

Mario Ciccarini  
EDLD 814  
Assignment #1

I am interested in exploring the impact of school principals on student performance through their work with the adults in the school and surrounding community. By adults, I am including certified staff, non-certified staff, parents/guardians, and members from the community in which the principal works. My goals for this research are to improve my own skills as a practicing school principal, support colleagues in similar roles, mentor beginning administrators, and contribute to an improved coaching and support model for school principals.

I am initially considering a qualitative research design. Creswell (2002) points out that qualitative research is best suited to address research problems in which you do not know the variables and need to explore a central phenomenon. In this case, I am looking to explore characteristics in school principals that positively impact adult actions which result in improved student achievement and behavior. In other words, how do school principals motivate adults to better support children? I would take a Grounded Theory research design using open-ended interviews with a stratified sample of adults:

- Working in the schools (classroom teachers, pupil services, and paraeducators)
- In the school community (parents/guardians)
- Outside the school community (community partners and agencies)

Then I would analyze the interview data to establish and organize themes that emerge. Depending on what the qualitative analysis uncovers, I have also considered an exploratory sequential mixed-methods research design. In this scenario I conduct the qualitative research first, analyze common leadership themes that emerge, implement the themes in a coaching/support model, and compare student progress utilizing quantitative measures.

If I were to go with a strictly qualitative research design I would be collecting interview responses from random samples of adults in and out of the school community. In addition to the

interview notes and transcripts, other data may include audio, video, and field notes. If I were to take a mixed-methods research approach, in addition to the aforementioned qualitative data I would also collect student achievement, behavior referral, and attendance data.

A possible research question I would pose is "What specific characteristics are you looking for in a highly effective school principal?"

Reference:

Creswell, J.W. (2015). *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research*. [Pearson Digital Edition version]. Retrieved from <http://www.pearsoned.com/>