse's (2016) writing on leadership approaches have moved along a continuum from leader-centered approaches with innate abilities to follower-centered approaches developed over time. This seems to suggest that the future of leadership is developed and learned. This opens the perspective of leadership from the traditional great man (Northouse, 2016) to many more people over time. Secondly, the scattered nature of the theories without a common thread, creates tension for what leadership can or should be. An inductive theory of leadership, such as RL/P and the 3Es, that can incorporate multiple approaches would benefit the extant leadership literature greatly. Lastly, the general need for understanding the construct is evident by the massive amount of information pertaining to leadership in articles, books, blogs, music, and more. Though the amount of leadership literature can be overwhelming, it is also evidence that further work on the refinement of theory and praxis is worthwhile.

Responsible Leadership

The concept and construct of Responsible Leadership (RL) found its way into the academic literature in the early 1990's with the work of White Newman (1983). Figure 2.3 visualizes the focus on RL and its place within this review. While there was a deficiency in the literature on Responsible Leadership for almost another decade, the construct began to gain traction around the globe in the mid-2000's. In 2010, the first *Conference on Responsible Leadership*, sponsored by GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Internationale Zusammenarbeit), was hosted by the Centre for Responsible Leadership at the University of
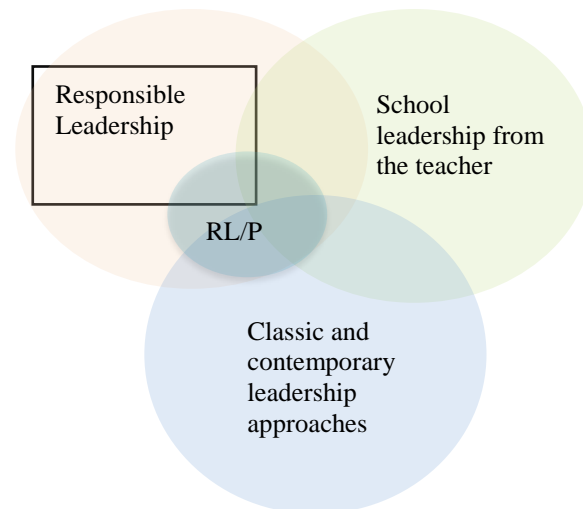
Figure 2.3. Visual on the focus of this current section on Responsible Leadership literature and RL/P (Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004) represented by the box.

Pretoria in South Africa. Marking the first annual international gathering of scholars and practitioners, the conference launched the importance of the RL construct and the need to study and understand it further—with the aim to inform improved leadership practice around the world. The focus of the conference was to contribute to the Centre's dedication "to the development of a generation of responsible leaders committed to social and environmental justice" (de Jongh, 2010, p.1). The hosts stated the need to promote,

> leadership that should demonstrate integrity, transparency, and accountability in their activities. They should define strategy, provide direction, shape policy, and establish the ethics and values that can influence and guide behavior toward sustainable performance that reflects the true cost and value of business in society. (de Jongh, 2010, p.1)

It also marked the first major collection of a body of knowledge on the RL construct, and launched concerted interest and collaborations for the development of related theory, research, and practice on RL, not just in South Africa, but globally. In 2006, interest in RL gained traction in the world of business when an edited book by Maak and Pless (2006) titled, *Responsible Leadership,* supported the claim that "responsible leadership is one of the most pressing issues in

the business world" (p. 1). Addressing this pressing issue has taken two routes: speaking to why

we need RL and speaking to what RL is in theory and practice

Locating the literature. Relevant literature was collected through electronic databases

and search engine inquiries in the fall of 2015, spring of 2016, and updated in the spring of 2018.

The date ranged from 2004 to 2016, reflecting the most recent publication on RL/P (Lynham,

2004). Also, to ensure proper understanding, literature was not limited to peer reviewed journal

publications as recommended by Torraco (2005). Trade journal entries (Broadbent, 2015; De

Bettignies, 2014), university statements of purpose and private corporation mission statements

(LORD, 2015; Wells, 2009), as well as books (Badaracco, 2013) were included. RL as a

definitive and independent construct is featured in the included literature.

An initial search for "responsible leader*" in *Academic Search Premier*, *Business Source*

Complete, *Business Source Premier*, and *PsychInfo* accessed through a university in the Rocky

Mountain region yielded a total of 462 entries. The asterisk was utilized as truncation to ensure

that the search included variation of leader such as leadership and leaders. A "Title only" filter

was then applied to ensure RL was a primary construct in each piece resulting in 169 entries. The

results were narrowed to peer-reviewed and trade journals and eliminating periodicals and book

reviews, yielding 139 entries. The date range was then set from 2004 to 2018, based on the most

recent relevant publication of Lynham's (2004) RL/P theory, and the results totaled 132 sources.

This beginning date was important because most works published since 2004 do not cite Lynham

(1992, 1998, 2002, 2004) even though RL/P is arguably the most robust framework on RL.

Finally, results were filtered for relevance by eliminating articles not specifically pertaining to

RL as a stand-alone construct in order to maintain focus on the construct (Callahan, 2010;

Torraco, 2005, p. 362). For example, eliminating terms included, "socially responsible

leadership," "globally responsible leadership," and "discursive responsible leadership." All duplicated pieces across databases were deleted. The final search compiled 58 unique and informing peer reviewed and trade journal pieces, including two books (Badaracco, 2013, Doh & Stumpf, 2005).

In addition to the academic search, a general search engine inquiry on the Internet via Google for "responsible leadership" yielded 6 blog and trade articles specifically pertaining to RL and published since 2004. Finally, six pieces from the proceedings of the Responsible Leadership conference hosted in South Africa in 2010, which discussed Responsible Leadership as a unique construct were added. In total, 72 pieces including 58 peer reviewed and trade journal articles, 2 full length books, 6 popular media pieces, and 6 papers from conference proceedings were included.

How RL has been explored. RL has been approached through an array of methods since the most recent publication pertaining to Lynham's (1998, 2000, 2004) robust theory of Responsible Leadership for Performance (RL/P). Both non-empirical and empirical research methods typify related inquiry during the past decade. Figure 2.4 provides a visual of how the methods utilized might be categorized. A majority of the research is non-empirical and conceptual, and also leans toward qualitative empirical methods. Therefore, it is appropriate to first examine non-empirical work including conceptual, anecdotal, and model development structures and then examine the empirical methods that have been used including quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods research.
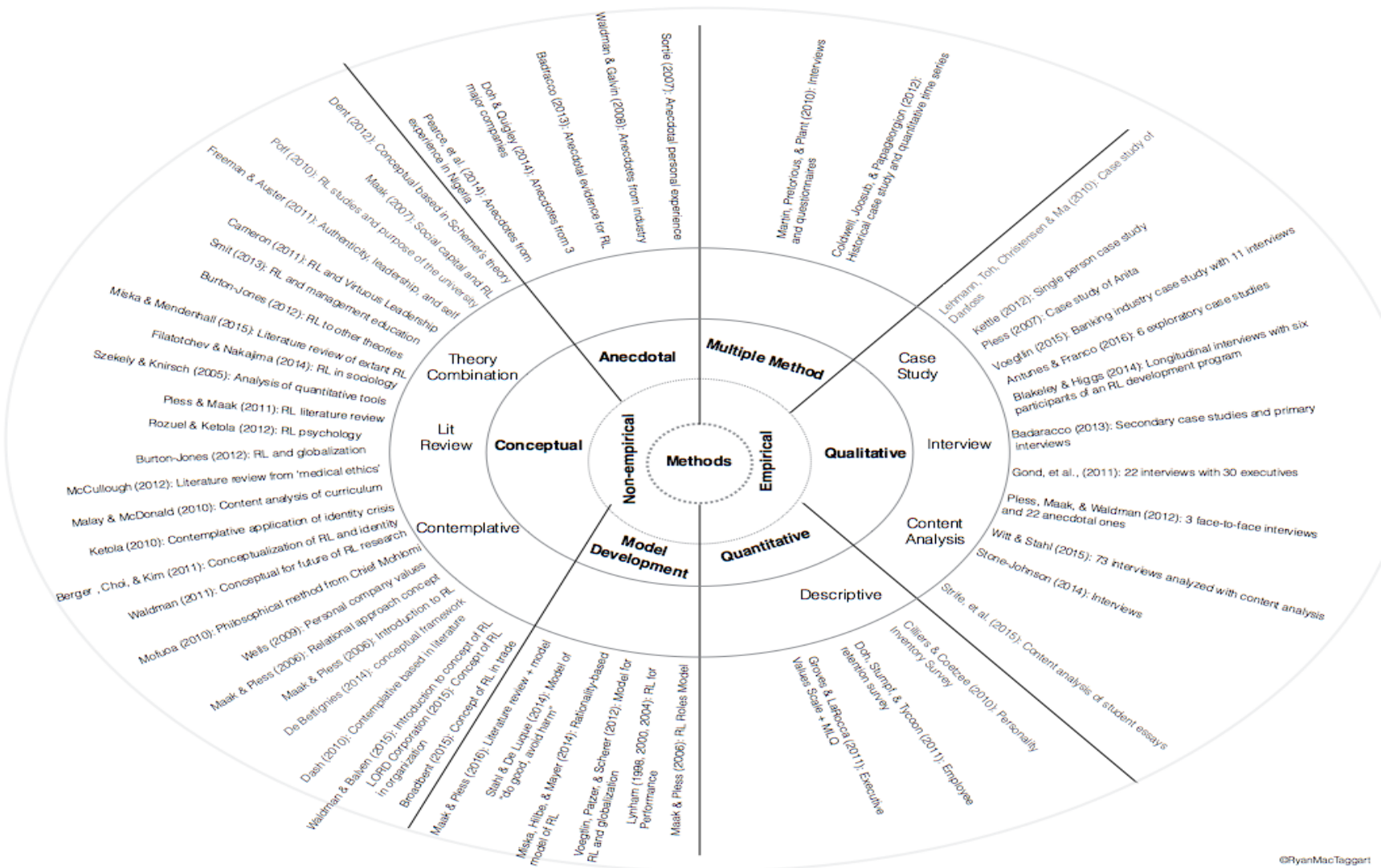
Figure 2.4. Extant methods to study RL. This figure is a visual representation of the extant RL literature's methods to study the construct.

Non-Empirical RL research. Non-empirical research in this analysis includes work done to describe RL without the inclusion of detailed methods or data. In extant literature, non-empirical methods described RL across contexts and provided a starting point for future empirical research to refine and apply the construct. Five categories of non-empirical research were present: (a) contemplative, (b) anecdotally based work, (c) theory combination pieces which associate RL with one or more other theoretical constructs, (d) model development, and (e) theory building.

Contemplative research. Contemplative research methods are identified by the researcher(s) working purely from their own thoughts and ideas to develop a description of RL (De Bettignies, 2014; LORD corporation, 2015; Mofuoa, 2010; Wells, 2009). There were no methods sections included in these pieces and there was no expectation to describe them (Brown University, 2016). Contemplative methods allow for people from various backgrounds to participate in constructing the phenomenon and create unique connections across disciplines and life-experiences (Brown University, 2016). This type of cross-contextual understanding is free flowing in contemplative research and provided evidence for RL's relevance to diverse audiences. The informality of contemplative research allows for freedom and connection but leaves a desire for formalized understanding. Extant and future empirical research should further refine and define RL within bounded contexts, taking the construct to a new level of understanding.

Anecdotal. Anecdotal research is characterized by casual observations or personal indications of a phenomenon (Anecdote, 2016). Personal stories were used to describe how RL manifested in people's experiences. For instance, Badaracco (2013) composed a book on "the good struggle" as a set of anecdotes, which illustrated various characteristics of RL. The personal

stories made RL tangible and something to learn from for the reader. Also, Doh and Quigley (2014) used stories from three companies to describe RL and what it looked like in practice. They applied their own understanding to the construct to see it in the success of organizations.

These anecdotes, though not empirical, offer description to the understanding of RL. First, the real-life stories in action are evidence that RL is not just a theoretical construct but a practical approach to leadership. Second, anecdotal research offers a unique opportunity to reach readers beyond the walls of academia. Many popular non-fiction works are characterized by stories that resonate with those inside and outside of traditional academic circles. Anecdotes offer the construct to popular audiences and provide evidence to its applicability.

Model development. Conceptual model development provides an intermediary step between description of a construct and formal theorizing. It is the first attempt to develop a transferable description of a phenomenon but lacks explicit logic and description of the processes used to develop it. Maak and Pless' (2006) roles model is the paramount example of this form of research in regard to RL. They developed their model based on their own experiences and researchers have since used it as a place to start in-depth exploration of the construct (Groves & LaRocca, 2011; Maritz, Pretorius, & Plant, 2011; Pless, 2007; Stone-Johnson, 2014). Development of a model provides a scaffold for future research to build upon and Maak and Pless (2006) certainly afforded that for RL.

Theory building. While disciplined robust theory building acts to move research from non-empirical to empirical work, robust theory is limited in the RL literature. However, one example of such theory building is Lynham's (1998, 2000, 2004) inductively driven development of A Theory for Responsible Leadership for Performance (RL/P). Lynham (2002) defined theory building as, "the ongoing process of producing, confirming, applying, and

adapting theory" (p. 222). What separates theory building from model development is that theory building is "following a logical cognitive style in the development and application of the theory and by explicitly reconstructing, or making explicit, that logic-in-use" (Lynham, 2002, p. 223). As a result of the use of a disciplined theory building methodology, as described by Dubin (1976 as cited in Lynham, 2000, p. 160), this theory of RL/P forms the theoretical framework used to inform the conduct of this study.

The non-empirical research on RL comprises about half of the total extant literature. RL is no exception to the rule that a new construct is typically first explored through description before being applied, studied, and understood in context. These contemplative, anecdotal, model development, and theorizing pieces offer an important starting point for future empirical research, and reflect significant utility in beginning the study of RL in various contexts and with various methodologies. They also underscore the need for future research that explicitly outlines methodological protocols.

Empirical RL research. Empirical research includes efforts to gain new knowledge through the use of direct senses to gain data (Goodwin, 2012). The most common data collection modes are observation, either visual or auditory, and experimentation. This work can be quantitative, qualitative, or a mix of the two. Based on a review of extant literature, each method was seemingly used to study and inform RL to some degree.

Quantitative RL research. Quantitative inquiry is represented in the form of four typical designs throughout RL literature: descriptive, correlational, quasi-experimental, or experimental (Center for Innovation in Research and Teaching, 2016). The related literature suggested very little quantitative work, and that which did exist was correlational in that it "explores and observes relationships between variables that are not controlled" (Center for Innovation in

Research and Teaching, 2016, p. 1). Nevertheless, such inquiry does offer meaningful insight as to the importance of RL in industry. Doh, Stumpf, and Tycoon (2011), for example, utilized correlational analysis (N = 4,352) to determine that employees were significantly (p < .001) more likely to remain in their jobs if their supervisor practiced RL. Also, Groves and LaRocca (2011) utilized correlational research (N = 580) to find that RL benefited from transformational leadership practices. These studies show the value of quantitative research for RL and provide direction for not just future studies, but also increasingly robust ones.

Quantitative methods allow for a phenomenon such as RL to be understood through large sample sizes, the address of precise questions, and the affordance of generalizable knowledge. The literature on RL suggested, however, a notable gap in studies and inquiry, undergirding the absence of a unified description or shared essence of RL important to inform future experiments. Constructing this kind of universal, shared essence would be an appropriate first step in bettering the understanding of RL and providing direction for future researchers.

Qualitative RL research. The most common empirical methods used to study RL were qualitative in nature. The literature showed, for example, that case studies, interpretive interviews, and content analysis had been used in various contexts on RL by a variety of writers.

Case study research is defined by its focus on a "bounded system . . . a single entity, a unit around which there are boundaries" (Merriam, 2002, p. 178). Case studies are therefore enveloped by finite terms of time and/or components of the specific case at hand. Stake (1995, p. 2) stated that a case "is a specific, complex, functioning thing" that stands alone as a viable research topic instead of relying on comparison or examination across contexts. In-depth learning of a single unit allows readers to determine what, if anything, can be applied to his or her context (Merriam, 2002, p. 179). The RL literature was clearly informed by case studies for

the purpose of examining the phenomenon bounded to a single person, a single industry, or particular themes. For example, Pless (2007) completed a narrative biographical analysis case study of Anita Roderick, who is widely seen as a responsible leader from a personal biographical interview, two autobiographical books, and personal observation. Pless (2007) stated that, "biographical information provides retrospective sense-making and identity construction to explain how and why a person (Anita) has developed into the leader she has become" (p. 441). Blakeley and Higgs (2014) also bounded their ideographic case study to one person's experience in an RL development program via interview at five points in time over the course of fourteen months. Ketola (2012) also performed a person case study, through the use of Jungian method, which aimed to answer questions about what RL means on an unconscious level. A single person's perspective, as reflected in these case studies, allows researchers to develop deep understanding in robust theory development, for example (Teagarden et al., 1995).

Other RL case studies have examined the phenomenon within bounded industries. For instance, Voegtlin (2016) completed a case study of RL in the banking industry through interviews with eleven executives of two Swiss banks. Data were collected through face-to-face interviews and analyzed via thematic coding for dimensions of responsibility and challenges to those dimensions. Collecting documentation in addition to interviews helped Voegtlin (2016) triangulate and build meaningful findings on RL, an approach that could prove useful in defining RL in other contexts such as schools. Exploring RL within an industry allows the researcher to collect data from multiple sources and still remain focused on a bounded context.

Case studies offer understanding of the contribution of human behavior to contextualizing a phenomenon (Lincoln & Guba, 1994). RL literature includes many case studies which serve such a purpose. For example, using Yin's (2013) protocol, Atunes and Franco

(2016) utilized a multiple holistic case study to explore six cases of organizations that practiced RL. Twenty-eight people were purposefully sampled from top to bottom across the organization (Patton, 1990; Yin, 2013). Data were collected using personal interviews, direct observation, and document analysis. By examining RL from various stakeholder viewpoints, Atunes and Franco were able to contextualize RL as a personal experience instead of an objective approach to leadership.

Case study methods provide helpful foundations for the construct of RL and suggest that individual experiences are useful for discovering meaning. They further highlight the need for continued understanding of RL across multiple contexts. Though suggesting a resonance of RL at the individual level, they all reflect a shared essence still left unexamined.

Interpretive qualitative research can take many methodological forms outside of case studies; however, the extant RL research tends to not divulge detailed methods used. As a result, the pieces described below all engage interpretive interviews as a common mode of data collection. Interpretive inquiry compliments case study research because it provides deeper description of what RL is and how RL is experienced across varying contexts, such as education, private industry corporate social responsibility (CSR) departments, and businesses in various global regions. A brief overview of these interpretive studies and how they were conducted is helpful because this proposed study will also utilize interviews as the primary source of data collection.

To address what RL is in the context of education, Stone-Johnson (2014) utilized qualitative interview data from the Performing Beyond Expectations study completed between 2007 and 2010. The original study included 220 interviews from 18 school sites that were analyzed and coded according to Yin's (2013) protocol for fifteen factors of leadership. Stone-

Johnson (2014) then chose three sites from one geographic area to further analyze Maak and Pless' (2006) the four roles that were most relevant for schools (visionary, servant, steward, and citizen). Though the methods of this study hold promise for the exploration of RL within educational contexts, the lack of descriptive detail of the methods used highlights a gap for future study and intentional exploration of RL.

Some interpretive interview-based studies also provide answers to the question of how RL operates within other organizational structures. For example, through interviews with 30 executives, Gond, Igalens, Swaen, and El Akremi (2011) found that human resource departments and policies significantly contribute to an organizations level of RL. Interviews were anchored in four themes that captured the variables of the study using a pre-determined protocol (Gond et al., 2011, p. 119). Predefined codes were imported into Nvivo8 and two researchers coded each interview transcript into the predetermined codes and also rated each organization on the four anchors, connecting HR and RL. Another example of the connection between RL and HR comes from Pless, Maak, and Waldman (2012) who collected data from 25 top-level business leaders and entrepreneurs from multiple industries. Participants were required to be associated with firms considered strong in CSR. Data collection included interviews, speeches, blogs, and autobiographical books. Using a content-analytic approach Pless et al.'s (2012) analyzed data in two phases: (a) two researchers independently scanned the data for text that indicated specific responsibility statements, and (b) researchers developed a set of leader categories based on these responsibility statements. The clear description of the methods used in each of these studies made the logic of data collection, analysis, findings, and conclusion very explicit, thereby undergirding the importance of doing so in future studies.

Other extant interpretive research described how RL is manifested in various cultural and geographic environments. The best example is a study by Witt and Stahl (2015) who interviewed 73 business leaders in Germany (n = 17), the United States (n = 14), China (n = 10), Japan (n = 17), and Korea (n = 15) to examine how the construct of RL was described in each of their business cultures. A convenience sample of network connections and third-party introductions was completed for participants who had the responsibility for creating and executing strategy at the highest level within their organization. To align with an exploratory nature, Witt and Stahl (2015) utilized semi-structured, in-depth interviews as modeled by Redding (1990). Reliability and validity were ensured through peer checking, yielding a strong Cohen's alpha for inter-rater reliability (α = .75 - .80). Witt and Stahl (2015) provide evidence for the usefulness of exploratory interpretation research when a construct has been recently formulated such as RL has.

RL literature does not include many content analysis pieces; however, the work of Sroufe, Sivasubramaniam, Ramos, and Saiia (2015) was worth exploring as it related to RL in formal education. Sroufe et al. completed a content analysis of MBA student reflective essays from 62 students over a three-year period. The data were coded based on Maak and Pless' (2006) roles model framework and triangulated by three faculty members both within and across cases. Sroufe et al. found that Study Abroad programs contributed to development of five of the six RL "roles": steward, global citizen, social agent/architect, story teller and meaning maker, visionary (p. 248-9). Content analysis provided insight on the usefulness of written sources in understanding a construct such as RL.

The extant qualitative research identified and defined the construct of RL for individual units (case study), cultural groups and organizations (interviews), and content (content analysis).

The nature of RL as a fairly new construct allowed for these studies to be simultaneously rigorous and informative yet insufficient for complete understanding. The studies began answering big questions: (a) How do individuals experience RL in their lives over time? (b) How is RL related to/in operation with other aspects of organizations; (c) Is RL relevant to various groups of people? and (d) How is RL manifested in people's experiences (lived, spoken, and written)? Though further, refined understanding is needed, RL qualitative inquiry has provided motivation for further study of RL in peoples' experiencies.

  Mixed-methods RL research. RL has been explored through the use of quantitative and qualitative research together in a mixed approach. Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) described the difference between "mixed method" and "multi-method" research. They stated that writers "are careful to distinguish 'multi-method studies' in which multiple types of qualitative or quantitative data are collected from 'mixed methods studies' that incorporate collecting both qualitative and quantitative data." (p. 273). In the instance of RL, a few empirical studies utilized multiple or mixed method approaches to explore long-term effects on traditional measurements of leadership success and further relate RL to other phenomena robustly studied (Coldwell, Joosub, & Papageorgion, 2012; Lehmann, Toh, & Christensen, 2010; Maritz et al., 2010). Multiple method research on RL, characterized by the use of multiple qualitative methods in one study, lends credence data triangulation to better understand a phenomenon. Mixed method approaches also provide beneficial evidence for using various forms of data to understand a construct.

  All three methodological approaches in the extant literature have contributed to our understanding of the RL construct. Quantitative research showed correlational relationships between RL and factors such as employee retention and personal identity. Qualitative inquiry illustrated how individuals and other bounded groups experience RL, what people across varying

contexts believed about the construct, and how written documents reflected RL practices. Mixed and multiple method approaches successfully drew connections between RL and other constructs, such as CSR, and through source triangulation, gave insight of RL. However useful these methods are, the related studies and their subsequent findings were not anchored in a shared essence of RL nor informed by a robust theoretical framework of RL, for example, like RL/P (Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004). This gap suggests value in further exploring particular and shared essences of RL as a lived phenomenon.

Unknowns in extant literature Though the methods used by scholars to study RL thus far provide useful and informative insights about the concepts of RL, work remains to truly understand the phenomenon. Outside of Lynham (1998, 2000, 2002, 2004) and Maak and Pless (2006), the robustness of theory and model building is notably lacking with Lynham (1998, 2000, 2002, 2004) offering the sole theory developed through robust theory-building methods of RL to date.

The gap between current methods and a lack of robust theory provides a few observations. First, other than Stone-Johnson (2014) and McCullough (2012) who examined RL in schools and health care respectively, literature on the construct resides almost exclusively in the business and management field. Further, the current body of research reflects a lack of methodological articles which describe how the understanding of RL has been pursued. The studies above described their methods to varying degrees, but no articles focused on methodology used to study the construct. Furthermore, the majority did not include method discussions at all. Finally, to date, little empirical research on the topic exists with only five pieces that rely on original interviews to inform findings. Though these observations highlight a

gap on this body of knowledge, they also suggest opportunity: The construct of RL is ripe for further study using robust methodology and original data collection.

Moreover, a gap in the existing methodology applied to the study of RL results in an absence of a theorized phenomenon. For example, most pieces rely on Maak and Pless' (2006) roles model, which represents RL as qualities that leaders illustrate at any given time: servant, steward, citizen, visionary, change agent, storyteller, coach, and architect. However, many researchers using roles model (Maak and Pless, 2006) in their study of RL utilize only some components of the model. The understanding of the construct would benefit from studying a shared essence of RL as a phenomenon of lived experience, for example. Phenomenology that results in descriptions of the lived experience of the phenomenon could provide future research with an essential definition of what RL is and how it is experienced. Such study could inform further development of the theoretical framework of RL/P (Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004) and templates for future research on the phenomenon in various contexts, such as schools, hospitals, and government.

These gaps in the research denote the exploratory and developing nature of RL research and the gaps and opportunity related to such inquiry. To begin the process of constructing a shared essence understanding of RL in schools, methodology and methods for a phenomenological study is proposed and described in Chapter Three of this proposal.

Reasons RL has been described. The need for RL has been motivated by inclinations to (a) open leadership systems toward inclusion of more people, (b) extend leadership focus to the greater good, and (c) promote leadership with strong ethical groundings.

The literature suggested that RL operates as an open system with various people acting in and upon it (Berger et al., 2011; Broadbent, 2015; Dent, 2012; Ketola, 2012; Lynham, 1998,

2000, 2002, 2004; Pless & Maak, 2011; Sortie, 2007). For example, RL rejects "great man" (citation) leadership, therefore, opening it to external stakeholders, such as an aggrandizing relationships. RL also suggests a need for common values (Filatotchev & Nakajima, 2014; Freeman & Auster, 2011; Maak & Pless, 2006; Maak, 2007) created from a wide range of internal stakeholder inputs, such as employees, customers, board members, etc. (Burton-Jones, 2012; Doh & Quigley, 2014; Groves & LaRocca, 2011; Lynham, 2000, 2002, 2004). Some research went further to include external stakeholders including competitors, customers, interest groups, etc. as valuable inputs (Doh & Quigley, 2014; Filatotchev & Nakajima, 2014; Lynham, 2004; McCullough, 2012; Waldman & Galvin, 2008).

The literature suggested RL as a leadership focused for the greater good (Siegel, 2015; Waldman, 2011). By focusing on a big picture and determining meaningful action for many stakeholders, RL systems are capable of connecting people toward common human welfare (Blakeley & Higgs, 2014; Cameron, 2011; Coldwell et al., 2012; Freeman & Auster, 2011; Maak & Pless, 2006; Voegtlin, Patzer, & Scherer, 2012; Pless & Maak, 2011; Witt & Stahl, 2015). For instance, Gond et al. (2011) defined responsible leaders as those who "build and sustain good relationships. . .for the advancement of humanism and the promotion of welfare on a global scale" (p.115). Such focus on others also requires RL to be affectively oriented with personal integrity (Broadbent, 2015), virtuousness (Cameron, 2011), authenticity (Freeman & Auster, 2011), as well as heart and compassion (Mofuoa, 2010). Affective in nature with consideration for a multitude of stakeholders' well-being, RL is not considered a self-focused approach to leadership, but rather an approach created and maintained for the greater good of society.

A final motivation for the conceptualization of RL has been in response to cases of and general lapses in ethical indiscretions (Dassah, 2010; Maak & Pless, 2006; Maloiy & McDonald,

2010; Pless, 2007; Waldman, 2011). The RL literature suggested that ethical action be a goal, but furthermore, ethics and values should be the starting line for organizational behavior, decisions, judgments, and actions (Freeman & Auster, 2011; Stahl & De Luque, 2014; Voegtlin, 2016). Such a focus on ethics requires a move away from profit as the number one priority of leadership implied in classic approaches, to being guided by the adage to do good and avoid harm (Burton-Jones, 2012; Pearce, Wassenaar, & Manz, 2014).

Research on RL has been motivated by a need to open systems, focus on the greater good, and ground leadership in ethical behavior. Doing so requires a paradigm shift on the role of leadership and directly confronts the notion that leadership exists to drive production and gives the role to those who lead.

Descriptions of RL. To accomplish the three above outcomes, RL has been described in three meaningful ways: (a) associated with ideals of extant leadership approaches, (b) a contextually bound system of inputs, processes, and outputs toward serving others; and (c) a set of affective leadership characteristics, actions, and images. As will be discussed further in the following section, many writers described RL through its positive associations with ideal approaches and processes. Some described it as the most affective component of approaches such as servant, transformational, or authentic leadership. Others described it as a means to affective ends, including CSR, a company's action to benefit society as a whole (Filatotchev & Nakajima, 2014; LaRocca & Groves, 2011; Sortie, 2007; Voegltin, Patzer, & Scherer, 2012).

RL has also been described as a system with inputs, process, and outputs focused on serving. RL inputs are diverse stakeholders from both inside and outside of the organization whose voices all contribute to the needs of RL (Blakeley & Higgs, 2014; Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004; Maak & Pless, 2006; Maak, 2007; Voegltin, 2015). RL encompasses actions and

processes of ethical individual action (Doh et al., 2011; Gond et al., 2011; Waldman, 2011; Waldman & Galvin, 2008) and the act of balancing power, social factors, and leader influence (Cilliers & Coetzee, 2010). White-Newman (1983) and Lynham (1998, 2000, 2002, 2004) argued that the 3Es of effectiveness, ethics, and endurance constitute the process of RL. Finally, the outputs of RL vary but are consistently constructed as something that can only be defined by serving the relationships and feedback from stakeholders for the common good of humanity (Cameron, 2011; Gond et al., 2011; Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004; Maak, 2007; Maak & Pless, 2006; Pless & Maak, 2011; Voegtlin, Patzer, & Scherer, 2012). Leadership seems to no longer a construct designed solely to enhance profitability. Instead, as RL shows, leadership must be an ideal view with a systemic structure for multiple positive outputs.

RL literature is scattered in terms of origin and framework but the described needs and means are consistent; however, one notable issue is the lack of reference to a robust theoretical framework. RL/P (Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004) could prove useful in furthering the understanding of RL in all contexts, especially in education where RL literature is scarce (Stone-Johnson, 2014).

RL/P and the 3Es. White-Newman (1993) and Lynham (1998, 2000, 2002, 2004), in a cluster outside of the business literature, respectively described and developed a model and later a theory of Responsible Leadership for Performance (RL/P). In the model, White-Newman (1993), a professor at the then College of St. Catherine and Director of the Masters of Arts in Organizational Leadership program, distinguished 3Es of responsible leadership: practices of *effectiveness*, *ethical* habits, and resources for *endurance*. "Too often," White-Newman said (1993, as cited in Lynham, 1998), "leadership writing and practice have emphasized how to be

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effective. They need to embrace much more than this singular focus" (p. 211). White-Newman

continued by describing the need for the 3Es to work together in leadership for all stakeholders:

> Being solely concerned with effect seems inadequate, potentially even dangerous, since it is obvious that a person can be effective–that is, make a difference–yet also be unethical. Knowing the harm such people can cause, I believe most of us want leaders who, because they are ethical, will make beneficial differences to the world.
> Conversely, many good people just cannot get things done; they do not make a difference. They are ethical, but ineffectual. The premise is that most of us want to follow a good person who can convert ethical ideas into viable actions.
> Too often, in these stressful times, individuals who are effective and ethical survive as leaders for only a brief time. They do not endure. Some are replaced by external factors. Others cave in or burn out under the pressure of leadership. It seems irrational to advocate using up leadership, or self-immolation, as a way to serve a cause. Thus, endurance becomes essential to leadership. Endurance encompasses refreshment for leaders and renewal for their groups. The further assumption is that most of us wish to follow, and/or be, enduring leaders. Being effective, ethical, and enduring as a leader is the 3Es model. (as cited in Lynham, 1998, p. 211-212)

Building off this 3Es model, the theory of RL/P is characterized by "three units which

interact in a systemic way to form the inputs, process, and outputs of the leadership system–in–

focus" as shown in Figure 2.5 (Lynham, 2000, p. 130).

The first unit consists of the inputs to an RL/P system, the considerations for constituency

who are (a) inside or outside, (b) with high or low authority, and (c) high or low impact. The

inputs describe who can (and should) influence the system and recognizes the necessity to

consider multiple stakeholders and thus more than just formal leaders. The second unit, the

processes of "responsibleness," are White-Newman's (1993) 3Es: the "three poles for

constructing a teepee and providing a common framework" for responsible actions (Lynham,

1998, p. 212). The third and final unit, the multi-level outputs of the system, is described as the

domains of performance. They consist of (a) the system mission; (b) the work process/es; (c) the
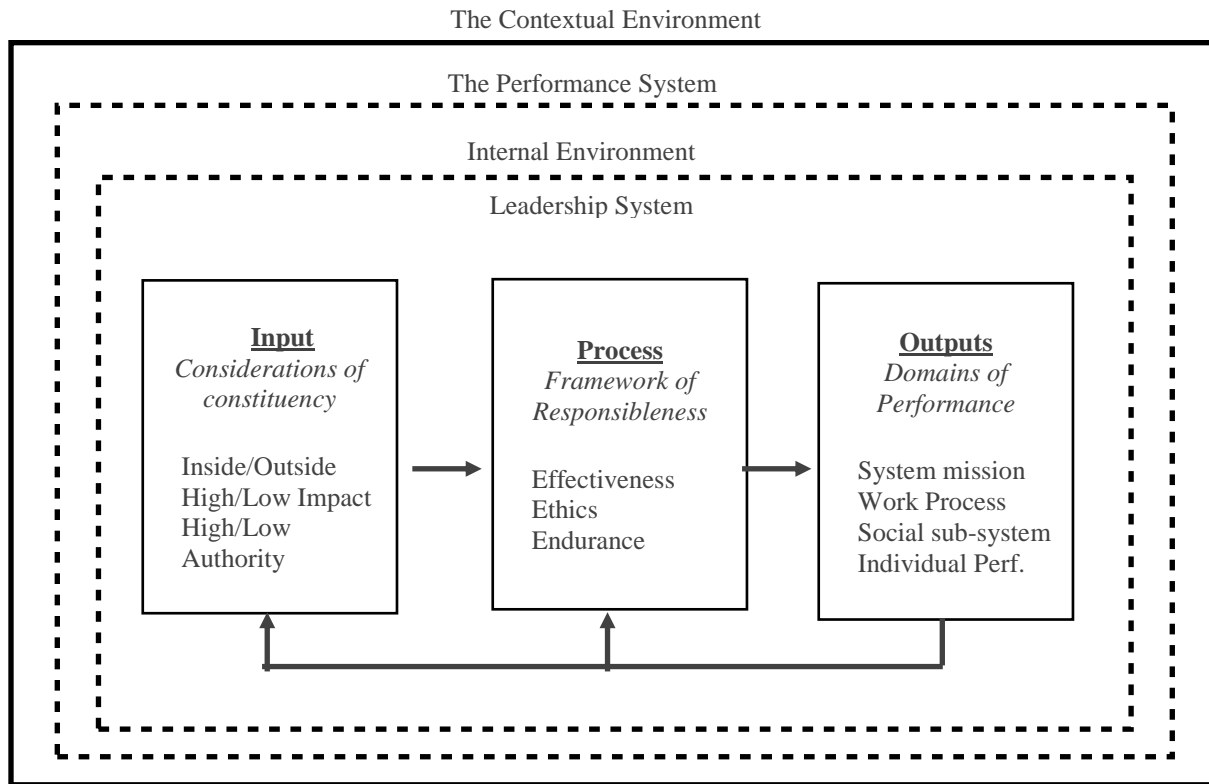
Figure 2.5. *Lynham's (1998, 2000, 2002, 2004) RL/P framework. Adapted from Lynham's RL/P theory to visualize the leadership system and its three units.*

social sub-systems; and (d) the individual performer to "ensure more integrated, connected, and sustainable" leadership solutions (Lynham, 1998, p. 212). Together, these units provide a systemic perspective in which they interact with one another and the external environment. Though scholarship on RL has been dominated by the business schools, Lynham's RL/P theory (1998, 2000, 2002, 2004) offered a uniquely robust theoretical perspective on the construct and phenomenon. Through the review of RL literature, it is evident that RL/P is an appropriate theory to encompass many ideals of RL, including an open system of multiple stakeholders, individual and collective actions for the common good, and a common purpose. The focus of the proposed study is on informing of RL/P in the context of education, and more specifically, public middle schools by seeking description of lived experience of the 3Es.

In a sense, the RL/P theory and this study existed in a symbiotic relationship. The theory informed participant selection through considerations of constituency. Additionally, the 3Es framework provided the language for the research questions and interview protocol to focus the phenomenon. In return, the study refined the theory through rich description of the 3Es in a new context. A brief focus on each of the 3Es follows to clarify what the theory and subsequent studies describe as effective, ethical, and enduring. A comparison of the descriptions is readdressed in Chapter Five to illustrate how this study added to the understanding of each E.

Effective leadership. The most common vision for effective leadership is getting tasks done (Lynham, 1998). However, participants in Lynham's (1998) study of businesses in South Africa, as displayed in Figure 2.6, described effective leadership as "demonstrating through example," "nurturing a climate of motivation," and "making decisions appropriately" (p. 214). These variant descriptions were further supported by literature. Of the 3Es, effective leadership had the most attention with descriptions varying from financial wellness of the company to practicing emotional intelligence. *Academic Search Premier* provided 45 academic pieces with "effective leadership" in the title over the past five years. The popularity of effectiveness indicates the importance of leadership taking action. This suggests that idol leadership soon becomes failed leadership; however, acting without discretion may result in deterioration as well.

Ethical leadership. Ethical expectations for leadership behavior have become increasingly paramount over the last couple of decades. As seen in Figure 2.6, the business leaders of South Africa described ethical leadership competencies as, "doing things right," "embracing a sense of inner truth and higher purpose," and "holding a deep sense of commitment to and belief in people" (Lynham, 1998, p. 214). In a comprehensive investigation of ethical

Effectiveness	Ethics	Endurance
1. Serving the reciprocity and partnership between leadership and followership.	1. Serving as a symbol.	1. Reflecting wellness, wholeness and balance.
2. Demonstrating through example.	2. Resonating the needs and feelings of one's constituents.	2. Embodying both a willingness and an ability to change.
3. Focusing beyond just the immediate environment.	3. Doing things right.	3. Embracing vision, goals, and values that evoke lastingness.
4. Sharing, inspiring, and safeguarding mission, vision, and direction.	4. Nurturing differences and nurturing the larger environment.	4. Nurturing balance and reciprocity between leadership and followership.
5. Inspiring change.	5. Embracing a sense of inner truth and higher purpose.	5. Showing toughness and courage.
6. Making decisions, appropriately.	6. Possessing toughness, courage, balance, and touch.	6. Pursuing learning.
7. Nurturing a climate of motivation and learning.	7. Holding a deep sense of commitment to and belief in people.	7. Evoking effectiveness and ethics.
8. Engaging movement and goal achievement.		

Figure 2.6. *Practices of effectiveness, ethics, and endurance perceived by leadership and followership to be necessary for RL and most likely to sustain South African business through changes of the 1993-1998 business period (reprinted from Lynham, 1998, p. 214).*

leadership instruments, Yukl, Mahsud, Hassan, & Prussia (2013) found that overall:

> The topics that appear most relevant for a specific focus on ethical leadership include: (a) honesty and integrity (including consistency of actions with espoused values), (b) behavior intended to communicate or enforce ethical standards, (c) fairness in decisions and the distribution of rewards (no favoritism or use of rewards to motivate improper behavior), and (d) behavior that shows kindness, compassion, and concern for the needs and feelings of others (rather than attempts to manipulate, abuse, and exploit others for personal gain). Except for some supportive behaviors, these qualities appear distinct from the types of behavior included in most prior research on effective leadership. (p. 41)

The literature suggested ethical leadership underscores effective leadership by bolstering how to act. Voegtlin (2017) included guiding decisions by "being able to make informed ethical judgements about existing norms and rules" (p.1) as the first relevant aspect of RL in management, underscoring ethical action toward effective practices. Effectiveness alone negates the need for compassion and concern for others. Being both ethical and effective means that "responsibleness" requires getting tasks done and doing so with a lens toward the good of others.

Enduring leadership. Leadership that endures is leadership that sustains through positive and negative cycles and challenges. Lynham (1998) stated, "Too often, in these stressful times, individuals who are effective and ethical survive as leaders for only a brief time. They do not

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endure. . . . Endurance encompasses refreshment for leaders and renewal for their groups" (p. 211). Participants in Lynham's (1998) study described enduring leadership competencies as, "reflecting wellness, wholeness, and balance" and "evoking effectiveness and ethics" (p. 214). Leaders who have ethical habits for effective practice, tend to endure even through hardship. To avoid burnout or over-stress, leadership must both complete tasks to keep the organization moving but in an ethical manner where they feel good about their actions. Enduring leadership provides stability to followers, aids in avoiding over-stress, and is, therefore, a necessary remedy for short-term leadership and organizations.

The constant changes to our world, and within education itself, call for dynamic leadership more than ever before. RL/P, and specifically the 3Es of "responsibleness," offer a framework for leadership that goes beyond effectiveness. The approach to "leadership is about 'and, boths.' It's not about 'either, or's" (Lynham, 1998, p. vii). As the world changes at a drastic pace, school leadership that encompasses each 3Es of effective, ethical, and enduring seems an ideal construct for the success of education. To discover what each of the 3E's are in schools, it is important to understand how one set of important stakeholders, teachers, experience the phenomenon of RL.

School Leadership From the Perspective of Teachers

Those in formal leadership positions and researchers often define leadership. In the case of schools, leadership has been described by scholars from universities or practitioners. However, many prominent approaches to leadership from the past decade are follower, or constituent, focused (Northouse, 2016; Lynham, 2006). The approaches continue to reiterate that there is no leader without followers, and therefore, no leadership without followership (Lynham, 1998, 2000; Lynham & Chermack, 2006; Sinek, 2014; Willink & Babin, 2015). One avenue to

begin describing the needs of leadership comes from analyzing the position of followership.

Figure 2.7 visualizes the position of school leadership from the follower, the teacher perspective, within this literature review.
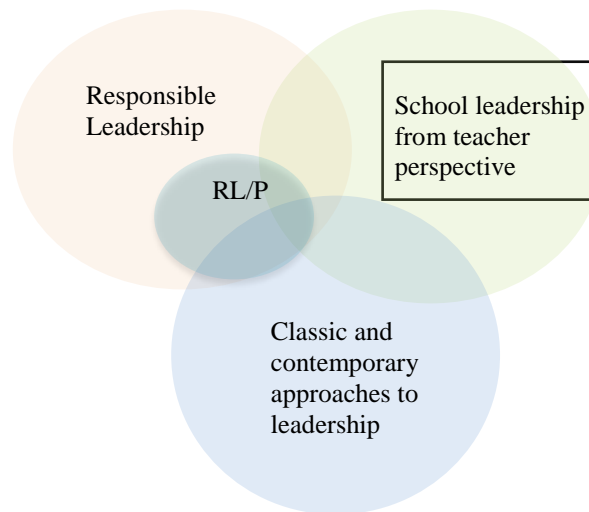
Figure 2.7. Visual on the focus of this current section on school leadership literature from the teacher perspective represented by the box.

Determining the meaningful stakeholders of any leadership system can be difficult to do considering the multitude of people and groups who may be informing and/or affected by the decisions of leadership. Describing stakeholders according to their impact, their authority, and their internal or external connection to the system provides an encompassing view of who is in the system (Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004). Some stakeholders may carry significant internal impact but have low formal authority. Others might exist external to the organization yet bear high authority and high impact. In schools, there are clear stakeholder groups who have high impact potential: parents, school boards, students, and teachers, to name a few. Among these stakeholders, teachers are incredibly impactful and internal to the system with immense knowledge for its operation, yet they are often unheard in the conversation of leadership. The teachers who operate within the leadership system every day and carry the decision forward to

the education of students may be the best stakeholders to describe the needs of school-based leadership.

        Locating the teacher perspective. In the extant literature on school leadership, there is a small, yet informing set of work that examined how teachers perceive leadership. A search for academic literature within *Academic Search Premier*, *ERIC*, *PsycINFO*, and *PsycARTICLES* for combinations of teacher perception and perspective as well as school leadership and principals was conducted. All searches were narrowed by date to include pieces from 2004 to 2018, reflecting the same date range in which RL literature was examined. The articles were examined for relevance by the researcher, and articles that did not speak to how teachers perceive leadership within the school setting were eliminated. Such examples included pieces which spoke to how teachers perceive other teachers, students, or other school staff. Also, articles that did not utilize teachers as the subjects of the inquiry were eliminated, as that is required to gain their personal perspectives. A search for "teacher perspective" AND "school leader*" resulted in five pieces that met the inclusion criteria. To extend the search, the terms were adjusted to "teacher perception" AND "school leader*" yielding 16 more useful articles, "teacher perspective" and "principal" with two articles, and "teacher perception" and "principal" adding 14 entries. Finally, a general search engine search was conducted via *Google* for "teacher perception and perspective of school leadership" which yielded 6 informing academic pieces. In total, 44 pieces of literature were found to inform the state of the body of knowledge on teacher perception of school leadership. These articles included all levels of schooling from elementary to high school from various regions of the United States and internationally. To explore some of the seminal information on school leadership in general, I also included pieces from the two most

recent versions of *The Jossey-Bass Reader on Education Leadership,* a widely read collection of pieces from prominent scholars in the field.

Each article was examined individually for findings and discussion of teacher perceptions and then themes were created across the literature. Such themes that informed the current study were teachers desire for cultural leadership instead of management, teacher perception of ineffective instructional leadership, and leadership as an open construct instead of an office closed to anyone without the formal titles..

Teacher desire for cultural leadership. Literature that describes the needs of leadership from the perspective of teachers suggests a desire for principals and other formal positions to act primarily in building and maintaining culture (Bellibas, 2015; Hulpia et al., 2011; Leech & Fulton, 2008; Yirci et al., 2014). The culture of a school, according to Fullan (2007), is the guiding beliefs and values evident in the way a school operates. Mafora (2013) echoed that principals play a vital role in the culture of a school. Literature suggests, the more principals act to create a welcoming and supportive culture, the more supported teachers feel, the more likely they are to stay in their jobs, and the happier they are overall (Karaköse, 2008; Rhodes, Camis, Milburn, & Lowe, 2009).

Research suggests that teachers seem to understand power dynamics at play and overwhelmingly indicate that leaders should be taking charge of the norms and systems of the school. For example, Grobler et al. (2017) noted many teachers described the need for leadership to build a culture of collaboration amongst staff that they can then maintain. Similarly, other teachers have voiced a desire for leaders who inspire individuals and build a team (McCarley et al., 2016). Cook (2014) found "the ability of the school principal to get everyone on board [to be] an important element in achieving short and long-term goals" (p. 11). Without leadership that

effectively unites people for a common mission, Willink and Babin (2015) would suggest, any group can quickly become a set of individuals each with their own agendas. It would seem that when principals utilize opportunities afforded them by their position to interact with all of the staff and move through the school teachers can focus on collaboration and student success.

The literature also shows that teachers need supportive leadership. Regular support from leadership has been correlated with improved teacher attitudes and increased collaboration throughout the school community (Berebitsky, Goddard, & Carlisle, 2014; Rhodes et al., 2009). Research suggests that support becomes increasingly indispensable during demanding instances of cultural change. Alimi, Alibi, and Ehinola (2011) stated that "appointment as principal should not be based on seniority alone but also on the capability as a change agent" (p. 23). Additionally, teachers voiced need for leaders who are "cognizant of meeting the expectations of school-based personnel when implementing change" (Hauserman, Ivankova, & Stick, 2013, p. 34). Creating a culture is primary but maintaining it with consistent support and keeping a watchful eye especially during change separates good school leadership from great school leadership.

Ideal school leadership, from the teacher perspective, centered upon cultural leadership. Such perspectives acclaimed leadership that constructed teams focused on common goals through collaboration and communication. On the other hand, teachers consistently described a dissatisfaction with school leadership that was too involved with management of their day-to-day classroom work.

Teacher desire for minimal management. Across included literature, teachers spoke to a desire for leadership to remain in the realm of culture and vision and thereby out of management-oriented tasks. Teachers from various geographic regions, and different levels of

education consistently suggested that formal leadership was best suited to handle cultural tasks and avoid management of teaching (Bellibas, 2014, 2015; Lee & Nie, 2017; Yirci et al., 2014).

Teachers seemed particularly concerned with principals acting as instructional leaders, a traditional management task. Bellibas (2014) found that "even though teachers were not reluctant to have a principal help them to improve their teaching skills, teachers seemed to be suspicious of their ability to do so" (p. iii). Leaders who act as instructional coaches by observing and providing feedback on teaching practice, were perceived to be effective listeners and goal setters yet ineffective at giving feedback and showing empathy for teachers' work (Yirci et al., 2014). Even principals themselves reported lacking vision for their role in instructional management (Bellibas, 2014). Instead of providing detailed management of instructional practices, teachers wanted leadership to help them feel empowered and encouraged (Lee & Nie, 2017). From a teachers' perspective, leadership was most effective as a source of encouragement in daily work, not as a lesson-by-lesson instructional coach.

The variance between the roles of leadership and management in schools appeared to be ever-present in teacher expectations. At its best, teachers saw leadership focused on cultural artifacts such as teamwork, collaboration, and communication.

Teacher desire for open leadership. In order for leadership to focus on culture, they must leave management of teachers to someone else. Across the literature, teachers suggested an open approach to leadership, which allowed them to personally be involved (Angelle & DeHart, 2011; Cheng & Szeto, 2016). Leadership was often viewed as a closed door: If you are inside of the room then you have decision power, but if you are in the hallway you simply take what comes through the door. Teachers in Cook's (2014) study wanted a school without the door, one that is "transparent and creates an environment that recognizes the school as a village where

everyone's input is important" (p. 12). Open school leadership characterized by shared decision-making and distributed leadership practices were often positively perceived.

Teachers desired to be actively involved in an open process of decision making within their schools. Cook (2014) found that in order for leadership to be sustained, it should embed shared-decision making into the fabric of the community. Similarly, an ideal leader facilitated the decision-making process to a set of effected stakeholders instead of dominating (Grobler et al., 2017). Cheng and Szeto (2016) also suggested that input from a variety of teachers, not just a sub-set, such as those with more time in the classroom, be included in decisions. When included in decisions, teachers were more committed to their school and felt more empowered in their job (Hulpia et al., 2011; Lee & Nie, 2017). With these teachers, staunch leadership that set unmovable expectations did not succeed.

Many educators perceived leadership best when it was shared among people. One common means that teachers mentioned for sharing leadership was delegating authority (Alexander, 2010; Cheng & Szeto, 2016; McCarley et al., 2016). Angelle and DeHart (2011) stated that whether formal leaders can relinquish power to teachers will determine how much initiative teachers will make to build community. Similarly, Lee and Nie (2017) listed "delegation of authority" (p. 260) as the first of seven behaviors school leaders demonstrated to empower teachers. Alexander (2010) also found a positive correlation between teacher retention, one of the most pressing issues in education, and how much leadership is shared with a school. The more leadership was shared, the more teachers remained in their positions. By distributing leadership actively across the school and community, principals were perceived as stronger instead of the intuitive view that less power would be seen as weakness.

Teachers, perhaps the most impactful stakeholders, described leadership within schools as much more than just effective. Success in public schools are in a multitude of student achievement measures. Teachers want their students to thrive and the literature suggested that teachers felt confident in their ability to accomplish such goals without the constant oversight from formal leadership. In fact, teachers that felt part of the leadership system are more apt to collaborate and retain their positions. In conclusion, teachers seemed to desire leadership that through open systems and cultural norms, facilitated what they know best: teaching students and preparing them for tomorrow.

Relationships Between the Constructs

The three constructs of Responsible Leadership, school leadership from the teacher perspective, and classic and contemporary approaches to leadership stand alone in the literature. However, they also overlap with some literature either directly or indirectly speaking to two of the three. Below is an exploration of where and how informing literature crosses between RL and prominent leadership frameworks, prominent frameworks and teacher perceptions of school leadership, and finally RL and teacher perceptions of school leadership. By examining these overlaps, the proposed study focuses.

Responsible Leadership and Classic and Contemporary Approaches of Leadership

Throughout the informing literature, RL was described in relationship to extant theories and processes. This overlap and its position in the literature review is displayed in Figure 2.8. As a relatively new construct, RL through the lens of these popular approaches has been studied theoretically and practically by renowned scholars. With so many existing leadership approaches, including those in Northouse's (2016) work and others, RL resonates strongly with affective components of other approaches.

RL has however sometimes been conceptualized as a unique and all together new phenomenon (Burton-Jones, 2012; Smit, 2013; Waldman, 2011). For example, in Waldman's (2011) call for future directions of RL research, RL was explained as a "unique and beneficial

Figure 2.8. Visual on the focus of this current section on the relationship between Responsible Leadership and classic and contemporary approaches (Northouse, 2016) represented by the box.

construct within the domain of leadership theory and research" (p. 80). Similarly, Smit (2013) called for RL as the desired outcome of a new and different management education paradigm, whereas Maak (2007) added that RL cannot be captured by the "traditional dyadic leader-follower relationship" (p. 1). The uniqueness of RL provides evidence for the need of the construct even amongst so many other approaches described in the literature. Doing so, however, creates confusion and in response, many writers have chosen to describe RL in light of other extant leadership theories.

The first few theories outlined by Northouse (2016) were leader focused and did not resonate with the system approach of RL. RL does, however, accommodate a leader-centered reflective practice to consider personal skills and behaviors within the 3E's (Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004; White-Newman, 1993). Instead of leaders acting out their own assumptions,

they can filter decisions and actions through the 3Es framework. For example, they may consider

if their next idea would be acting toward effective processes, ethical habits, or enduring

resources and determine the best course of action. RL, in accordance with leader-centered

situational and adaptive approaches, prioritizes consideration of contextual factors of the

surrounding environment and shifting situations when making decisions. Finally, the needs of

followers are central to both RL and the leader focus of path-goal theory. If leadership acts

consistently with the 3E's, they should be moving their followers along the path to their goals.

These approaches are not directly in accordance with the RL literature but they are reflected into

RL and RL/P actions.

Since its ingress into the academic literature, RL has been associated with theories that

populate the second half of Northouse's (2016) work: authentic leadership (George, 2003;

Northouse, 2016), transformational leadership (Bass, 1990; Northouse, 2016), servant leadership

(Greenleaf, 1970; Northouse, 2016; Patterson, 2003), virtuous leadership (Caldwell et al., 2015),

and spiritual leadership (Reave, 2005). In their mapping of extant RL literature, Miska and

Mendenhall (2015, p. 2-3) provided a substantial discussion of the commonalities and

differences among RL and other leadership orientations but the overarching connection is a focus

on the welfare and prosperity of others.

Some have associated RL with transformational leadership practices (Burton-Jones,

2012; Cilliers & Coetzee, 2010; Groves & LaRocca, 2011; Waldman, 2001). For example, Burns

(1978) defined transformational leadership as the process in which "leaders and followers raise

one another [emphasis added] to higher levels of morality and motivation" (p. 20). Scholars have

argued that if leadership has a goal of transforming the status quo upward, it will require

responsible action (Northouse, 2016). Waldman (2011) contended that if RL is not

transformational and if it does not shift reality to something better, then it might not be responsible at all. RL's associations with transformational leadership seem to indicate that both approaches share a focus on affecting the world positively.

Servant leadership and the prioritization of fulfilling followers' needs has also been used to provide context for what characterizes RL (Burton-Jones, 2012; Greenleaf, 1970; Patterson, 2003; Waldman, 2001). For example, Maloiy and McDonald (2010) associated RL action in education with the development of servant leadership in Kenyan students who were taught to abide by the servant principle of prioritizing the needs of others in order to act responsibly. Also, servant leaders are described as thinking first about the needs of their followers over their own needs (Northouse, 2016). RL is strongly associated with searching input and meaning from as many stakeholders as possible and with the needs of formal leadership only counting equally to those of others. It seems that in RL and servant leadership, more responsibility in leadership leads not to more people who can serve you, but to more people whom you can serve.

Caldwell et al. (2015) illustrated the depth of RL by aligning it with virtuous leadership represented by trust and ethical stewardship. Virtuous leadership raises the bar from "accountability, dependability, authority and empowerment" to the pursuit of prospective prosperity for all (p. 32) and produces advantages for each constituent whether directly affected by leadership action or not. RL then might not only be a shift in status quo for the better, but also a virtuous pursuit of earning and giving trust through ethical decisions.

Spiritual leadership has also served as a guiding framework to describe RL (Burton-Jones, 2012; Coldwell et al., 2012; Pruzan & Miller, 2006). In a review of literature on effective leadership, Reave (2005) stated, "Values that have long been considered spiritual ideals, such as integrity, honesty, and humility, have been demonstrated to have an effect on leadership success"

(p.1). In turn, Pruzan and Miller (2006) cited Reave's (2005) behaviors of spiritual leadership, including respect for others, concern for others, and recognition of others' contributions in their description of RL. Ideals of spirituality and their tie to RL may indicate a deep and positive affect of RL on schools that reaches into the depths of system relationships and interconnection.

In addition to the positive associations between RL and other leadership approaches, there are some approaches which are not associated with RL in the literature. As examples: trait, skills, behavioral, or leader-member exchange approaches (Northouse, 2016) are not aligned with RL. These theories, in contrast to those RL resonates with, are focused on the leader as an individual or working to the betterment of some constituents but not all. A lack of RL description in relationship to leader-first theories seems to confirm that RL is leadership focused on others.

Classic and Contemporary Approaches of Leadership and School Leadership From the Perspective of Teachers

When seeking teacher perspectives of leadership, follower-first frameworks are most often described as well. Figure 2.9 displays where this section fits into the broader structure of

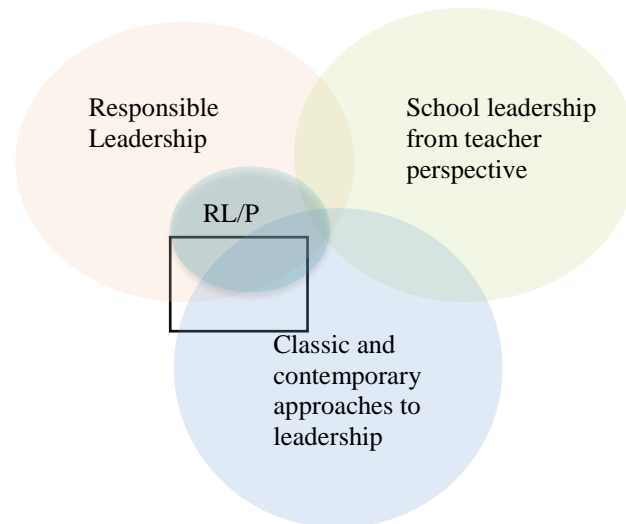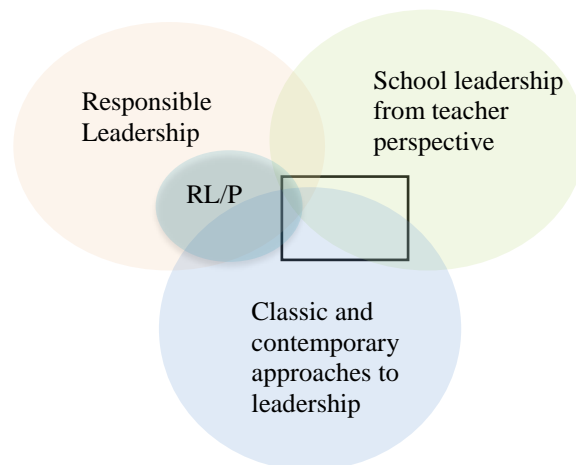*Figure 2.9.* Visual on the focus of this current section on the relationship between classic and contemporary approaches (Northouse, 2016) and school leadership from the teacher perspective represented by the box.

the literature review between classic approaches and the teacher perspective. Throughout the literature, teachers described their ideal forms of leadership in coherence with transformational (Goddard, Neumerski, Goddard, Salloum, & Berebitsky, 2010; Hauserman et al., 2013; McCarley et al., 2016) servant (Al-Mahdy, Al-Harthi, & Salah, 2016), and authentic (Shapira-Lishchinsky & Tsemach, 2014) approaches. Other studies associated positive school leadership outcomes with Kouzes and Posner's (2012) five practices of exemplary leadership: model the way, inspire shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart. Scholars (Lingam & Lingam, 2015) found the strongest positive correlations between teacher perception and inspiring a shared vision plus encouraging the hearts of followers—further informing affirmative teacher perception of people-centered leadership.

Noticing what has not been included in literature can be informing, in the case of the literature of teacher perspective and prominent leadership approaches, there is no mention of trait, skills, or behavior approaches, illustrating that teachers saw their work as a vital component of a system that leads to positive student outcomes instead of separated individual action. They did not see their leaders as people with innate abilities to lead them but instead as facilitators to give them the most comfortable environment in which to do their work. Teachers did not hope for born leaders but rather for those that considered many stakeholders, cared deeply for the teachers in the building, and let go of personal pride in the effort to help all students.

Responsible Leadership and School Leadership From the Perspective of Teachers

Though RL, and specifically RL/P, offers a uniquely systemic approach to leadership focused on the good of others, it is rarely referenced in school leadership literature. Figure 2.10 visualizes the importance in seeking meaning in the overlap between RL and school leadership from the teacher perspective in this literature review. Stone-Johnson (2014) and Oplatka (2017)
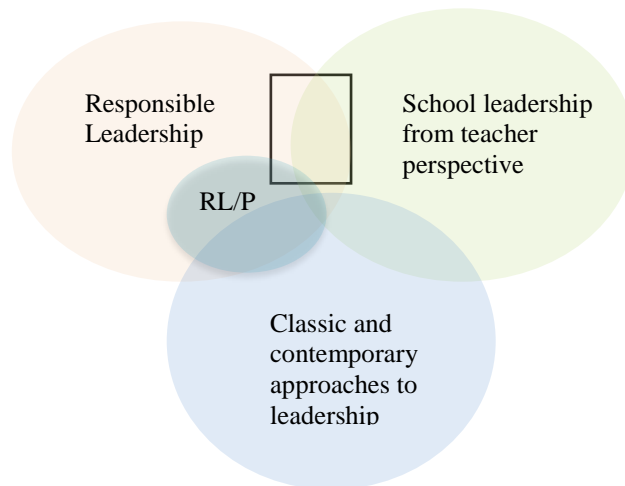
Figure 2.10. Visual on the focus of this current section on the relationship between school leadership from the teacher perspective and Responsible Leadership represented by the box.

were the only academic pieces written specifically on RL's utility within a school setting. However, Oplatka (2017) promoted RL from lessons in business, so there was not a direct association to practice. School leadership literature did speak to theories associated with RL such as servant leadership (Al-Mahdy, Al-Harthi, & Salah El-Din., 2016), authentic leadership (Shapira-Lishchinsky & Tsemach, 2014), and transformational ideals (Goddard et al., 2010; Hauserman et al., 2013; McCarley et al., 2016). If these types of approaches resonated among school leadership scholars, then perhaps RL, which can operate many of these at once, is an approach worth exploring. Instead of school leaders choosing between approaches, they can use RL as the framework to guide which approach is best, what components of each are most useful, and the contextual factors that will affect their leadership.

The intersections between classic and contemporary leadership approaches, RL and RL/P, as well as teacher perceptions of school leadership begin to narrow the focus of the current study. Because RL and other affective approaches resonate and even incorporate one another, RL has the basis to be included alongside other popular approaches and theories. The call for cultural and open leadership from teachers gives evidence for the possibilities RL has in schools. Finally,

noting that schools have looked to other classical approaches for guidance, and that those theories can often fit into the RL system, backs the hope that RL will help school leadership and their stakeholders to be successful.

Conclusions of Chapter Two

This review of three different yet overlapping constructs of leadership displays the complexity of the role of leader. If leaders fail to understand the dynamic system that surrounds them, they may feel that their own personality or skills are not enough. On the other hand, if they spend too much time searching for the right leadership approach, they spend time searching and no time acting. School leadership, as evidenced by the perspective of teachers, is notorious for missing the mark on what stakeholders need. A possible solution for leadership may be to see themselves as a vital member of a bigger system. Through an approach of RL/P, leaders could filter their own leadership approaches through the needs of the stakeholders, the 3Es of process, and produce multiple positive outcomes for themselves, teachers, students, and the community.

This review of literature showed that there is no short supply of work done on any of the three constructs. However, as the search narrowed, the results totaled a gap in the literature, and this is where the present study resides.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

This chapter describes the methodology and appropriate methods used to answer the research question. The study was guided by the assumptions of the constructivist paradigm as described by Guba (1990), Lincoln and Guba (1985, 2013), and Lincoln, Lynham, and Guba (2011). This chapter outlines the problem and research question that describe the need and hopes for the study. Furthermore, the chapter presents the assumptions of the constructivist paradigm and describes their effect on how and why the research was conducted. Then the transcendental phenomenology method, as developed by Moustakas (1994), is described which includes the processes of participant selection, data collection, and data analysis. Finally, the criteria for quality grounded in constructivist inquiry are described in accordance with the study. To gain further understanding of teachers' lived experiences of responsible leadership (RL) in middle schools, these methodologies and methods provided the means to locate the phenomenon, inquire the lived experiences of teachers with the phenomenon, and ultimately, reached a sense of shared essence of teachers' everyday experience of the phenomenon.

Research Need and Questions

The questions asked of teachers' experiences of RL lends itself well to the daily experiences of the average person that bring meaning to a phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994):

1. How do middle school teachers perceive and describe their experience of RL (3Es) in middle schools in a western state in the United States?

    a. How do these middle school teachers perceive and describe their experience of *effective* leadership?

b. How do these middle school teachers perceive and describe their experience of *ethical* leadership?

c. How do these middle school teachers perceive and describe their experience of *enduring* leadership?

2. How does the phenomenological approach to the selected phenomenon of—how middle school teachers perceive and describe their experience of RL (3Es) in middle schools in a western state in the United States—inform the RL/P (Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004) theory?

Moustakas (1994) demonstrated that breaking the main research question into its major components helps to ensure a question best suited to be answered with transcendental phenomenology. Major components of this question were "how," "teachers," "perceive," "describe," "experience," "RL," and "middle schools." "How" requires openness to what may emerge about RL (3Es) during the research process and facilitates clarity of the question. "Teachers" indicates the specific people that meaning is sought from and frames the context of understanding. "Perceive" indicates that RL (3Es) is perceived differently by various people and possibly observed differently by the same person in distinctive contexts. Examples include the diverse definitions of "effective" practice in each approach addressed by Northouse (2016). Transcendental phenomenology is suited to describe diverse phenomenon such as RL because it "is concerned with wholeness, with examined entities from many sides, angles, and perspectives until a unified vision . . . is achieved" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 58). "Describe" refers to what RL (the 3Es) *is and means* to co-researchers. "Experience" shows in-depth stories from co-researchers in how they perceive and describe RL (3Es) in their everyday lived experience(s). "RL" denotes the specific phenomenon the researchers aims to understand as effective, ethical,

and enduring leadership as reflected in the research questions. Finally, "middle schools in a western state of the United States" describes the specific context in which the researcher seeks understanding of the phenomenon. Phenomenology addresses each of these components because it is a method for studying everyday lives of ordinary people. This first research question, and its components, are consistent with Moustakas' (1994) call to address both *what* (the textural and descriptive) of the central phenomenon of an experience and *how* (the structural and interpretive) it is experienced.

Inquiry Paradigm

In the foundational work *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Kuhn (2012) described a paradigm as the "practices that define a scientific discipline at any certain point in time" (p. xlii). Patton (1997) defined a paradigm as a "worldview built upon implicit assumptions, accepted definitions, values defended as truths, and beliefs projected as reality" (p. 267). Paradigms surround us and guide what we value and seek to know. Therefore, a researcher's paradigmatic alignment influences numerous aspects of a study.

Constructivist Paradigm

In this study, the constructivist stance shaped what the researcher believed to count as knowledge and how it is best attained. Specifically, constructivism guided researchers' ontological, epistemological, methodological, axiological and teleological beliefs—the unstated but deeply rooted purpose for research (Lincoln et al., 2011). See Table 3.1 which summarizes how each belief guides the assumptions and actions of this study of lived experience. Each is then detailed to provide the necessary information to ground the study in the paradigm.

Ontology. Ontological orientations, according to Lincoln et al. (2011) ask: What is the nature of reality? and ontology gives notice to the researcher's world-views and assumptions

Table 3.1

The Constructivist Metaphysical Components That Guided This Study and Their Direct Effect on This Study

Metaphysical Components	How components inform this study
Ontology – What makes for reality? Realities are relative and are local, specific, and dependent for their form and content on the persons who hold them (Guba, 1990, p.27)	It was assumed that the reality of RL is co-constructed by those that experience the phenomenon themselves. The reality of the experience of RL in middle schools is relative to, and dependent on, the teachers living it, everyday and in the context in which they exist.
Epistemology – What makes for knowledge of that reality? The relationships between what we know and what we see. The truths we seek and believe as researchers. (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011, p. 103) Transactional/subjectivist; co-created findings due to the interaction between the researcher and the subject (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011, p. 103)	To best understand teachers' experience of RL in middle schools then, it was vital to co-create knowledge with those teachers. Their experiences, in combination with the researchers academic understanding of RL, are assumed to create the new and meaningful knowledge that can contribute to research and praxis.
Methodology – How such knowledge is acquired and accumulated The process by which we seek new knowledge. (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011, p.104) Hermeneutical and dialectic: Individual constructions are elicited and refined hermeneutically, and compared and contrasted dialectically, with aim of generating one or few constructions on which there is consensus. (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011, p. 104)	Qualitative methods were therefore taken to best generate new and meaningful knowledge. Specifically, transcendental phenomenology was used as the process to gain knowledge of the *what* and *how* through epoch and essence.
Axiology – which knowledge is most valuable, truthful, and life-enhancing? How we ought to act in acquiring, accumulating and applying such knowledge (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011, p. 111)	The researcher actively sought co-construction, highlighting the voices of the participants through description of teachers' lived experience of RL (3Es). Interpretation of what those experiences "mean" will not be an aim of this study.
Teleology – To what end ought we apply such knowledge Knowledge should be applied to informing praxis (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011, p. 112)	The knowledge generated on RL through this study was applied to inform and improve the practice of RL in schools, and to inform further refinement and development of the RL/P theory (Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004).

as the researcher searches for knowledge (Schwandt, 2007, p. 190). The ontological stance of constructivism assumes reality is relative, local, and "dependent for their form and content on the persons who hold them" (Guba, 1990, p. 27). This relativist stance is important for this study because it is assumed that the reality of RL is co-constructed by those who experience the phenomenon; the participants informed the study but also co-constructed the findings through their experiences. The reality of the experience of RL in middle schools was relative to, and dependent on, the participants' lived experience in their middle school context.

Epistemology. Epistemological orientation asks: What makes for true knowledge of that reality? The answers form the "relationships between what we know and what we see" (Lincoln et al., 2011, p. 103). Epistemological assumptions outline what we seek as meaningful knowledge. The epistemological orientation of constructivism assumes that knowledge is transactional and subjectivist and best found through co-constructed meaning with the researcher and the participants acting as partners in the creation of knowledge (Lincoln et al., 2011). As Guba (1990) stated, "Findings are literally the creation of the process of interaction between the two [researcher and participant]" (p. 30). To best understand teachers' experience of RL in middle schools, knowledge was co-created with teachers through interviews to maintain their voices throughout the analysis process. Their experiences, in combination with the researchers academic understanding of RL, were assumed to create meaningful knowledge that can contribute to research and praxis. (Lincoln et al., 2011). This stance is also consistent with Moustakas' (1994) methods that recommended participant voices be maintained through the process and connected to one another at the end.

Methodology. Methodological orientations ask: How is such knowledge to be acquired and accumulated? for it is the "process by which we seek knowledge and conduct research"

(Lincoln et al., 2011, p. 104). The methodological means to obtain the subjective knowledge sought in constructivism are hermeneutic and dialectic. Thus "individual constructions are elicited and refined hermeneutically through language, and compared and contrasted dialectically" (Lincoln et al., 2011, p. 104) to generate one or a few shared constructs.

Typically, qualitative methods use hermeneutics and dialectics to seek the lived experiences of others (Angen, 2000). To execute this, qualitative methods of data collection through interviews were utilized to best generate new and meaningful knowledge of experience. Specifically, transcendental phenomenology offered a focused process of qualitative methods through deep description to gain the "what" and the "how" of the lived experience (Moustakas, 1994).

Axiology. Axiological beliefs inform how we ought to acquire, accumulate, and apply newly generated knowledge (Lincoln et al., 2011). Guba (1990) stated that axiology asks: Of the knowledge available, which is most valuable, truthful, and life-enhancing? The axiological basis for constructivism assumes that transactional knowledge is instrumentally valuable as a means of social understanding (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 111). As the researcher, I actively sought co-construction by highlighting the voices of the participants through analysis and dissemination. I focused on contributing connecting statements but allowed participants' words and ideas to fill the writing, as evident in the mental models of experience discusses later in the chapter. I acted in interpreting data and ensured that interpretation was consistent with the experiences of the participants through peer checking with my colleagues and advisors, as well as member checking with each participant.

Teleology. Teleology asks: To what end should such knowledge be applied? (Lincoln et al., 2011). The teleological stance of constructivist inquiry is that knowledge should be applied

to inform praxis (Lincoln et al., 2011). The knowledge of RL generated through this study will be applied to inform and improve the practice of RL in schools, and to inform further refinement and development of the RL/P theory (Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004).

These philosophical orientations undergird the way this study was conducted. They informed what questions were asked, who could best provide data, what data counted toward gaining knowledge, how data were analyzed, and ultimately, what the findings mean for practitioners and researchers. A qualitative approach of transcendental phenomenology was well suited to enact these assumptions, as discussed in the next section.

Methods: Transcendental Phenomenology

Phenomenology is a means to understand first-person lived experience of a phenomenon. Husserl, regarded as the intellectual founder of phenomenology, defined it as "a descriptive philosophy of the essences of pure experiences" (as cited in Van Manen, 2014, p. 89). Husserl's (1937/2017) approach has thus been deemed descriptive phenomenology. Phenomenology, Husserl believed, directs attention to our experiences and descriptions of external elements of life (Van Manen, 2014, p. 91). Husserl felt that perception of reality of an object is dependent on the subject; meaning is only made in the interaction between the subject, most often a person and an object. The object itself holds no inherent value.

Husserl (1937/2017) posited we understand the human condition through our experiences themselves, in contrast to the traditional notion that we can only understand our behavior in response to experience. Husserl's approach would find value in understanding the experience of happiness itself. In addition to Husserl's work, Hiedegger (2008/1927), a student of Husserl, developed another branch of phenomenology, interpretive phenomenology, extending the study of interpretation and focusing on the "science of being" (Reiners, 2012, p. 1). Both scholars

"recognized the crucial value of returning to the self to discover the nature and meaning of things as they appear and in their essence" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 26). Since these foundational philosophers posed descriptive and interpretive phenomenology, many others have developed discipline and contextually specific methods (Van Manen, 2014, p. 113).

In the mid 1990's, Moustakas (1994) conceptualized transcendental phenomenology, one branch of the descriptive phenomenological tree. Transcendental phenomenology "embraces the qualitative focus on the wholeness of experience and search for essences of experiences, and viewing experience and behavior as an integrated and inseparable relationship of subject and object" (Raffanti, 2008, p.59). Consistent with the Husserlian approach, transcendental phenomenology provides a means to understand the essence of a phenomenon making every effort to remove the subjective experiences, assumptions, and ideals of the researcher to focus purely on the experiences of those experiencing the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). To do this, the researcher must transcend his or her biases and assumptions to see the phenomenon "freshly, as for the first time" and be open to its totality (Moustakas, 1994, p. 34).

Transcendental phenomenology is most useful when "the researcher has identified a phenomenon to understand, and has individuals who can provide a description of what they have experienced" (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004, p. 32). This study into teachers' experiences of RL (3Es) has both characteristics. To best understand the essence of the teachers' experiences, all efforts were made to gain understanding dialectically through the participants' descriptions. Selected participants were currently experiencing RL in middle schools at the time of the study and were therefore able to provide relevant description of the phenomenon.

Site Selection

In accordance with the constructivist paradigm, the study was conducted in the participants' natural environment (Guba & Lincoln, 1989): the middle schools in which they naturally operate. The research sites of public middle schools in the western United States provided a logical place to seek description and understanding of the essence of the participants' experiences of RL (3Es) in two ways. Firstly, middle schools—defined as schools which educate students from sixth to eighth grade—reflects the trend in education to move away from a junior high school model of seventh to ninth grade to a middle school model of sixth through eighth grade. Working in the middle school model provided relevance for the study context in current education policy. Additionally, middle school sites in the area have a practical logic. The schools offered convenient geographic and knowledge access to participants and data collection due to my physical and knowledge proximity (Patton, 1990).

Participant Selection

The requirements and subsequent criteria for participant selection, as outlined by Moustakas (1994), were that (a) the participants had intense experience of the phenomenon, (b) were interested in understanding it, and (c) were willing to participate and have findings published. Intensity selection described by Patton (2001) was utilized to identify the potential participants who have manifested *intense* experiences of RL (3Es) as middle school teachers in the specified location.

To ensure intensity of experience, participants met multiple criteria. First, participants were selected who were in their third year of service or more in middle school sites. This three-year mark served as an important milestone in the journey to being an effective teacher because it signifies the transition from a probationary teacher to a permanent teacher in official policy

According to the official governmental policies of the study's western region, three years of service deemed teachers as having had intense experience of leadership in middle schools. The second criteria required that participants were selected based on self-identification of experiencing the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). Recruitment was initiated via email that prompted participants to consider, and subsequently, identify if they have had experiences with effective, ethical, and enduring leadership in middle schools. Thirdly, the recruitment email ensured that participants were interested in the topic being examined and found it meaningful to their experiences (Moustakas, 1994). Lastly, participants were willing to partake in in-depth interviews, follow-up correspondence as necessary, and member-checking (Moustakas, 1994). Member-checking served to establish trustworthiness of the qualitative data findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and is explained in more detail in the analysis section.

Description of participants. Participants were initially contacted via an email providing a letter of description of the research (Appendix A). Participants received a consent form which was approved by the Colorado State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) before any data collection began. The true identities of the participants were kept confidential throughout this work due to the potential nature of the discussions. In place of their names, pseudonyms were chosen to present results. In addition, each person's place of work was kept confidential. Maintaining confidentiality was deliberate and consistent with the method of transcendental phenomenology because the aim is to understand the phenomenon in the broader context of middle schools in a western state of the United States, not in the context of a specific school or leader (Moustakas, 1994). While, the participants are diverse in racial and gender identity; I have kept their specific identifiers hidden to ensure anonymity. It is prudent to disclose that three participants self-identified as Caucasian females, one identified as a Caucasian male, and one as

a Hispanic male. The lack of racial diversity was a result of the geographic area of study where the majority of educators were of Caucasian identity. An implication for future research, discussed in Chapter Five, is the opportunity to conduct the study with participants who self-identify with other various racial, gender, and socioeconomic statuses. The five participants in this study shared their occupation as middle school educators but were employed in diverse districts and schools across the study area, offering diverse contextual perspectives but singular focus on the phenomenon.

Saturation of participants. Phenomenology, as a qualitative method, seeks saturation in data with description. Saturation is a difficult concept to define as it varies across studies (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Many researchers consider saturation in terms of a number of participants; however, data as a balance between both thick in quantity and rich in quality provides a useful frame for saturation (Dibley, 2011). Patton (1990) suggested that "in-depth information from a small number of people can be very valuable, especially if the cases are information-rich" (p. 184). In my interviews with the five participants, I was able to collect thick and rich descriptions of their experiences across their personal journeys as educators. After the fifth and final participant interview, the data reached redundancy as "no new information [was] forthcoming" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 202). Additionally, the multiple layers of analysis highlighted the depth of understanding from the five participants. The phenomenon was explored from multiple angles and lenses by seeking deep understanding of the three levels of analysis within each individual experience, repeating the same processes across the five interviews (Moustakas, 1994).

Data Collection and Analysis

The study was executed according to data collection and analysis processes for transcendental phenomenology described by Moustakas (1994). Participants provided their experiences of the phenomenon of RL via in-depth interviews that were then transcribed verbatim and analyzed with a constructive approach to Moustakas' (1994) process.

Data collection. To collect rich data, Moustakas (1994) suggested an "interview protocol with broad questions that facilitate rich, vital, substantive descriptions" (p. 116). Such broad inquiries are appropriate to keep the protocol open to alterations in real-time that might help participants verbalize their experiences. An open protocol also aligns with the constructivist paradigm because it facilitates in the moment interpretation and co-construction (Lincoln & Guba, 2013).

Bracketing questions according to the 3Es of RL proved beneficial in allowing participants to explore their experiences yet remain oriented to the topic (Raffanti, 2008; Van Manen, 1990). Built off of a sample from Moustakas (1994, p. 116), the following protocol, also detailed in Appendix B guided each interview to seek both the what and the how of the participant experiences:

1. What dimensions, incidents, and people (intimately) connected with your experience of Effective/Ethical/Enduring leadership stand out to you?

2. How did the experience with Effective/Ethical/Enduring leadership affect you?

3. If you think of leadership that is Effective/Ethical/Enduring to you, what attributes/characteristics come to mind?

4. Can you describe an experience you have had with school leadership that is NOT Effective/Ethical/Enduring?

The final question also sought understanding through the negative case of how they have experienced leadership that is not responsible (Patton, 1990). The protocol was revisited after each interview to ensure opportunities for confusion or repetition were minimal but that the main questions ultimately remained consistent across participants. Each interview was captured via a recording and then transcribed verbatim to allow for the participants' own words to be maintained throughout the process. The times and locations of the individual interviews were chosen by each participant to ensure they felt comfortable speaking to the experience of RL (3Es) in their context.

Data, according to Moustakas (1994), should be organized and analyzed with a process that ensures rigor while still remaining accessible to the researcher. The goal in data collection was to balance subjective approaches to knowledge construction with detailed, rigorous analytical steps (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004). Table 3.2 outlines Moustakas' (1994) steps in the second column, and the last column explains how I enacted it them. Each step is detailed below the figure including how each component was executed and led toward shared essence of the phenomenon.

Epoche. The researcher must set aside prejudgments, biases, and preconceived ideas about the phenomenon as much as possible when interacting with participants and when working with data (Moustakas, 1994, p. 84). This kind of "fresh start" was necessary in describing the participants' experiences of RL (3Es) because each of the 3Es, particularly effective and ethical, have been densely studied in the past. Moustakas (1994) suggested that "no position whatsoever is taken. . .[and] nothing is determined in advance" (p. 84). As someone who has worked in schools and studied leadership, it was important that I put my experiences, previous perceptions,

Table 3.2

Phenomenological Data Analysis Process and Application to This Study Described by Moustakas (1994)

Major Process	Minor Process	Description	Application
Epoche		Setting aside prejudgements - opening research interview and data analysis with an unbiased, receptive presence	Utilized mindfulness and breathing techniques to focus on each step of the process with each transcript
Phenomenological Reduction	Horizontalization	Regarding every statement as having initial equal value	Unitized the transcript into single statements of meaning and created a notecard for each horizon statement
	Invariant constituents	Pare down horizon statements to non-repetitive, non-overlapping constituents	Sorted the cards into two piles - in and out- based on relevance to the question and repetition within the transcript
	Cluster meaning units	Record invariant constituents on notecards and categorize them through constructed themes	Spread all invariant constituent cards out and clustered them into groups with common words and ideas
	Individual textural descriptions	Descriptive integration of invariant meaning units and textural description of each participant	Clustered and labeled similar meaning units into textural descriptions of experience that
	Composite textural descriptions	Integration of all textural descriptions into a full textural description	Constructed a mental model of textural description and wrote a composite statement for the participant(s) that was then member-checked with them and reviewed with peers/advisor

Imaginative Variation	Structural qualities	Construct a list of structural qualities of how the phenomenon is experienced	Revisited the transcripts to search for structural elements that describe *how* participants experienced RL
	Structural themes	Cluster structural qualities into themes	Clustered the structural qualities into common themes that captured how experiences were bounded
	Individual structural descriptions	Integrate structural themes into an individual structural description for each participant	Integrated the structural themes into a statement that tied them together in list form for each participant
	Composite structural description	Integrate all of the individual structural descriptions into a group or shared structural description of the phenomenon	Bound the textural mental models with structural descriptions for participant(s)
Intuitive Integration	Shared Essence	Integrate textural and structural descriptions of all participants to develop a synthesis of the shared essence of the experience of the phenomenon	Revisited the entirety of the data for invariant constituents and meaning units. Then, developed a composite textural mental model and essence. Analyzed structures across participant experiences and bounded the mental models, displaying a composite textural (what) and structural (how) the participants experience RL (3Es) that was then member-checked with them and reviewed with peers/advisor

and judgments aside to achieve epoch. Although some things may not be bracket-able away from my own experience, every attempt possible was made to do so (Moustakas, 1994).

I utilized a few strategies to achieve epoch throughout the study. I explored and journaled my assumptions, ideas, feelings, and thoughts I had previously associated with the 3Es. By doing so, I revisited assumptions and personal biases I need to be careful of prior to any analysis. An example of this was my preconceived idea that effective leadership is supportive and not authoritative. My written assumption provided awareness that I should not slant participants' responses of supportive practices. I then took time to write my assumptions out prior to the analysis of shared essence because this allowed me to objectively conduct each interview without drawing conclusions. By writing out my assumptions prior to analysis, I was more aware and open to the entirety of description. Finally, I practiced tools of mindfulness such as mindful breaks of focused breathing, as described by Tuhovsky (2017), prior to examining the data to focus myself on the information in front of me and not my outside thoughts.

Data analysis. Data were analyzed via Moustakas' (1994) process. Phenomenological reduction toward textural description and imaginative variation toward structural description, and intuitive integration toward shared essence are detailed below. Additionally, I outline how I revisited the data to analyze for the 3Es and then constructed a complete shared essence.

Phenomenological reduction. The process of reduction, "involves a pre-reflective description of things just as they appear and a reduction to what is horizontal and thematic" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 91). The process of phenomenological reduction took the transcribed interview down to clustered themes or meaning units through horizontalization, creating meaning units and developing textural descriptions.

Horizontalization. Horizontalizing the data required viewing every statement from the interview transcripts as having equal value. These "horizons" were taken directly from the transcripts and acted as the "condition of the phenomenon that gives it a distinct character" from other phenomena (Moustakas, 1994, p. 96).

With each interview I conducted, I first listened to the interview as I read the transcript to ensure that the meanings in what was said and how it was said were incorporated in order to capture the most honest and precise data set. I then unitized the entirety of the transcript by peeling it apart into horizon statements which represented stand-alone statements. Horizons varied in length from one word to entire paragraphs. The main question I asked of each horizon during the process was, "Is this capturing a single idea and when is it transitioning to a new one?" At this stage, the entire transcript was still included but broken into units. Once unitized, I printed the transcript in its new form with each horizon on a three-by-five card. Each interview ranged from 120 to 270 horizon statements.

Constructing invariant constituents. Because each horizon statement is of equal value, the next logical step in following Moustakas' (1994) process was to narrow the statements to the unique and meaningful invariant constituents of the phenomenon. Statements repetitive and irrelevant to RL (3Es) were removed (Moustakas, 1994, p. 97). Two questions helped me to discern the value of the horizons as invariant: (a) "Does it contain a moment of the experience that is a necessary and sufficient constituent for understanding it" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 121)? and (b) "Is it possible to abstract and label the horizon?" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 121). The remaining horizons after the gleaning process were the essential invariant constituents for understanding the experience of the phenomenon. As decisions were made based on these two questions, the note cards containing each horizon statement were split into two piles: one for

invariant constituents and the other for irrelevant or repetitious horizons which were set aside for

the across-case process. Each participant provided 60 to 130 invariant constituents.

Clustering toward meaning units. Once the invariant constituents had been identified, I

clustered them into common thematic labels or meaning units to represent the "core themes of

the experience" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 121). I utilized the note cards to cluster them and construct

the meaning units in a way consistent with the subjective nature of constructivist knowledge

(Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011). Each interview resulted in 10–20 meaning units that are

detailed in Chapter Four.

Moustakas (1994), and many who have used his method, have not specified how they

moved from invariant constituents to meaning units. In my process, I sought learning from other

constructivist qualitative methods. In their summary of thematic development in qualitative

research, Vaismoradi, Jones, Turunen, and Snelgrove (2016) noted:

> The basic premise of classifying codes is "typification". It is the process of grouping a large
> range of codes under a "typical" similarity that can be generalized to them all de- spite their
> variety of details and subtleties. Typification is the result of researchers' creativity during
> the organization of codes through giving a common meaning to a group of codes with
> various features. According to the principle of mutual exclusiveness, if a code has attributes
> of more than one classification group, it is assigned only to one that best fits. Therefore,
> the theme becomes the recurrent unifying idea that characterizes the experiences of
> participants by a holistic insight from the whole of data. (p. 105)

Once the invariant constituent statements were laid before me, I was able to see and construct

groups of typical similarity. To connect them, I looked for common words or portrayed ideas

from the interviews. The process was ongoing construction of knowledge and meaning. The

units shifted and took shape as I individually examined each invariant constituent to determine

its own theme, and I only then placed it within a meaning unit if it was consistent with others

(Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Once typical ideas and words had connected invariant constituents into meaning units, I worked to label them in a way that captured the participants own words and ideas. I often labeled meaning units with phrases instead of single words because of the depth of experience participants described. For example, in one participant, Amber's experience, clustering many invariant constituents into a meaning unit labeled as "knowledge" would have failed to capture the forms of knowledge she had experienced in conjunction with RL. Instead I utilized labels of (a) knowledge of self as a leader, (b) knowledge of the field, and (c) know your staff to better capture Amber's knowledge and experience of RL.

Upon the initial clustering of invariant constituents into meaning units, Moustakas (1994) stated that they must be validated through application (p. 121). To validate the themes, I checked each theme against the complete transcript of the participants and followed Moustakas' (1994) recommendation to ask: (a) "Are the meaning units expressed explicitly throughout the transcription?" and (b) "Are they compatible if not explicitly expressed" (p. 121)? I felt as if the physical data cards were highly valuable in the compatibility process.

Developing textural descriptions. Once the constructed meaning units became clear, I constructed textural descriptions of the phenomenon for each participant (Moustakas, 1994; Raffanti, 2008). I developed one textural description that encompassed the essence of the experience of RL from participants' words and included verbatim statements to ensure their voice in the co-constructed meaning. Textural descriptions combined some meaning units into short segments of connected meaning for the participants. Creating a textural description was in the spirit of not revising the original conversation, but rather ordering the original conversation for meaning toward the phenomenon and toward refinement of description to essence. I revisited

the transcripts each time a textual description was constructed to ensure that descriptions provided connections true to the original participant interview.

Common textural descriptions developed in three areas: (a) when meaning units reappeared in the conversation at multiple points, (b) when the given participant linked meaning units together consistently throughout the conversation, or (c) when multiple units all fit logically within a broader description (Moustakas, 1994). For example, multiple participants listed "actionable characteristics" associated with their experience of RL such as being dependable, courageous, and straightforward. Another example of a textural category was, "teacher outcomes of working with RL," which included feelings such as wanting to work harder, desiring to be a part of the team, and feeling valued. Textural descriptions placed the focus on what participants experience as RL (Moustakas, 1994).

Imaginative variation. Structural descriptions reveal the process of the structures of the experience defined as, "the conditions that must exist for something to appear" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 99). Additionally, structural descriptions provide the context for textural descriptions. The goal was to seek possible meanings through imagination by varying the frame of reference and approaching the phenomenon from divergent perspectives, different positions, or different roles. Ultimately, Moustakas (1994) said that seeking meaning through various angles should lead to "structural descriptions of an experience, the underlying and precipitating factors that account for what is being experienced" (p. 98). It is the process of describing the "how/in what context" (structural descriptions) that speak to conditions which illuminate the "what" (textural description) of that experience (Moustakas, 2004, p. 99).

Moere-Urdahl and Creswell (2004) helpfully described the process to construct structural descriptions in four steps:

1. Systematic varying of the possible *structural qualities* that underlie the descriptions from each participant is done through deep examination of each person's experience.

2. The researcher must recognize the underlying *structural themes* or contexts that account for the emergence of the phenomenon.

3. The universal structures that precipitate feelings and thought with reference to the phenomenon are considered, such as the structures of time, space, bodily concerns, materiality, causality, relation to self, or relation to others.

4. A search for exemplifications that vividly illustrate the invariant structural themes and facilitate the development of structural description of the phenomenon (Moere-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004, p. 30).

In their example of the ripple effect, Moere-Urdahl and Creswell discovered the essential factors to the ripple effect: contexts of who mentors were and when they entered the participants lives. For example, participants spoke about the power of mentorship that began when they were young children or college students as vital to the ripple effect experience.

The process described by Moustakas (2004) and exemplified by Moere-Urdahl and Creswell (2004) was used to describe significant structures of the participants' experience of the phenomenon of RL. Each person's experience was examined for structural factors by listening to the interview again and reading the transcript in tandem. I considered potential universal structures including time in the classroom, space and physical environment of the school, leadership as a construct to self, other roles the participants identified with, external experience they brought to teaching, and how many varying contexts they had worked within. Though this list is not exhaustive of possible structures that influence the experience of RL, these universal structures varied the frame of reference yet still maintained focus on the contextual boundary of

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middle school leadership. Finally, I searched the meaning units and invariant constituent statements for exemplifications of such structural themes. I discovered various components for the participants' experiences, but structural themes of time in the profession, occupational background, leadership exposure and leadership in formal positions were essential to the experience of RL.

  Intuitive integration. In this final step for each participant, the essence of the phenomenon was captured in one coherent textural-structural description statement. Essence, according to Husserl (1937/2017), is "that which is common or universal, the condition or quality without which a thing would not be what it is" (as cited in Moustakas, 1994, p. 100). Husserl went on to say that the textural-structural synthesis represents the "essences at a particular time and place from the vantage point of an individual researcher following the lengthy study" (as cited in Moustakas, 1994, p. 100).

  To construct the textural-structural descriptions for each participant, I began with mindfulness exercises to get as close to epoche as possible. As a person and a researcher, I tend to overlook details or the minutia which carry significant findings and discoveries, so the practice of epoche allowed me to focus fully on the participant experience. To construct these statements, I began with note-cards categorized into meaning units and invariant constituents which were categories that combined meaning units for significance and accuracy. By physically laying the cards out, that story of essence began to form. As Moustakas (2004) made clear, the participants own words must be maintained as much as possible to describe their experience with RL. To do so, I asked myself, "How do these meaningful pieces come together to form a single story?" The process was constructivist oriented because I moved units around in physical space and connected them with phrases such as, "the focus is on. . .", "to enact these

priorities. . .", "and motivated by. . ." or single words like, "including," "with," or "and." By focusing on adding connectors, the essence statements were constructed by the interaction between the participants and myself. With the units and connecting statements physically laid out, I developed mental models that then, when written out in paragraph format, formulated the essence statements and encapsulated the structural and textural descriptions of each participants' experience of RL.

Upon completion of each participants' essence statement, I was able to member-check with them and engage in what Van Manen (2014) referred to as, "interpretation through conversation" (p. 97). I shared the essence statement and the mental models of their experiences with the participants. Though formal interviews were not conducted for a second round, participants confirmed and provided further input on the essence statements. Co-construction continued as I exchanged messages with multiple participants and refined their essence statements accordingly. This process allowed each participant to reflect on the constructed meaning units, any connections I interpreted between them, and the outcome of both to ensure accuracy of their experience through their own perspective (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Revisiting the data for the 3Es. Once a holistic essence statement describing the experience of RL was constructed, each participant's data were revisited with a new lens focused on the 3Es. To do so, I created new meaning units for each of the 3Es. Note cards were sorted into specific categories where the participants described effective, ethical, or enduring leadership. I then described what each experienced as effective, ethical, and enduring to gain rich description of RL and its three components as outlined in Chapter Four. None of the participants clearly spoke to one of the E's at a time; instead, they intertwined them in real time, revisited

initial components often, and jumped ahead multiple times. In reporting on the specifics of the 3Es, it was valuable to examine each in order to inform the theory in Chapter Five.

Developing a complete description of shared essence. Once each participant's textural-structural description was completed, a description of the shared essence of the experience was constructed. Keen (1985) provided an example of a shared essence statement through a complete description of the experience of depression:

> The final truth seems to be that emerging from depression is never really complete. The work of remembering, and feeling the sadness, must be renewed a little every day. The fight into distractions avoids the sadness and makes us more cheerful. . . Addiction to happiness is no less an addiction than the vilest narcotic. Withdraw provokes panic. Flexibility is gone; dependency is complete. (as cited by Moustakas, 1994, p. 100 - 101)

This example shows the connections Keen made between participant experiences through their individual textural-structural descriptions that spoke of complicated recovery, daily battles with sadness, and the addiction to happiness that they withdrew from.

I repeated the process of constructing individual essence with the entirety of the data set to seek shared meaning. I first recollected the horizon statements from the entire study and re-sorted for relevance and repetition, leading to invariant constituents. I then laid the individual invariant constituent cards on the floor and sorted them into typified meaning units. Once the across-case meaning units were constructed, I further categorized then into shared textural descriptions which then served for me to manipulate the physical data and create a shared mental model of the essence of the participants' experiences of RL. It was my intention to replicate the same process utilized for each individual with the group as a whole (Moustakas, 1994).

Once I had a textural-structural mental model and essence statement, I revisited the data set to look for structural descriptions of how RL was experienced. I first went to the individual structural decisions to seek overlap in words, themes, and ideas. In so doing, I was able to

construct three shared structures of teacher's experiences of RL. Finally, I created a composite

shared essence statement for the experience of RL in middle schools for all participants. I

completed one more round of member-checking via email with participants to ensure that the

shared essence captured elements of their individual experiences (Raffanti, 2008).

Through this multi-step process outlined by Moustakas (1994), teacher's experiences of

RL (3Es) in middle schools will become clearer than in the extant literature. Capturing both what

the experience is and how it exists for the individuals and the group, allows for an encompassing

shared essence to inform practice, theory, and research.

Quality Criteria

Because constructivism undergirds the methods used to describe a shared essence, the

paradigm offers the most foundational and appropriate evaluation of quality of the study. In *The*

Constructivist Credo, Lincoln and Guba (2013, p. 70), outlined criteria of authenticity for

research in appropriate ontological, epistemological, and dialectic terms. The criteria included

fairness, ontological authenticity, educative authenticity, catalytic authenticity, and tactical

authenticity. Table 3.3 provides a table summary of the criteria and their assessment in this

study. While many aspects overlap, it is worthwhile to briefly explore each.

Fairness

The criterion of fairness is the "extent to which competing constructions have been

accessed, exposed, and deconstructed toward the emergent constructions" of the study (Lincoln

& Guba, 2013, p. 70). To meet this criterion, all participants provided written and verbal

informed consent via the forms described in the ethics section. Prolonged engagement, the

second quality of fairness, required that co-constructors be identified and solicited for

experiences until saturation occurred. Accordingly, in the tradition of transcendental

Table 3.3

Outline of Quality Criteria Outlined of the Constructivist Paradigm: How Each Criterion is Assessed and Evidenced in This Study

Criteria	What is Required	Assessment of Methods	Practical Evidence in the Study
Fairness	Competing construction are a focus. They have been accessed, constructed, and taken into account.	1. Informed consent 2. Prolonged engagement 3. Member checking at multiple points 4. Peer debrief	1. Signed forms 2. Engagement in collection and analysis 3. Member-checked individual and shared description 4. Debrief with advisors
Ontological authenticity	Individual constraints, including the researcher's, have become more informed, or individuals themselves become more aware of their prior unrealized constructions.	1. Conversations with semi-structured interviews. 2. Being open about the purpose of the study. 3. Written echolocation of researcher perspective. 4. Building caring and trusting relationships with participants. 5. Reflecting on growth after the study.	1. Semi structured interviews utilized. 2. Purpose declared openly in dissemination and in participant recruitment email. 3. Researcher perspective addressed in Chapter Three. 4. Relationships built throughout the study. 5. Growth reflected in Chapter Five.
Educative authenticity	Individuals, including the researcher, have become more understanding of, more sophisticated about, and more tolerant of others' constructions.	1. Conversations with semi-structured interviews. 2. Peer debriefs. 3. Comparison of participants' constructions. 4. Introspective statements about the understanding of constructions.	1. Semi structured interviews throughout. 2. Peer debrief with advisors. 3. Across case analysis and mental model of shared essence. 4. Chapter Five reflection of researcher perspective and some insight from participants.
Catalytic authenticity	Action is stimulated by the inquiry.	1. Collaboration between participants and researcher. 2. Accessibility for all stakeholders upon completion. 3. Evidence of practical application discussed within final product.	1. Co-constructed meanings of RL with interviews and member checking. 2. Member checking throughout and dissemination of final paper to participants. 3. Implication for practice discussed in Chapter Five. 4. Write up and dissemination of study
Tactical authenticity	Individuals are empowered to take action that the inquiry implies or proposes.	1. Maintenance of confidentiality and use of informed consent. 2. Conversations with semi-structured interviews. 3. Discussion of power in regard to the inquiry. 4. Training in discussions of power, if necessary.	1. Informed consent and pseudonyms. 2. Semi-structured interview utilized throughout. 3. Discussions of power within the study and with participants when necessary. 4. Training concerning power not necessary. 5. Bring attention to extant literature.

Note. Inspired by Lincoln & Guba, 2013; Guba & Lincoln, 1985; and Lincoln et al., 2011.

phenomenology, each essence of the phenomenon was constructed individually before attaining additional data so that individual saturation of meaning could arise in descriptions and signal adequate engagement. In addition, before the inquiry began, it was essential that I untangled my ethical position (Lincoln & Guba, 2013, p. 71). As discussed in the methodological process of epoche, all diligence was taken prior to and during the study to separate my past assumptions and feelings toward the phenomenon and its associated constructs. As the study progressed and as each structural-textural description was assembled, member checking via email served to ensure accurate descriptions of their experiences. Finally, to warrant fairness, peer an advisor debriefing confirmed or further informed refinement of the meaning units, textural descriptions, and shared essences (Lincoln & Guba, 2013, p. 71). Fairness, or ensuring that all constructions have been included in a meaningful manner, ensures that inquiry values diversity of experience for a full description.

Ontological authenticity. The second quality criterion is ontological authenticity defined as the "extent to which individual constructions, including that of the inquirer, have themselves become more informed and sophisticated, or the extent to which individuals themselves become aware of constructions that they did not realize they held" (Lincoln & Guba, 2013, pp.70-71). To address this criterion, the purpose of the inquiry was clearly articulated to participants via the initial recruitment email and informed consent form. Also, caring and trusting relationships between the inquirer and co-constructors were built to obtain meaningful data that leads to accurate shared essence (Lincoln & Guba, 2013).

Utilizing the semi-structured interview format allowed a sense of informality during the interviews for participants to speak freely and take the conversation in a variety of directions. Each participant answered the interview questions but no two interviews were the same. Some of

the participants went in the order the questions were written, whereas, others went back and forth between questions to describe their experience. This process allowed participants freedom to address structural factors of their experience with RL, such as Amber's experiences teaching in many different geographic location and various types of schools. At the conclusion of the interviews, many of the participants reflected that the experience allowed them to see leadership from a lens they had maybe not investigated before. For example, Kate stated that the interview "was an excellent cognitive coaching session" reflecting the newly examined understanding that resulted from participating. Ontological authenticity ensures that inquiry inspires learning for co-constructors and researchers alike, making the research a quality experience and product for all involved. This investigation of teachers' experiences of RL certainly inspired constructions of the phenomenon for myself and the participants.

Educative authenticity. The third criterion of authenticity is educative: The extent "to which individuals. . .have become more understanding of, more sophisticated about, and more tolerant of the constructions of others" (Lincoln & Guba, 2013, p. 70). To ensure this type of growth, the inquiry should engage comparison of co-constructors' and inquirer's assessments of other constructions. To promote tolerance and growth, each participant's textural-structural description was included in the final paper in addition to the shared essence to give all participants and readers opportunity to examine learning from each person's unique and meaningful perspective. Peer review and introspective statements of my own biases and assumptions contributed to my own growth of perception. Constructivist inquiry hopes to increase understanding and tolerance. In this study of teachers' experience of RL, participants reflected that their perspectives had been expanded and I am hopeful that readers of the study will benefit in similar ways.

Catalytic authenticity. The fourth authenticity criterion is the extent to which "action is stimulated and facilitated by the inquiry," known as catalytic authenticity (Lincoln & Guba, 2013, p. 70). To catalyze action, constant collaboration between inquirer and co-constructers was held throughout data collection and analysis. This collaboration was reached via an open interview protocol, member checking, and sharing findings with all relevant stakeholders. Catalytic authenticity also requires practical applications. I have been careful to consider potential relevant applications within the implications section of this paper but also recognize that any reader has the opportunity to define and apply RL to their own contextual structures. Research that moves beyond the paper and the walls of academia is a goal of constructivist inquiry and the goal of this study into teacher perspective of RL (effective, ethical, and enduring). I hope that through the open discussion of these participants' experiences, any interested parties can find utility in these perspectives for their own understanding and practice of RL.

Tactical authenticity. Tactical authenticity is the final authenticity criteria described by Lincoln and Guba (2013, pp.70-71). It builds upon the foundation of catalytic authenticity and is defined as the extent to which "individuals are empowered to take the action that inquiry implies or proposes" (Lincoln & Guba, 2013, p.70). Tactical authenticity requires a deliberate focus on power and breaking down borders. Constructivist research can expose issues of power that enable action; tactical authenticity ensures that it is handled carefully and meaningfully instead of recklessly. Agreements were reached prior to data collection with the participants regarding the power embedded in the inquiry through consent forms and anonymity of results (Lincoln & Guba, 2013, p. 71). Asking teachers to speak about leadership for which they currently work is certainly power laden and being deliberate about handling that power carefully was of utmost

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importance. A few of the participants and I discussed the power leadership holds before beginning the interview questions to clarify that I have some understanding of the issue and to give them opportunity to recognize it before continuing. By openly addressing power issues, I am hopeful that tactical authenticity was met and this work can ignite a new and valuable perspective.

Quality constructivist inquiry should meet each of the authenticity criteria described in *The Constructivist Credo* (Lincoln & Guba, 2013). Above criteria ensure that the constructivist inquiry is consistent with the relativist subjectivist paradigmatic assumptions. They therefore ensure not only quality but also meaningful impact of research.

Limitations

By embarking on this study of RL utilizing transcendental phenomenology, I aspired to construct a shared essence of the phenomenon that is missing in the extant literature. However, these methods present a few limitations that are important to recognize. First, the understanding of any experience or phenomenon is never totally exhausted (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004, p. 32). These methods delivered a shared essence of these specific participant's experiences in a finite time of the study (Moustakas, 1994). Findings are not intended to be timeless and boundless in the positivist sense (Lincoln et al., 2011). Readers decide how the results may benefit them and what can be transferred from these participants, at this time and within their contexts, to the readers' own specific structural conditions.

Additionally, the participants self-identified with the experience as the main criteria for inclusion. The criteria did not include an attempt to saturate participants in terms of racial, gender, or other diversity criteria. Implications for future research to address gaps in the saturation of participants are discussed in Chapter Five.

Also, the methods assume that there is a common thread which flows between significant statements, meaning units, and the essence descriptions in order to reach a "universal" quality (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004, p. 32). This thread is subjective to me as the researcher and could be different for a separate researcher. Consistent with the constructivist orientation to subjective knowledge (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), I am limited from attempting to claim that the findings could be replicated exactly. However, I hoped to provide enough detail that the process could be emulated and ensure authenticity of the results with member-checking, co-constructed interpretation, and peer checking.

Another potential challenge is that even though all co-researchers self-identified as having experienced the phenomenon of RL, a universal theme is not intended given their unique cultural or historical backgrounds. I did not ignore the importance of each person's unique background; instead, the goal was to ask questions and produce results focused solely on participant experiences with RL separate from other elements of experience as much as possible. Finally, and perhaps most challenging for me, was achieving true "epoche" (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004). To focus entirely on the participants' experiences without the influence of any biases, assumptions, or personal experiences is rarely possible and some things could not be bracketed out entirely (Moustakas, 1994). However, by following the steps outlined by Moustakas (1994) and also going through the epoche process before each interview and data analysis session, I made all attempts to honor the process. Though there were challenges in transcendental phenomenology, it remained an appropriate way to begin to understand an essence of teachers' experiences of RL in middle schools in the selected area of study and offered unique growth opportunities for the construct and the researcher and co-constructors.

Conclusion of Chapter Three

Chapter Three detailed the transcendental phenomenology methods grounded in the constructivist methodology utilized to co-construct and describe the shared essence of teachers' experiences of RL in middle schools in the selected geographic location. The purpose of the study was to inform praxis through action, theory, and research. Chapter Four presents the process and findings from the five participants in the form of horizons, meaning units, textural descriptions, structural descriptions and essence statements. In addition, the informing elements of the 3E's are also included for individual participants. Chapter Four finishes with a presentation of process, meaning units, and textural descriptions of shared essence across the five participants.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE SHARED ESSENCE OF RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP FOR FIVE

MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHERS

The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings of this study as the co-constructed essence of five participants' lived experiences of Responsible Leadership (RL) and their shared description of the 3Es (effective, ethical, enduring) to inform the Responsible Leadership for Performance (RL/P) theory (Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004; Moustakas, 1994). Part I is focused on the individual participants' descriptions of RL. To address how middle school teachers perceive and describe their experience of RL (3Es) in middle schools in a western state of the United States, a snapshot of each participant is provided along with (a) a description of the stages of analysis to move from horizon statements to essence, (b) textural descriptions which describe what participants experienced, and (c) structural descriptions which describe how participants experienced RL. Secondly, to inform how these middle school teachers perceived and described their experience of effective, ethical, and enduring leadership, a section is included that details how each teacher associated his or her descriptions with the 3Es. Figure 4.1 displays how each participant's complete essence is constructed from the three components. Each participant's individual description then culminates in a complete statement of the essence of the individual experience of RL in middle schools in the study area.

Part II addresses the first research question and sub-questions from a shared perspective across the experiences. Thus, part II presents the shared structural and textural descriptions that I constructed in addition to the shared associations with the 3Es. Part II culminates in a statement of shared essence of the experience of RL to capture "the essential, invariant structure of ultimate 'essence' which captures the meaning ascribed to the experience" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 100).
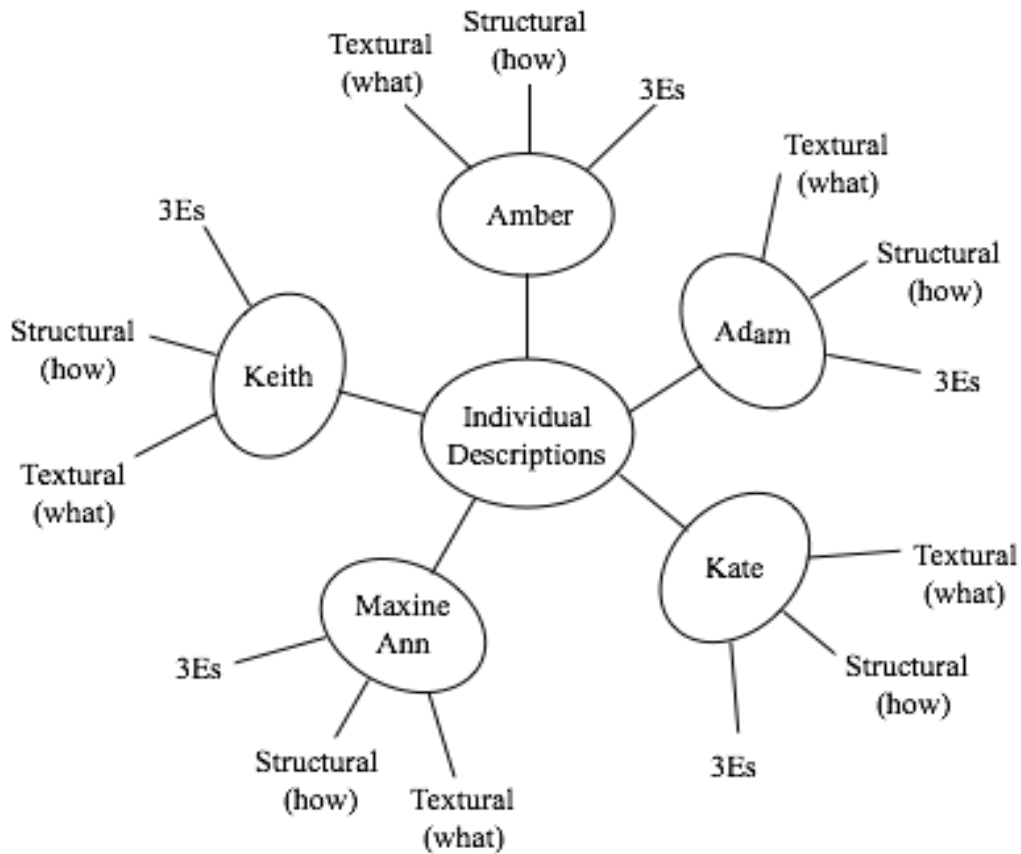
Figure 4.1. Individual participant descriptions of RL including the textural (what), structural (how), and associations with the 3Es.

A unique component of the process in this study is the inclusion of mental models (Senge, 2006). In the classic text, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*, Senge (2006) defined a mental model as "our internal pictures of how the world works" (p. 163). Clear (2018) defined mental models as "a concept, framework, or worldview that you carry around in your mind to help you interpret the world and understand the relationship between things" (p. 1). Senge claimed that "what is most important to grasp is that mental models are active—they shape how we act" (p. 164). I have included a mental model of each participant's textural-structural essence of his or her RL experience and a model for the shared essence of their collective experiences. In each model, the textural descriptions are

represented in boxes and structural descriptions visually bound the system. The models guided my thinking from the lists of descriptions to the statements of essence.

Part I: Individual Descriptions of the Essence of RL

A deep focus on each of the five participants' experiences of RL completes the constructivist transcendental phenomenological of this. To fully understand participants' experiences, it is prudent to remember Lincoln and Guba's (1985) conclusion that "constructions held by people are born out of their experience with and interaction with their contexts" (p. 60). Therefore, it is appropriate to explore the individual background of each participant that has shaped who they are and how they experience the world around them, including the phenomenon such as RL. However, I guarded personal information that could potentially identify participants to protect anonymity. I have described the participants in the context of their career experiences with their own words as much as possible. I withheld information concerning the schools they work in and pertaining to their personal lives.

Each participant had unique experiences with RL but all five are bound together by a profound passion for middle school students and students' education. The five participants were included in the study because they are teachers to their students every day and have had intense experience with RL in middle schools in a western state of the United States. However, each participant provided more in addition to teaching. The participants were mentors for future educators, complex curriculum developers, role-models for colleagues, go-to experts for school and district leaders, dedicated professionals, and more. They were family members, spouses, parents, and friends. Though my time with each of them varied in length, my respect for them as educators and as people did not. I hope to honor their voices and perspectives through deep description of their experiences with their own words. Individual descriptions are shared in no

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particular order in this chapter and names are all pseudonyms to help protect participant

anonymity: Amber, Adam, Kate, Maxine Ann, and Keith. Each description begins with a

snapshot of the person and his or her general background followed by the details of the analysis

process including phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, and intuitive integration

regarding the interview (Moustakas, 1994). To disseminate findings, I first discuss each

participant's experience through textural descriptions (what), structural descriptions (how), and

their associations with the 3Es. I then end each person's individual component with intuitive

integration through a mental model and statement to capture the essence of his or her personal

experience of RL. The chapter concludes with an identical analysis across the participants to

culminate with a mind map and statement of shared essence of the participant's experiences of

RL in middle schools in a state of the western United States.

Amber

Amber was an ardent educator for over fifteen years. She worked with students ranging

in age, global geographic locations, socio-economic statuses, and school sites within the

geographic area of the study. Her variety of experience provided her opportunity to work with a

wide range of school leadership approaches. Additionally, Amber experienced leadership with a

large range of goals across cultural contexts as a result of teaching in various regions of the

United States and beyond its borders. For example, at one location she had "a super unique

experience of literally dragging my finger down the chalkboards to have enough [chalk] on my

finger to write on the chalkboard" (IP1, 2017, p. 12). Within the United States, Amber stated that

"the first nine . . . [years of teaching] were at turn-around schools" (IP1, 2017, p. 12). A turn-

around is described as:

> A dramatic and comprehensive intervention in a low-performing school that: a) produces
> significant gains in achievement within two years; and b) readies the school for the longer

process of transformation into a high-performance organization. (Kutash, Nico, Gorin, Rahmatullah, & Tallant, 2010, p. 4)

With such diverse experiences with leadership, Amber had a unique perspective to inform RL in middle schools in a western state of the United States.

Amber served in multiple roles under the positional umbrella of a teacher, throughout her geographic movement. She primarily taught middle school grades sixth through eighth in English and Social Studies. As an English educator, she taught students who could not speak English to English speaking students with deep passion for reading and writing. Amber also held the proper license to serve as a formal school leader, but she remained mostly in the classroom to continue her work impacting the lives of students. However, by attaining her leadership credentials, she had a leader perspective, which offered another layer to her description of RL. Amber's experience with leadership was brimming as a result of variations of physical space, student demographics, and personal background, and the diversity is reflected throughout her descriptions.

The analysis process. To give proper value to Amber's experience, I will revisit the details and application of Moustakas' (1994) method process to construct the essence of her experience. Figure 4.2 shows the process beginning with the entirety of the transcript and
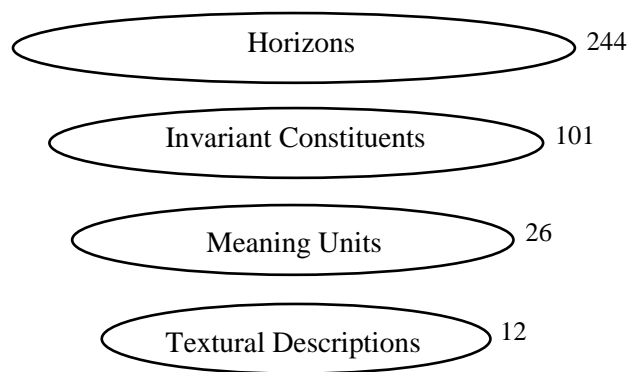
Figure 4.2. Phenomenological reduction process for textural description of Amber's experience with corresponding unit totals of each phase.

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moving through horizon statements, invariant constituents, meaning units, textural description, structural descriptions, and finally the essence statement.

The initial process of isolating horizon statements, "the grounding or condition of the phenomenon that gives it a distinct character" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 95), from the transcript resulted in 244 horizons which initially counted for equal value to Amber's description of RL. Amber's horizons varied in length from a single word to multiple sentences but each captured a single thought such as, "for me, being a teacher is about the intellectual dialogue that is beneath it" (IP1, 2017, p. 2). I then followed Moustakas' (1994) recommendation that for each horizon statement, I asked: (a) is this horizon statement relevant to the topic of her experience of RL? and (b) is this horizon statement repeated by other horizon statements throughout the interview? Horizons that were transitional between descriptions, discussion between Amber and me not related to the topic of RL, or repetition throughout were discarded. The remaining horizon statements were then counted as the 101 unique invariant constituents of her experience (Moustakas, 1994, p. 121). From these 101 statements, I constructed 26 meaning units by laying each invariant constituent card on the floor or a table and seeking typification and classification to cluster them (Vaismoradi et al., 2016, p. 99). After an additional round of clustering, the 26 meaning units became 12 textural description statements toward a complete description of Amber's experience: RL matters, needs of RL, knowledge of the field, knowledge of yourself, knowledge of your team, nudge teacher thinking, support and love, humility, give credit, and build a dynamic team. Table 4.1 displays the meaning units and textural descriptions as they were constructed.

Once phenomenological reduction toward textural descriptions of Amber's experience were completed, I sought structural descriptions through imaginative variation, which is detailed

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Table 4. 1

Meaning Units and Subsequent Constructed Textural Descriptions of Amber's Experience of RL

Meaning Units	Textural Description
• Leadership at the forefront of experience	• RL is foundational
• Someone to professionally value • Someone to personally value • A role-model	• Personal needs of RL
• Decision based on school mission • Champion focus on the school mission	• Focus on the school mission
• Trust • Maintain confidentiality	• Build and maintain trust
• Beneficial over time • Remaining in the school	• Be dedicated
• Stay current with teaching and education • Have a knowledge of the practice of teaching	• Knowledge of the field
• Seek a variety of perspectives • Develop leaders within the school	• Develop a dynamic team
• Know your gaps in understanding • Know your own niche	• Know yourself as a leader
• Listen • Give credit • Humility	• Be humble enough to listen and recognize accomplishment
• Know what each teacher is focused on • Understand what will help teachers grow • Know teaching at the Middle School level	• Know your staff
• Provide support through good and bad • Love the teachers and students	• Lead with support and love
• Challenge teachers • Push thinking for better practice	• Nudge teachers toward growth

later in the chapter, and then relational associations between textural descriptions and the 3Es.

Finally, textural descriptions (what), bounded by structural descriptions (how), and associated

3Es resulted in the statement of essence through intuitive integration.

Textural (what) descriptions. Textural descriptions provide the *what* of Amber's RL

experience, and these are described in further detail.

After I described the study to Amber, she said that she "has thought about this [leadership] a lot" (IP1, 2017, p. 1), reflecting that general leadership is a forefront consideration for her. Amber communicated that RL is foundational to her experience as a middle school teacher. She then described the defining elements of her experience, including someone she "could value professionally and personally, could look up to, someone who is smarter than me" and a person she can "aspire to be like" (IP1, 2017, p. 2). RL is important to Amber and seems to be grounded in meeting her personal needs and earning her respect.

Once her personal needs were met, Amber described that actions characterized her RL experiences. She felt that RL should prioritize the vision of the school to keep everyone focused in a single direction by always asking themselves and their staff, "Is the work you're doing part of our mission and vision" (IP1, 2017, p. 5)? RL should also build and continually develop "overarching trust. [That] can't be emphasized enough" (IP1, 2017, p. 9) between them and their staff. One example of trust for her was confidentiality. She mentioned, "All of the leaders that I've ever really respected, I knew that they didn't ever discuss what happened in their office with anybody else. And with me either" (IP1, 2017, p. 9). Last, Amber expected RL to display dedication to the school as evidenced by "leadership that lasts over time" (IP1, 2017, p. 12).

In order to enact RL, Amber felt that every system needed basic knowledge of a few very important components. Amber spoke to knowledge of the field, knowledge of themselves as RL and where they may lack, and knowledge of one's staff and the work they do. RL must have knowledge of the field of education in order to "nudge teachers" to be the best they can for students (IP1, 2017, p. 5). As Amber put it, RL should "know the newest and greatest research that's out there" and "be able to engage in the intellectual dialogue of the profession" (IP1, 2017, p. 2). She also explained that she needs nudging toward personal growth. She said, "I need them

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to be pushing on me. They're not going to break me but they're going to make me bend and I want them to push on me and I want them to help me" (IP1, 2017, p. 20). A balance of nudging toward growth yet supporting teachers relies on knowledge of the field of education.

Amber also displayed a need for RL to know themselves: to "figure out your niche" and to "understand that you may not have all the answers" (IP1, 2017, p. 23). Through humility and self-awareness, RL can "intentionally put people on [the] leadership team to fill your gaps" (IP1, 2017, p. 15). Amber believed that humility is key as teachers "need credit for their ideas" because,

> when the leader talks about it at a department meeting, or at a staff meeting or something like that, that credit is given to that teacher . . . not only just because we don't want principals stealing ideas, but also in the profession of teaching, we don't get Christmas bonuses. We don't get a new car because we have the most sales, and we don't have those things . . . we have two things. We've got our own classroom, and we've got our ideas. You've got to give credit to those ideas. (IP1, 2017, p. 10)

By knowing yourself as RL, Amber suggested that it is possible to build a strong team and give credit to teachers when they deserve it.

Finally, Amber perceived RL as deeply knowing your staff both collectively as a group and as individual teachers. Amber stated, "To be an effective leader is to be like an effective teacher, and you have to know your classroom, and for them their classroom is their teachers" (IP1, 2017, p. 8). Amber emphasized the importance of effective leadership as growing teachers through feedback: "One of the parts of being an effective leader for me, is . . . I believe that the evaluation process is huge" (IP1, 2017, p. 5). For Amber, RL was "able to give lots of support to their teachers and their leadership team also" as individuals and as a team (IP1, 2017, pp. 14–15). By being known, teachers can feel love and support from RL while being a part of a bigger vision.

Amber's experiences of RL were informed by a diverse and dense background in middle schools in the selected context of the study. She worked with leadership that was responsible and leadership that was not. Amber described that leadership was responsible when it met her needs of a role-model, when it had knowledge of education and the school, and when it loved teachers through support and humility.

Structural (how) descriptions. This section focuses on the structural descriptions of Amber's experience of RL constructed through what Moustakas (1994) called imaginative variation. After constructing the textural descriptions, I revisited the data to process through various perspectives and underlying structures of Amber's experience. One apparent structure concerned the amount of time—more than 15 years—she had spent in middle school classrooms. She indicated that time was foundational because for RL, "to think that what I need is [the same as] what a five-year teacher needs, isn't effective" (IP1, 2017, p. 28). Her experience was also framed by the unique context of middle schools, which she described with a sense of humor. She laughed as she said, "When push comes to shove, middle school teachers who remain middle school teachers for the bulk of their career, are there because they enjoy the dorkiness of kids and so they're kind of a dork themselves" (IP1, 2017, p. 25). She also described her experience through a comparison to lower grades, where she briefly served as a leader with the notion that she had, "to be extra listening [*sic*] and extra compassionate" (IP1, 2017, p. 24) in that context versus middle schools. An additional structural component of Amber's experience centered on the diversity of schools she had worked in. Her response showed conviction about the power of RL that understands context. For instance, from her time in low socioeconomic schools she knew that "you're working with kids in trauma, you're working with kids who are low socio-economic status, and with being poor comes a whole bunch of different things" (IP1, 2017, p. 13) that

leadership needs to be aware of. Structures of personal experience, time in leadership roles, and contextual variety all seemed to structure Amber's experience of RL in middle schools in the selected region of the study.

Amber and the 3Es. Because the interview protocol was designed to solicit reflection on each of the 3Es, Amber's insights on each are discussed. Table 4.2 indicates the textural descriptions Amber associated with each of the 3Es. However, an interesting note to make is that

Table 4.2

Associated Descriptions of the 3Es in Amber's Experience of RL

Effective	Ethical	Enduring
Nudging toward growth	Build and maintain trust	Ethical and effective over time
Feedback	Confidentiality	Humble to build a team
Focus on the mission	Give credit	Support teachers
Knowledge of the field		Love teachers
Know yourself		
Know your staff		

Amber also intertwined the 3Es throughout the interview. She did not discuss them in a linear way even though the questions were presented in such a way, thus, potentially indicating that the 3Es are reciprocal (Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004).

Effective. In her experience of RL, Amber particularly associated effective leadership with nudging teachers toward growth and knowledge of the field. She said, "For me to have an effective leader as my leader, I need somebody who's going to understand. . . . They need to pathologically understand where I am and know the newest and greatest research that's out there" (IP1, 2017, p. 2). Amber also stated clearly, "An effective leader, just like an effective teacher, would know all of their staff members enough . . . to know what each teacher needed in that moment in time" (IP1, 2017, p. 8). Amber also associated knowing yourself as a leader and focus on school mission with effectiveness. She felt that if RL was unaware of their own approaches

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and knowledge, they cannot design an effective mission or create the environment to attain it (IP1, 2017). In Amber's experience, each element of effectiveness illustrated that middle school RL is most effective when focus is maintained on the schools' mission and each person knows him or herself and the team well enough to work toward it with vigor.

Ethical. In Amber's experience, ethical leadership was closely associated with building and maintaining trust, plus giving credit. She said, "Laying the foundation of any good intimate relationship is going to be the same with a leadership position, and I think that trust has to be there for them to be ethical" (IP1, 2017, p. 9). Amber placed significance on the necessity of confidentiality to maintain trust. Amber summarized ethical leadership as recognizing contribution and remaining a trustworthy leader.

Enduring. Amber described enduring leadership as, "Leadership that lasts over time . . . people that are in it for the long haul" (IP1, 2017, p. 13).During one moment, Amber connected the 3Es and revisited her initial thoughts and concluded that enduring leadership is more complex than just being there for a limited time. To endure requires "staying effective and ethical over that period of time" (IP1, 2017, p. 14). Amber associated endurance with being humble as well as leading with support and love. In her experience, she saw humility when "enduring leadership . . . developed leadership teams, and intentionally asked people to be on the team who would fill in the gaps of their learning and their understanding" (IP1, 2017, pp. 14 - 15). Enduring leaders in the middle school understood that "if you're going to be a leader of those teachers, love them . . . just like the teacher needs to love those students" (IP1, 2017, p. 23). In Amber's experience, enduring leadership remained effective and ethical overt time by developing teams to fill knowledge gaps and leading with care and love for teachers.

The 3Es guided my interview with Amber and served as the framework by which to understand the phenomenon of RL. In return, Amber's experience informed how each of the 3Es manifested in middle schools during her time as a teacher and across her many geographic locations.

The essence of Amber's experience of RL. When Moustakas (1994) described the intuitive integration process, it was unclear how researchers should synthesize meaning into a single statement of essence. Figure 4.3 displays the components of Amber's experience:

- Time in leadership
- Middle school context
- Personal experience

Structural (how

Textural (what)

Amber

3Es

- RL matters
- Personal needs of RL
- Focus on school mission
- Build and maintain trust
- Be dedicated
- Knowledge of the field
- Develop a dynamic team
- Know yourself as leadership
- Be humble enough to listen and recognize accomplishment
- Know your staff
- Lead with support and love
- Nudge teachers toward growth

- Effective
  - Nudging toward growth
  - Feedback
  - Focus on mission
  - Knowledge of the field
  - Know yourself
  - Know your staff
- Ethical
  - Build and maintain trust
  - Confidentiality
  - Give credit
- Enduring
  - Ethical and effective over time
  - Humble to build a team
  - Support teachers
  - Love teachers

Figure 4.3. Components of Amber's complete description of RL.

textural (what), structural (how), and associations with the 3Es. However, to move from these pieces to a coherent whole required creativity. As I examined meaning units on notecards spread across the floor, I began to construct a mental model of her textual descriptions of experience bounded by the structural descriptions. I then moved the units around in physical space and drew connections between them reflective of Amber's own logical progression in the interview.

Amber's experience of RL as a middle school teacher is captured in the following textural-structural essence developed from her description and confirmed by her in member-checking:

> Responsible Leadership matters. It is structured by time, experience, and the contextual environment of middle schools. Teachers are aware of RL's effects and see their principal as fundamental stakeholders. After spending years in classrooms across the globe, teachers may notice that enduring RL requires someone you can look up to and aspire to be like, someone you can value personally and professionally so that you want to please them and be part of the team. Effective RL focuses on mission and vision, builds and develops deep trust, and is dedicated to the craft of education and RL. To enact these, responsible leaders possess effective knowledge of: (a) the field of education to push teachers' thinking, (b) themselves as a leader and person with the humility and ethical groundings necessary to give credit to teachers when it is due and build a dynamic leadership team, and (c) their staff as a group and individually to support their professional and personal development.

This textural-structural description, as Moustakas (1994) explained, represents the "essence at a particular time and place from the vantage point of an individual researcher following the lengthy study" (p. 100). In follow-up emails with Amber, she confirmed that this statement captured her descriptions of her experience of RL as a middle-school teacher. Figure 4.4 is the resulting mental model that then allowed me to create a fluid essence statement.

In reflecting on my time with Amber, it struck me how deeply connected she was to her role as an educator. The passion she showed for our youth and her role in their lives was contagious. I found it inspiring that a conversation afforded by the topic of RL could spark such passion in both myself as the researcher and Amber as an educator.

Adam

Adam was a young teacher with tremendous devotion to the profession and the general field of education. After considering alternative careers, he earned his teaching license in conjunction with an advanced degree. At the time of the interview, he was seeking further education en route to leadership roles for himself. His passion for students also carried beyond the school as evidenced by his variety of roles with a youth sports group, which allowed him to
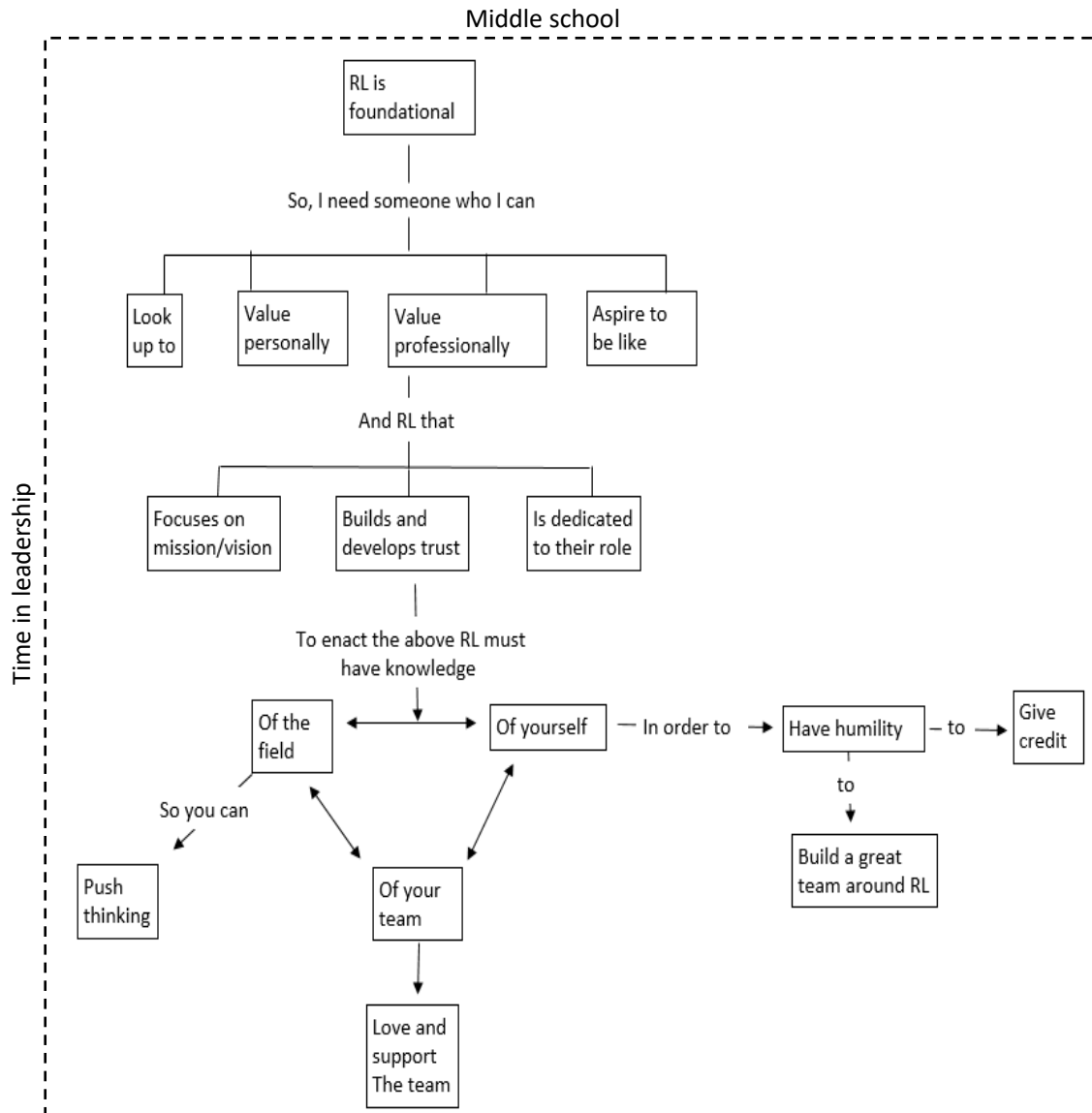
Figure 4.4. A mental model of Amber's experience of RL with textural (what) bounded by structural (how).

experience leadership outside of education. He also spent time in a variety of education contexts including teaching in a high school and now in a middle school.

Adam regularly took on challenges and roles within his school to further build his perspectives. For example, he spent significant time through his formal studies, considering what leadership meant to him and how it should be enacted. He also had practical opportunities to be a leader as an athlete and coach throughout much of his life. Adam continued to practice

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leadership within his school by coordinating extracurricular opportunities for students and by being an active member of staff development sessions.

Adam described himself as an intuitive person. He said that he had a good sense of the effort people applied to their work and how they were feeling about their work. This sense of intuition made Adam a reflective and thoughtful person, which sparked inspiration and thoughtful reflection for myself as well. Adam's experiences of RL reflected the deep-thinking nature of his personality.

The analysis process. It is valuable to revisit how I utilized Moustakas' (1994) process to describe Adam's perception of his RL experience. The process of phenomenological reduction—horizontalization, invariant constituents, categorized meaning units, and textural descriptions—for Adam's interview is displayed in Figure 4.5.

Horizons	165
Invariant Constituents	91
Meaning Units	31
Textural Descriptions	12
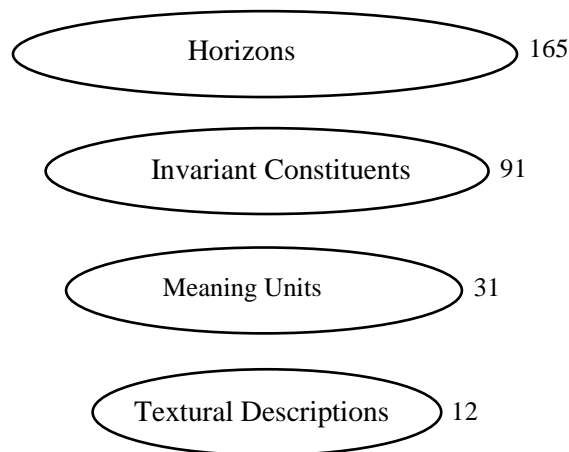
Figure 4.5. Phenomenological reduction process for textural description of Adam's experience with corresponding unit totals of each phase.

My interview with Adam resulted in 165 horizon meaningful statements. The two questions concerning relevance and repetition were asked of each horizon and resulted in 91 invariant constituent statements that represented unique and relevant aspects of Adam's experience. These 91 invariant constituents were typified and classified into 31 meaning units.

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Upon revisiting the data and context as a whole, I was able to construct 12 textural descriptions

from his data which is displayed in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3

Meaning Units and Subsequent Constructed Textural Descriptions of Adam's Experience of RL

Meaning Units	Textural Description
• Don't avoid suffering; face it • Take risks and learn	• Courage for risk and tough situations
• Transparent decision making • Communicate ethics clearly • Communicate and connect vision	• Transparent and clear with the "why"
• Model accountability • Take ownership • "Fall on the sword"	• Model accountability and ownership
• Follow through on what you say • "Do what you say you will do"	• Follow through
• Empower others • "Build leaders, not followers" • Build a team around you • Humbly seek advice and listen	• Empowerment through humility
• Reflect on practice • Reflection as precursor to growth • Learn from every person and situation	• Constant reflection and learning
• Principals • Teachers with informal leadership	• Who is a "leader"
• Genuinely do your job • 100% effort	• Do your best
• Be aware of your position • Context matters; know it	• Know your role in context
• Be visible in the school • "Shine" through the good and bad	• Be present always
• See teachers as human being's first • Display care for the human experience	• People focused
• Be authentic • Be direct • Be honest • Be consistent	• RL in action

After phenomenological reduction to construct textural descriptions of Adam's

experience, I sought structural descriptions through imaginative variation (detailed later in the

chapter) and sought relational associations between textural descriptions and the 3E's. Finally, intuitive integration of textural descriptions (what), bounded by structural descriptions (how), and associated 3Es resulted in an essence statement.

Textural (what) descriptions. Adam was passionate and thoughtful when he described the textural nature of his experience. He voiced excitement for leadership and he often paused to think through questions I asked or to gather his own thoughts.

Throughout our conversation, Adam consistently shared that RL was associated with the principal. When speaking to who metaphorically captains the ship of a middle school, he noted, "For me, it's got to be your principal" (IP2, 2017, p. 7). He explained that in times where formal leaders were not stepping into their proper roles, "other leaders would have to be some of the teachers, just the way in which they carry themselves" (IP2, 2017, p. 6). The principal, however, was the role clearly associated with RL. Adam added that these formal leaders have a duty to understand the importance of their position and the context in which they operate. RL was an all-encompassing mindset that Adam described through rhetorical questions and responses:

> How are you in your office? How are you dressed? Now I wouldn't tell them that, but that's just something that I'm always thinking of. I don't know. They should already know. Every action that you do, I'm going to, whether I realize it or not, I'm going to think about it. It's going to affect how I work for you. (IP2, 2017, p. 15)

He also said that "middle school has its own context" (IP2, 2017, p. 3). Context means the circumstances that create an idea or event. Adam followed up by stating that "leaders have to recognize the context on their own" which requires "patience" (IP2, 2017, p. 3). In Adam's experience, those most often associated with RL were principals who understood the importance and context of their role.

Once Adam described who he experiences RL through, we talked about what he experiences. Adam used the metaphor of the sun to explain that RL was present in both good and trying times just as the sun is present for us here on earth:

> The sun. I say that in a way because as we're here right now, the sun is lighting up our day. We can't see the sun right now, but it's here. It's present. Sometimes you don't realize it. It's always there. As we look now, everyone can get their day going and they don't really see it, but if we didn't have the sun, we wouldn't have anything. It's just present and it's there. Even when it's cloudy and it's raining and things seem awful, that sun is still burning through it. It's still up and it's still shining. You may not see it, but the light is still there. You've got to be relentless and you have got to be there. Right when that rain clears, what's the first thing you see? Boom. Sunlight. Even when it's snowing and there's a blizzard, the sun is still up. It's still doing its thing. (IP2, 2017, p. 16)

Through this metaphor, Adam illustrated the steadfast nature of RL through anything. He also described RL's resilient presence in a school for teachers to count on.

In Adam's experience, the priority on presence manifested a value of prioritizing people in a school. He further described a need for the leaders themselves to "realize that you're a human first" and to ask themselves, "How are you helping other people get on in life? How are your decisions affecting others and why are you making certain decisions? You have got to be able to ask yourself some pretty vulnerable questions" (IP2, 2017, p. 8). Adam indicated that asking questions allowed RL to put people above test scores and material items of a school.

Personal traits that Adam perceived to be associated with RL were authenticity, consistency, and directness. He said leaders in RL systems should

> honestly express who you are and not someone else. That's really tough . . . To figure out who you are is you got [*sic*] to talk with everyone else. How do you want to lead them, and then ask yourself, 'How do I want to do that?' (IP2, 2017, p. 21)

Adam also expected consistency from RL. He bluntly said, "You have to be honest and consistent with what you're saying" (IP2, 2017, p. 5), and even across contexts, "someone who's consistent, too . . . is consistent" (IP2, 2017, p. 3) no matter the circumstances. To be authentic

and consistent, Adam explained the need for directness. He said, "In leadership, you can't beat around the bush" (IP2, 2017, p. 15), and he referred to directness as his "biggest thing" (IP2, 2017, p. 15) when describing RL. In Adam's experience, RL is not fully enacted if not authentic, consistent, and direct.

In Adam's experience, traits of RL were manifested as actions including transparency and accountability. First, "You have to to be transparent. You have to be very, very transparent. When you can't be, you have to say why you can't be" (IP2, 2017, p. 5). RL is also a willingness to be accountable and "to fall on the sword over and over and over again even when it's not your fault" which takes "a lot of pride and integrity and character to be able to do that [take blame] over and over and over again (IP2, 2017, p. 8). Adam, therefore, seemed to note the courage it took to enact RL but described why courage is exactly what he needed from RL.

Courage to face tough situations and take risks defined RL for Adam. For example, responsible leaders are "not afraid to take on things that are tough" or to "get real with your teachers sometimes" (IP2, 2017, p. 8). He had experienced RL able to "have those hard conversations with teachers without affecting the relationship and just keeping it professional" (IP2, 2017, p. 10). In addition to facing tough situations, courageously taking risks and failing was essential RL for Adam. He explained, "It's almost crucial for leaders to make mistakes. Then they can get feedback, they can reflect, and then in the long run, you can see how they grow from there" (IP2, 2017, p. 10). The courage to be transparent, accountable, and take calculated risks was necessary for RL.

With the courage to be outward looking, Adam also added that RL is inward focused on deep reflection and constant growth. He said, "you have to grow, grow, grow. Reflection is the precursor to growth" (IP2, 2017, p. 9). In line with his intuitive nature, Adam felt that if he sees

"someone's actively reflecting in whatever way . . . you can tell [that] they are getting better"
(IP2, 2017, p. 9). Reflection seemed to go beyond a professional trait. Adam said that reflection
"is the key to being a human being, I think. You have to be able to ask those questions" (IP2,
2017, p. 9). In Adam's experience, deep inward reflection and growth were essential for RL.

A unique aspect of Adam's experience was the notion that RL empowers others. He
reflected that he had past RL "listening to me and empowering me [which] makes me feel like I
have more influence than I thought I once did, which is good" (IP2, 2017, p. 13). This made him
"feel like he's a part of something [bigger than himself]" (IP2, 2017, p. 13). He felt that "when
[responsible leadership] empower[s] other people to step up and take a RL role, it says a lot
about their character" (IP2, 2017, p. 14). Against the traditional great man leadership approaches,
RL seemed to provide empowerment for others, not authority over others.

A final component of Adam's RL experiences was clear and regular communication. He
thought RL should "just know that you are always communicating something to me. Even when
you're not communicating, you are. When you think you're not communicating, you're
communicating to me" (IP2, 2017, p. 16). Constant and clear communication is paralleled by a
deep connection to ethics and vision. Communication helps RL "connect with me and make me
feel like I'm connected to their vision" (IP2, 2017, p. 15). He added, "Everyone has their own set
of ethics and their own moral code, but when you're able to explain it to somebody who
disagrees and get them to understand where you're coming from" then you are leading
responsibly (IP2, 2017, p. 17).

Throughout our interview, Adam thought deeply and used vivid language to describe his
experiences. He identified RL through the 12 textural descriptions in Table 4.3 that all held deep

and personal resonance. RL was highly valuable in Adam's experience because RL was, "so desperately needed" in middle schools (IP2, 2017, p. 10).

Structural (how) descriptions. Once textural descriptions were complete, I revisited Adam's interview for structural components (Moustakas, 1994). Adam's time as a coach and programmer for sports provided structural reference points. He related RL in his school to "the experiences outside of school with my [sport] organization (IP2, 2017, p. 8). Additionally, Adam's current academic work toward moving into formal school leadership influenced his perceptions of RL. As a result of his active engagement with leadership courses and internship experiences, he was able to clearly structure his own beliefs. Furthermore, his personality as an "intuitive person" who can "just sense when someone's giving their best" structured his perception of leadership with a concern for others and a connection to the human experience (IP2, 2017, p. 7). By extension, he regularly referenced the importance of "seeing [teachers] as humans first" and leaders recognizing the humanity in themselves (IP2, 2017, p. 9). Finally, Adam spoke to the importance of his role as a new teacher to his experience. He said,

> When you feel like a small fish in a big pond at a school as a new teacher, it's really empowering and reassuring knowing that this principal, this big kahuna is going to . . . look out to you and be like, 'Hey, was that taken care of for you? Did that get done? (IP2, 2017, p. 1)

A final structure of Adam's experience was the effect of timing on his perception because his school recently went through a leadership change. For example, he noted that in his experience, "All eyes are on our principal" because he is new to the position (IP2, 2017, p. 6). Adam's experience was structured by comparative elements of occupation background, timing for him and RL, and the relation of RL to the basic human experience.

Adam and the 3Es. The 3Es of RL guided Adam to describe his experience of the phenomenon with meaning and depth. This section is intended to discuss non-directional associations between Adam's descriptions and the specific 3Es as presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4

Associated Descriptions of the 3Es in Adams's Experience of RL

Effective	Ethical	Enduring
Follow through	Clear communication	Presence
Reflection	Transparency	Accountability
Execution	Uphold high expectations	Consistent vision
Holding it together		

Effective. In Adam's experience, effective leadership was a combination of what RL does and values. Upon my asking about effective leadership, Adam quickly noted that "effective would be follow through. A leader who can follow through with what it is that they're saying that they want to do" (IP2, 2017, p.1). Many leadership systems carry mission or vision statements that fall short because they are not followed through with in every day action. Adam's responses seemed to agree with Kouzes and Posner's (2012) principle of leadership illustrated with the acronym D.W.Y.S.Y.W.D.–do what you say you will do (p. 40). To Adam, effective leadership was also associated with accountability because effective leaders "don't just push it [problem] under the rug" (IP2, 2017, p. 2). Adam also required that RL reflect when something does go wrong, such as looking back on a poorly run meeting. He went on to explain that being leadership needs "pretty cognizant of that [a poor meeting] for the next meeting and go, 'I'm not going to let that happen again. I wasn't an effective leader'" (IP2, 2017, p. 3). Adam also associated effectiveness with "holding it together" and being strong and steady for constituents (IP2, 2017, p. 7). Adam felt that when leaders "are just crumbling because of their own lack of effectiveness, there is no sympathy for that" (IP2, 2017, p. 8). Adam's ideas of effectiveness

consisted of follow-through, communication, accountability, reflection, and holding it together for everyone's betterment.

Ethical. Adam associated ethical leadership with clear communication, transparency, and high expectations. An interesting component concerned how RL should respond to ethical dilemmas. He noticed teachers who may be burnt-out acting unethically by not putting their best effort in for students. In these cases, Adam said that ethical leadership needed to clearly communicate and "really, really dig deep and figure out what's going on ethically at their school" (IP2, 2017, p. 5). By not letting issues like burn-out become major problems, RL can uphold high expectations. Ultimately, Adam associated ethical leadership with transparency. He captured the connection between ethics and transparency succinctly: "I think just tangible-wise, you have to be transparent. You have to be very, very transparent" (IP2, 2017, p. 4).

Enduring. Adam associated enduring leadership with presence, accountability, and vision. He noted, "Someone who's enduring is just someone who's just consistently there before school starts, after school starts, and they are taking on things. They're not afraid to take on things that are tough" (IP2, 2017, p. 8). Endurance also required accountability. He said, "They [leaders] want to shift the blame? That's not enduring" (IP2, 2017, p. 8). In Adam's experience, enduring leadership must be based on long-term vision. He said bluntly, "Enduring is someone who's just fueled for the right reasons" (IP2, 2017, p. 9) over time. To endure, leadership seemed to require vision, accountability, and presence.

Adam also symbiotically linked the 3Es together. He culminated his ideas when he stated:

> Enduring is someone who's just fueled for the right reasons. That goes back to their ethics. What drives them ethically? What ethics and goals, what mission, what vision makes them driven ethically but also therefore makes them effective because they want to be effective with it? (IP2, 2017, p. 9)

Such a relationship between the 3Es indicated that RL in the middle school must encompass

effectiveness, ethics, and endurance together or leadership may not be any of the three.

The essence of Adam's experience of RL. All three elements of Adam's description as

seen in Figure 4.6 culminated in a composite essence of Adam's experience. I constructed a
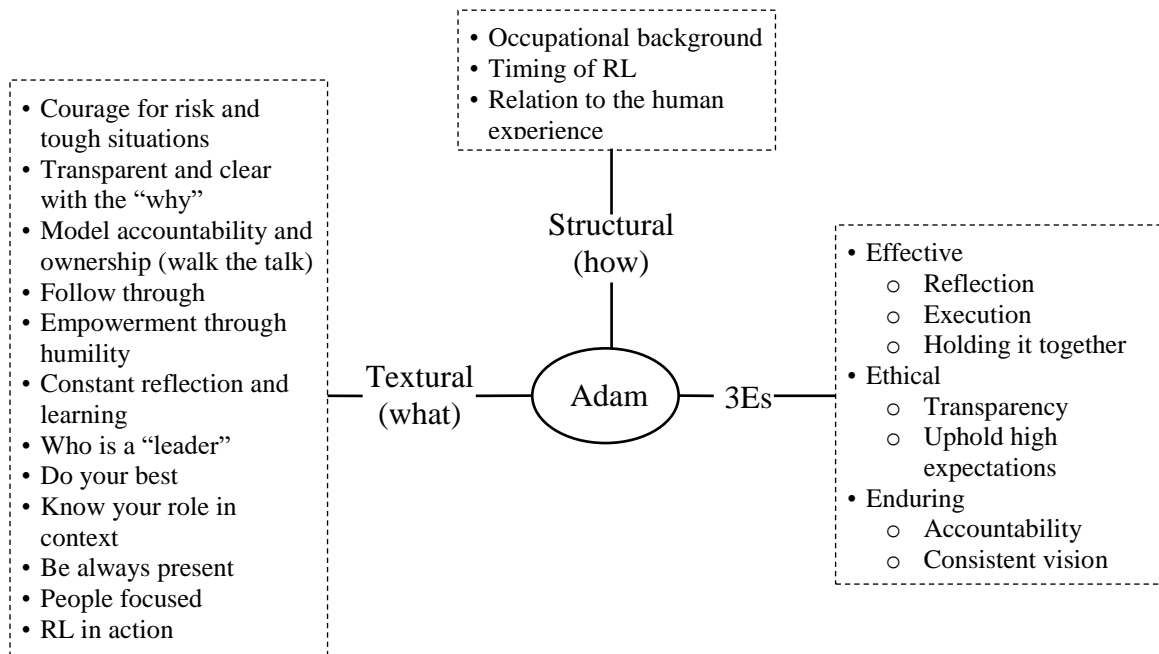
Figure 4.6. Components of Adam's complete description of RL.

mental model (see Figure 4.7) of his textural (what) experience bounded by structural (how)

descriptions before constructing the statement. The constructed essence of Adam's experience

was:

> When thinking of Responsible Leadership, it is structured in time and occupational
> background in relationship to the human experience. In middle schools, it is associated
> with formal school leaders such as principals and other administrators who are aware of
> the importance of their position and the context in which the operate. RL is effective
> leadership that is physically present and visible throughout the school to reflect an
> ethically people-centered focus. Ethically, responsible leaders are authentic to
> themselves and in their work, consistent with decisions and interactions, and direct with
> communication when necessary. Effective RL is most visible when complete
> transparency, accountability for success and missteps, and courage to face tough
> situations are enacted. Responsible leaders are in a state of almost constant reflection in
> order to learn and best empower those around them. Above all, to endure, RL is doing

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your best and being absolutely transparent with those around you in regard to what is happening and why. Responsible leadership is the metaphorical sun to those who follow: it is always reliable and there to light the way, but it also steps back to recharge and empower others–the stars and the moon–to shine. It is humble, yet strong; it is unwavering, yet flexible.
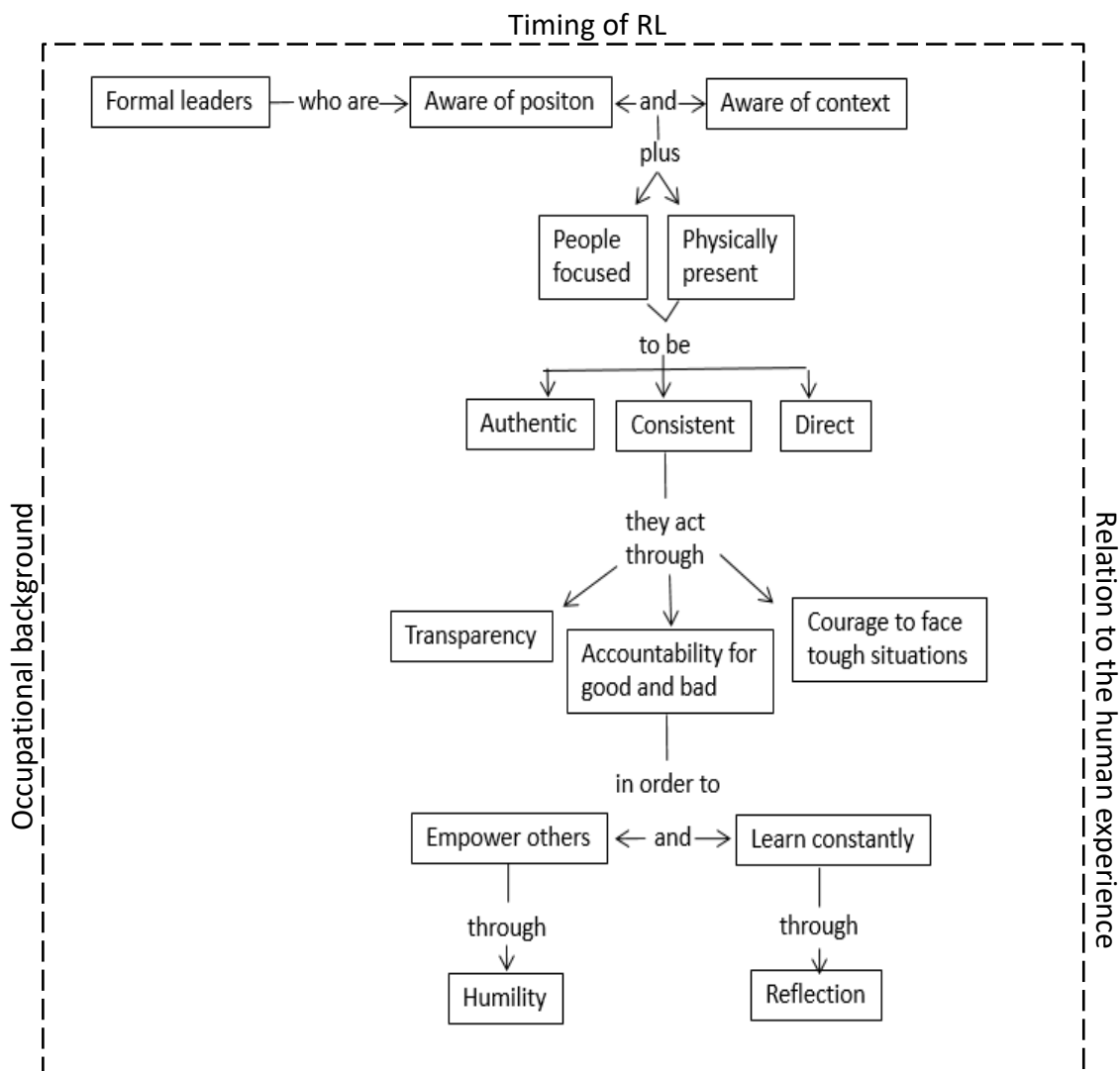
Figure 4.7. A mental model of Adam's experience of RL with textural (what) bounded by structural (how).

After constructing the essence of his experience of RL, I conversed with Adam via email to confirm that the statement captured his descriptions and experiences. The depth at which he spoke to RL highlighted the importance of the phenomenon. RL was not something to be taken lightly in the context of middle schools. Adam showed that in his experience, RL that is

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effective, ethical, and enduring is desperately needed. Though his time in the classroom has been relatively short, Adam will almost certainly make a lasting impact on his students and on the education system. His passion is contagious and his beautiful metaphor—linking RL to the sun in such complex yet meaningful ways—inspired new thoughts of my own and even a picture in my office to remind me of what RL is.

Kate

Kate, a teacher for over 17 years, exuded passion for education, students, and her school. Over the course of her career, she had taught in various schools across multiple districts. Beyond her classroom, Kate is also involved with broader education systems. She was a participating member of teams in her school and the district that were aiming to create more pertinent project-based education for students through curriculum changes. She also mentored future educators in the art and science of being an effective teacher in multiple ways. Her work was recognized with awards given to educators who stand out for innovation and passion for the field. She had a profound passion for education at the middle school level and believed whole-heartedly in the impact she had every day with kids. This love and dedication was infectious and a valuable resource to learn from.

Kate's experiences over her 17 years as a teacher was characterized with breadth and depth. After some time in a different school district, Kate moved to her current school which served a diverse student body. The students in her classroom came from a variety of backgrounds and family lives. Approximately 40% of students identified ethnically as Hispanic, African American, or American Indian with 60% Caucasian (Public School Review, 2017). Her school also served a high percentage of students who qualified for free and reduced meal programs–a measure of socioeconomic status and poverty (Public School Review, 2017). This breadth across

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districts and depth within a school provided Kate with unique opportunities to work with a range of leadership approaches.

Kate proved that teachers are far more than what the public often thinks. She was a mentor. She was an innovator. She inspired those around her and helped them to empower themselves to reach their full potential. She was honest and had the courage to face crucial issues that were best for kids. My interview with Kate was, as she put it, "a great cognitive coaching session" (IP3, 2017, p. 17) for both of us. In qualitative research, Lincoln and Guba (2013) suggested that both the researcher and participant should grow from the experience and I felt the truth of that with Kate.

The analysis process. As with Amber and Adam, it is valuable to revisit Moustakas' (1994) process to best understand Kate's experience. Figure 4.8 displays the process of

Horizons 191

Invariant Constituents 90

Meaning Units 24

Textural Descriptions 11
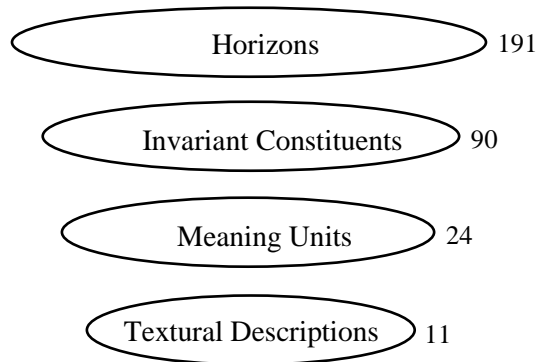
Figure 4.8. Phenomenological reduction process for textural description of Adam's experience with corresponding unit totals of each phase.

phenomenological reduction toward textural descriptions (what) that was then complimented by construction of structural descriptions (how) and associations to the 3Es.

My interview with Kate resulted in 191 horizon statements that stood alone as meaningful. Once the two questions concerning relevance and repetition were asked of each horizon, there remained 90 invariant constituent statements. By following the process of typification and labeling (Vaismoradi et al., 2016) detailed in Chapter Three, I labeled the 90

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invariant constituents into 24 meaning units which then resulted in 11 textural descriptions as seen in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5

Meaning Units and Subsequent Constructed Textural Descriptions of Kate's Experience of RL

Meaning Units	Textural Description
• RL is not easy • Stressful to the community	• What RL is not
• Secure • Obvious and clear	• What RL is
• A genuine desire to lead • Not escaping teaching • A big picture understanding	• Motivations for RL
• Focus on what's important • Know when to make a decision	• Prioritize and execute (Willink & Babin, 2015)
• Support teachers • Support staff innovation and ambition	• Support teachers as professionals
• Humility to utilize team and resources effectively • Be flexible for new ideas	• Humility to empower
• Clear beliefs • Clear and communicated vision	• Clear beliefs and driving vision
• Physical presence • Model the way • Connect external stakeholders • Maintain confidentiality	• Essential RL actions
• Understand the scope of the job • Maintain basic structures	• Basic requirements
• Clear communication • Embrace tough conversations for growth	• Bottom line of RL

After constructing textural descriptions of Kate's experience through phenomenological reduction, I sought structural meaning through imaginative variation detailed later in the chapter. I continued analysis in search of relational associations between textural descriptions and the 3Es. Finally, I finished intuitive integration of textural descriptions (what), bounded by structural descriptions (how), and associated with the 3Es in the statement of essence.

Textural (what) descriptions of RL. Kate began describing her experience of RL with an analysis of what RL was not: "I think people jump into leadership roles, as far as leading a school, sometimes for the wrong reasons, and I think that what I'm seeing more and more is that's the case"(IP3, 2017, p. 2). She often found that leadership she did not consider RL was often motivated by pay increases or trying to escape the teaching profession. She articulated that RL,

> was effective if leaders weren't ready to be done with something before they came there. . . . That's why if you don't like being a teacher anymore, and you're like, "I'll just go to principal school, and then I'll be a principal," you are 100% missing the mark. (IP3, 2017, p. 10)

Kate shared that an additional antithesis of RL was leadership that put stress on a community. For example, "Ineffective leaders make it really hard on the community, because then teachers feel like they have to assume those leadership roles, and that's really, really stressful" (IP3, 2017, p. 3). Finally, Kate noted that RL was not insecure. She noticed that individual leaders who did not practice RL "know they're bad. They know what they're missing, and they're overcompensation is to go after teachers, or anyone really, who shine any light on that" (IP3, 2017, p. 16). The negative cases of Kate's experience made it apparent that RL was not: (a) motivated by money or prestige, (b) stressful on the community, nor (c) insecure.

In contrast to what RL was not, Kate then described what RL had been to her. She acknowledged the difficulty of RL through her recognition that she had "more ineffective leaders than effective" (IP3, 2017, p. 2). She went further to explain that "enduring principals are hard to find" (IP3, 2017, p. 2). However, she also felt that "effective leadership is really obvious" (IP3, 2017, p. 3) and stands out to followers. The dichotomy of RL being difficult and yet obvious highlights its complexity as a leadership approach for middle schools in the selected area of study.

Kate also positioned that RL was motivated by an honest desire to "actually do the job they're doing" (IP3, 2017, p. 13), and a big picture understanding of education beyond the walls of a single school. Those who practiced RL "came to leadership because they have a higher level of understanding around curriculum, or instruction, or discipline, or environment, or kind of in culture, and they wanted to impact the masses at a greater level" (IP3, 2017, p. 3). Once the motivations were grounded via Kate's descriptions, she described RL action.

Kate moved her description toward actions that distinguished RL after undergirding what RL was and what motivated it. First, Kate explained that RL had an ability to know what was important and prioritize it. I borrowed the term "prioritize and execute" from Willink and Babin (2015, p. 149) who declared, "leaders must determine the highest priority task and execute" (p. 161). In Kate's experience, to prioritize and execute meant RL could focus on high impact issues to "figure out what battles to fight . . . [and] agree to things that we're going to do super, super well" (IP3, 2017, p. 9). Prioritization and execution also required RL to know when to make a decision for the betterment of the group. In the modern era of shared decision making, Kate felt that "there's sometimes when [RL] just have to decide this is what's best" (IP3, 2017, p. 23) because "when you open up, and make everything a shared decision in the school, no decisions ever get made" (IP3, 2017, p. 8). In Kate's experience, prioritization and high impact execution work together to simplify teachers' environments and allow them to do what they do best without distractions.

A common priority of RL Kate spoke to was the humility to empower others and utilize a team to accomplish the mission. She put it plainly when she said that "there's got to be a link. If a principal takes action in a silo, nobody's happy" (IP3, 2017, p. 12). RL had to be systemic across the team. The most responsible leaders in her experience even sought to connect people to each

other by "asking teachers, 'I see you work with this teacher well, or we need this. Or I see that you do this really well, can you go and talk to them?' to benefit the whole community" (IP3, 2017, p. 12). A critical piece of building this team was the flexibility that every RL system must have. During Kate's time as a teacher, many ideas and approaches of education had changed drastically and without flexibility to listen to new ideas and to implement and execute the ideas, nothing changes to keep pace (IP3, 2017, p. 7). Humility seemed essential to Kate's experiences of RL as it allowed leadership to be more open to people and ideas that progress education.

Kate shared her perception of RL by describing everyday actions including connecting community, modeling the way, maintaining confidentiality, and being physically present. Kate said, "Communities and families have to be a part of the [school] conversations. They can't be a second thought" (IP3, 2017, p. 24), and RL was charged with connecting them within the school. RL must be enacted by modeling the way (Kouzes and Posner, 2012). Kate exclaimed,

> They [leaders] have to set the standard. . . . If they want us to follow a moral code, and hold other people to that code, or ethical code, or whatever, good teaching quality—it could be anything—then they have to model that too. (IP3, 2017, p. 20)

One specific area of modeling is RL's physical presence throughout the school. Even if leaders are working on their tasks, Kate believes they need to be present in the community and metaphorically "in the water with everybody else" (IP3, 2017, p. 19). Kate mirrored Amber's ideal that RL was enacted with trust and confidentiality with RL not "airing dirty laundry" with anyone not directly involved in a situation (IP3, 2017, p. 12). For Kate, RL was enacted through connecting community, setting the standard, being present, and keeping confidentiality.

Throughout my time with Kate, she revisited and emphasized two characteristics that must be present for RL: open communication and facing tough conversations. At the end of our interview, she summarized it clearly when she said, "This whole conversation with you is so

funny, because I just think it comes down honestly to what I hear myself saying is that 'effective leaders are the best communicators'" (IP3, 2017, p. 13). She mentioned that leaders who are open and honest with communication helped teachers feel trusted and safe in their work. The second essential element of RL was embracing tough conversations. Kate felt that "principals, or administrators, or any leader, who lacks that ability to have really hard conversations is not going to be an effective leader" (IP3, 2017, p. 4). Kate's experience of RL focused on RL communicating and facing tough conversations for the betterment of the community.

Structural (how) descriptions. Kate framed RL mostly within the boundaries of formal leadership with principals and assistant principals personifying a leader for her (IP3, 2017). Furthermore, she seemed to find the amount of time she had spent in education significant to her views and experiences of RL. For example, she noticed that "principals don't last" and that she had outlasted most of them herself (IP3, 2017, p. 6). As a result of her time outlasting many formal leaders, Kate perceived RL as the title of principal but concurrently as more than just one person at one time as legacies can carry over. Finally, Kate structured her experience of RL with her personal lack of interest for occupying formal leadership roles. "I've chosen not to be an administrator," she said, "and part of it is because I don't want to hold people accountable. I don't want to have to make sure that what we did last year carries over to this year" (IP3, 2017, p. 3). As a result, Kate's experience was grounded firmly in the teaching position without aspirations to be a school administrator. Structures of formal leadership positions, time in the profession, and her personal aspirations all structured Kate's perceived RL experience.

Kate and the 3Es. Kate's description of her RL experience also correlated to the 3Es. She spoke strongly to effective leadership due to her past with ineffective leaders and contributed description to ethical and enduring leadership as seen in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6

Associated Descriptions of the 3Es in Kate's Experience of RL

Effective	Ethical	Enduring
Maintain structure	Connecting stakeholders	Lasting legacy
Clear communication	Modeling expectations	What remains after RL leaves
Tough conversations		
Genuine motivation		
Prioritize overall good		

Effective. Effective leadership, as seen in Table 4.6, was a focus of our conversation. She identified effectiveness as maintaining basic structures, clear communication, embracing tough conversations, genuine motivation, and placing priority on the overall good of the school. Kate made clear that effective leadership must maintain basic structures of the school including policies, schedules, and systems (IP3, 2017, p. 21). As quoted earlier, she correlated effective leadership to communicating because "if they are not an effective communicator, [they are] probably not going to be an effective leader" (IP3, 2017, p. 11).

Kate immediately associated effective leadership with a genuine motivation to lead for the overall good of everyone involved. She noted that even when effective leadership requires RL to "have those tough conversations" and face teachers who may not be meeting expectations, the most "effective leaders put the good of the school in front of anything else" (IP3, 2017, p. 5). Effective leadership in Kate's experience was grounded in RL actions that created a school environment conducive to helping students and teachers thrive.

Ethical. Ethical leadership centered on the need for connecting parents and being a model for expectations. To Kate, RL was not ethical if it failed to recognize the influence of stakeholders, including parents or outside community members. Kate noted that sometimes RL had to connect with parents in order to protect teachers because parents can "violate a lot of those [professional expectations]. How they talk to adults, how they talk to teachers, and how

they treat them, and the things they ask from us" (IP3, 2017, p. 5). Other times, Kate explained that RL needed to connect with community as allies, such as if the "community really loved something we were doing, and we could use their testimony, rather than just ours all the time" (IP3, 2017, p. 21) to promote educations' value. As discussed in Kate's experience of RL, ethical leadership must also act as a model for staff and students alike. In an example she said, "If I want kids to pick up the trash, I need to demonstrate picking up trash. Well, it's the same thing with the leader" (IP3, 2017, p. 18).

Enduring. Kate described enduring leadership as the idea of a lasting legacy. However, Kate noted endurance did not require everything to remain the same, but rather that RL provide "the bones" of structure (IP3, 2017, p. 7). Even if the school adapted away from the details "the system or the structure that was built is good, and so we've held onto" what past leadership has put in place (IP3, 2017, p. 6). In fact, Kate said that "sometimes you don't want a principal to last forever either, because it can stagnate the school" (IP3, 2017, p. 6).

The essence of Kate's experience of RL. The essence of Kate's experience was the combination of textural-structural descriptions and associations to the 3Es as seen in Figure 4.9. Kate's experience was unique in that it has been characterized by both responsible and non-responsible leadership, so the model was built to reflect both

Following the process of building a mental model of her experience, I constructed the model of Kate's experience. The mental model displays the textural descriptions of Kate's

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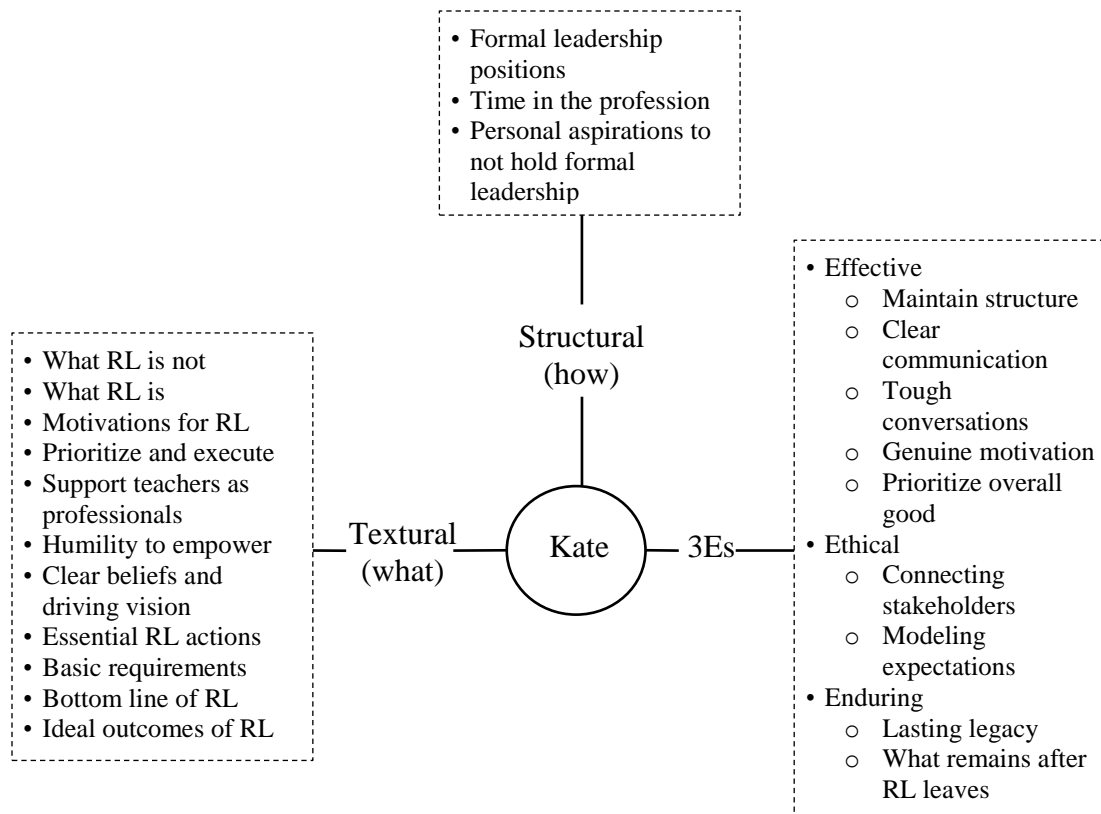
Figure 4.9. Components of Kate's complete description of RL.

experience in boxes with structural descriptions bounding them as seen in Figure 4.10. From the

mental model, I then co-constructed an essence of Kate's perceived experience:

> Responsible leadership (RL) is not easy, but it is easy to see. Those in formal roles need to know their position and not take for granted that all teachers want to be leaders but they all care about what leadership does. Ineffective and unethical leadership stresses the entire community and breeds insecurity for teachers and kids. Responsible leaders understand the scope of the job and maintain basic structures of the school and be physically present in classrooms and hallways to keep the school running smoothly. When RL is in place, it is manifested through ethical values including modeling the way for behavior, connecting the school to community members and families, and maintaining confidentiality in tough situations. RL is motivated by a genuine desire to lead and an interest in the big picture of educating our next generation. RL who endure are (a) humble enough to prioritize and execute tasks in order to simplify teacher's environment, (b) know where they can best focus their energy toward high impact decisions, and (c) trust and utilize their team for decisions and actions. Above all, RL is characterized by open communication and embracing tough conversations for the ultimate good of the school and students.
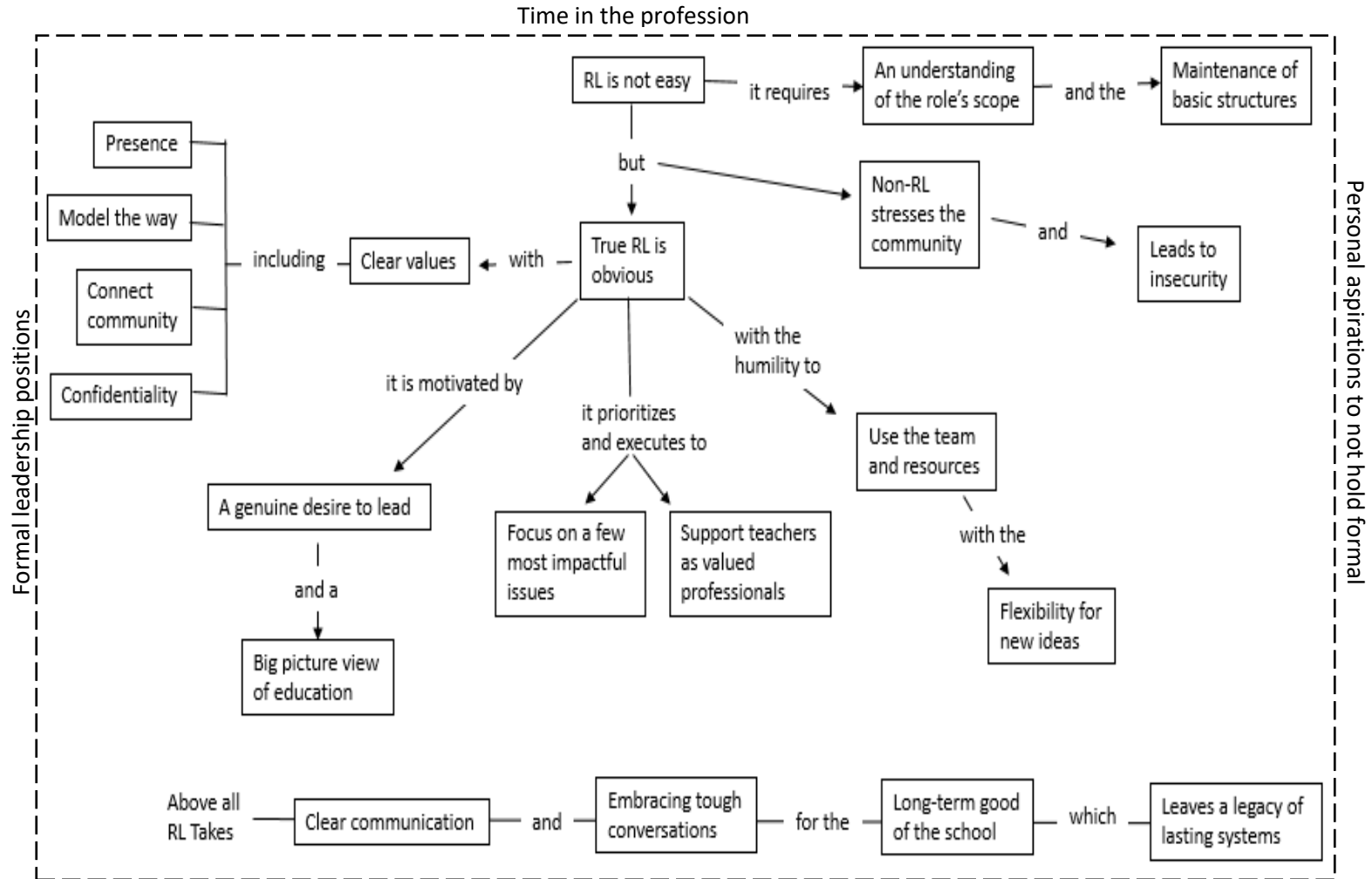
Figure 4.10. A mental model of Kate's experience of RL with textural (what) bounded by structural (how).

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Throughout our interview, Kate made her perceptions clear. The depth that she spoke to the needs of RL was inspiring to me as a vested researcher. It indicated the power of speaking to teachers for meaningful knowledge of RL in schools. Although teachers are not in formal RL roles as principals are, their insights and ideas deserve the utmost value.

Maxine Ann

Maxine Ann taught at the middle school level for over ten years in the English content area. My interview with her was a result of intensity sampling (Patton, 2001). She was recommended by multiple contacts of mine as someone with immense and astute experience with RL. She had, "been lucky" to work for a few leaders who she referred to as responsible and who inspired her to be the teacher she was (IP4, 2017, p. 2). Her first principal in particular was "so smart and inspiring" that this principal's impact stayed with Maxine Ann throughout her career (IP4, 2017, p. 4). Maxine Ann seemed to be a humble professional, but her reputation for hard-work and incredible teaching preceded her.

Due to the linear progression of our conversation, analyzing Maxine Ann's interview for meaning presented unique challenges but also great learning. Maxine Ann was incredibly direct during our conversation, addressing each question with such thought that we rarely revisited ideas throughout the interview. Instead of building a web of RL experience, Maxine Ann built more of a string. She seemed to view her experiences of RL as a linear path with some variation in quality of leaders through time. In many cases, linear description resulted in meaning units composed from horizon statements close together in the transcript. I believe the level of thinking pertaining to RL Maxine Ann had done and her own practice as an educator was reflected in how she spoke about the phenomenon.

The analysis process. In the process of phenomenological reduction displayed in Figure

4.11, Maxine Ann's interview, there were 195 horizon statements. Upon seeking for relevance
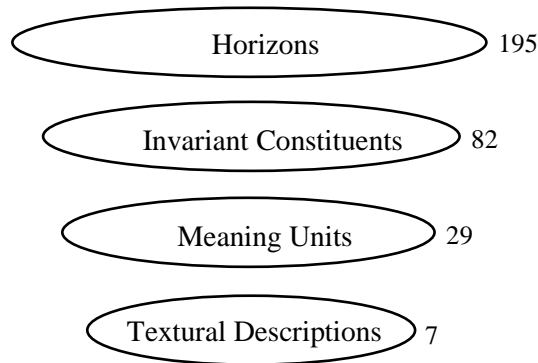
Figure 4.11. Phenomenological reduction process for textural description of Maxine Ann's experience with corresponding unit totals of each phase.

and repetition (Moustakas, 1994), 82 invariant constituents were identified. Once the 82 data

cards were laid out, groupings began to be constructed via typification and labeling (Vaismoradi

et al., 2016). For labels, I often looked for repeating words or specialized vocabulary from

education similar to indigenous categories as described by Patton (1990, p. 306) because Maxine

Ann regularly referenced educational verbiage. The process resulted in 29 meaning units.

Finally, in another round of categorization to further refine the meaning units into 7 non-

repetitive textural descriptions were constructed. The lower number in comparison to other

participants resulted from the clarity with which Maxine Ann spoke to each question. Table 4.7

displays the constructed meaning units and textural descriptions of Maxine Ann's experiences.

Table 4.7

Meaning Units and Subsequent Constructed Textural Descriptions of Maxine Ann's Experience of RL

Meaning Units	Textural Description
• Leadership matters for a school • Leaders are in the spotlight • Connected 3Es	• The importance of RL

• Empathic • Deep care for kids • Relational and fun • Physically present	• Personal affective characteristics of RL
• Organized • Effective feedback • Continuous growth	• Actionable characteristics of RL
• Build community and belonging • Professionalize and model teaching • Support teacher growth • Transparency • Value teachers' voices and time	• Every day RL action
• Have a clear purpose • Inspiring for teachers • A focus on "champions" • Doing the right thing • Balance of systems and specific middle schools contexts	• Transcendent qualities and actions
• A clear and common vision • Personal core values	• Grounding forces of RL
• Open to new ideas • Be more involved • Take on leadership within the school • Work harder toward the vision	• Desirable RL outcomes for teachers

Once textural descriptions were constructed through phenomenological reduction, I sought structural meaning in Maxine Ann's experience through imaginative variation which is detailed later in the chapter. I continued analysis with a revisit of the data in search of associations with the textural descriptions and 3Es. Finally, I finished analysis with intuitive integration of textural descriptions (what), bounded by structural descriptions (how), and associated with the 3Es in the statement of essence.

Textural (what) descriptions of RL. This section details the textural descriptions of Maxine Ann's experiences of RL**.** Maxine Ann began our discussion by laying out the importance of RL to her experience as a middle school teacher. She bluntly said, "Leadership? Leadership is huge" (IP4, 2017, p. 4).

When we examined her past experiences, Maxine Ann reflected on a time of leadership change: "You would think, from year to year, it [the experience of leadership] wouldn't change that much, but boy could you tell the difference" when the new leadership started (IP4, 2017, p. 2). She also highlighted, "When you're in a leadership role . . . specifically thinking of a principal or an assistant principal, you're really in the spotlight" (IP4, 2017, p. 6). Maxine Ann noted that RL must be aware of their importance and impact on the school (IP4, 2017, p. 6). For Maxine Ann, RL from formal positions was instrumental to the success of a school and the teachers who work there.

Maxine Ann began describing her experience of RL as a set of personal affective characteristics. The priority on empathy was evident when she said that RL must be "able to really empathize with staff and empathize with kids" in order to act in responsible ways (IP4, 2017, p. 6). Empathy had been actionized to Maxine Ann when RL showed a genuine concern for students and "believed in the whole picture of the kid, and second chances" (IP4, 2017, p. 3). RL's love for students showed when they were "out and around in classrooms and hallways" being physically present for everyone (IP4, 2017, p. 9). Physical presence in the school also offered opportunities for RL to be "super personable and relational" (IP4, 2017, p. 1). With personal characteristics of responsible leaders entrenched through her description, Maxine Ann described the actions leaders take to remain responsible.

In addition to the personal affective characteristics, Maxine Ann described her experiences of RL with actionable characteristics. For example, RL should be organized to allow teachers to focus on teaching and not trivial issues (IP4, 2017, p. 4). If teachers were concerned with things like field trips or athletics, it could take time away from important work and conversations (IP4, 2017, p. 10). Maxine Ann also experienced RL when leadership was "giving

specific feedback" to teachers for the purpose of continual growth (IP4, 2017, p. 9). Last, Maxine Ann experienced RL as a dedication to growth. She simply stated that RL has to "keep learning, keep growing, keep trying" (IP4, 2017, p. 11). Organization, growth, and feedback allowed Maxine Ann and her colleagues to thrive as teachers and RL in the middle school setting.

The affective characteristics Maxine Ann associated with RL were enacted through everyday actions. The first everyday action of her experience was a sense of community and belonging among teachers and leaders. RL was evident when leadership was relatable and fun so that "you feel like you belong at the school" (IP4, 2017, p. 3). Second, RL was enacted when teaching was professionalized and modeled. She expected responsible leaders to remember "what it's like to be a teacher and recognize the real work that teachers do" to make "teaching feel really important and professional" (IP4, 2017, p. 3). One way Maxine Ann experienced professionalization of teaching was when RL supported teachers in their development and growth, such as ensuring teachers "were constantly given opportunities to grow and to learn things" (IP4, 2017, p. 3). An additional RL action was displaying value for teachers' time and their voices. Maxine Ann experienced RL when it "feels like my voice is heard if I have a concern or a question" (IP4, 2017, p. 6). Similar to Adam, Maxine Ann also believed value is shown in "how you treat your staff as people, not just as teachers" (IP4, 2017, p. 6). Finally, Maxine Ann experienced RL when "leaders [are] transparent with big decisions that impact the staff" (IP4, 2017, p. 7). Transparency seemed foundational to Maxine Ann's day-to-day experience of RL. If decisions are made obscurely, teachers do not feel valued and community breaks down. On a daily basis, Maxine Ann experienced RL through building community, professionalizing teaching, valuing teachers as people, and being transparent with impactful decisions.

Moving deeper into her experience, Maxine Ann described transcendent qualities and actions of RL such as having a clear purpose, inspiring teachers, focusing on the champions, and doing the right thing. Maxine Ann consistently spoke to the need for a clear purpose for RL to be experienced. She said, "Everything you do, you've got to be able to say this is why" (IP4, 2017, p 15). She also noted how inspiring a clear purpose can be and that RL to her was able to regularly inspire teachers (IP4, 2017, p. 3). Maxine Ann reflected that no matter how effective RL was, not all teachers will be on board with the common purpose. However, she did not seem to associate the lack of full participation with irresponsible leadership, but rather she expected RL to "put energy where you want it to be" and "work with the runners" to make a difference (IP4, 2017, p. 13). Ultimately, Maxine Ann associated RL with asking, "What's the right thing to do even if it's hard to do?" and facing it to move forward (IP4, 2017, p. 11). This sentiment resonated with the RL adage to do good and avoid harm (Burton-Jones, 2012; Pearce et al., 2014).

To bookend our conversation, Maxine Ann seemed to revert back to the forces that ground RL from the beginning: a clear and common vision plus personal core values. Similar to her discussion of purpose, Maxine Ann felt that leadership was responsible only if "they've shown that they have a vision and a plan" (IP4, 2017, p. 8). She described the leaders in her experience who exemplified RL as "visionary" and "having good vision" (IP4, 2017, p. 3). The second grounding force of RL were the personal core values of those in RL positions. She said leaders need to know their core values and talk about them openly (IP4, 2017, p. 15). Common vision and personal core values cannot be both flippant and associated with RL; they must be firm even if it requires patience. For example, Maxine Ann did not feel that one year would "be enough time for any sort of systematic change or implementation," and that true RL is

characterized by a sense of perseverance and patience that only the strongest grounding can provide (IP4, 2017, p. 13).

When all of the RL descriptions she had experienced were enacted, she felt specific outcomes that keep her motivated. First, she described a desire to be more open to things. RL "pushed on teachers' thinking to just look at things in a different way, or try different things" (IP4, 2017, p. 4). RL also resulted in teachers wanting to be involved by participating more and putting themselves out there (IP4, 2017, p. 7). Maxine Ann also described that RL resulted in her aspiring to "step up into other leadership roles at the school, like teacher-leader roles, that ultimately are for the good of the kids" (IP4, 2017, p. 8). RL was not simply an approach for Maxine Ann but an encompassing experience that drove her to be better for the students she served.

Maxine Ann's description of her experience of RL as a middle school teacher was linear and logical. It had been established from her time working with leaders she deemed both responsible and lacking responsibility. In Maxine Ann's experience, RL was complex, grounded in firm foundations, enacted through daily actions plus transcendent qualities, characterized with affective descriptions, and led to the betterment of teachers and schools.

Structural (how) descriptions. The structural variations of Maxine Ann's experiences were integral to her individual experience of RL. She did not explicitly speak to the amount of time she had been in education or to the distinct features of the schools she had worked in. Instead, Maxine Ann spoke to the changes in her personal perceptions as structures of time and space. Moustakas (1994, p. 132) referenced "relationship to self" as a potential structural theme, but in Maxine Ann's case, the relationship to her career progress seemed foundational to her perception. For example, she credited exposure to the RL approaches of her first principal

throughout the interview as a pinnacle example of RL, indicating this early experience to be fundamental to her perception of the phenomenon overall (IP4, 2017, p. 2). Maxine Ann also structured her experiences as the actions and missteps of formal RL teams. Individual leaders and the teams they built shaped her perceptions of RL throughout her career. Timing and the role of individuals were synonymous with how her experiences of RL structured her descriptions of the phenomenon.

Maxine Ann and the 3Es. Throughout our conversation, Maxine Ann provided great insight to the 3Es of RL in the context of middle schools as a component of her overall description. Her focus on each of the 3Es, as it was presented in the protocol, allowed for a fairly linear look at each of the three (displayed in Table 4.8).

Table 4.8

Associated Descriptions of the 3Es in Maxine Ann's Experience of RL

Effective	Ethical	Enduring
Staff development	Teachers voice is heard	Lasting over time
Relational with staff and kids	Do what's right even when it's not easy	"Walking the walk"
Carry the vision and get people on board	Knowing your core values	
	Treat staff as people	
	Consistency in treatment	

Effective. Effective leadership in Maxine Ann's experience was associated with a dedication to staff development, being relational with students and teachers, and carrying a common vision that followers rally behind. Her first principal, whom she felts was the most effective leader she worked with, "really believed in continuing professional development and teacher training, and she had a strong belief that teachers can improve and get better with specific training" (IP4, 2017, p. 3). Where other leaders may develop a sense of guilt for teachers taking time out of the classroom, her effective leader "really believes that those days out of the

classroom were so important on the flip side when you were back" (IP4, 2017, p. 3). The effective leaders in her career were also relational with students and staff. They did not hide away in their office but spent time out in the classrooms working with teachers and students. A final association with effectiveness exemplified in Maxine Ann's first principal was that "she was this visionary. She had this big vision of where she wanted the school to go, and . . . you felt like you belonged at the school" (IP4, 2017, p. 4). A sense of vision that teachers can rally around supports the basic RL tenant of leaders and followers—if no one is following, then you are not leading. From Maxine Ann's perspective, effective leadership in middle schools was the active promotion of teacher development, being physically present and engaged with teachers and students, and communicating a clear vision for others.

Ethical. Ethical leadership sparked an initial hesitancy in our conversation as Maxine Ann searched for meaning with the idea, but after some thought, she began to associate it with multiple aspects of her experience. First, Maxine Ann experienced a lack of ethics when leaders failed to treat teachers as people first. The most ethical leaders allowed for teachers to be actively involved in aspects of life outside of the job and recognized that many are parents, spouses, friends, siblings, and children themselves. Maxine Ann also associated ethical leadership with doing the right thing even when it is difficult, such as challenging teachers who are not maintaining expectations. Along with the personable treatment of teachers and maintaining expectations, Maxine Ann also believed it was most ethical to be consistent. She said, "You have to be fair. . . . It doesn't feel good to be a teacher who works her tail off and follows the rules, and the teacher two doors down from you somehow doesn't have to do that. . . . That's not ethical" (IP4, 2017, p. 8). Finally, ethical leadership "knows their core values . . . and talk about them as an admin[istration] team so you can be clear with your staff" (IP4, 2017, p. 17). in

Maxine Ann's experience, ethical leadership created a consistent sense of the values guiding them and a focus on people first.

> *Enduring.* Enduring leadership to Maxine Ann was simply RL that lasts and "that's going to withstand different things" (IP4, 2017, p. 9). To endure, Maxine said that RL must "walk the walk" such as her first principal who, even after leaving the profession, continued to live out her work and be involved in public education (IP4, 2017, p. 9). Maxine Ann continued to revisit the notion that for RL to endure, those who attain formal roles must not "forget about what it's like to be in the daily grind" of teaching (IP4, 2017, p. 6). Enduring leaders "recognize the real work that teachers do, the time that it takes, and the challenges that arise every year that are different today than they were last year" (IP4, 2017, p. 7). In Maxine Ann's experience, when RL fails to remember how problems were solved in the past and fails to have a gauge for the art of teaching, it did not endure.

> **The essence of Maxine Ann's experiences of RL.** The essence of Maxine Ann's experience was unique to her due to her own lived experiences. A stand out component of her experience has been strong comparison between leaders**.** To construct the essence of Maxine Ann's RL experience, I began with the components of her description including textural descriptions, structural descriptions, and associations with the 3E's. Figure 4.12 is a display of the three components and how they operated together to form the essence of Maxine Ann's experience.

> I followed the process to construct a mental model (Figure 4.13) and a single statement that captured the essence of her perceived experience of RL. Below is the essence I constructed confirmed by Maxine Ann via email conversation:
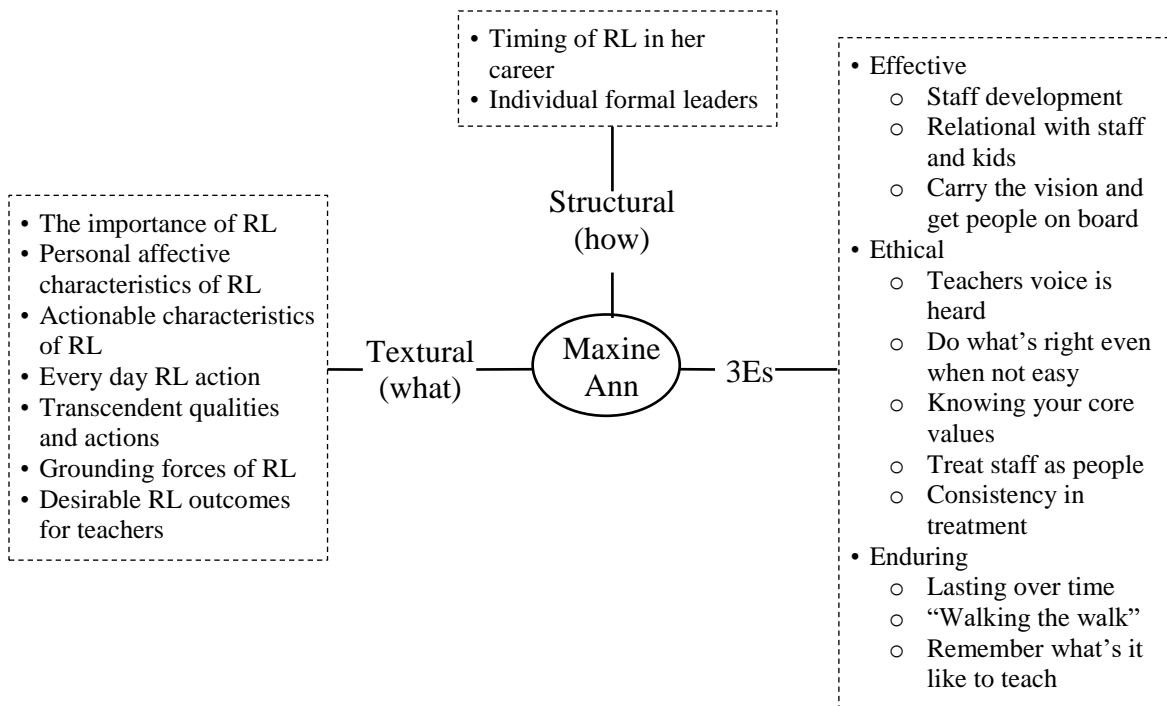
Figure 4.12. Components of Maxine Ann's complete description of RL.

In the midst of a career, quantified time and experience with various formal leaders shows that Responsible Leadership (RL) matters. RL puts people in the spotlight and they need to be aware of that. By experiencing both good and bad leadership over a career, RL can be recognized in comparison. RL is perceived as affective personal characteristics: organized, empathic, relational, physically present in the school, fun and dynamic while continuously growing, caring for kids, and providing feedback to teachers. RL is experienced through day-to-day actions which build community among staff, professionalizing teaching by supporting development for teachers, being transparent with decisions, and valuing teacher input and time. Tasks are prioritized with a focus on whole-school goals in addition to freeing time and resources for teachers to focus on their primary job. RL inspires and unites people with a common purpose, fosters patience with people and systems toward growth, and does the right thing even when it is uncomfortable. RL is guided by personal core values and tying together large educations systems and the contextual knowledge of leading a middle school. When teachers feel as if they want to work harder, be more open to new ideas, get more involved with the school, and take on leadership roles for themselves, RL is most purely enacted.

This statement of essence gives us Maxine Ann's story. It gives us her experiences of RL that may be able to inform future or other leadership systems, but more than anything, it provides a rich story of one teacher's experience of a complex phenomenon.
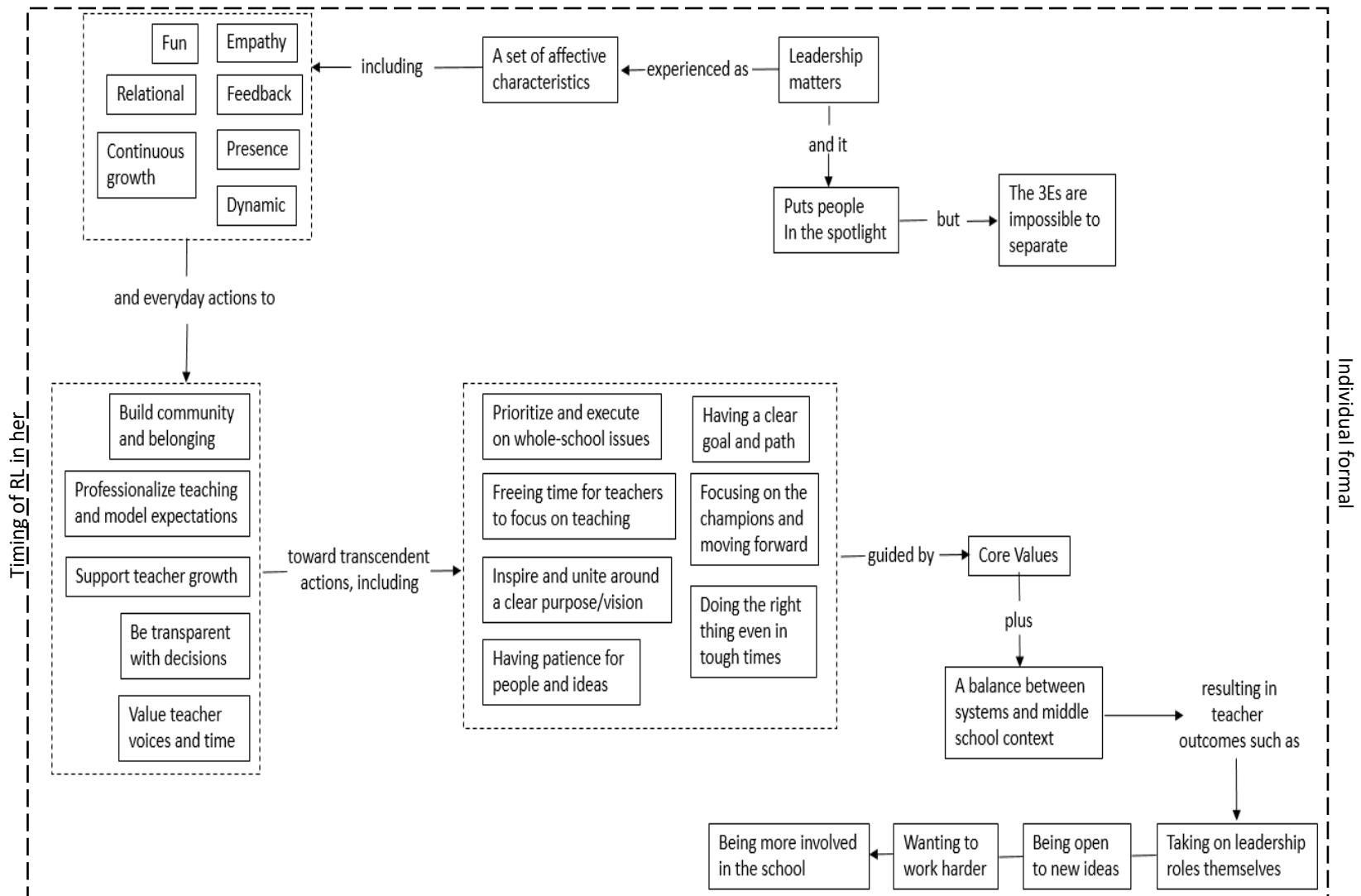
Figure 4.13. A mental model of Maxine Ann's experience of RL with textural (what) bounded by structural (how).

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Keith

Keith was a math educator and at the time of our interview, Keith had nearly 25 years of teaching experience. During this time, he was a part of multiple schools and worked with many different leaders. Keith held an advanced degree in education leadership which would allow him to work as a formal administrative leader in a school, but as he put it, "I never became a principal because I enjoyed the class[room] too much" (IP5, 2017, p. 4). Spending nearly 25 years in the classroom even though other opportunities were presented reflected Keith's passion for working with students. During our interview at his school, I got a glimpse of his work. Two students were excited to see Keith during some downtime but the classroom door was closed because he was busy speaking with me. Instead of ignoring the students, he embraced them into the room in a relaxed manner with jokes and laughter. Even during our time together, Keith was full of humor– we laughed more during the interview than I had anytime during the process.

Keith's experience took him to a variety of places, but his current school was one characterized by a diverse student body. Sixty-four percent of students at his school identified as Hispanic, 26% percent identified as Caucasian, six percent identified as Asian, and three percent identified as African American (Public School Review, 2017). Sixty-four percent qualified for Free and Reduced Lunch programs (Public School Review, 2017). Though these numbers are useful in understanding components of Keith's students, they do not tell the whole story. Keith's descriptions of his experience of RL reflect a dynamic career.

The analysis process. It is valuable to revisit Moustakas' (1994) process to learn from Keith's experiences. The process of moving from the transcript to horizon statements, invariant constituents, meaning units, textural descriptions, structural descriptions, and finally the essence statement is detailed below.   The process of phenomenological reduction toward textural

description is displayed in Figure 4.14. My interview with Keith resulted in 124 horizon

statements that stood out as individually meaningful. After considering the relevance and
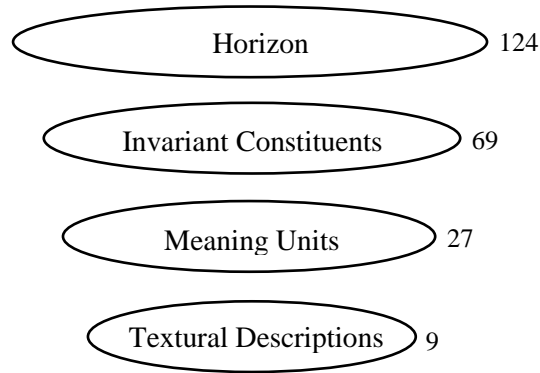
Figure 4.14. Phenomenological reduction process for textural descriptions of Keith's experience with corresponding unit totals for each phase.

repetition of each, I had 69 invariant constituent statements. Through typification and labeling

(Vaismoradi et al., 2016), the 69 invariant constituents were clustered into 27 meaning units.

Then 9 textural descriptions were constructed as shown in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9

Meaning Units and Subsequent Constructed Textural Descriptions of Keith's Experience of RL

Meaning Units	Textural Description
• Desire to be impactful • Desire to lead • Maintain basic structures	• Catalysts of RL
• Honest and straightforward • Consistent • Dedicated	• RL actions
• Be courageous • Take ownership to learn	• Courage to fail and learn
• Don't rely on a title • Stay humble	• Humility not authority
• Model the way • Be in the trenches • Be physically present and visible	• Be a model of expectations
• A people person • Be relational • Listen to stakeholders to build relationships	• Open RL to others

• Invest in shared decision making	
• Learn by doing • Seek mentorship • Learn your context • Keep getting better	• RL development
• Put the right people in place • Let others do their job–don't micromanage • Individualize motivation	• Build a great team
• Feel valued • Feel like you have an impact • Willing to work hard	• Teacher outcomes of RL

With phenomenological reduction and constructing textural descriptions of Keith's experience complete, I sought structural descriptions through imaginative variation (detailed later in the chapter) and relational associations between textural descriptions and the 3Es. Finally, intuitive integration of textural descriptions (what), bounded by structural descriptions (how), and associated 3Es resulted in the statement of essence.

Textural (what) descriptions of RL. During our interview, Keith's experiences of RL came to fruition as one that was lived by a strongly driven educator through peaks and valleys who remembered to not take himself or his students too seriously. Throughout his description, Keith spoke to what catalyzed his view of RL , actions that put RL on display for teachers, long-term characteristics of RL in the middle school setting, and how he has seen RL developed throughout his career.

To Keith, the crux of RL is a genuine desire lead. He said, "you've got to have a desire [to lead] and you've got to have a desire to make an impact" (IP5, 2017, p. 2). For Keith, RL was more than just moving into leadership for a better paycheck or to escape the classroom. Instead, it was a genuine hope to make lasting change for the students of your school. Keith also expected those who practice RL to maintain basic structures of the school. In one of Keith's past positions, teachers were charged with some of the basic structures of scheduling, but he described a chaotic

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scene where: "Parents would come to get kids [and] they wouldn't know where the office was, it was so disorganized" (IP5, 2017, p. 1) and leadership seemed "out of touch with education" (IP5, 2017, p. 3). Keith thought RL should be doing what they could to ensure teachers were focused on teaching. In Keith's experience, RL that was motivated by a genuine desire for change and balanced with a practical view of school structures.

Keith described a number of actionable elements of RL when proper motivations and structures were in place. First, RL was enacted through an honest and straightforward approach with teachers and the broader community. He shared, "As a leader you have to be straightforward with people and I guess what I'm getting to is you have to be honest" (IP5, 2017, p. 3). By being honest, even if people do not agree with a decision being made, "they would respect that you're being straightforward and honest about it" (IP5, 2017, p. 3). Keith also expressed that honesty and consistency are complimentary. He related the complimentary relationship to the classroom where honest and consistent expectations are key to effective management. He said that it was the "same thing with the leader in the school [because] you have to be consistent with what you do" (IP5, 2017, p. 4). Keith felt that to be honest and consistent RL must be able to participate in tough conversations even though, "sometimes people won't like what you have to tell them" (IP5, 2017, p. 3). Through sometimes difficult moments, RL as honest and straightforward was manifested in Keith's experience.

Keith also described long-term elements of his experience of RL including dedication and ownership to learn from setbacks. Keith described dedication simply: "In order for somebody to make impact in a building, they have to be there a while" (IP5, 2017, p. 5). He then metaphorically described dedication as "a marathon and in order to have an impact . . . it's not just having 150 kids one year; it's having 1,500 over 10 years or 20 years or whatever" (IP5,

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2017, p. 5). Keith also recognized that dedication inherently required RL to overcome setbacks. He reflected that over time RL needed to be "willing to step out on the ledge and take a chance at something new," and if something fails, "you probably learn more from failures than you do anything else" (IP5, 2017, p. 7). Keith provided an example of negative leadership where the leader "tried to put everything off on the teachers" instead of owning his personal role in the setback and learning from it (IP5, 2017, p. 1). In Keith's experience, dedication and ownership undergirded long-term respect and success of RL and school.

A unique element of Keith's description was his passion for RL being open, trusting, and focused on others. He said RL has "to be willing to help people instead of putting more and more and more on you [the teacher]" (IP5, 2017, p. 7). As he described, "help" was essential, and though you are "kind of a role model . . . for the teachers or the staff," you need to "put quality people in and let them do their job" (IP5, 2017, p. 3). He also believed RL was best when values and expectations followed the principle of, "Don't just bring it, create it" together as a team of teachers and administrators (IP5, 2017, p. 5). When RL did not micromanage and instead shared decision making, Keith reflected that RL was often populated by those who treated teachers as people and were able to "pick you up and dust you up when you need it" (IP5, 2017, p. 8).

Keith also described the need for RL to listen to stakeholders, including veteran teachers, new teachers, and "hell, even talk to a custodian and see what they think of the school," to learn the needs of the school and students (IP5, 2017, p. 12). Keith shared that RL must give credit to teachers by "recognizing them [teachers] in a staff meeting or even throwing a breakfast or something for staff. Sometimes it's something as simple as hey, give a slap on the back" (IP5, 2017, p. 1). Regardless of how praise was recognized, RL does not take credit for ideas which originated with stakeholders. By RL opening up to more than formalized titles, as reflected

deeply in the literature, it values the voices of diverse stakeholders and increases teacher autonomy and motivation (Berger et al., 2011; Broadbent, 2015; Dent, 2012; Ketola, 2012; Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2004; Pless & Maak, 2011; Sortie, 2007).

Keith described outcomes of working within RL systems. First, he had a profound sense of loyalty to his current principal: "Because of her willingness to help, if she ever needed anything from me, I would do it for her" (IP5, 2017, p. 8). He also said RL made you "feel like you're part of the system . . . like you matter in that school" (IP5, 2017, p. 6), and that "if you're not there, it's going to make an impact" (IP5, 2017, p. 6). In an RL system, it seems that Keith and his colleagues felt a deep sense of value and purpose in what they do.

To end our time together, Keith shared with me how was RL be developed over his career. Keith shared that RL "can be learned but I think there's something innate in people" (IP5, 2017, p. 1) and that "people learn the most from interacting with people" (IP5, 2017, p. 11). In addition to innate qualities, Keith hinted that RL was also built through experience. He said, "Somebody could become a good leader by working under a good leader and seeing what they do and get mentored by them" (IP5, 2017, p. 11). Overall, Keith required RL to be in a constant state of growth and development because "the more you do something, the better you're going to get at it" (IP5, 2017, p. 5). In Keith's experience, RL as a dynamic system required ongoing development through mentorship and experience over time.

Keith's nearly 25 years in the middle school classroom provided him a depth of experience that was enlightening to the essence of RL. He spoke with ease and passion concerning what catalyzed RL, how RL was enacted, the long-term characteristics in the middle school setting, and how he saw RL be developed.

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Structural (how) descriptions. Keith structured his experiences similarly with elements of the other four participants: his education experience, timing of leadership, and external background. With nearly 25 years as a classroom teacher, Keith articulated RL from an experienced vantage point. He shared a formal leadership characteristic with Adam and Amber because he also attained a principal license at one point in his career with aspirations of contributing to a change in his school.

However, Keith never practiced formal leadership as an administrator and instead remained in the classroom. An understanding of formal leadership, but lack of extensive practice, seemed to provide his experience of RL with an insider-outsider balance. Keith also indicated that timing created an environment for RL to either thrive or fail. For example, Keith worked with many leaders in his career and seemed to indicate that new leadership had the best chance for responsible action. However, once new RL showed signs of failing to act responsibly, as he described earlier, the chance for success was lost. Finally, in addition to his role as a teacher, Keith was a military veteran and an active athletic coach which provided him with contextual understandings of RL external to schools and allowed him to consider and apply principles broadly. His military and athletic experiences also allowed him to experience RL through comparison. For example, he viewed RL in schools through the lens of what he believed to have been RL in the military or sports. Throughout our conversation of RL, Keith structured his experience upon his time in the classroom, timing of leadership as it enters and exits, and his external experiences.

Keith and the 3Es. Keith's descriptions were guided by the 3Es. By revisiting the data analysis process but searching for the 3Es, RL/P (Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004) is informed by Keith's experience in the middle school context as seen in Table 4.10.

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Table 4.10

Associated Descriptions of the 3Es in Keith's Experience of RL

Effective	Ethical	Enduring
Model the Way	Taking ownership	Personable with teachers
Motivating	Honest and straightforward	Lasting impact
Build the team and let them work	Consistency	Dedicated to teachers
Recognize teachers		In the trenches

Effective. In Keith's experience, effective leadership was characterized by four unique ideals and actions. First, leaders were most effective when they model the way and rise to the standards they set for others. Keith said that as an effective leader, "I wouldn't expect you to stay here way late at night several times a week and I go home. I wouldn't expect anything more of you than I would of myself" (IP5, 2017, p. 1). He also associated effectiveness with the ability to "motivate people and . . . understand what each individual needs to motivate them" (IP5, 2017, p. 1). To be effective, RL needed a motivated team but to build that team, Keith felt that "a true leader would work collaboratively with the staff . . . face to face" and choose the direction of the school (IP5, 2017, p. 5). Also, effective leaders did not micromanage their team, but rather, they put teachers and other stakeholders in the right job and let them work (IP5, 2017, p. 6). Lastly, effective leadership recognized people in the RL system for their contributions. In middle schools, acknowledging the hard work teachers do every day and not taking credit out of pride for your title was essential to Keith. Setting the example, developing an autonomous team, and giving credit to teachers were all elements of effective middle school RL in Keith's experience.

Ethical. Ethics and effectiveness were congruent in Keith's description. He reflected, "Ineffective almost becomes unethical [because] sometimes it can turn into an ethical issue when [ineffectiveness] escalates" (IP5, 2017, p. 7). However, in speaking of ethical leadership, he did

uniquely associate it with taking ownership, being honest, and consistency. He said that "if you're [the leader] not doing that good, you've got to own it" (IP5, 2017, p. 6): be ethical and do not put unwarranted blame upon a teacher. Second, to be ethical, RL must be honest and straightforward. In his experience, he had "seen some leaders who are more non-confrontational or whatever so they just tell everybody what they want to hear . . . but when it comes to the reality of a situation, they're not really listening to these people" (IP5, 2017, p. 3). Last, Keith valued ethical leadership and consistent decisions. He said, "If you're pretty consistent with that stuff, people may not necessarily agree with you . . . but they'll respect it" (IP5, 2017, p. 4). A lack of consistency seemed to result in inequitable treatment of staff and confusion of values. Consistency, honesty, and taking ownership for what happened in the school summarized Keith's ideals of ethical RL.

Enduring. Enduring leadership was the toughest for Keith to consider but he concluded that enduring leadership is "there a while, and they have to build relationships with the staff, the community, with the kids" (IP5, 2017, p. 4). Relationships were essential to RL because there was need for long-term dedication to the teachers and the school. Keith said that teachers were not viewed as "replaceable cogs" in RL because "people aren't that way" (IP5, 2017, p. 4). Keith expressed how important it was for enduring leadership to be "in the trenches" with their teams. Responsible leaders cannot "hide off in their office and then nobody sees them" (IP5, 2017, p. 7).

The essence of Keith's experience of RL. Keith made me laugh, think, and reflect all within the relatively short time we spent together. His insights on leadership structured by his many years in education and undergirded by external experiences inspired me toward my own leadership journey. The elements of his experience are presented in Figure 4.15. In constructing
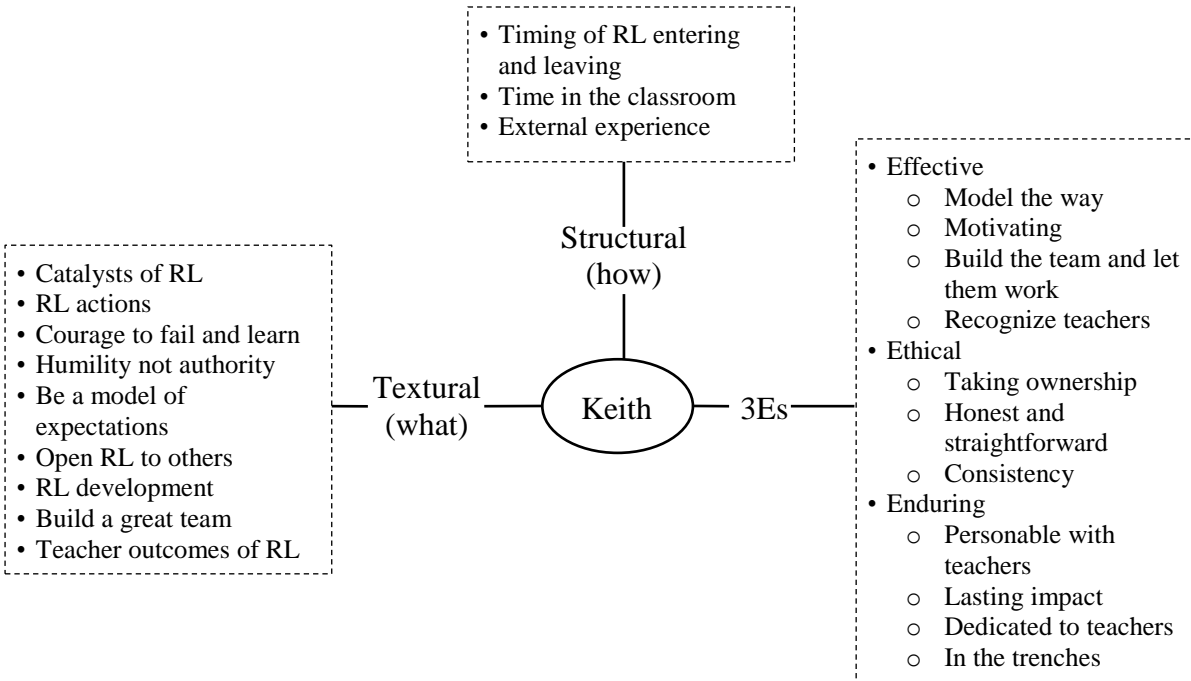
Figure 4.15. Components of Keith's complete description of Keith's experience.

a statement of essence and building the map of his textural descriptions bounded by structures of

time and experience (displayed in Figure 4.16), I found a lot of depth in what Keith offered us as

readers and researchers:

> Responsible Leadership (RL) of a middle school begins with a true desire to be impactful while still effectively maintaining the basic structures of the school and knowledge of teaching. RL is manifested ethically through honesty, a straightforward approach, consistency, and the willingness to have tough conversations for the betterment of the whole. Enduring RL are dedicated for the long-term, courageous to try things, and take ownership if they fail. Responsible leaders work hard and "get in the trenches" with their team. They lead ethically through humility by being people focused to gain input from various stakeholders and build relationships in as well as out of the school. They also are effective at building the right team around them and let those folks do their jobs by collaborating with staff on decisions and values while individualizing motivation for different teachers. Working in a RL system makes teachers feel like part of something larger than themselves where they are valued and appreciated. Along the way, RL develop through experience and mentorship toward continual growth and improvement of their practice. RL acts humbly but tenaciously toward setting the example of dedication to education.
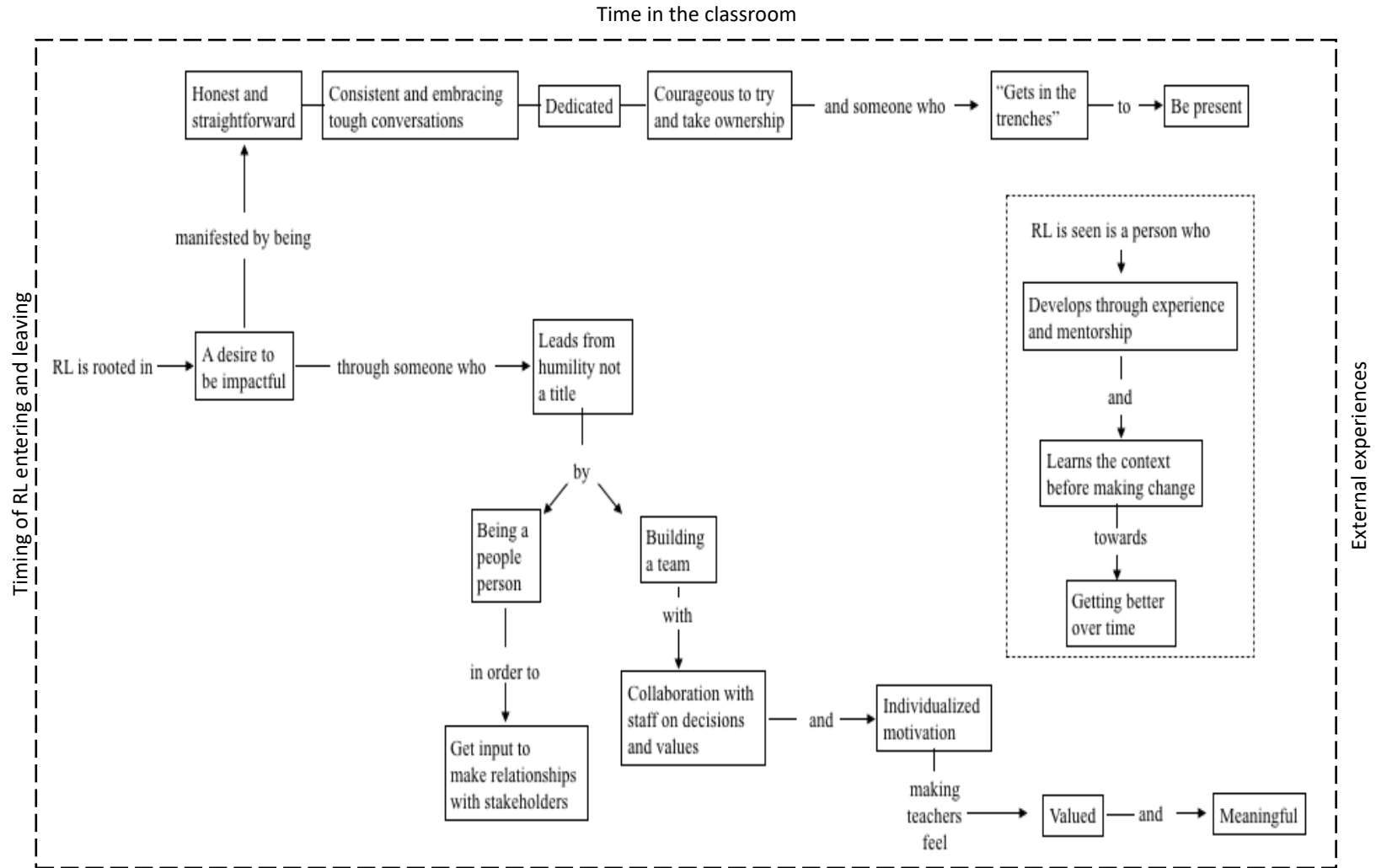
Figure 4.16. A mental model of Keith's experience of RL with textural (what) bounded by structural (how).

These five participants provided me with much more than the descriptions above. My hope is that not only will readers learn from these experiences and stories but that readers may feel the same inspiration I did from each one of the amazing educators. As five people who stand out amongst their peers and who have proven to be highly effective at their craft, these participants represented a group of people for whom I deeply respect. Their experiences represent an authentic data set characterized by the depth of time in the classroom and the learning that comes with it. According to Moustakas' (1994) process, once all five participants' descriptions were analyzed and completed individually, I set out to seek a shared essence of RL among the participants.

Part II: Description of Shared Essence

After describing the structural and textural experiences of each participant, Moustakas' (1994) "intuitive integration" synthesizes the various experiences into an "ultimate essence" (p. 100). As displayed in Figure 4.17, to reach this essence it is important to incorporate elements of both structural and textural descriptions and, in the case of this study, the associations to the 3Es as a guiding framework. Below I discuss the following shared: textural descriptions, structural descriptions, associations of the 3Es, and a composite structural-textural description of the essence of these participants' experience of RL.

The Shared Experience Analysis Process

Moustakas (1994) did not prescribe a process for constructing the shared experience consistent with phenomenological methods. In this study of teachers' experiences, it was known that participants had a shared experience of teaching middle school within a state of the western United States, but the details were constructed through phenomenological reduction as displayed in Figure 4.17. I began by revisiting all of the data cards by physically laying them out

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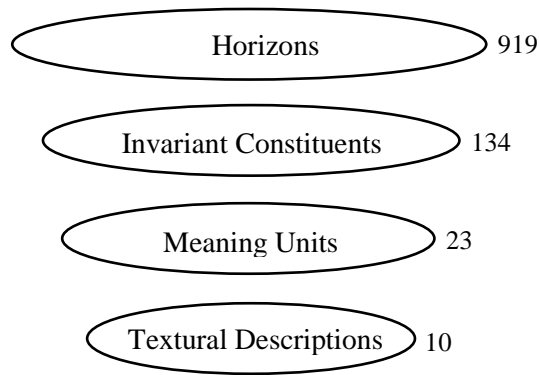
Figure 4.17. Phenomenological reduction process for shared textural description of the five participant's experiences with corresponding unit totals of each phase.

individually for a grand total of 919 horizon statements from all five interviews. I followed the same process Moustakas (1994) described for each participant but on the larger scale. I sought relevance and repetition of each card to lead me to 134 shared invariant constituent statements. The difference between the 134 here and the total sum of invariant constituent statements from the participants—433—is because of the repetitive nature across participants' descriptions. For example, if multiple participants spoke to listening, I selected the most clearly articulated horizon and recorded the others as supportive. With the 134 invariant constitutions, I typified (Vaismoradi et al., 2016) and labeled them into 23 meaning units. I then revisited the meaning units from each participant and found consistency between the shared descriptions and individual units, providing evidence that individual and shared units were in line with the words and experiences of the participants. In the case of this study, I included meaning units as shared if the majority of participants had spoken to it in their description. At times, I utilized the labeling process to combine meaning units from various participants into a single one that seemed to capture what they each were saying. Another round of typification and labeling (Vaismoradi et al., 2016) the meaning units resulted in 10 textural descriptions of shared essence across the participants as displayed in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11

Shared Meaning Units and Textural Descriptions Constructed Across Participant Experiences of RL

Meaning Units	Textural Description
• Physical presence • Active engagement in education	• Diligence
• Humility • Listening • Build a great team and share decisions	• Open RL to more people
• Staff development • Personal development of leadership	• Dedication to development
• Own your role—the good and bad • Act as a model	• Take ownership
• Be relational • Value teachers as people • Value teachers as professionals	• Genuine care for teachers
• Consistent behavior • Consistent treatment of others	• Consistency
• Courageously advance • Embrace difficulty and tough conversations • Transparency	• Fortitude
• Prioritize the vision • Driven by deep values • Genuine desire for impact	• Guided by vision and values
• Feel impactful and meaningful to the cause • Feel heard • Desire to commit themselves	• Desirable outcomes of RL for teachers

Once shared textural descriptions were constructed through phenomenological reduction, I utilized imaginative variation to construct structural descriptions of the shared experience among the five participants. Finally, through intuitive integration, I constructed a mental model and statement of shared essence detailed later in the chapter.

Shared Textural (what) Descriptions

Across the data of the five participants there were shared elements of textural RL descriptions. Though the participants teach in different schools and have equally diverse personal histories, their experiences of RL have informative similarities. These shared descriptions are not

intended to be universal in a post-positivist sense. Instead they are relative and co-constructed in a subjectivist manner in order to spark inquiry and inform praxis (Lincoln et al., 2011, p. 102-103). It is the reader's decision whether shared elements of RL from these perspectives is meaningful to their own contextual environment.

Diligence. To be diligent, one must be both careful and persistent. Diligence encapsulated that participants wanted RL to be physically present throughout the school and actively engaged in education. The term included a level of care that required RL to be aware of what was happening in the school at all times and incorporate persistence through active engagement.

Physical presence. Across the study, participants spoke to a desire for RL to be physically present throughout the school and in their classrooms. School leadership literature reflects a concern about leaders who may be too involved in teachers' day-to-day activities (Lee & Nie, 2017; Yirci et al., 2014), but the participants reflected a more balanced approach to leaders' presence in the classroom and school community at large.

Kate, for example, indicated feeling supported by RL when they were present in her classroom. She said that even if principals were doing their own work, she always appreciated "when they are at least present" and available to her (IP3, 2017, p. 3). Maxine Ann put the need simply when she said, "presence: being out and around in classrooms. That's important" (IP4, 2017, p. 5). Amber echoed that being physically in classrooms was the only way to know what every member of the staff was focused on and to then help each teacher improve their practice.

Participants also indicated that RL practitioners should leave the office and spend time in community spaces. Keith, although worrisome about "principals who always micromanage the staff," advised RL practitioners to spend time in the cafeteria or hallways to make their presence

known to staff and students (IP5, 2017, p. 9). Adam connected physical presence in RL to the sun as an omnipresent source of light and energy (IP2, 2017, p. 16). He later refined the metaphor to include a sense of balance because "sometimes that sun's got to set. You've got to set and you're no longer a leader" (IP2, 2017, p. 16). His metaphor reflected the empowerment from a balance of physical presence similar to what Lee and Nie (2017) described when they noted that teachers may not want direct instructional management, but they do want to feel inspired to do their job. RL in schools needs to be carefully balanced as to not overwhelm teachers, but not being present at all is not responsible.

Active engagement. Most principals are "tapped into" (Myung, Loeb, & Horng, 2011, p. 696) by their own leaders who identified leadership potential in them. Though this strategy may help to identify potential RL qualities, the participants indicated that commitment to continued active engagement with education once leaders gained formal titles, such as principals, was just as important.

Kate could think of more than one leader who moved to leadership to escape the classroom which "is super ineffective" (IP3, 2017, p. 2). Alternatively, Maxine Ann still held a past leader in high regard because "being able to see her at a conference in Washington, D.C. and have that connection" showed that she has been "able to endure in education beyond the job as principal" (IP4, 2017, p.6). The dichotomy makes it clear that the most responsible leaders are those dedicated to education as a whole.

When leaders are engaged with them, the participants reflected a renewed sense of loyalty and excitement. Keith shared a time when a leader came to his aid: "she came in here [the classroom] and she thought she was going to have to help me grade . . . she sat here with me and it took about 45 minutes . . . she helped me (IP5, 2017, p. 8). As a result, he displayed his loyalty

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in that "If that girl needed anything, I'd do it for her" (IP5, 2017, p. 8). Amber highlighted the

importance of educational engagement when she suggested that RL came in the form of accurate

and motivating feedback:

> If we want our leaders to be highly effective, they need to start figuring out: Where does this teacher want to be pushed? And then what do I need to know as the leader to be able to have enough background knowledge that. . . . I can ask the questions that continue to push them. As a teacher, all of that is what I need. (IP1, 2017, p. 6)

The participants seemed to support evidence from Buttram and Farley-Ripple (2016) that more

entrenched leadership involvement in teacher activities can influence productive action in how

collaboratively teachers work and what teachers do with their time at the school. RL must be

current on educational issues and show active involvement in the jobs of their team.

Physical presence and active engagement need to be in place for RL in middle schools.

RL must be visible and working alongside teachers because the priority is educating their

students and these participants suggested that it takes a village.

Open RL to more people. Across the five participants' experiences, RL was

characterized by looking beyond those who hold formal leadership positions. The literature

supported that RL has been described as an approach to open leadership systems (Berger et al.,

2011; Broadbent, 2015; Dent, 2012; Ketola, 2010, 2012; Pless & Maak, 2011; Sortie, 2007).

Cheng and Szeto (2016) found that in schools, leadership open to "incorporating the aspirations

and ideas of others" were influential in facilitating teacher leadership (p. 147). Although

participants contextualized RL with formal positions, they each also described a need for open

systems through humility, listening, building a team, and working toward shared decisions.

Humility. Participants and literature have shown a need for humility in order to invite and

welcome people to a RL system. In regard to spiritual leadership, Reave (2005) reflected that

humility, along with other ideals, has "long been demonstrated to have an effect on leadership

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success" (p. 1). RL literature regularly calls for leadership to humble itself to a greater cause as well (Cameron, 2011; Lynham & Chermack, 2006; Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004; Maak, 2007; Maak & Pless, 2006). Gond et al. (2011), for example, defined RL by its outcomes "for the advancement of humanism and the promotion of welfare on a global scale" (p. 115). Though the participants localized their need for humility for a greater cause to the school itself, it was still an important element of RL across their experiences.

Amber hoped for RL humble enough to recognize the gaps in their own thinking and for skill sets to inform who they need to entrust (IP1, 2017). Maxine Ann reflected that the best leaders she had were full of humility and not intimidated by knowledgeable teachers who were better suited to be treated as valuable resources and provided space to have influence (IP4, 2017). Inversely, Adam worked with leadership that failed to share responsibility to protect their own status and felt the negative consequences. Tellingly, he was now in a system where RL's humility made him "feel more empowered" (IP2, 2017, p. 3). Keith learned the importance of humility during training for a previous position when leadership failed to see their own bias and hurt the mission (IP5, 2017). It took a senior leader to recognize the mistake that had been made because active leadership was focused on being right instead of being humble. Similarly, Kate said, "I think [effective] leaders are willing to kind of put aside their ego" for the betterment of everyone (IP3, 2017, p. 4). Humility, referenced throughout the RL literature and associated with servant leadership, seemed to also be necessary for RL in middle schools in the western state of the United States.

Listening. In the participants' experiences, humility was most often tangible through listening. When I asked Amber what her best advice for a new middle school leader would ben she said:

> If I had to sum it up in one word, I would say listen. . . . And not just listen with their ears to what people say, but listen to the tone in the building and listen to what's not said and listen to the feeling from kids and just listen. (IP1, 2017, p. 22)

Maxine Ann reflected that even leadership which struggled to be effective, "really listened . . . when I had a concern" (IP4, 2017, p. 4). Adam said that even in hard times, RL was characterized with "listening to and . . . encouraging" followers (IP2, 2017, p. 11). The participants indicated that RL systems broaden when formal leaders listen to teachers' input.

Build a great team and share decision making. As RL opens to a broader spectrum of constituents, participants indicated that effective team building became increasingly important. Throughout literature, teams were a fundamental component of many approaches to leadership (Willink & Babin, 2015). In one of the seminal leadership texts of the past 20 years, Kouzes and Posner (2012) included one of their five practices of leadership: "enable others to act" (p. 213) . Kouzes and Poser (2012) suggested leadership was best when approached as a group. Adaptive leadership, often associated with RL, positions formal leaders as catalysts and a helpful resource for followers to take meaningful action (Northouse, 2016, p. 258). They adapt by building a team and giving them the space to solve problems. In the ideal school cultures for teachers to thrive, literature indicated a need for shared responsibility, delegation of authority, and a school that acts "as a village where everyone's input is important" (Cook, 2014, p. 12; Lee & Nie, 2017).

Additional to the literature, participants also provided reinforcing evidence for the power of building a great leadership team and a shared decision-making process. Maxine Ann asserted that in education some things can get difficult, "which is why you need your team, your support system, to really help you think through something" (IP4, 2017, p. 10). She also contended that the team was not there to tell you what you want to hear. Instead, you wanted "people who aren't afraid to challenge your ideas. I don't mean fight with you, but, 'Hey, why? Tell me more'" (IP4,

2017, p. 9)! Adam was regularly frustrated when RL struggled to build a team and let others

lead. He lamented, "Put together a team. Yeah. A leadership team or a disciplinary team. Come

up with it. Figure something out" (IP2, 2017, p. 14). Amber echoed that in addition to staying

current in education, RL should "get that good leadership team and listen to what they have to

say" (IP1, 2017, p. 6). For the participants, leadership forming teams opened RL by giving voice

to the team members and distributing decision making amongst them.

Amber most appropriately summed up the need for team building and listening with

humility. She reflected on her best experience with two particular leaders:

> Both of them were humble enough to say that [they didn't know] to their leadership
> teams; they both developed leadership teams, and they intentionally asked people to be
> on the team who would fill in the gaps of their learning and their understanding (IP1,
> 2017, p. 8).

In middle schools in this western state in the United States, RL systems seemed to become more

open through humility, listening, and team building.

Dedication to development. Each participant described a dedication to development of

staff and RL. In the associated RL literature, servant leadership promoted a commitment to the

growth and development of followers. Servant leaders considered what their team needs before

they considered what they needed themselves (Northouse, 2016). Transformational leadership

also focused on raising one another up as leaders and followers (Burns, 1978). In accordance

with servant and transformational leadership approaches, RL has been positioned as a means to

open leadership systems to more people thereby creating a need for development (Maak & Pless,

2006). The five participants likewise described RL as having a dedication to providing staff

development and a focus on personal development.

Staff development. Commitment to outstanding education for students requires a

dedication to teacher development, support, and collaboration (Berebitsky et al., 2014). Maxine

Ann declared that one of the most effective things about RL in her experience was when a leader, "would just dump money into expensive P.D., or find money for it" ensuring that teachers had the resources for professional growth (IP4, 2017, p. 1). Kate valued RL's willingness to support teachers in taking risks and trying new ideas with curriculum and pedagogy (IP3, 2017). Similarly, Cheng and Szeto (2016) found that principals who supported individual innovation increased teacher positive perceptions of leadership and teacher involvement in professional development. Amber felt that she could seek development opportunities on her own but needed RL that "would do their homework . . . and push my thinking" in the classroom every day (IP1, 2017, p. 7). Adam reflected that RL's commitment to development empowered him to opportunities to lead projects and staff meetings which increased his professional effectiveness and personal job satisfaction (IP2, 2017). Dedication to staff development as indicated in the literature and across the five participants experiences seemed to support professional growth and teacher satisfaction.

Personal development of leadership. Another key element to participants experiences of RL was leadership that continually strived for personal development. There was a sense from each of them that RL could not be enacted if growth and improvement were not continual. Maxine Ann said, as RL, "you've got to keep learning, keep growing, keep trying" in order to move teachers and a school forward (IP4, 2017, p. 9). Keith added, overtime RL can improve if people are always learning because "the more you do something, the better you're going to get at it" (IP5, 2017, p. 5). Amber implicated expectations that RL would be dedicated to continual personal growth by maintaining current knowledge of education through reading, attending conferences, and taking other opportunities to learn (IP1, 2017). The participants aspired to be

the best teachers they could through continual development and they seemed to have the same expectation of RL.

Take ownership. Participants suggested that RL implies taking ownership of the leadership role. Participants implied that RL owed it to stakeholders to bear the burdens of the position along with the triumphs. Stewardship, the eight characteristics of servant leadership, embodies a similar attitude of "taking responsibility for the leadership role entrusted to the leader" (Northouse, 2016, p. 228). Ownership to the participants meant taking responsibility for the good and bad components of RL and also acting as a model of the expectations set for teachers.

Own your role—the good and bad. A formal RL role inherently increases the impact one may have on a school, and participants indicated that RL understands the responsibility and acts accordingly (Fullan, 2007; Mafora, 2013). Adam described that leadership that has failed to acknowledge their role in building and maintaining a positive school culture had always been ineffective for him (IP2, 2017; Mafora, 2013). Maxine Ann also emphasized the importance of RL taking ownership of impact potential. She imparted that someone in the school will take on the leadership role no matter what, so it is imperative that those in leadership roles take the burdens and responsibilities seriously as to not place them on teachers or other professionals (IP4, 2017). Adam summed up the importance of ownership when he exclaimed, RL practitioners "should already know. Every action that you do, I'm going to, whether I realize it or not, I'm going to think about it. It's going to affect how I work for you" (IP2, 2017, p. 4).

In addition to owning the role, participants described accountability for setbacks. Willink and Babin (2015) summarized that "when subordinates aren't doing what they should, leaders that exercise Extreme Ownership cannot blame the subordinates. They must look in the mirror at

themselves" (p. 30). Keith echoed extreme ownership in middle schools when he stressed that

RL should recognize setbacks, take ownership of the setback by acknowledging it to themselves

and the team, and then search for actionable solutions (IP5, 2017). Adam similarly reflected:

> If you [leadership] screw up or someone else does, you have to take fault for it. . . .
> You've got to fall on the sword . . . [and] you've got to be willing to fall on the sword
> over and over and over again even when it's not your fault. (IP2, 2017, p. 8)

The participants seemed to expect RL to own mistakes even if they were not directly at fault in

order to drive change forward.

Act as a model. Ownership extends beyond understanding impact and also describes the

participants' need for RL to model expectations. Kouzes and Posner (2012) accentuated that

leadership "model the way" in which, leaders "take every opportunity to show others by their

own example that they're deeply committed to the values and aspirations they espouse" (p. 74).

Kouzes and Posner also claimed the golden rule of leadership: "Ask others to do only what you

are willing to do yourself" (p. 78). The five participants seem to agree with Kouzes and Posner in

their desire for middle school RL to act through example and model expectations for teachers.

Amber said RL must model simultaneous renewal of research and the education

profession through their own growth if they want teachers to do the same (IP1, 2017). Kate

added that RL "has to set the standard" and explained through example that "if I want kids to

pick up the trash, I need to demonstrate picking up the trash" (IP3, 2017, p. 18). Keith proposed

"that to be an effective leader, you're kind of a role model or whatever for the teachers or the

staff in your school" (IP5, 2017, p. 1). Keith also affirmed Kouzes and Posner's (2015) golden

rule of leadership. He expected RL to live by the mantra that "I wouldn't expect anything more

of you than I would of myself" (IP5, 2017, p. 1). A sense of role-modeling and setting the

standard by which to operate was clear amongst the participants' descriptions of RL.

Genuine care for teachers. Another cross-case textural description was constructed from the way teachers spoke about the care they have felt from RL. Literature also evidenced care and school leadership. For example, Lingam and Lingam (2015) noted correlation between positive teacher perception of leadership and "encouraging the heart" described by Kouzes and Posner (2012) as "leaders encourage others to continue the quest. They inspire others with courage and hope" (p. 272). Mofuoa (2010) associated RL with caring about people from the heart and with compassion. The participants expressed a similar sense of relationship depth when RL was relational and valued the teachers as people and professionals.

Be relational. Participants highlighted the need for RL to be relational with teachers. Amber pointed out that relatability was particularly important when working with new teachers who may find leadership to be "cold or intimidating" (IP1, 2017, p. 7). Adam explained that intimidation lowered when RL listened and got to know teachers through genuine conversation (IP2, 2017). Maxine Ann echoed the sentiment that RL was "super effective and also super personable and relational" (IP4, 2017, p. 1). Keith added a level of balance to the need for relational leadership. He described that leaders should be able to "drink beer on a Friday after school, but come Monday, they're my boss and I respect that" (IP5, 2017, p. 9). Informal relationship building removed the formality of leadership and was needed for RL to function as an approach focused on people.

RL was also enacted through relational behavior in professional tasks such as giving feedback. Adam described the effectiveness of his evaluator who approached feedback from a relational standpoint to focus on "the positive results in his work" and develop from there (IP2, 2017, p. 4). Amber also illustrated how RL's relatability with the staff can diminish nervousness during evaluations and promote growth (IP1, 2017, p. 5). Keith added further dimension of the

need for relatability with students when he said, "You've [leadership] got to be able to interact with your staff, adults, but you also have to be there interacting with the kids along with the teachers" (IP5, 2017, p. 7). Being relational with staff and other stakeholders was an element of RL that made it accessible to teachers and promoted a culture capable of growth.

Value teachers as people. Participants also communicated a need for RL to value them as people. Amber reflected Mofuoa's (2010) claim that RL was associated with love and heart when she said, "If you're going to be a leader of those teachers, love them . . . love those middle school teachers" (IP1, 2017, p. 24). Maxine Ann said RL "has to do with how you treat your staff as people, not just as teachers" (IP4, 2017, p. 5). Keith added that "you have to be a people person" and care about teachers before you consider taking RL actions (IP5, 2017, p. 7). Adam stressed valuing teachers as people when he spoke about his reaction to constructive feedback: "I won't take offense to it when I know that you care about me as a person" (IP2, 2017, p. 16). These five middle school teachers seemed to connect relatability to valuing teachers as people, but they also described a need to value teachers as professionals.

Value teachers as professionals. Literature described the hesitation some teachers have with leadership taking control of their day-to-day profession (Bellibas, 2014, 2015; Yirci et al., 2014). Micromanaging teachers in the classroom, where they hold both content and pedagogical expertise, may develop a sense of mistrust (Yirci et al., 2014). Participants described that they were not fearful of micromanagement but were concerned with not being valued as professionals.

To show professional value, RL advocated for the profession, gave credit when it was due, and appreciated the voices of teachers on school matters. Maxine Ann had a responsible leader who "made teaching [and teachers] feel really important and professional. She gave it a lot

of value" by advocating for teachers inside and outside of the school (IP4, 2017, p. 2). Amber advocated for RL to place value upon the ideas teachers have and the work they do by giving them credit. "If a teacher has come up with this amazing idea, or almost revolutionary or new way of doing something in their classroom," Amber said, then "when the leader talks about it . . . that credit is given to that teacher" (IP1, 2017, p. 10). Keith similarly described the need for RL to be constantly acquiring professional knowledge from teachers who have pedagogical expertise (IP5, 2017). Keith added that as a leader you must "listen to people in the school and it's not just me as a teacher [or] some of these veteran teachers around here. . . . Listen to the new teachers because they give you different perspectives" (IP5, 2017, p. 12), reflecting Cheng and Szeto's (2016) advocation that a variety of teacher sub-sets be supported as valuable community members. Placing genuine value in the ideas, work, and perspectives of teachers gave RL a unique approach to what followers were to them.

Consistency. Consistency from RL was another common description amongst all five participants. The included empirical RL and school leadership literature in Chapter Two does not speak to a direct need for consistency; however, popular writing such as blogs and websites show relevance of the consistency in current leadership (Clark, 2016; Shedd, 2011). In this study of middle school teachers' perceptions of RL, consistency in behavior and treatment of others were important.

Consistent RL behavior. Participants regularly discussed a desire and need for leadership to behave consistently with decisions and actions. Keith, for example, said that as a "leader in the school, you have to be consistent with what you do" and even if people do not like something, you have to tell them and be consistent (IP5, 2017, p. 4). In his metaphor between RL and the sun, Adam noted, "You don't question if the sun's going to come up. Even when it sets, you're

like, 'Yeah, it will be back'" (IP2, 2017, p. 17). The behavior of the sun—rising and setting—will continue just as RL should remain consistent for teachers. Adam also communicated a need for consistent behavior across time and space because he noted, "Even when you're not communicating, you are. When you think you're not communicating, you're communicating to me," regardless of when or where you are in the school (IP2, 2017, p. 16). Finally, Maxine Ann and Amber both seemed to reflect RL as a constant force in a school that should consistently treat their job with the respect it deserves and the seriousness it requires (IP1, 2017; IP4, 2017). Consistency of RL behavior seemed to allow the five teachers in the study to feel comfortable with leadership, and by extension, their followership.

 Consistent treatment of others. In addition to consistent behavior, participants described that RL should treat people in their team consistently. Keith advocated for consistent treatment and theorized, "People are very comfortable if they know a line. 'If I cross this line, this is going to happen. If I stay on this side of this line, this is what's going to happen" (IP5, 2017, p. 4). Maxine Ann added, "You [leadership] have to be fair, or you have to be able to say why you did something different for someone else" (IP4, 2017, p. 5). Keith and Maxine Ann saw immense value in RL being characterized by consistent action. However, Amber reflected that consistent treatment does not equate to treating all of the teachers the same by "cut[ting] the tallest poppy" when teachers work hard and innovate (IP1, 2017, p. 10). Instead Amber and Kate, shared that consistency entailed being ethical with all teachers (IP3, 2017, p. 11). For example, RL requires consistent confidentiality because teachers "don't want them [leadership] to air dirty laundry in a meeting with somebody else" under any circumstance (IP3, 2017, p. 11). Participants delineated acting consistently and equally and indicated that RL in middle schools was characterized by consistency but not always equality.

Fortitude. Fortitude, or having courage in adversity, is an apt description of much of the participants' experiences. They proposed a need for courage from RL in the face of adversity throughout our interviews which was also reflected in the literature for moral courage in the business sector (Voegtlin et al., 2012). In the participants' experiences, RL courageously advanced forward and embraced tough conversations for growth.

Courageously advance. Having the fortitude to advance a school, team, and field forward was perhaps the most difficult element of RL. Kate said that RL needed courage to "allow [teachers] to take some risks" and innovate within their classroom (IP3, 2017, p. 4). Keith echoed that RL needs to be "willing to step out on the ledge and take a chance at something new" because "you probably learn more from failures than you do anything else" (IP5, 2017, p. 7). Maxine Ann noted the courage needed to act as a buffer between teachers and the numerous barriers they may face. She said, "I understand you might want to be careful to [not] rustle too many feathers. I also think you've got to be you" and push the envelope for your teachers (IP4, 2017, p. 9). Kate added that "leaders let people try things [and] they believe in their teachers," demonstrating courage to stand up for their teachers in the face of adversity (IP3, 2017, p. 4). Participants seemed to indicate that RL in the middle school can catalyze progress but RL required fortitude and a resolve to succeed against the odds.

Embrace tough conversations. Nearly all of the participants shared experiences where RL had to maintain focus through tough conversations. Similar to adaptive leadership which maintains discipline attention and focus through tough work (Northouse, 2016), RL has to face hard conversations in order to keep moving. Kate said, "Any leader, who lacks that ability to have really hard conversations is not going to be an effective leader" because they cannot uphold expectations among the team (IP3, 2017, p. 3). She reflected the difficulty of these conversations

but knew that "you can have a really good conversation with someone about something they're not doing right, and not be mean" (IP3, 2017, p.18). Keith said, "As a leader you have to be straightforward with people" even when they may not agree with you because it is the only way to face the many challenges schools have (IP5, 2017, p. 5). RL will inevitably have to embrace tough conversations in order to build and maintain a successful school and these teachers expected RL to face it with fortitude.

Transparency. Fortitude also required transparency. Being transparent removed the illusion of perfection from leadership. Adam centered his experience of RL on transparency. He said transparency in crucial because "inconsistent stories you get sometimes or reasons from administrators for why they do certain things—I think that's not okay" (IP2, 2017, p. 5). Maxine Ann added, "If I had to say what's really important to me is that I think that, when possible, leaders be transparent with big decisions that impact the staff" (IP4, 2017, p. 5). Finally, Kate focused on communication and said, RL had "to be able to communicate in tough situations, [and] in good situations" (IP3, 2017, p. 11). Even when the school was facing challenges, Kate needed clear and transparent communication from RL in order to stay focused. Cook (2014, p. 12) noted that transparency created a school environment where everyone's input was considered and important and the participants seemed to echo the idea. Transparency seemed to be an obvious and simple tactic but it required fortitude from RL to not only face tough conversations but to be open and honest about issues facing the team.

Fortitude was evident in courageously moving forward, embracing tough conversations, and being openly transparent; this seemed to be difficult but needed for RL in middle schools. The participants spoke throughout our conversations about this courageous element of RL that often went unsaid but should possible be central to development and selection.

Guided by vision and values. A common discussion I had with participants surrounded what motivated true RL. In the literature, it was suggested that values must be the catalyst for RL action and decision (Freeman & Auster, 2011; Lynham, 1998; Stahl & De Luque, 2014; Voegtlin, 2016. In schools, values have such a role that Fullan (2007) defined school culture according to the evident guiding beliefs and values of the school and staff. For participants, RL cannot be motivated by money or prestige. Rather, RL must be driven by a priority to a whole-school vision and ignited by deeply held values plus a genuine desire to lead a school.

Prioritize the vision. Servant leadership has often been associated with RL and vision. According to Northouse (2016), servant leaders conceptualize a vision and clarify direction for followers accordingly (p. 233). George (2003) defined his second dimension of authentic leadership as having strong values for doing the right thing. Kouzes and Posner (2012) described similar needs for leadership to not only have a vision for the future, but to communicate it and "get others to see the exciting future possibilities" (p. 100). Being guided by a common vision for the future was common among academic and popular leadership literature (Sinek, 2014; Mercurio, 2017).

Participants' responses echoed the literature and further informed the importance of the common vision within their middle school context. For example, Amber said that to remain "focused on the mission and vision of your school . . . every [idea and] question should be embedded with, 'Is part of the work you're doing part of our mission and vision'" (IP1, 2017, p.5)? In Kate's experience, RL had always been able to communicate across situations when they were grounded in the "purpose, vision, [and] mission" of the school (IP3, 2017, p. 11). Keith also shared, "You have to know your goal and feel good about that, because if you're waffling, everyone can see that and no one feels good about it" (IP5, 2017, p. 5). Communication,

consistency, and a common vision were evident in Maxine Ann's experience with her most responsible leader who always refocused the team to the importance of their vision (IP4, 2017). Cook (2014) found that the principal's ability to unite a staff around a shared vision was essential to school success. Adam similarly placed vision at the forefront of RL. In speaking about how leaders should delegate to staff, he felt they have to be able to say, "'This is our mission, our vision. Here's what I'd like you to come up with.' Then work with them" (IP2, 2017, p. 14). Having a vision, rallying teachers around it, and sticking to it every single day seemed to undergird RL across the participants' experiences.

 Driven by deep values. Participants described a need for RL to be personally driven by deep rooted values in addition to the school wide vision and purpose. Maxine Ann said that RL should "know your core values, and talk about them" because they "bleed into the school" (IP4, 2017, p.11). Kate similarly described RL values as undergirding actions. In a story about ineffective and unethical past leadership, Kate described a lack of personal integrity and honesty that led to school-wide issues when leadership tried to scapegoat teachers for a grading mishap (IP3, 2017, p. 8). She also described the negative case in which "all of those things that they ask: 'what's your personal statement, or personal belief about this school,' or whatever. I really don't think they [leadership that is not responsible] can articulate that" (IP3, 2017, p.3). Adam felt that his current RL was driven by a deep value of openness which allowed them to seek input and bolster teacher opinions (IP2, 2017). In addition to these specific incidences of value, each of the participants associated RL with personal values such as honesty, integrity, humility, follow-through, and others, as detailed in other sections of this chapter. Each characteristic associated with RL was affective in nature and deeply human, as seen in Chapter Two. RL was not a

surface level approach for teachers (Broadbent, 2015; De Bettignies, 2014; Maak & Pless, 2006; Pless et al., 2012; Stone-Johnson, 2014).

Genuine desire for impact. Participants also discussed the need for RL to have genuine desire to make a lasting impact on the school and the broader education field. Keith said, "You have to have a desire to make an impact" for the students and the school (IP5, 2017, p. 9). Kate was adamant that "if you don't like being a teacher anymore, and you're like, 'I'll just go to principal school, and then I'll be a principal,' you are 100% missing the mark" (IP3, 2017, p. 9). She added that people who decided they want more money on the salary schedule and moved into leadership did not populate RL systems because they are focused on themselves. Maxine Ann immediately associated RL with a past principal who "continues to put herself out there for the good of education" and impact the field even beyond retirement (IP4, 2017, p. 5). Adam also wanted to work with RL which aimed to create the best school possible for the kids to learn and develop (IP2, 2017). A genuine desire to truly impact a school and the students within it characterized so much of what RL was to the participants.

Desirable outcomes of RL for teachers. A final textural description of RL was characterized by desirable outcomes for the participants as educators when they operated within an RL approach. Teachers in middle school systems in which RL exists seemed to feel important and heard. Plus they had the motivation to work hard and remain dedicated.

Feel impactful and meaningful to the cause. Above all, participants desired to have a lasting impact on education and RL truly made them feel that they were contributing to a cause greater than themselves. Keith proclaimed that RL made "you look forward to coming to work. You feel you're making a difference" and like "you matter in that school" (IP5, 2017, p. 6). Maxine Add added that RL "makes me want to step up into other leadership roles at the school,

like teacher-leader roles, that ultimately are for the good of the kids" (IP4, 2017, p.6), to contribute on a high level to the vision. Adam reflected that when RL provided him with tasks, this made him "feel accountable like, 'Oh, wow, he [leadership] wants something and I got to do it. He wants me to do it'" (IP2, 2017, p. 13). He further added that as a teacher, "you have to feel like you're a part of something" (IP2, 2017, p. 13) bigger than yourself. Keith summed the desire up nicely when he said that in an RL system, "you matter in that school and that school wouldn't be the same without you. . . . You're valued" (IP5, 2017, p.6). A sense of contributing to something bigger than yourself is a driving force for many service careers and it seemed to also be highly motivating for these middle school educators.

   Feel heard. As has been discussed throughout the study, teachers in RL systems must be listened to and they must feel heard. For example, Adam said in his experience, RL "listening to me and empowering me makes me feel like I have more influence than I thought I once did" (IP2, 2017, p.13). His sentiment reflected a similar idea to the empowerment found in teachers experiencing supportive leadership that is often associated with RL in business and management (Hulpia, Devos, & Van Keep, 2011). Maxine Ann also shared that for her, RL was characterized by leadership which actively sought input from teacher leaders and truly valued their voices (IP4, 2017). Kate noted that in a negative experience she had, leadership simply did not listen but made decisions and took actions without any attempt to hear the teachers (IP3, 2017). Amber was charged with leading departments and grade levels recently, and she felt very inspired by the amount RL took her input into account (IP1, 2017). Participants experienced RL when their voices were heard and valued.

   Desire to commit themselves. Teachers wanted to commit their time and energy, as well as, be more dedicated to what the school is doing when RL is in place. Dou, Devos and Valckle

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(2017) found a significant influence of transformational leadership on teachers' organizational commitment, and participants also reflected this with RL. Keith detailed an experience where RL stepped in to help him with an important assignment, "and because of that, if she ever needed anything from me I would do it" (IP5, 2017, p. 8). Maxine Ann said it plainly: RL "makes me work harder" (IP4, 2017, p.6). Adam took on increasing tasks with the new RL in his school because he felt empowered by what he viewed as meaningful work (IP2, 2017). These responses seem to communicate that if leadership was having a hard time getting teachers to work toward a common goal, they may have to look at themselves first because when teachers felt that their work mattered, they were excited to work hard.

The shared textural descriptions occurring across the interviews with participants represented what the participants have experienced with RL in middle schools. Each shared textural element resonated with each individual participant. Together the shared textural descriptions captured a sense what described the essence of RL experience for the participants. In compliment, shared structural elements guided how the participants have experienced RL.

Shared Structural (how) Descriptions

Before looking across participants for shared structural elements, structural descriptions will be defined. Moustakas (1994) defined structures as the "conditions that must exist for something to appear" (p. 99). Each participant conveyed various structures of their experience, but four structural components were indicated across participant descriptions: time in the profession, occupational background, leadership exposure, and leadership in formal positions. These four structures framed and bounded the shared textural descriptions of the participants.

Time in the profession. Each of the five participants described "time in the profession" as structurally important to their experience of RL. Amber, Kate, Maxine Ann, and Keith have

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extensive quantitative experience. They worked in various schools, districts, and even countries across the globe. The utility of such sweeping experiences in participants abilities to recognize RL and the difference RL created for them was clear. For example, Amber recognized RL through her "nine years in extremely rural poor settings" and noted:

> An effective leader . . . would know all of their staff members enough . . . to know what each teacher needs in that moment. But to average it all out and to think what I need is what a five-year teacher needs, isn't effective. (IP1, 2017, p. 8)

Keith also expressed a structure of longevity over time with RL because, with leadership having "come and gone over the years . . . it's not a sprint, it's a marathon" (IP5, 2017, p. 4). Kate also noted that she experienced leadership as both responsible and not responsible by outlasting many leaders (IP3, 2017). Maxine Ann did not numerically quantify her years in the classroom during our interview but having spent over ten years teaching, seemed to provide her with ample experience to describe what RL has been to her. For these participants who spent extensive time in middle school classrooms, hours in the profession seemed to be inherently essential to their experience.

Adam, the youngest participant in the study, could represent an outlier with only a few years in the classroom, but he also expressed the importance of time to his perception of RL as a relatively new teacher. He described the needs of RL relative to the time in that, "as a new teacher" RL is "really empowering and reassuring" (IP2, 2017, p. 2). He may have less time to draw upon in his description, but the amount of time he has been teaching was still imperative to how he experienced RL.

Across all participants, time in the profession was shown to be an essential structure of RL. Furthermore, how much time they spent teaching seemed less important than acknowledging that time mattered in how they experienced it. Adam experienced RL as a new teacher who

needed RL to do different things than Amber, Kate, Maxine Ann, and Keith who have each spent over a decade teaching, but all of them reference time as an essential structural for RL to be present and recognized.

Occupational background. In addition to their time in the profession and within the context of middle schools, each participant described other occupational experiences that were foundational to their perceptions of RL. For example, Amber described the effect of traveling internationally to work with children across the globe where leadership was sometimes non-existent on her perception of what RL is (IP1, 2017). Adam spoke to his experience working in the youth sports organization and seeing leadership there as a comparative for RL in middle schools (IP2, 2017). Kate often referred to her time early in her career in other schools and watching leadership as a revolving door to describe why RL must leave lasting legacies (IP3, 2017). Maxine Ann frequently described her current RL experiences by comparing them with her first principal in a different school district (IP4, 2017). Keith utilized his time in the Marine Corps before teaching to speak to what he experienced as RL (IP5, 2017). Though some participants stayed mainly within the confines of education to describe RL, each made it clear that their occupational backgrounds were essential to how they currently experienced and described the RL phenomenon.

Leadership exposure. With their years inside and outside of the classroom, each participant was exposed to leadership in multiple contexts. The five participants seemed to indicate that in order to experience RL through comparison, one must be exposed to both good and bad leadership for a sense of meaning. Adam, for example, shared that in his athletic undertakings, he experienced poor leadership with "consistent lies or just playing power games" that made him feel insignificant (IP2, 2017, p. 12). Such ineffective leadership exposure allowed

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him to find meaning in his current RL which empowered him to "feel like I have more influence than I thought I once did" (IP2, 2017, p. 13). Keith also witnessed ineffective and unethical leadership throughout his career which allowed him to describe RL. He worked with a leader who "was one of those, 'Do what I say.' Kind of an authoritarian type" in contrast to his experiences of RL that were characterized by those who "put quality people in their jobs and let them do their jobs" (IP5, 2017, p. 2). In Maxine Ann's experience, she had an amazing first leader who inspired teachers instead of poor leadership that expected things to be done "just because 'I said so'" (IP4, 2017, p. 5). Kate and Amber experienced a lot of leadership they deemed responsible in their current roles but both also recognized the role poor leadership played in the development of their perspectives. Amber compared her current experiences of RL to those in turn-around schools where leadership never lasted, and Kate looked to her time working with leadership without vision which confused her and her colleagues for years. The juxtaposition of good and poor, responsible and not responsible, allowed each participant to sharpen their descriptions of RL—a seemingly necessary structure of the experience.

Leadership in formal positions. Leadership in formal positions, the final structural element of each participant's experience, was clear from the outset of each interview. Though participants also viewed RL as a system of people and expectations, each participant associated it with specific people in formal positions. Principals stood out as the main subject of RL across the data. School leadership literature from the teacher perspective also strongly associated leadership with the principal role (Bellibas, 2015; Cook, 2014; Hulpia et al., 2011; Leech & Fulton, 2008; Yirci et al., 2014).

When we began our interview, Maxine Ann described her "very first principal" who she felt "pretty lucky to have been hired by" (IP4, 2017, p. 1). Amber identified a past principal

when asked about ethical leadership. It seemed that the person's individual ethics acted as the measure for leaderships' ethics. Kate spoke of an unethical action a previous principal took when describing what made leadership ethical. In his experience of RL, Adam said , "All eyes are on our principal because we just needed that oh so desperately" (IP2, 2017, p. 6). Keith also commonly referred to administrators' actions in his description. These participants, without being specifically asked, associated RL with formal leaders, suggesting RL should be open but still needed people specifically assigned to lead.

The four structures of RL experience from the participants—time in the profession, occupational background, leadership exposure and leadership in formal positions—were vital to these participants' experiences of RL and represent the result of imaginative variation across participant description (Moustakas, 1994). In order for them to experience and delineate RL from other leadership, they referred to each structure and bounded their RL experience within them. Throughout the participants shared textural-structural descriptions, they associated elements of RL directly with the 3Es – effective, ethical, and enduring.

Shared Associations with the 3Es

To fully address the second main research question, "How does the phenomenological approach inform the RL/P (Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004) theory?" a shared description on the 3E's will be explored, as displayed in Table 4.12. I followed Moustakas' (1994) process once again to seek shared meaning of the 3Es by first distributing the individual description meaning

Table 4.12

Shared Textural Descriptions of Each of the 3Es Across Participants' Experiences

Effective	Ethical	Enduring
Maintain structures of the school with focused time and energy	Consistency	Lasting legacy

Have the vision and purpose	Humility	Sustained dedication to education
Always communicate clearly and consistently	Value and believe in staff	Have vision and purpose
Dedication to learning and development	Transparency	Courage
Be the model	Courage	Actualize effectiveness and ethics

units and clustering them into categories akin to textural descriptions. Because the 3Es guided

the initial inquiry, the descriptions are already embedded in the shared essence of RL as a whole.

A description of each E across the participants' experiences follows.

Shared description of effective leadership. When taken as a whole, the participants'

experiences illuminate for us what makes for effective leadership in middle schools in the

geographic area. For example, multiple participants described a need for effective leadership to

maintain basic structures of the school to be effective. Kate highlighted the importance of

effective leadership in setting expectations when she rhetorically asked, "How are you going to

make sure that policies, structures, and systems are followed, and what will you do if they

aren't" (IP3, 2017, p. 19)? Keith also felt that effective leadership needed to handle issues such

as student scheduling (IP5, 2017). Adam expected effective leadership to be prepared for

meetings and to "make sure that everyone's time is being used effectively" (IP2, 2017, p. 3). By

ensuring basic structures are in place, middle school RL can be more effective in spending time

and energy on important matters.

The participants also characterized effective leadership as having a vision or a purpose

and being able to execute. Maxine Ann said that she hoped to have an "effective leader that can

say, 'This is what we're doing, here's why'" (IP4, 2017, p. 6). Adam shared, as effective

leadership "you've just got to be able to . . . make me feel like I'm connected to your vision"

(IP2, 2017, p. 8). Kate confirmed the importance of vision when she said, "Effective leadership

in a principal emerges pretty quickly, because you can tell if they don't have a vision" (IP3, 2017, p. 15). Teachers want to be assured that their work is purposeful and supported by their colleagues.

A third description of effective leadership was clear and constant communication between leadership and the team. Adam said, "I think you have to know what's important to you as a leader. You have to be able to communicate that" (IP2, 2017, p. 4). Maxine Ann felt that truly effective leaders were able to "tie the strings together" (IP4, 2017, p. 8) for teachers through communication. Kate reflected, "This whole conversation with you is so funny, because I just think it comes down honestly what I hear myself saying is that effective leaders are the best communicators" (IP3, 2017, p. 11). Communication was clearly central to effective middle school RL in the experiences of the participants.

Dedication to and support of learning and development was another element of effective leadership. Participants indicated a desire to grow that benefited from RL support. Maxine Ann described dedication through financial resources toward opportunities (IP4, 2017). Amber's passion for pushing her own thinking and teaching practices required RL to show dedication to knowing the field in order to support her (IP1, 2017). Finally, Adam compared RL to poor leadership via dedication. He noted effective leadership in his experience asked questions of the staff to learn and evaluate needs while poor leadership brought processes with them and forced them into the school (IP2, 2017). A dedication to learning and constant development seemed imperative to effectiveness for these five teachers.

A final essence of effective leadership was to be a model for the team. Participants such as Keith and Adam expected effective leadership to model professional expectations at all times. Keith thought RL should be, "interacting with the kids along with the teachers" (IP5, 2017, p. 7)

to set the example, and Adam said effective leadership should model expectations such as dress, work ethic, and communication (IP2, 2017). Kate went as far as to say, "If they want us to follow a moral code . . . or good teaching quality . . . then they have to model that" (IP3, 2017, p. 18). Amber also expected modeling of knowledge and staying up to date with the field (IP1, 2017). For these participants, middle school RL was most effective when it modeled the way for expectations, had clear and constant communication, was centered on a vision and clear purpose, and maintained basic school structures thereby focusing time and effort.

Shared description of ethical leadership. For the five participants, their experiences of ethical leadership were characterized by courageously being consistent, humble, and transparent, plus truly valuing teachers and students. Consistency, as described in the shared essence of RL, meant both being consistent with behavior and treatment of others. It was clear that the participants associated inconsistencies with unethical leadership. It was also clear that the level of consistency required by teachers necessitated a level of courage to not shy away from conflict and expectations (IP3, 2017; IP5, 2017).

A second descriptive of ethical leadership was humility. Keith illustrated that humble ethical leadership was able to build well-working teams (IP5, 2017). In Amber's experience, ethical leadership was "humble enough to see where their weaknesses were and surround themselves with staff members who could fill in those holes" (IP1, 2017, p. 14). Humility also allowed for ethical leadership to "honestly express who you are and not be someone else" (IP2, 2017, p. 21) because you can admit your flaws. Maxine Ann, Kate, and Amber also illustrated how humility allowed for ethical leadership to listen for teacher input and showed a deep care for them as professionals and human beings. Prime and Salib (2014) named humility and courage as two of four critical leadership factors for making people feel included, and the participants'

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responses seemed to support this. Courage to be humble may be the key to resolving ethical issues hidden behind closed doors.

A related characteristic of ethical leadership to humility was transparency. Adam was adamant when he said as ethical leadership, "you've got to be transparent. You got to be very, very transparent. When you can't be, you got to say why you can't be" (IP2, 2017, p. 5). Maxine Ann added, "When possible, leaders need to be transparent with big decisions that impact the staff" (IP4, 2017, p. 5). Interestingly, there was a clear limit to transparency when it came to sharing personal information of one teacher with another. Kate said, "The number one unethical thing, the thing that is really destructive to leaders is confiding in teachers what they should be confiding in administrators" (IP3, 2017, p. 10). Amber spoke to the same issue when she reflected, "All of the leaders that I've ever really respected, I knew that they didn't ever discuss what happened in their office with anybody else" (IP1, 2017, p. 9). It would seem that transparency was vital to ethical leadership but also needs to be discerning and not transgress into sharing of personal business of others.

A final descriptor of ethical leadership for the participants was truly valuing teachers and students. As described in the shared essence of RL, it was central that ethical leadership valued the voices and time of their teachers. Amber stated, "Someone who's an ethical leader . . . give credit" (IP1, 2017, p. 10) and showed value for the work teachers do. Maxine Ann and Adam both related ethics with care for teachers as people (IP4, 2017, p. 5). For example, Maxine Ann mentioned a responsible leader in her past that had truly cared for kids and did everything possible to give them chances to succeed (IP4, 2017). Valuing teachers and students, being humble enough to listen, working with transparency, and remaining consistent described ethical leadership of a middle school for the five participants.

Shared description of enduring leadership. Endurance in Responsible Leadership was described most succinctly by participants. The first essence was akin to a definition. Participants across the study experienced enduring leadership as lasting legacy. Kate told me, "A true measure of the enduring qualities . . . of a principal would be what remains after they go," referencing "strong systems, structures, and routines" (IP3, 2017, p. 6). Maxine Ann added, "enduring is [when] they've put some systems in place" (IP4, 2017, p. 10). A shared tangible descriptive essence of enduring leadership was constant reflection and growth to last over time. Adam lamented, "Reflection is the precursor to growth" (IP2, 2017, p. 9). Keith noted, "That's where you make an impact. . . . The more you do something, the better you're going to get at it" (IP5, 2017, p. 5).

The participants also experienced enduring leadership as dedication to the field. For example, Adam said, "Someone who's enduring is someone who doesn't avoid suffering because it's easy. That's not what life's about" (IP2, 2017, p. 19). Being dedicated enough to face the challenges of the everyday life of school leadership was truly enduring. Amber reflected a similar tenacity and dedication to people when she noted, "What shows really good leadership, though, is not like a stand-alone moment where you were able to handle crisis, but that you were able to help someone over time" (IP2, 2017, p. 18). Enduring leadership required a sense of dedication to the school in order to endure. Amber described, "Show good leadership and have it be sustained over time" (IP2, 2017, p. 18).

A final finding concerning enduring leadership was that it includes the actualization of both effective and ethical leadership. Multiple participants noted that RL would not endure if it is neither effective nor ethical. For example, Keith saw many leaders and teachers come and go in his career, and their lack of effectiveness assured quick departure. Kate had similar experiences.

A clear example for her was when she had an unethical leader who "had a really good smokescreen. He seemed to be effective, and very clearly, like all the things we talked about, not following through, not communicating, not having our back" (IP3, 2017, p. 14), and he was quickly out of his role as the smokescreen did not last. In the participants' experiences, endurance relies on effectiveness and ethics as does effectiveness and ethics on endurance.

Enduring leadership was described as lasting legacy by the participants. It required dedication to the broader field of education and was the actualization of both effective and ethical leadership. Congruence's and reciprocity among the 3Es were reflected in additional ways and are described next.

Congruence among the 3Es. Perhaps one of the more interesting findings from these experiences was the reciprocity among the 3Es. Maxine Ann put it well when she reflected, "If you're effective, you're probably going to be enduring . . . and probably ethical, too, because I'm really not sure you can be one without the other" (IP4, 2017, p. 7). Adam grounded his experiences of RL in reflection and said, to describe all of the 3E's "I'll keep going back to reflective" (IP2, 2017, p. 4). For him, all 3Es shared a sense of required reflection by RL, signifying a shared nature of the 3Es themselves. In describing enduring leadership, Amber had a similar insight, "It [enduring leadership] not only has to do with someone being somewhere over a period of time, but them staying effective and ethical over that period of time" (IP1, 2017, p. 14). It would seem that these five participants, who had not previously associated anything with RL or the 3Es as a single construct, discovered the same as Lynham (1998, 2000, 2002, 2004) had: That while the 3Es are distinct descriptors of responsibleness in leadership they work in tandem and holographically to enact the necessary processes for RL.

The Shared Essence of RL

       As illustrated for this study in Figure 4.18, Moustakas (1994) described this final analysis
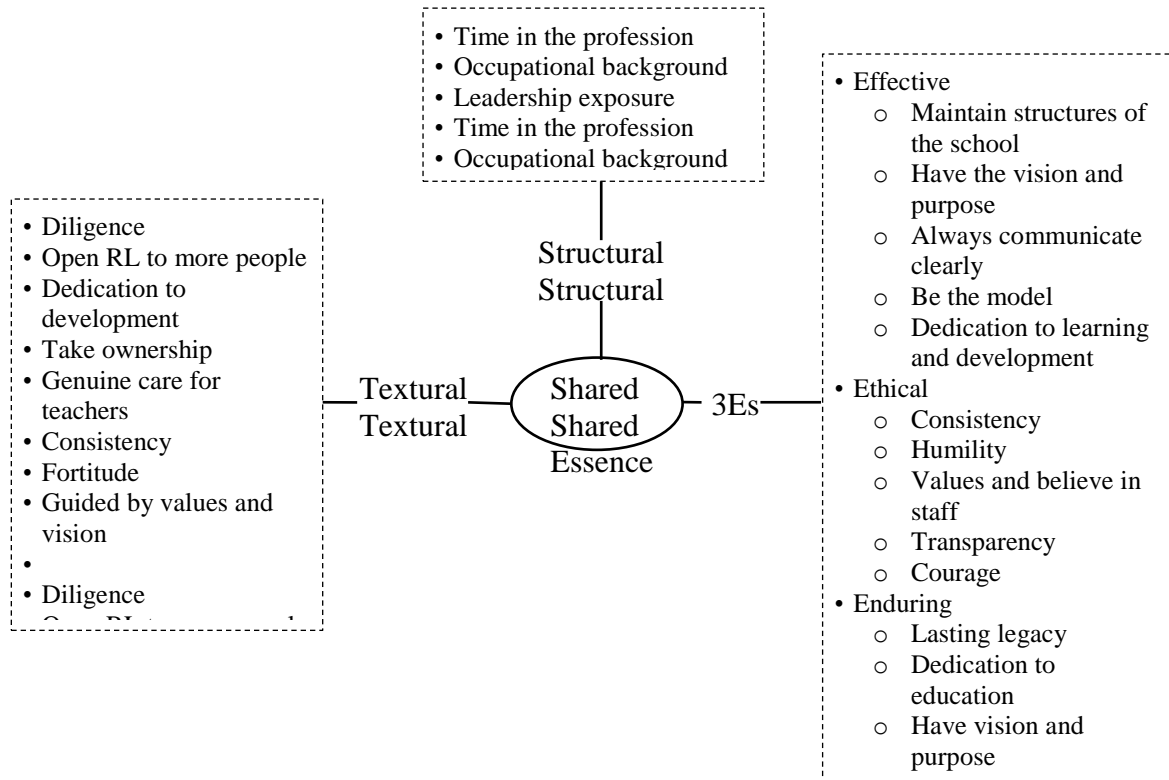
Figure 4.18. Components of the shared essence of the five participants' complete descriptions of RL.

as a "complete description of the meanings and essences of the experience, representing the

group as a whole" (p. 121). In order to construct this synthesized shared essence of RL, I once

again created a mental model from the textural-structural descriptions and associated 3Es across

the participants (see Figure 4.19 on the following page).

       The entirety of this chapter has worked to answer them in great detail, but the essence

allowed me to explore how all of the participants together perceived their experiences of RL with

the guiding 3Es and how participants then informed the process component within the RL/P

theory (Lynham 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004). The essence of the five middle school teachers'

experience of RL can be summarized into a single description:
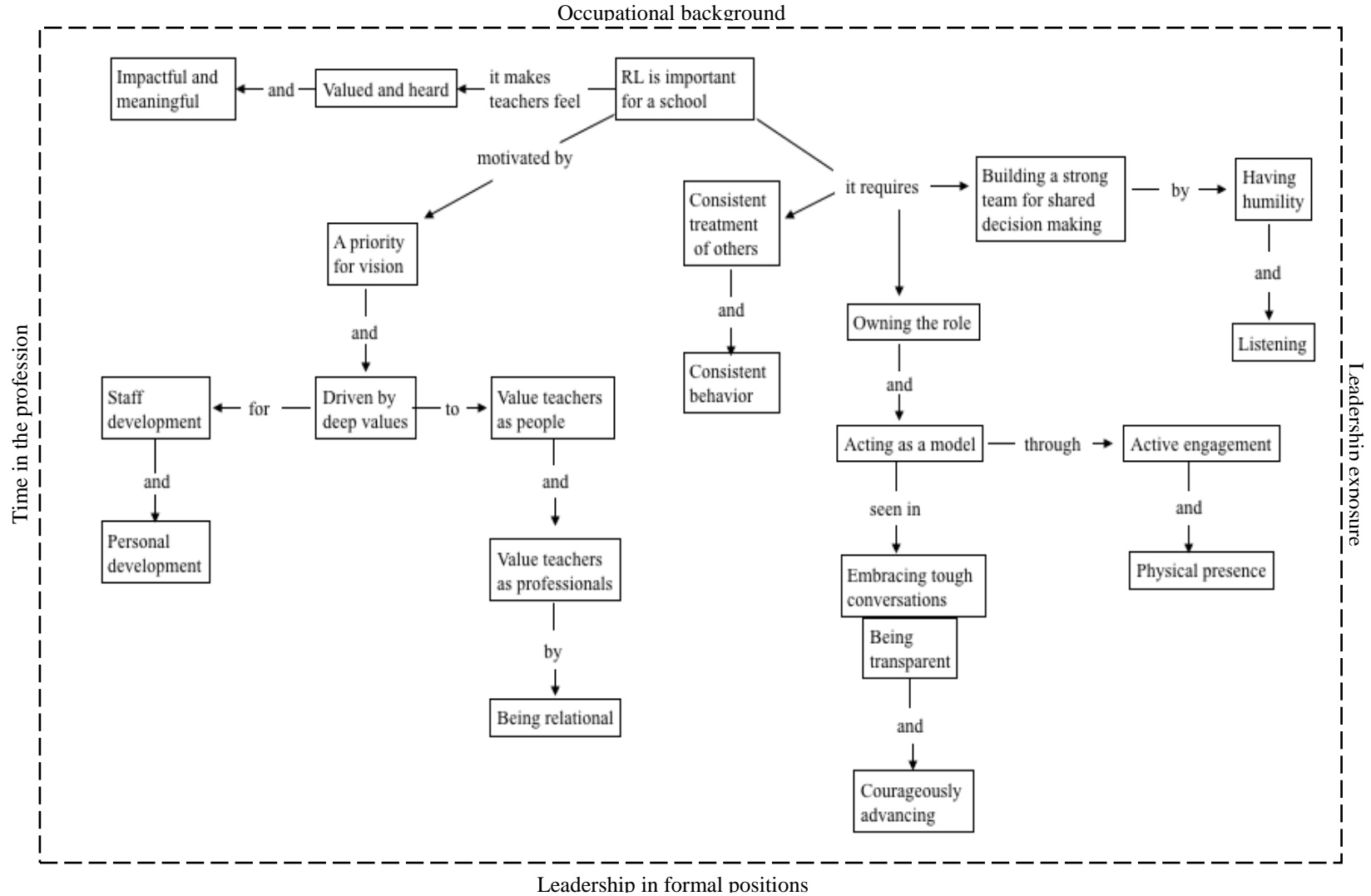
Figure 4.19. A mental model of the five participants' experience of RL with textural (what) bounded by structural (how).

RL and those in formal leadership positions, are imperative to a school. Effective RL should be motivated by a priority for making impact and a shared school-wide vision driven by commitment to ongoing staff and leadership development. Effective and ethical RL upholds teachers as professionals with significant voices and as people with meaningful relationships. RL requires owning the burdens of the leadership role and modeling the way through a dedication for active engagement in education and physical presence in the school. To be an ethical model, RL must be: reflective, embracing of tough conversations, honest and transparent with decisions, plus courageous to advance the school and staff forward while acting and treating others consistently. RL requires a strong team to be built and shared decision making through humility and listening. Teachers in RL feel valued, impactful, heard, and crucial to the broader purpose of the school. When effectiveness and ethics work together, RL can endure and put lasting systems in place for the school to thrive into the future.

Conclusion of Chapter Four

The purpose of this chapter was to provide deep description of the participants' experiences of RL and the shared essence of all of their experiences together situated in the context of middle school within the geographic area of study. These five teachers were an incredible group of passionate, loving, and highly effective educators so all attempt was made to honor their voices by placing them at the center of these findings. As a result, the literature was not incorporated at this point in order to highlight their voices solely. The literature will be incorporated in Chapter Five.

The three research sub-questions of, "How do these middle school teachers perceive and describe their experience of *effective* leadership? How do these middle school teachers perceive and describe their experience of *ethical* leadership? and How these do middle school teachers perceive and describe their experience of *enduring* leadership?" were also discussed for each individual above. However, these findings directly related to informing the theoretical framework of the study and will be discussed in that proper section of Chapter Five as well.

The initial research question of the study was, "How do middle school eachers perceive and describe their experinces of RL in middle schools in a state of the western United States?"

The essence of their experience was constructed first individually as detailed previously and then together with the textural descriptions of: RL is diligence, RL is opening leadership to more people, RL requires ownership, RL asks leadership to care for teachers as people first, RL takes consistency, RL requires fortitude, RL is guided by vision and deep values, and RL results in positive outcomes for teachers. These ten descriptions were bounded by the shared structures of time in the profession, formal leadership exposure, and occupational background. The individual essence statements also bolster the shared essence of the RL experience as each participant equally contributed to the meaning of RL in their context. Therefore, the shared external descriptions represent the essence of the experience of RL.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS

Chapter Five is intended to frame the relevance and implications of this study, revisit components of quality, and reflect on the process for the researcher. To this point this dissertation was presented in four chapters: Chapter One acted as an introduction to the study including purpose, research questions, informing bodies of literature, methodological philosophy and approach, theoretical framework, significance, the research perspective, ethical considerations, definitions, and limitations. Chapter Two presented a review of the three relevant bodies of extant literature: RL and RL/P (Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004), classic and contemporary leadership approaches (Northouse, 2016) and school leadership from the teacher perspective. Chapter Three detailed the studies alignment to the constructivist methodology and transcendental phenomenology method including participant selection, site selection, saturation of participants, the data collection process, and the data analysis process. Chapter Four presented each participants' textural and structural descriptions that informed the essence of each individuals' RL experience in middle schools through their descriptions of the 3Es. Chapter Four also addressed the first and primary research question of the study, namely: How do middle school teachers perceive and describe their experience of RL (3Es) in middle schools in a western state of the United States through the shared essence of the experience? Chapter Five serves to culminate these four chapters into the findings which inform theory, research, and practice as well as my reflections as the human instrument of research.

The purpose of this study was to understand two problems: (a) school leadership systems are faced with increasing challenges yet classic and contemporary approaches are not inherently systemic; and (b) though student success and teacher retention are highest when teachers and

principals work together in leadership, the extant literature still approaches school leadership as an individual. By addressing these two problems through experiences of RL (3Es) and the systemic approach of RL/P (Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004) I hoped to inform: (a) further development and refinement of RL plus RL/P theory (Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004),and (b) the improved practice, (c) general theory, and (d) research regarding RL in middle schools.

Relevance of the Findings to the RL/P Theoretical Framework

This section is intended to expand upon Chapter Four and fully respond to the second research question: How does the phenomenological approach to the selected phenomenon—how middle school teachers perceive and describe their experience of RL (3Es) in middle schools in a western state of the United States—inform the RL/P theory (Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004)? This study was not designed to test or create theory, as discussed in Chapters One and Three; however, I used the description of RL from White-Newman (1993) and the resulting theory of RL/P from Lynham (1998, 2000, 2002, 2004) to bind the construct of RL to the 3Es of effectiveness, ethics, and endurance. Doing so seemed to allow me to create the research questions and interview protocol with focus. Whether phenomenology can serve to theorize has been debated, as pointed out by Van Manen (2014), "Theories tend to explain phenomenon that are not necessarily understood in a lived or concrete sense," but phenomenology is keen to answer, "How is this topic actually experienced?" (p. 226). As a result, it is my intention to illustrate how this study of five teachers' lived experiences of RL informs the RL/P theory including the 3Es described in Chapter Four (Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004). Figure 5.1 displays how each component on the RL/P system were informed through this study in the unique context of middle schools in a western state of the United States, including the: contextual environment, internal environment, inputs, processes, and outputs.

Contextual Environment = Surrounding Community

| The Performance System |
| Internal Environment = Local Middle School |
| The Leadership System |

Input	Process	Outputs
Considerations of Constituency	*Framework of Responsibleness*	*Domains of Performance*
-Principals -Administrative team -Coaches and instructional professionals -Teachers -Parents and the community	**Effective** Maintain structures of the school Have the vision and purpose Always communicate clearly Be the model Dedication to learning and development **Ethical** Consistency Humility Values and believe in staff Transparency Courage **Enduring** Lasting legacy Dedication to education Have vision and purpose Courage Actualize effectiveness	**System mission** - Need for school-wide vision **Work Processes** - Collaborative action - Shared decisions - Team building **Social Sub-System** - Implied work teams **Individual Perf** - Principal

Figure 5.1. RL/P theory (Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004) as described by the five middle school teacher participants in the context of middle schools in a western state of the United States.

Inputs

In RL/P (Lynham, 1998) the inputs or considerations of constituency include three conceptual dimensions based on whether the constituency (a) resides inside or outside the performance system, (b) has high or low authority over the performance system, and (c) has potential for high or low impact on the performance system. Though this study was not intentionally designed to inform considerations of constituency for school RL, participants did provide some insight. For example, participants utilized the principal position to describe RL throughout our interviews. Principals, who have high impact and high authority over a school RL system, were immediately associated with RL in middle schools (Cook, 2004; Fullan, 2007). However, Maxine Ann also spoke to the role of instructional coaches who "were people looked up to as leaders a lot and relied on a lot" (IP4, 2017, p. 4). She implied that instructional coaches often have high impact but low authority because they do not have power to make school-wide decisions. Kate also described how teachers themselves can be leaders, especially when formal leaders do not take the role seriously (IP3, 2017). Teachers could have high or low impact and authority depending on the scenario because their ability to make change can fluctuate with time. Kate added that "the communities and families have to be a part of the conversations. They can't be a second thought" because they have impact on the system as well (IP3, 2017, p. 10). External parties are impactful stakeholders of school RL and should be considered because their input can inform and evaluate the RL system.

Considering stakeholders in the education system could extend from internal students, teachers, counselors, school resource officers, and administrators to external parents, legislators, community members, etcetera. The participants did not directly name many stakeholders other than principals, teachers, students, and parents, but given that they included such stakeholders in

their descriptions of RL without specific prompting indicated the prevalence of systems leadership and the specific inputs of middle school RL.

Process

Describing the process of RL/P defined through the 3Es, in middle schools in the geographic area of study, was a focus of this research study. Part I of Chapter Four responded in detail to how five middle school teachers described their experiences of each. It is informative to compare the teacher's descriptions with those Lynham (1998) explored with South African business leaders although the contexts are vastly different because the two studies have sought description of the 3Es through lived experience.

As described in Chapter Four, the five participants described effective leadership as (a) maintaining school structures, (b) having vision and purpose, (c) clear and regular communication, (d) being a model for the team, and (e) dedication to learning and development. The South African business leaders similarly described effectiveness as "demonstrating through example" which was closely associated with being a model (Lynham, 1998, p. 214). Thus, setting the example and living up to shared values seems to be important to effective leadership across the contexts. Second, teachers and business leaders correlated effective leadership to a guiding vision that they pursue relentlessly. Business leaders included, "sharing, inspiring, and safeguarding mission, vision, and values" (Lynham, 1998, p. 214) akin to having vision and purpose. Maxine Ann and the business leaders utilized the word, "inspire" in description of vision and effective leadership (IP4, 2017, p. 8, Lynham, 1998, p. 214). Further, business leaders spoke to "serving the reciprocity and partnership between leadership and followership" (Lynham, 1998, p. 214) that seemed related to "clear and regular communication" (citation needed), indicating a desire for RL to serve followers and maintain openness. Lastly, teachers

and business leaders indicated a sense of learning and development in association with effectiveness. The teachers in this study illustrated a need for RL to promote learning through staff development opportunities. Amber, for example, described RL that promoted learning in the classroom by pushing teachers to take risks toward stronger practice, and Maxine Ann loved a past leader who "dumped money into PD" (IP4, 2017, p. 2). Across contexts, some elements of effective leadership seemed to stand firm.

Ethical leadership was also described in similar ways between teachers and business leaders. The most apparent shared elements of ethics were a sense of commitment to and belief in constituents. Business leaders indicated the idea through "holding a deep sense of commitment to and belief in people" (Lynham, 1998, p. 214); whereas, teachers described it as "value and believe in staff" (citation needed). Also, both groups associated possessing courage with ethical action (Lynham, 1998). For example, the participants reflected that RL in middle schools within the selected area must have the courage to face tough conversations in order to lead ethically for everyone on their team (IP2, 2017; IP3, 2017). It would seem that the five teachers and the South African business leaders could agree that often doing what was right was the more difficult road to take but worth the struggle for ethical action.

Enduring leadership also illustrated shared experience between business leadership and middle school teachers. Business leaders and teachers seemed to concur the definition that endurance equated to lasting leadership. In business, they described "embracing vision, goals and values to evoke lastingness" (Lynham, 1998, p. 214); whereas, teachers associated "lasting legacy" (citation needed), adding an element of duration after RL departed. Though enduring leadership descriptions were not identical, they both seemed to indicate the shared nature of lasting over time. Perhaps one of the more exciting constructions between the two groups

concerning enduring leadership was a common reference to "evoking effectiveness and ethics" (citation needed) and "actualizing effectiveness and ethics" (Lynham, 1998, p. 214). It would seem that even though the groups were different, they both needed RL to be effective and practice ethics in order to last over time.

In congruence with the RL/P theory (Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004), a comparison of difference among descriptions of the 3Es from teachers and business leaders, shows evidence for the impact of the contextual environment. For example, descriptions of effectiveness in South African business included "inspiring change," "making decisions appropriately," and "engaging movement and goal achievement" (Lynham, 1998, p. 214); whereas, teachers spoke to "clear communication" and "maintenance of school structures" (citation needed). Such differences indicated that there may be different needs for effectiveness in business compared to middle schools. To describe ethical leadership, the middle school teachers used characteristics to explain ethics such as humility and consistency enacted through courage (citation needed). By comparison, business leaders indicated "balance and tough" as accompanying features to courage (Lynham, 1998, p. 214). Given the context of South African apartheid, toughness was important whereas middle school teachers in a western state of the United States were facing unknown challenges, so humility allowed everyone to grow together (J. I Goodlad et al., 2004; National Center for Education Statistics, 2018). Endurance may also be context specific because South African business leaders faced incredible challenges that required a pursuit of learning and "willingness and an ability to change" (Lynham, 1998, p. 214) that teachers in this study did not describe. Explaining the differences between the business leaders and teachers in regards to the specific 3Es would require further inquiry. However, acknowledging the differences indicates meaningfulness of context to RL experiences. If our experience is our reality, as Moustakas

(1994) posited, then it would follow that no two descriptions of RL would be the same. Nonetheless, exploring the likeness of descriptions across the two contexts continues to refine the 3Es processes and RL/P framework (Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004) through more thick and rich description.

Overall, this study adds to the work done by Lynham (1998) with South African business leaders to inform the 3Es of RL (White-Newman, 1993) through additional deep and rich description in a new contextual environment. This study of RL in middle schools implies that the 3Es offers further evidence for RL/P as a pragmatic framework to understand RL processes in multiple contexts. The largest implication of the 3Es processes of RL/P theory is that the 3Es offered an effective means to access teacher's experiences of RL in ways they had not described before. Kate's reflection that our interview was a great cognitive coaching session reflected the utility of the 3Es and RL/P to explore leadership from a teacher perspective and suggests its utility for future study of middle school leadership as a system (IP3, 2017).

Outputs

The third unit of RL/P distinguishes multiple domains of performance including the system mission and purpose, the work process, the social sub-systems, and the individual performer (Lynham, 1998, p. 214). An important clarification to describe how someone can be both responsible and focused on performance is that in an RL/P system, the constituents define what makes for high-level performance, so RL accounts for them and responds to constituent needs (Lynham, 1998, 2002). In this study, participants described in varying detail each of the performance domains and thereby refined each through their lived experiences.

Participants seemed to reflect the necessity of performance via system mission and purpose, when they described the need for a common vision. In fact, the need for vision was so

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prominent that it held a place as one of the shared textural descriptions across participant

experiences as discussed in Chapter Four. Work processes for the participants included

collaborative action. As seen in Chapter Four, performance in the middle school may revolve

around shared decision making, building a team to fill RL gaps, and communicating clearly.

Social sub-systems were not directly related by any one of the participants. However, in

discussions regarding the importance of teams, there seemed to be indication the influence of

social sub-systems on teachers; thus, it would be intriguing to explore the social sub-systems of a

school in future theory development. Finally, in the case of RL in middle schools the individual

performer seemed to be described as principals. The five teachers regularly equated RL to the

position of principal as the individual in charge of performance. Though not surprising, future

theory refinement could benefit from exploring other aspects of individual performance beyond

the principal.

Context

In addition to the three units of RL/P, this study informed components of the performance

system and contextual environment boundaries, as seen in Figure 5.1 above (Lynham, 1998,

2000). First, the leadership system of inputs, processes, and outputs was informed as described

above. The second level, performance system, seemed to be defined at the individual middle

school level. Each participant spoke to unique needs of their middle schools and implied that the

middle school was where performance was measured based on local leadership. For example,

Adam spoke at length about the school needing a new system for discipline and student social

learning (IP2, 2017), and Maxine Ann looked to the school measures of performance to gauge

success (IP4, 2017). School leadership literature also suggested the school as the most likely

performance system for teachers (Fullan, 2007). The highest order contextual environment

seemed to be on the community level. For example, Amber contextualized her experience according to the level of poverty in schools she had taught in which was a result of the surrounding environment (IP1, 2017), and Kate thought that the community had to be involved in the school for the system to work (IP3, 2017).

This study was not intended to inform each component of the RL/P theoretical framework but it did offer glimpses into various elements as they might appear in a middle school. The participants informed who some of the impactful stakeholders were that acted as inputs to the RL/P system in middle schools. Participants also deeply described their perceptions of the 3Es as a leadership process and illuminated some sense of which outputs were most meaningful in a middle school. Furthermore, participants inadvertently defined the contextual boundaries of the leadership, performance, and contextual systems. Future research with the theoretical framework could focus more on the inputs, outputs, or contextual boundaries to further inform, refine and develop the theory.

Implications for Research, Practice, and General Theory

The participants provided rich description of their experiences through the 3Es, but in addition to RL/P, their descriptions held further reaching implications. Implications for future research, middle school RL practice, and general theory development are discussed below.

Implications for Research

This study of middle school teachers' perceived experience of RL seems to have implications for a variety of future research areas: the construct of RL, the value of the teacher perspective, processes for participant selection, meaning making with metal models in transcendental phenomenology, and the relationship between RL and school leadership.

The construct of RL. The goal of this study was to contribute to the growing research on the construct of RL. As examined in Chapter Two, RL has been prominently studied with anecdotal and non-empirical research methods. Empirical research utilized case study and interpretive interview methods to describe RL in the business and management sectors. Thus, this study added a unique research method, perspective, and contextual environment to the construct. Having a transcendental phenomenological approach of lived experience shows some confirmation of the literature on RL, as seen in Chapter Four, and more empirical research would continue to add to our understanding. Continued empirical research could may also respond to Miska and Mendenhall's (2018) call for "increased methodological diversity capable of capturing the particularities of each level of analysis" of RL (p. 124).

Based in RL/P (Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004), this study also indicated a need for increased theoretical foundations of RL. By utilizing a strong theoretical framework to order my inquiry, I felt that I was able to "consider [the phenomenon] in its singularity" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 34). Through this study and Lynham's (1998) study of South African business leaders, RL/P (Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004) seems to be shown a viable theoretical foundation for the construct. Outside of this study, RL in schools has only been examined by Stone-Johnson (2014) with reference to Maak and Pless' (2006) roles model. Both RL/P and the roles model functioned to isolate the phenomenon of RL and both are evidence that future RL research could continue to explore and apply strong theoretical frameworks. To better understand RL, future research may benefit from strong theoretical foundations in order to unify the term in definition and application.

The value of the teacher perspective. My intention was also that this study continue to give voice to teachers in the school leadership literature. Though there are studies from the

teacher perspective on leadership styles and approaches, as discussed in Chapter Three, examining RL from the lens of teachers lived experiences was unique. Moustakas (1994) posited, "Perception of the reality of an object is dependent on a subject" (p. 27). In schools, the construct of leadership has often seemed to ignore teachers' voices. The gap created without teacher input denies Moustakas' (1994) claim because in practice teachers are often the subject while leadership is the object, so literature has not followed the reality that school leadership is dependent on teachers. Moustakas (1994) also noted that research which "regard the data of experience as imperative in understanding human behavior and as evidence for scientific investigation" can more fully develop a phenomenological understanding (p. 21). If the reality of effective, ethical, and enduring school leadership is perceived most apparently by teachers and teachers' experiences are imperative to understanding human behavior, then teacher voices are valuable and informing to the reality of the phenomenon of RL in schools.

Teachers play arguably the most vital role as the subjects of leadership in our schools. Students who work with high value-added teachers—an indicator of high quality teaching to promote student growth—"are more likely to attend college, earn higher salaries, and are less likely to have children as teenagers" (Chetty, Friedman, & Rockoff, 2014, p. 2633). Additionally, "the way that teachers interpersonally relate to their students is highly predictive of student emotions" (Mainhard, Oudman, Hornstra, Bosker, & Goetz, 2018, p. 109). Therefore, ignoring the voices and experiences of teachers in defining RL and leadership in general, may leave much to be considered. Alternatively, by placing the experience of teachers firmly into the framework of school leadership, the phenomenon and practice may be better informed. Future research concerning school leadership practices may benefit greatly from including the teacher voice, as this study did, in order to inform RL needs, practices, and outcomes.

Participant selection. An additional implication for future research concerns participant selection. This study was designed to seek understanding of the lived experience of RL for the five middle school teacher participants. According to the paradigmatic and methodological undergirding of the study, stratified participants were not deliberately sought (Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2002). Being the first study of the phenomenon of RL with teachers, the most important criteria were that "the research participant has experienced the phenomenon" and "is intensely interested in understanding its nature and realities" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 107).

As a result, I utilized components of intensity sampling to purposefully seek participation from those who self-identified "intense experience" of the phenomenon (Patton, 2002). Intensity sampling involved selecting "excellent or rich examples of the phenomenon of interest, but not highly unusual cases . . . cases that manifest sufficient intensity to illuminate the nature of success or failure, but not at the extreme" (Patton, 2002, p. 234). Accordingly, variation was not deliberately sought for the five teachers I interviewed. However, Moustakas' (1994) general considerations for participants included "age, race, religion, ethnic and cultural factors, gender, and political and economic factors," so I did make an effort to speak with teachers from a variety of ethnic, gender, and age considerations (p. 107).

For future research on the phenomenon of RL in schools, I suggest increased stratification of participant selection to further contextualize the phenomenon. One way to stratify might be to focus the study in different local contexts to be consistent with Lincoln and Guba's (1985) claim that "constructions are necessarily based on local circumstances and experiences, and hence have applicability, strictly speaking, only in the local situation" (p. 71). Within the constructivist paradigm, it would be appropriate to change the locality from middle schools in the geographic region western state to a different area because schools across the

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United States are incredibly diverse. A plethora of school leadership opportunities and challenges exist in any given city and from one neighborhood to another. Examples of potential localities for future participant selection may be an urban school district, a rural area, high schools, or elementary schools in regions beyond the western United States. Another stratification strategy could be to utilize Moustakas' (1994, p. 107) general criteria to seek teachers for participation who vary in race or gender identification. To best understand RL as a phenomenon in middle schools, research may necessitate selecting participants across considerations and localities for increased variation of description and understanding.

Constructing meaning through mental models. As discussed in Chapter Four, I faced a challenge in continuing description of participant experiences from structural and textural descriptions to essence statements. Moustakas (1994) described the step as "the integration of the fundamental . . . descriptions into a unified statement of the essences of the experience of the phenomenon as whole" (p. 100). However, the process for integrating description into the statement was not clear.

In response, I created mental models of each participant's experience that I was then able to formulate into a statement (Kauffman, 1980; Moustakas, 1994; Senge, 2006). A mental model is an "explanation of how something works. It is a concept, framework, or worldview that you carry around in your mind to help you interpret the world and understand the relationship between things" (Clear, 2018). The models seemed to benefit me as a human instrument and also the descriptions because they allowed for manipulation of the data in real time. Seeing data animated allowed me to manipulate and understand relationships between textural descriptions and their structural boundaries clearly. Seel (2017) noted in educational psychology, "A popular approach says that learning occurs when people construct meaningful representations, such as

coherent mental models that represent and communicate subjective experiences, ideas, thoughts, and feelings of a person" (p. 935). In the case of this study, I was the learner and mental models allowed for representation and communication of the subjective participant experiences.

Future phenomenological research may continue to refine the process of utilizing mental-models to analyze data toward meaning-making. In my experience, anecdotally the mental models seemed a natural and effective strategy for phenomenological data; therefore, models may be a beneficial topic of research and discussion as a phenomenological technique and potentially for other meaning-making approaches as well. However, this study was not intended to be procedural in a post-positivist sense. Thus, I am not advocating that mental-models be explored as a necessary component of phenomenological research; Rather, models may be examined as a suitable tool for others to utilize and find inspiration in if appropriate for their own research.

Future topics to explore for RL in schools. Specific to the construct of RL in schools, this study represented one of three in the current literature. The other two were from Stone-Johnson (2014) who found correlations between school leadership and four roles described by Maak and Pless (2006), and Oplatka (2017) who called for schools to adopt lessons learned from business in regard to responsible leadership. As the sole study of the lived experience of the phenomenon of RL, this dissertation represents a few new entry points into understanding RL in schools. However, one study is not sufficient for complete description. I intend for this work to catalyze future inquiry into RL in schools in a few ways.

The most apparent call is to possibly increase the amount of research done with RL as a potential approach to school leadership. As discussed in the implications for sampling techniques, future research could aim to continue the trend of this study by obtaining increased

numbers and diversity of teachers' RL descriptions as meaningful knowledge for the practice of middle school leadership. Moustakas (1994) said, "Phenomenology is concerned with wholeness, with examining entities from many sides, angels, and perspectives until a unified vision of the essences of an experience is achieved" (p. 58). Conducting RL research in more schools, geographic regions, or with targeted sub-sets of educators could be powerful, additional perspectives for a unified vision of RL in schools.

A second future ingress for RL in schools may be to examine RL outside of formal school leadership roles. Although this study was not intended to seek understanding of the phenomenon in regard to formal leaders such as principals, the participants associated RL with principals throughout the interviews. Future research could design research questions and interview protocols to seek understanding of the experience for non-formal leadership. Potential inquiries might include: teachers as RL practitioners themselves, instructional coaches, or even students as leaders in the school. By seeking varied constituents and leadership associations, future research could strengthen the understanding of an RL/P (Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004) system in middle schools that can identify and respond to challenges (Kauffman, 1980).

The final implication for future RL research is perhaps to further study schools as leadership systems. As discussed in the implication for theory section, research on leadership from a systems perspective through RL/P could open systems to new stakeholders, continue to inform the RL processes, and further clarify the impactful outcomes. A systems approach of RL/P has potential to increase schools' agility in the face of challenges by opening the system toward positive outcomes for all stakeholders (Angelle & DeHart, 2011; Kauffman, 1980; Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004; Cheng & Szeto, 2016)

Future research implied by this dissertation may offer opportunity to explore the construct of RL in increased depth, inform further refinement of the theory of RL/P (Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004), inform phenomenology and meaning making through visual mental models, and more deeply explore the connection and meanings for RL/P and school leadership at a deeper level.

Implications for Practice

I also intend for this study to inform the practice of RL in middle schools for multiple parties. This study focused mainly on the practice of school leadership which, as informed by the teachers and the stakeholder dimension of RL/P (Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004), involved a multitude of stakeholders who were active participants in the system and the judges of its functionality. This section described potential implications for reframing school leadership and also for each stakeholder group including formal school leaders such as principals, middle school teachers, parents and community members, and those involved in developing future leaders for middle schools.

Reframing school leadership as a parallel system. One exciting implication of this study is a potential reframing of our understanding of the school leadership system. It seems that the engrained traditional hierarchical system was not dismantled by the ingress of RL/P (Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004) but perhaps there was a duplicate system at work.

Traditionally, school leadership has seemed to be hierarchical. State leaders in the capitol reside over a downward chart to district school boards, then district superintendents who oversee the principals of each school in their district. Those principals then hire assistant principals, deans, athletic directors, and other tier two leaders who then hire teachers. There is much complexity in position titles and roles but the essential structure remains.

This study implied a performance model system, as suggested in RL/P (Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004), may reside parallel to the traditional hierarchy. All five participants spoke to school administration as the leadership system in-focus, indicating the traditional model. However, as evidenced by the shared textural description of RL being an open system, they also spoke to the need to consider a variety of inputs from stakeholders such as state level leaders, teachers, parents, and the community at large.

In the parallel RL/P (Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004) system, this study also implied the most appropriate elements to enact RL through the teachers' descriptions of the 3Es. The shared essence of their experience of RL (3Es) detailed in Chapter Four and seen below, provided various beliefs, attitudes, and actions for school leaders and the various other stakeholders to enact. The elements emphasized with italics of the essence statement below imply actions leadership and stakeholders could take to being enacting RL (3Es):

> RL and those in formal leadership positions, are imperative to a school. Effective RL should be *motivated by a priority for making impact* and a *shared school-wide vision* driven by *commitment to ongoing staff and leadership development.* Effective and ethical RL *upholds teachers as professionals* with significant voices *and as people with meaningful relationships*. RL requires *owning the burdens of the leadership role* and *modeling the way* through a *dedication* for active *engagement in education* and *physical presence* in the school. To be an ethical model, RL must be: *reflective, embracing of tough conversations*, *honest* and *transparent* with decisions, plus *courageous to advance the school and staff forward* while *acting and treating others consistently*. RL requires a *strong team to be built* and *shared decision making* through *humility* and *listening*. Teachers in RL *feel valued*, *impactful*, *heard*, and *crucial to the broader purpose* of the school. When effectiveness and ethics work together, RL can *endure* and *put lasting systems in place* for the school to thrive into the future.

State level school leaders. The top positions of authority may need to shift practice if parallel systems are at play. The traditional model places state legislators, who determine issues of budget and policy as well as other elected officials, at the top of the school chain. If RL/P (1998, 2000, 2002, 2004) implies anything for these high-level leaders, it may be to recognize

the existence and nuances of a performance system. Such a system could imply that state leaders are high impact and high authority contributors to the system but that they are not sole-directors of it. They could more readily recognize the contributions of other stakeholders including principals and teachers in driving the system. The five teachers who participated in this study represented incredible amounts of wisdom and expertise in the education field. Their voices were powerful and well-informed and could be valued as such by even the highest formal leaders.

Formal school leaders. Though RL (3Es) and RL/P (Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004) are systemic, the participants of this study often referred to RL as the principal. Thus, the most pertinent implications for practice seem to apply to them.

The first implication for formal school level leaders is suggested from a holistic view of the study. As discussed earlier, future research could intend to locate and highlight the teacher voice, but in practice, formal leaders could do the same by working to get their teachers to step out as members of the open leadership system. As evidenced by Nappi (2004), leaders and students would benefit because "in today's educational and financial climate the school principal cannot go solo. School and student success are more likely to occur when distributed or shared leadership is practiced" (p. 29). The five participants also provided evidence for the importance of their voices as teachers. They described this as "valuing teachers as professionals" and "giving credit" to them for their contributions. Literature on leadership from the teacher perspective also seemed to highlight teachers' desire for open leadership which could provide them a valuable voice and means of participation (Angelle & DeHart, 2011; Cheng & Szeto, 2016). Also seemingly supported by literature, the teachers in this study wanted their voices to be valued and their work to be recognized by formal leadership.

A second practical implication for formal school leaders may be to get parents involved in the school RL system. Povey et al. (2016) noted formal leaders in their study endorsed benefits of parental involvement in education:

> enhanced student learning outcomes (97% Principals; 93% P&C Presidents), student attendance (99%; 93%), positive student behavior (99%; 95%), school retention of students (96%; 89%), school culture (94%; 96%), self-development among parents (85%; 84%), and social capital (93%; 90%). (p. 134)

These numbers indicate that parental involvement has a multitude of positive effects on student learning. Povey et al. also added that

> the most effective ways to engage parents in their school, with both groups most likely to nominate the following methods as effective [are] creating a respectful and welcoming environment (93% of Principals; 67% of P&C Presidents), being flexible in accommodating the needs of parents and families (88%; 61%), and recognizing volunteers (88%; 62%). (p. 135)

Such methods mimicked those participants described, such as physical presence and giving credit. Such overlap may indicate that formal leaders who possesses and enact the qualities described in Chapter Four can enhance the education experience for multiple parties.

A final implication for formal school leadership practice may be what the participants' descriptions of RL and the 3Es did not include. For example, not a single participant discussed tasks that principals are often charged with such as testing, data analysis, and others. They did however seem to indicate that RL was characterized by leadership's ability to maintain school structures. This, along with the literature described in Chapter Two which evidenced teachers wanting cultural leadership and not management (Bellibas, 2015; Hulpia et al., 2011; Leech & Fulton, 2008; Williams, 2009; Yirci et al., 2014), might imply that leaders should shift their personal focus to cultural matters. This could then require leadership to build effective teams and trust others to make proper decisions which participants also described as RL characteristics.

Principals should perhaps work to focus their everyday practice on active engagement, physical presence, team building, and maintain a positive school culture for all stakeholders.

Formal school leaders', especially principals', workdays are "characterized by long hours and diverse tasks" (Sebastian, Camburn, & Spillane, 2018, p. 47). By recognizing the parallel system of leadership such as RL/P (Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004), principals may be able to open their leadership to parents and teachers while shifting their focus to cultural elements of their work, and thus, enact RL (3Es).

Teachers. As part of a large and more open RL system, teachers could be active in their roles regardless of formal titles. The most important implication for teacher practice from this study seemed to be for teachers to speak out when possible and get their voice in leadership.

The five participants consistently connected experiences of RL to having their voices heard and valued. Some contemporary school initiatives have encouraged all teachers to take leadership responsibilities such as the professional learning community model (DuFour, 2004; Hairon, Goh, & Chua, 2015), but this study may have implied that even without formal models, teachers want to be valued for their potential impact. Amber, for example, took initiative to push her own teaching toward personalized learning without incentive from her formal leadership (IP1, 2017). Adam was recently tasked to participate in a teacher led committee for intervention at his school, something he was hoping for the last couple of years (IP2, 2017). Maxine Ann was heavily involved in collaborative teaching opportunities in her role that were leading the way for other teachers and schools (IP4, 2017). All five participants took leadership roles as mentors for future generations of teachers as well. The leadership without formal titles that these teachers took on serves as evidence that teachers are valuable professionals, but they need to make that known to the leaders and community. I believe this study may have carried implications for

teachers to open their practice beyond the classroom and recognize their vital role in the open leadership system.

Parents and community members. Parents and community members of any given middle school system are another constituent whose role was informed through this study. Though not all five participants spoke to the importance of parents, a few of them did. For example, Kate was adamant that RL be involved "with all the people and talk to parents all the time" (IP3, 2017, p. 14). One of Keith's textural descriptions of experience was "listen to stakeholders to build relationships" which was constructed from a specific reference to parents along with teachers as valuable voices.

Literature on parental involvement in their children's education showed similar value. Povey et al. (2016) found that parents at the secondary level tended to be less involved than those in primary grades. They stated, "While it has been argued that this may be a developmentally appropriate phenomenon, parent involvement in schools has still been found to have positive, if indirect, associations with adolescent learning outcomes" (p. 139). In a meta-analysis of parental involvement and academic achievement, Morera et al. (2015) found, "Parental models most linked to high achievement are those focusing on general supervision of the children's learning activities," including developing and maintaining communication (p. 33). They indicated not that parents need to be involved in the minute-to-minute educational lives of their students, but that having open communication and general involvement was correlated with higher achievement.

Parents and community members at large, who are also the voting public for school funding in the study area, could become active participants in the more open leadership system this study suggests. By getting their voices into the conversations through communication with

administration, teachers, and their students, parents and community members can display their role as important external stakeholders.

Developing leaders. A final stakeholder in school leadership I hope can find meaning from this study is informing the practice of preparing future school leaders. Kate and Keith were adamant that for RL to be enacted, those who moved into leadership must do so for good reasons and to make an impact (IP3, 2017; IP5, 2017). Thus, those involved in developing leaders may consider administrative candidate motivation as a vital element of their ability to enact RL.

A second implication may have originated from Amber, Adam, and Keith. All three experienced formal leadership preparation and each spoke to the need for RL development in real-time through practicum experiences. RL developed is by mentorship from a practicing leader and by "getting in the trenches" as much as possible (IP5, 2017, p. 5). Tubbs and Holliday (2009) concluded similarly that "practicum experiences expose candidates to real-world school leadership experiences," so "supervisors, mentors and candidates need to form a coalition to explore other options, especially out-of-the-box strategies, to deliver a highly effective practicum program for potential educational leaders" (p. 14). Programs for leadership preparation and all the involved stakeholders could continue to get candidates in practicum experiences as much as possible and carefully vet for the most effective, ethical, and enduring mentors possible to promote the kind of RL participants described.

A last implication for school leadership development may be to introduce the parallel systems model to candidates. Most principal candidates may or may not recognize a leadership system other than the tradition hierarchy. It could be useful to include description of a parallel leadership system in which principal candidates will need to consider the voices included in this study that often go ignored in the traditional hierarchy.

The practice of school leadership is dynamic and challenging. This study may imply practices for many stakeholders from state leaders, to school level leaders and teachers, to parents and external principal educators. The implications throughout the study revolve around enacting RL as described through the lived experiences of the five participants and the notion that a RL/P (Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004) system could parallel the traditional hierarchy.

Implications for General Leadership Theory

In addition to specific support for RL/P (Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004) and along with research and practice, this study may have implications for general leadership theory. Dubin (1978) suggested that the, "growth cycle of theory-research-practice is fundamental to building rigorous and relevant applied theory" and posited that "good theory in applied disciplines is as realistic as it comes" (as cited in Lynham, 2002). Such importance reflects the gap in extant RL literature that is mostly void of strong theoretical foundation for practice.

Miska and Mendenhall (2018, p. 127) highlighted upward of twelve theoretical frameworks that associated with understanding of RL in the past twenty years. Thus, based upon the implications of this study, they and this research call for the building of "expanded, interdisciplinary theoretical perspectives which connect different levels of analysis" (p. 124). Lynham's (2002) General Method of theory-building in applied disciplines may be an appropriate place to start formal theorizing. Lynham (2002) suggested five distinct phases of theory-building: conceptual development, operationalization, application, confirmation or disconfirmation, and continue refinement (p. 229). As an example, this study informed the third, fourth, and fifth phases of the model in regard to RL/P (Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004). This applied approach to theory building "consists of two broad components, namely, theorizing to practice and practice to theorizing" (Lynham, 2002, p. 229). Currently, RL research has been

dominantly conceptual but this study adds to a growing number of empirical pieces on the construct signifying the growth cycle, described by Lynham (2002), from research to theory can then be used to inform practice, which informs further theory toward refinement.

To inform theory, research, and practice it is important to revisit the quality criteria of authenticity of this study. In doing so, the findings and implications can be taken with trust.

Revisiting Authenticity

Lincoln and Guba (2013) described four authenticity criteria that ensure constructivist research is done with integrity and is useful to the researcher, participants, and general readership. Chapter Three (p. 105 of this dissertation) displays the criteria required for authenticity of inquiry and how I addressed them. Below is an overview of each.

The first criterion was ontological and asked that individuals become more informed or more aware of unexplored constructions (Lincoln & Guba, 2013, p. 70). To promote new learning, Lincoln and Guba (2013) recommended using open conversations, being forthright with the purpose of the study, describing the researcher perspective, building relationships with participants, and reflecting on growth. In regard to the participants, their learning was evident in the depth with which they described RL. Kate reflected after our interview that it was a good cognitive coaching session for her to examine her thoughts on RL, and Amber expressed excitement on considering RL as an approach after studying many others in recent courses. Many of them also mentioned that the mental models of their experiences captured a new sense of understanding for them, and two asked me to provide them digitally for reference.

To accomplish ontological authenticity, I followed the recommendations of semi-structured interviews to build relationships with the participants. I also openly declared the purpose of the study in the recruitment email, consent form, and verbally before each interview. I

was sure to fully discuss my own social awareness and perspective regarding RL and school leadership in Chapter Three. I also reflected deeply on my learning as the human instrument in the previous section of this chapter.

The second criterion concerned educative authenticity and required individuals to become more understanding of and more informed about the constructions of other people (Lincoln & Guba, 2013, p. 70). The first element of educative authenticity is semi-structured interviews which I utilized throughout the study. In addition, peer debrief is associated with educative authenticity because it helps to reflect upon individual and shared learning (Lincoln & Guba, 2013). Throughout the study, I was blessed with mentors and colleagues who debriefed with me during data analysis and findings concerning textural descriptions, meaning units, and essence statements. In addition to individual learnings, the mental models and shared essence in Chapter Three are evidence of comparison of participants' constructions, as described by Lincoln and Guba (2013), useful for awareness of others' perspectives. Finally, educative authenticity benefits from introspective statements about the understanding of constructions. Throughout Chapter Three and Five, I tried to show thought processes and decisions that led me to my findings and constructions.

A third criterion, catalytic authenticity, is described as action being stimulated by the research (Lincoln & Guba, 2003, p. 70). One way to elicit action is to ensure collaboration between participants and the researcher. By co-constructing essence from the words of participants as well as member-checking with them at multiple points, I was able to be confident that they felt their voices were heard and represented in the co-construction. It is also important to catalytic authenticity that the completed research be available to meaningful stakeholders. This dissertation is publicly available and I offered to share it personally with each participant.

The last element of catalytic authenticity concerns evidences of practical application being discussed within the research. Within Chapter Five, I described the actionable implications for practice I constructed from the study and, as a constructivist study, the reader is able to determine for themselves if there are other implications for their unique context.

The fourth authenticity criterion are tactical and ensures, individuals are empowered to take action that the research implies (Lincoln & Guba, 2003, p. 70). One important element of empowerment is maintaining confidentiality of the participants which was done with informed consent and pseudonyms throughout. It was also useful to utilize semi-structured interviews, which allowed participants to take their responses in any direction that seemed most relevant to them and their positions as teachers. When we sat down to talk, I discussed issues of power openly with participants, and I reflected those discussions in the implications for practice of Chapter Five. This inquiry did not seem an appropriate motivation for formal training on power because it was not a central theme, and the chances of power being problematic for the participants was minimal. However, readers may determine that issues of power laden in any study of leadership are forces powerful enough for training appropriate in their context.

Conducting authentic research in the constructivist paradigm guided my work from my proposal to this dissertation. I have been careful to maintain authenticity in data collection, analysis, and dissemination to ensure the study was done well and can be useful to participants and readers alike.

Reflections on My Lived Experience as the Human Instrument

Peredaryenko and Krauss (2013) noted that scientific instruments are often examined and recalibrated for accuracy but, "rarely is the notion of calibration used in relation to the social and human sciences, especially in the context of qualitative research where the human being is the

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main research instrument" (p. 1). Lincoln and Guba (1985) described seven characteristics and five desirable qualities to reflect upon in order to hone the human instrument. It was important for this study and myself as the researcher to reflect on these seven characteristics and five desirable qualities and how they affected me as seen below.

Attending to the Seven Characteristics of the Human Instrument

Lincoln and Guba (1985) first introduced the concept of the "human instrument" and described seven characteristics that "uniquely qualify the human being as the instrument of choice for naturalistic inquiry" (p. 193). Characteristics included responsiveness, adaptability, holistic emphasis, knowledge base expansion, processual immediacy, opportunities for clarification, and opportunities to explore atypical responses (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Responsiveness. Lincoln and Guba (1985) described responsiveness as the instruments ability to "sense and respond to all personal and environmental cues" (p. 194). During my first three interviews, I felt a level of comfort because of the casual environments and prior knowledge of the participants. However, even after getting comfortable with the interview process and protocol during those first three, I felt a level of nervousness in the fourth and fifth interviews. I believe it was due to not having met the participants prior to the interviews. I also battled feelings of being an imposter throughout the process, wondering if participants met me and asked themselves, "What is he doing studying this?" My nerves were quickly calmed in both scenarios, though, when the participants greeted me with a smile and seemed to enjoy the interview and conversation.

One environmental cue I distinguished was the difference between interviewing someone in a public space, such as a coffee shop, versus interviewing someone in a private area, such as a classroom or office. I had the opportunity to experience both over the course of the study and

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noticed that the public space allowed participants more comfort whereas the private space offered participants opportunities to think deeply. I do not recommend to future researchers one or the other—barring a public place at a busy time that would make recording the interview difficult—but rather for them to consider what is most important. In the case of a phenomenological study such as this, I felt able to gather solid information from all five participants regardless of the physical environment.

My interview protocol, adopted from Lynham (1998, 2000), served me and the participants well throughout the study. I changed it very little from interview to interview, maintaining the questions but sometimes altering the order as the conversation flowed. The most challenging question for me to ask was regarding a metaphor or image the participants had in mind to represent each of the 3Es. Reflecting back, I should have been more confident in the question because participants really enjoyed it. In fact, Adam's significant moment relating RL to the sun was bred from the question and would have been a shame to miss. For future phenomenological researchers, my advice would be to have a good protocol entering interviews and to be confident in the questions. If a participant does not understand the question, they will ask you to clarify.

Adaptability. Being adaptable allows a researcher to adapt to environment, context, and informational needs (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This requires that the human instrument be willing to modify the study—number of participants, interview protocol, focus, and themes—in real time as necessary.

I struggled at times with this level of adaptability due mostly to my stubbornness in executing the study as planned. I approached the study with an attitude of getting it done effectively but also efficiently. However, I quickly learned that constructivist inquiry and

phenomenology demanded adaptability. I had to learn to be patient with the study because co-construction takes time. Upon realizing the value of patience, true meaning seemed to develop. For example, constructing the mental models took more time than Moustakas' (1994) method had implied, but it was highly beneficial to constructing meaning as a story of essence. Plus, the participants reflected that the mental models impressed them, and they enjoyed seeing their stories displayed visually.

Holistic emphasis. Lincoln and Guba (1985) described holistic emphasis through the human being the only instrument capable of finding the whole in the pieces of a phenomenon, "grasping all this buzzing confusion in one view" (p. 194). In this study, I truly felt the need for holistic emphasis and had to consistently allow myself to move through the whole-part-whole cycle as I analyzed the data (Vagle, 2014, p. 97). Practicing epoch, as described by Moustakas (1994), was difficult both a researcher and a person as stepping outside of a task at hand and see the whole picture proves difficult; However, this project and the whole-part-whole cycle was beneficial to me in conducting research.

An interesting element of holistic emphasis that I faced was isolating my bias and assumptions (Moustakas, 1994) because I have been personally interested in leadership for most of my life. As an athlete and then a teacher and coach, I have experienced leadership and have done my best to practice it well. In that journey, I consume media and literature on leadership outside of formal studies. At times, I felt compelled to label pieces of this study with ideas and words from other authors. Initially, I fought the feeling in order to eliminate my bias. However, after reflection, I was able to come to the conclusion that if another writer has spent energy constructing a theme of leadership that fit what the participants said, it was justified to apply it. Phenomenology is a unique process, but it also honors the researcher's instincts and thoughts

(Vagle, 2014). For future researchers, I recommend being careful to not allow your biases to alter your description of participant experiences themselves, but to also know that the knowledge you have constructed in your past is still valuable.

Knowledge base expansion. Knowledge base expansion requires a balance between propositional and tactical knowledge (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It is also recognition that we often expand our knowledge on an unconscious level so our relationship with the data continues even when we are not aware of it. Throughout the study, I felt this kind of unconscious awareness. During the data collection and analysis phase, I started carrying a notebook with me to capture ideas and notes that came to me at unlikely times such as walking, exercising, or reading other material. I had to be careful with these notes as they were not considered in a time of epoch, but I found it helpful to write them down so that I could maintain focus.

In my experience, knowledge base expansion was also evidenced by the way I looked at the data once fully emerged. With the data cards numbering near 1,000, I constantly had them around me. They filled my kitchen, my office, and my bedroom. By immersing in the physical cards I was able to finally visualize essence in the mental models. I certainly recommend the use of data cards to future phenomenological researchers. Although I did not utilize software for data, I found physically having data cards very helpful to expand my knowledge base both consciously and subconsciously.

The issues of distraction from the data were evident for me as I had unexpected life and career events occur in the midst of data collection and analysis. I certainly recommend that researchers do everything they can to stay with the data as much as possible and neutralize distraction. Due to life changes, I had to practice mindfulness prior to working with the data at any time and tried to find lengthy windows of time to do so.

Processual immediacy. Lincoln and Guba (1985) defined processual immediacy as

> the ability of the instrument (and only the human instrument) to process data just as soon as they become available, to generate hypothesis on the spot, and to test those hypotheses with respondents in the very situation in which they are created. (p. 194)

With a constructivist phenomenological study, I did not have hypotheses entering data collection. However, immediacy was relevant when I was able to have conversations with the participants instead of just interviews. By the third interview, I began asking questions off of the protocol and building upon what the participants said. I also asked confirmation questions such as, "So I'm hearing you say . . . is that right?" which allowed participants to dive deeper or clarify meaning. It was my experience, interviewing and learning from participant experiences and being open to learn in the moment that data are collected was invaluable.

Opportunities for clarification. Opportunities for clarification encompass chances for the researcher to ask clarification questions, for further clarification of a participant statement, and for data to be summarized to check credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 195). Throughout the interviews, I felt comfortable asking participants for clarification when statements seemed confusing. However, more often I found myself simply pausing and allowing the participant themselves to seek opportunity for clarification. As a teacher I always learned to use wait time —being silent and waiting for students to respond thoughtfully—and I believe the same happened in the interviews. When something was confusing, I could usually see the participants thinking it over, so I waited and let them do so.

Summarization of data was a weak point of mine. By the last participant interview, I did review the interview with him at certain stopping points, but prior to that, I failed to summarize until the member-checking phase. I would encourage future researchers to be more aware of

summarizing in real time. When I did ask for summarization, the fifth participant added a few key and fun points.

Opportunities to explore atypical responses. The opportunity to explore atypical responses provided the chance for new interpretations, ideas, and expansion of thought (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 195). The most relevant practice that I utilized to this end was asking the participants for metaphors or images that they may associate with the 3Es. I was inspired by Lynham's (1998, 2000) protocol, but as discussed earlier, was hesitant to ask the question as I wondered if it would be too abstract. However, the participants gave incredibly unique and insightful responses to every metaphor question. With these atypical questions, I was able to learn the uniqueness of each person, some of their beliefs, their values, and some personal background information that highlighted the true value in human experience as meaningful knowledge.

Attending to Desirable Qualities of the Human Instrument

In addition to the seven characteristics, Guba and Lincoln (1981) described five desirable qualities for a human instrument to possess: having empathy, dealing with psychological stressors, being a good listener, being attentive to social and behavioral signals of others, and finding others' to be truly interesting. As described below, throughout the study I had experiences with each quality to grow as a human instrument.

Having empathy. The first desirable quality to possess is empathy (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, p. 140). I have been strongly interested in teaching empathy since my time as a teacher, which was sparked by own lack of it at times. In looking back on my experience with this study and the participants, I can truly say that my empathic capacity has grown. By spending time with people and learning about their experiences as teachers and the backgrounds that led to them, I

felt able to see the profession from a perspective other than my own for the first time. I was able to tap into my experience as a middle school teacher and to walk in their shoes, but I also gained a whole new respect for the individuals whom participated and the collective whole of middle school educators.

Dealing with psychological stressors. Undertaking a study with the phenomenological method certainly fits some of the psychological stressor, including isolation, large amounts of data, handling your own reflections, and being able to adapt throughout the study (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, p. 141). At times, I felt each one of these stressors. For example, when I first printed and cut the data cards, I had an entire day of feeling so overwhelmed with what was in front of me. I also consistently dealt with feelings of isolation as my original cohort members and I lost pace part way through the program. However, a new cohort of advisees, all focused on phenomenology, accepted me into their group and mentored me through, and my original cohort members remained important allies. My mother, a teacher herself, was also always willing to listen to me talk through the data and my ideas. For future researchers, I suggest not considering the journey to be a lonely one. Find people who have previously, or are currently, studying in a similar way and lean on them. In the end, the process of studying the experiences of these five participants was an extremely enjoyable one. I feel honored to be able to hear their stories which made psychological stressors easier to handle.

Being a good listener. The third quality is the ability to be a good listener regardless of their own perspectives or opinions (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, p. 141). Having the epoch process explicitly associated with the transcendental phenomenology method (Moustakas, 1994) was helpful for me as a listener because it reminded me constantly to separate my own values and be open to the participants. Being someone who tends to struggle with setting aside my personal

mental distractions, I was not always fully successful in immersing myself as a listener.

However, this study and the interviews taught me the value of listening so much that I made a

conscious effort to listen more in my personal and professional lives.

Being attentive to social and behavioral cues. Being attentive to social and behavioral

cues was a missing, conscious component during my interview. However, upon reflection, it is

clear to me how important this was during my time with the participants. With the two

participants whom I had never interacted with, building trust and the ability to recognize even

minor cues was a different experience than the three that I had interacted with previously. During

interviews, I picked up on social cues of body language that were helpful to me but knowing the

participants ahead of time certainly made it easier. Their behavioral cues showed that they were

excited to participate and provided me with a sense of comfort right away.

Finding people truly interesting. Similar to being a good listener, the phenomenology

method is in congruence with finding people truly interesting. Guba and Lincoln (1981) made

the point, "Curious about everyone, he [the researcher] is willing to listen to people and is aware

that information can come from unexpected quarters" (p. 142). Thus, the researcher should be

genuinely interested in the voices and stories of all people who may have experience of the

phenomenon and specific interest in the participants in order to deeply engage with the data. For

me, this quality was one of my strong points. I have always been fascinated with the human

experience and carried that interest into the study. My favorite piece of this journey was getting

to hear and then share the stories of these five incredible people.

Reflective Advice on Being and Becoming the Human Instrument

In addition to the reflection on Lincoln and Guba's (1985) characteristics of the human

instrument, there are a few pieces of advice that may aid future phenomenological researchers. I

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learned lessons concerning time, maintaining method integrity, and the value of constant reflection.

Time. Time in this type of study is a nearly uncontrollable variable. The first challenge of time I faced was with IRB approval. At no fault of anyone but my own, I submitted my IRB application at an inopportune time and had to adjust my time frame to allow for approval. Once I had IRB approval, I imagined that participants would be easy to contact and eager to respond. Though for the most part they were excited to participate, I initially contacted the first three in early August, one of the busiest times in the life of a teacher. Two participants were able to meet with me right away before the school year started, but it took longer to conduct the fourth and fifth interviews which then occurred in close succession. In data analysis, I quickly saw the varying amounts of time it took to go through data for one participant compared to another participant. In general, I would advise future researchers to enter their study knowing that time will shift throughout data collection and analysis. It is good to have general time frames and goals for completion, but the nature of deep description of an experience requires flexibility.

Maintaining method integrity. In my journey as a researcher, I confronted some questions when telling people that I was utilizing a constructivist lens for a transcendental phenomenological study. At times, I even had to reorient myself to what exactly that meant for me. However, I found paradigmatic alignment vital to gaining meaningful knowledge. Though it is sometimes excused in other research to not deliberately align to a paradigm, my advice is for researchers to be aware of their paradigmatic assumptions and to revisit them often in the search for understanding.

Moustakas (1994) is a pivotal resource for conducting a phenomenological study. At times in the process, clear means of staying true to the method challenged me but then became an

opportunity. For example, when I was first faced with moving from invariant constituents to meaning units, I struggled to determine how. This frustration became opportunity when I sought how other qualitative researchers tackled theming and found the elements of "typification and labeling" (Vaismoradi et al., 2016). I knew my goal to categroize the meaning units and textural descriptions but having the language helped immensely.

The most significant challenge in maintaining the integrity of the method was in taking textual and structural descriptions to create a statement of essence. It was overwhelming to take such a large amount of seeming separated information and create one cohesive and coherent statement that captured the essence of experience for each participant. I then found the mental models, as detailed in Chapter Four. Previously, I often found myself capturing learning in models such as those used in this study, but I had not thought of them as a legitimate source of describing meaning. My desire is that the mental models serve others as it did me. I believe the larger lesson gleaned from the mental models was the phenomenological processes are emergent and researchers may benefit from practicing epoche and allowing the messiness that can arise.

Constant Reflection. Through this study, I learned how valuable reflection is for both myself and the research process. I have often utilized writing for reflection, but this was the first time I attempted to write my reflections down in a systematic way. For example, at one point early in the journey I noted:

> Overwhelmed again! This feels too big to be just one paper but I want to make good progress. I'm worried that "RL" alone results in too much confusion in the literature for me. I feel inadequate to handle it and contribute to it in a meaningful way.

This type of reflection occurred regularly in my journal and shows the peaks and valleys of the experience of this study. As I began to write Chapter Three and Chapter Four, I revisited my journal often to recall exactly what I did and the decisions I made. I was surprised how helpful it

was to see my own journey laid out in front of me. I was inspired by the good moments and motivated by the frustrations. Reflecting that I did not know if I could contribute to the current knowledge base motivated me even more to seek meaning in lived experience. My advice is to embrace the struggle but constantly reflect: This is where much of the learning and growth occurs.

Conclusions of My Experience as a Human Instrument

In studying the lived experiences of others, it can be difficult to then turn the tables and study our own lived experiences as the instrument. This section was designed to respond to Lincoln and Guba's (1985; Guba & Lincoln, 1981) call for researchers to reflect on the changes we undergo as researchers.

Since I am not currently experiencing the phenomenon of RL in middle schools myself, I did not feel significant change in my own lived experience as a professional. However, in my current role as researcher with past experience that enabled me to resonate with the participants, I did sense change in how I perceived the teachers who I come into contact with outside of the research process.

Conducting this research personally changed me in a couple of significant ways. First, it showed me that being vulnerable carries immense power. Bestselling author and expert on shame and vulnerability, Brene Brown (2010) said, "Vulnerability is the birthplace of innovation, creativity and change." I lived this in real time as a researcher. For my first interview, I was not vulnerable in the sense that I did not adapt well and change to meet the participant. I had to learn to get more vulnerable and overcome the imposter syndrome that stifled me from asking deeper questions or questions of clarification. In my case, vulnerability truly equated to confidence. A second way I changed through this research was to become more patient with myself as an

instrument. At first, I wanted meaning in the data to be evident and obvious, but I learned that patience is key to rich description. A final change from being the instrument for this particular study was in my own perceptions of leadership. It was interesting to me to find elements of RL that overlapped with extant leadership and ones that did not. My fascination with leadership has only grown because perhaps middle school leadership is more complex than it is often portrayed; At the same time, middle school leadership may be simple. This dichotomy is one I had not considered before this research and is powerful enough to enhance my intrigue for the subject.

Conclusion

The findings from this phenomenological study move toward answering the recent calls from Miska and Mendenhall (2018) to explore RL through diverse methods and continue the trend of open leadership in middle schools. Moustakas' (1994) transcendental phenomenology allowed for me as the researcher to focus the study on the lived experiences of the participants in order to inform theory from practice directly. In schools, Cook (2014) found that leaders needed to be "transparent and create an environment that recognizes the school as a village where everyone's input is important" (p. 12). Literature suggested that the best schools for student's result when "teachers and principals [are] working together" to lead (Schmidt-Davis & Bottoms, 2011, p. 2). The five middle school teachers I had the pleasure to work with in this study echoed the need for teachers to be included in RL.

Schools in the United States are in a state of growth and the uncertainty that comes with it. The 50.4 million students entering our schools are more diverse than ever (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018): private education options continue to expand, school security is a leading topic across the nation, and we are facing a historical teacher shortage (Sutcher et al., 2016). These factors indicate a need to find and lead with a systems perspective capable of

comprehending and addressing the whole of education all the while examining the

interrelationship of the parts (Senge, 2006). The participants indicated support for the RL/P

(Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004) framework and informed RL (3Es) for their particular middle

school context. Chapter Five intended to discuss the implications from their experiences for the

theoretical framework, research, general theory, and the practice of multiple stakeholders in the

school leadership system. This dissertation gave voice and value to the experiences of five

incredible educators. My hope is that these findings will not only spark future research on RL

and RL/P (Lynham, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004), but that leadership will value teachers as sources

of knowledge and practice for school leadership.

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APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Hello, we are conducting a research study on responsible leadership in middle schools in order to inform school leadership theory and practice from the unique perspective of teachers. The Principal Investigator is Dr. Susan Lynham and I am the Co-Principal Investigator, conducting this research as part of my dissertation research.

We would like to invite you to participate in an interview to share your experiences. Participation will take approximately 45 minutes at a place and time of convenience for you. Your participation in this research is voluntary. If you decide to participate in the study, you may withdraw your consent and stop participation at any time without penalty.

When we report and share the data with others, we will combine the data from all participants. Your personal information, your school, nor your district will be attached to any reported findings. There are no known risks or direct benefits to you, but we hope to gain more knowledge on the important work of leading our schools and supporting teachers.

We are hoping to learn from the experiences of teachers who have three or more years in a middle school classroom and identify has having experience with effective, ethical, and /or enduring school leadership.

If you feel that you meet these criteria and would like to participate or have any questions about the research, please contact the Co-Principal Investigator via email at ryanmac@rams.colostate.edu or phone at (303) 564-0702.

If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact the CSU IRB at: RICRO_IRB@mail.colostate.edu; 970-491-1553.

Dr. Susan Lynham   Ryan MacTaggart
Associate Professor   Doctoral Candidate
CSU School of Education   CSU School of Education

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. What dimensions, incidents, and people (intimately) connected with your experience of effective leadership stand out to you? Why do these stand out?

2. How did the experience with effective leadership affect you? Why did it effect you that way?

3. What dimensions, incidents, and people (intimately) connected with your experience of ethical leadership stand out to you? Why do these stand out?

4. How did the experience with ethical leadership affect you? Why did it affect you that way?

5. What dimensions, incidents, and people (intimately) connected with your experience of enduring leadership stand out to you? Why do these stand out?

6. How did the experience with enduring leadership affect you? Why did it affect you that way?

7. If you think of leadership that is effective to you, what attributes characteristics come to mind? Why do these attributes come to mind?

8. If you think of leadership that is ethical to you, what attributes characteristics come to mind? Why do these attributes come to mind?

9. If you think of leadership that is enduring to you, what attributes characteristics come to mind? Why do these attributes come to mind?

10. Can you describe an experience you have had with school leadership that is NOT effective? Why does the experience no represent Effective/Ethical/Enduring leadership?

11. Can you describe an experience you have had with school leadership that is NOT Effective/Ethical/Enduring? Why does the experience no represent ethical leadership?

12. Can you describe an experience you have had with school leadership that is NOT enduring? Why does the experience no represent Effective/Ethical/Enduring leadership?