

# Flourishing Leadership: A Positive Organizational Perspective

A paper presented at CASEA/CCEAM 2014

Fredericton, New Brunswick

June 4-10

By Sabre Cherkowski

[Sabre.cherkowski@ubc.ca](mailto:Sabre.cherkowski@ubc.ca)

And

Keith Walker

[Keith.walker@usask.ca](mailto:Keith.walker@usask.ca)

## **Abstract:**

This main purpose of this study was to identify and elaborate on the construct of *flourishing* in schools as understood through the stories and explanations provided by a small group of public school principals. The specific objectives of this study were: **(1)** Identify how school leaders understand and experience flourishing in their roles and in their schools; **(2)** Explore the conditions, catalysts, and/or galvanizing forces of flourishing in schools. Using a Delphi survey, the researchers collected understandings and impressions of the construct of flourishing from practicing school administrators in one school district in central British Columbia. Preliminary findings indicate that creating conditions for flourishing in schools may be cultivated as we promote generative leader mindsets, attend to subjective well-being and work towards adaptive community.

What does it mean to flourish as a school leader? What can we learn from inquiring into the positive emotional and social aspects of the work of teachers and other school leaders? These questions, and others like them, are beginning to emerge in research in psychology and on organizations for understanding the positive deviance that exists in individuals and organizational contexts. This positive psychological and positive organizational research examines the effects, influences and confluences of attending to strengths and positive outlooks, of cultivating virtues and notions of goodness, of increasing resilience, vitality, and happiness. Understanding the human experience from a positive perspective also illuminates ways that individuals, and the organizations that they work within, overcome challenges, develop new capabilities in the face of struggle and trauma, establish strong relationships and create a sense of meaningfulness in their work and lives.

Understanding the working lives of teachers and other school leaders has been an important area of research in education. The relatively new field of research in positive psychology and positive organizational scholarship can offer insights on a more rich and full understanding of the human experience of work in schools, as we focus on what works, what goes well, what supports and fosters a more full sense of a human experience at work and brings vitality to people in schools. We bring research findings from the disciplines of both positive psychology and positive organization studies into the field of education to explore flourishing in schools. There is currently no specific definition of what it means to be a flourishing educational leader, so we use the research from positive psychology as a starting point for thinking about flourishing as optimal ways of functioning characterized by goodness and wholeness (Frederickson & Losada,

2005; Gable & Haidt, 2005). People who flourish experience the opposite of languishing, yearning for more, or feelings of being stuck in a rut (Keyes & Lopez, 2002). Instead, individuals who flourish are more resilient and come closer to self-fulfillment, contentment, and happiness (Haybron, 2008; Martin & Marsh, 2006; Rasmussen, 1999).

Through our research, we aim to contribute a definition of flourishing applied to education as a way of gaining insight into a fuller sense of the human experience, from a positive research perspective, of the work of teaching and leading. In this article, we present findings from the first round of a Delphi study that aimed to elicit an initial understanding of the nature of flourishing in schools from the perspective of school leaders. The specific objectives of this study (one part of a larger research project) were to identify how school leaders understand and experience flourishing in their roles and in their schools and to explore the conditions, catalysts, and/or galvanizing forces of flourishing in school cultures. In the remainder of this article, we provide an overview of the theoretical framework underpinning this research, a description of the main themes emerging out of the Delphi survey, followed by a discussion of our findings.

### **Theoretical framework**

We locate our research in the fields of positive psychology and positive organizational scholarship linked to our ongoing research on learning communities. This interdisciplinary theoretical framework establishes a focus on the positive, generative and life-enhancing aspects of the school organization and those who work within them.

Positive psychology is a growing field of research designed to examine the development of positive outlooks, habits, and mental models with a focus on studying and describing positive qualities in individuals rather than aiming to repair the negative

and destructive ones (Ben-Shahar, 2008; Seligman, 2002). In other words, positive psychology is the study of the conditions, strengths, and virtues that enable individuals and communities to thrive (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008; Keyes, Frederickson, & Park, 2012; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

The field of positive organizational scholarship (POS) emerged from positive psychology with a similar focus for studying positive traits, attributes, behaviours, processes, and practices of individuals and organizations (Carr, 2004; Gallos, 2008; Lilius et al., 2008; Luthans & Youssef, 2007; Pace, 2010; Roberts & Dutton, 2009; Wright, 2003). POS research focuses on “the dynamics leading to the development of human strength, producing resilience and restoration, fostering vitality, and cultivating extraordinary individual and organizational performance” (Cameron & Caza, 2004, p.3). POS research does not deny the struggles and challenges of work in organization, nor the negative and even toxic organizational environments that are experienced by many individuals in organizations (Gallos, 2010). POS research tends to examine the full human experience of those within organizations, both the trauma and the triumph (Maitlis, 2009), with an emphasis on happiness and organizational health (Achor, 2011; Lencioni, 2012) and meaningfulness in work (Rosso, Deakas & Wrzesniewski, 2010) among other human capacities and capabilities. We acknowledge that our theoretical framework is significantly influenced by the work of organizational scholars who examine the fullness of the human experience within the organization, but might not necessarily align specifically with the field of POS, such as Margaret Wheatley who argued that in the future “. . . those organizations who will succeed are those that evoke

our greatest human capacities—our need to be in good relationships, and our desire to contribute to something beyond ourselves” (2005, p.124).

Finally, the theoretical framework for this study is underpinned by the research literature on learning communities as an organizational approach for supporting a culture of professional learning for ongoing improvement in teaching for improved student learning (Sergiovanni, 1994; Dufour & Eaker, 1998; Mitchell & Sackney, 2009; Stoll & Louis, 2007). Within this research, the role of school leaders for the learning climate and culture in schools is recognized as an important element in the success of learning communities (Hord & Sommer, 2008; Leithwood, 2006; Robinson, 2007). With our research, we use a positive organization lens with which to view the learning community and the people within it. In the next section, we describe the methods for this study followed by a discussion of the main themes and findings.

### **Methods**

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of practicing school leaders’ experiences and understanding of flourishing in their work and in their school. Our preliminary research questions were as follows: **(1)** What can practicing school leaders tell us about their understanding and experiences of flourishing in their work and in their schools (including identifying and benchmarking indicators of flourishing schools)? **(2)** In what ways do leaders encourage and sustain flourishing in their schools? **(3)** Based on our research, what concrete recommendations can we make to inform how schools can be supported in nurturing and sustaining a more positive organizational approach in a time of increased accountability?

To answer these questions and in keeping with the emergent nature of our research

design (McMillan, 2002) we used an electronic Delphi survey to gain access to the stories, experiences, and interpretations of the concept of flourishing among a group of school leaders. A Delphi survey consisted of three progressive iterations in which data is synthesized after each iteration, and then further elaborations, interpretations or extensional insights are requested from original participants. The Delphi was administered to a sample of practicing school administrators (N=28) using e-mails gathered from school district websites in one rural school district in central British Columbia. The invitations to participate were sent via e-mail. Participants e-mailed their responses to the researchers. A three-phase follow-up regime (Dillman, 2007) was used to secure the highest possible rate of return. To encourage a strong return rate for the surveys, we sent a second e-mail to all potential participants two days after the first e-mail to solicit participation from current school leaders in this district. We sent a final e-mail five days after the first e-mail to all participants thanking them for their time and reminding them of the next round of the survey that will be sent to them via e-mail, and inviting participation from those who might still be interested. Although we were hoping for a higher response rate, we believed that a 43 % response rate (12/28) was sufficient for reporting on the findings from this first effort of administering an electronic Delphi survey on flourishing.

Once received, responses were immediately removed from identifying data (e-mail replies) so there was no connection between specific responses received and respondent. We asked respondents for their impressions, memories, stories and understandings about their sense of flourishing in schools and to provide examples of where they see flourishing in their own work and the work of others in their school.

Their written narrative contributions are the data for this study. Data were inductively analyzed using the constant comparison method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Johnson & Christensen, 2012), whereby each item of information was classified into categories that gradually emerged as the data were examined. Patterns, trends, and categories were formed, re-formed, and adjusted with the accumulation of the data related (McMillan, 2002). All of these data were compared and contrasted with the themes derived from the ongoing literature review. Several rounds of data were collected as we analyzed and re-distributed the next iteration to the participants.

The use of an electronic Delphi survey enabled us to gather a maximum number of individual opinions on a topic without bringing participants together to discuss the topic, allowing for the collective wisdom of a group to surface through the various iterations of the survey. There are limitations to this study, however. The sample size is small and so generalizing findings beyond this study is unreasonable. Further, because we separated participant information from responses to aggregate the responses to provide these back to participants for their further elaboration and reflections on each iteration, we were unable to determine whether particular responses were connected to context (elementary or secondary; size of school; years of experience as an administrator) or gender. The following section provides an overview of the three main themes that emerged from the data and a discussion of these themes in relation to the literature from the theoretical framework used for analysis of the data.

### **Findings and Discussion**

Most of the responses indicated that flourishing environments were ones that hosted a strong sense of togetherness and being on purpose, where there was a strong

desire for helping children learn and an atmosphere of team playfulness and excitement. Although we will present these three themes in separate sections, the stories revealed that they interact and overlap as they join to create a sense a flourishing at work. Moreover, the participants described their understanding of flourishing, but acknowledged that, for them, flourishing is often “magical,” and “hard to quantify.” We aimed to have them put into words what is often impossible to describe but is commonly felt during their work in their schools. Although the participants may have been challenged to put into words their understanding of flourishing in their work, they were able to reflect on it as “deeply rewarding and satisfying.” One of the binding threads through the responses was the belief that a deep and lasting impression can be felt when a sense of flourishing has been evoked among educators and across the learning community. In the next section we describe the three themes that emerged from the stories: working together toward a common purpose; the importance of passion at work; and a sense of playfulness at work.

### **Toward a common purpose**

Working together toward a common purpose of helping all children to learn and grow emerged out of the stories as a shared theme among these participants. They described that this feeling of working together toward this important common purpose often created an emotional bond among all the teachers. This sense of collective action toward a shared purpose helped them to navigate through challenging times and difficult work. The belief of togetherness at work seemed to contribute to a feeling of fulfillment and of meaning in the work of leading the school. One principal described a sense of being fulfilled at work

I think of stories... when we achieved a common and expressed sense of purpose, vision, and plan of action. As a principal, a story that comes to mind is all staff (after months of collaboration about how to deal with a cohort of students that was less than motivated) agreeing that "it was our problem," agreeing upon a long-term vision of what it would look like if we were successful, and agreeing upon short and long-term action plans. There were frustrations, things that didn't work, and regular celebrations of things that worked well. It drew us together as a complete staff both professionally and socially.

For some of the respondents, finding a way to describe the desire for common action toward a shared purpose was done through the negative example, of how they experienced their work in the absence of togetherness at work. One respondent shared an experience of feeling the fragility, and even the mystery, of developing a sense of shared ownership for school improvement

I would say that the school I am in right now has some aspects that are flourishing but they are happening more at the individual teacher level than the school level. In order to start flourishing, the trust in administrators needs to be increased and the belief that teacher initiatives will be supported needs to be increased. I think that this is more of an art than a science. I have seen so many administrators kill schools and so few of them help the schools to flourish that I would say the biggest support a school can have is an administrator who does not put their ego ahead of the school and instead helps to build the confidence of their staff. They need to do this by guiding not by pushing, by building capacity for

leadership within the staff not by directing everything. If a staff truly embraces a sense of ownership and pride where a school's success is concerned and feels that they are given due credit for their contributions and efforts, the system starts to support itself.

For most of the respondents, a shared sense of leadership for improving the school was essential to their belief of flourishing at work. Many of the respondents described this shared leadership across the school community, including among the students, and explained that this leading together toward the common purpose of helping everyone learn and grow was an essential part of what it meant to be working in a school that is flourishing. The respondents described the rewarding feelings of working hard together through difficult times. They shared their stories of the positive impact on their work of celebrating the school's success and also caring for each other in difficult times in a community where all members felt they belonged and worked together. One principal's story captures this feeling of caring for one another in a flourishing school community and the deep emotional impressions this can leave on students and teachers

It snowed the night before. So I woke up early to head to school to shovel the school walkways as I did on snow mornings to have the walkways and stairs clear for students and staff. When I arrived the walkways were done. I soon discovered that a grade 5 boy had come to the school after the snowfall the night before and shoveled, because, he said, "Mr. N always does it for us, and I wanted to do something for him." It wasn't reading, writing or math, but somehow I think something even bigger was now part of "who we are as a school."

The message that students were an integral part of the shared leadership toward the school community's common purpose was a repeated idea among these participants. The message contained within this principal's description was the strong impression that can be made as students are empowered to enact the ideals and values of the learning community and to become part of the team of leaders who work towards the shared goals and common purposes. Interestingly, in this example it was the young student who helped this principal to see that the school had moved beyond what is typically understood as a successful school culture—academic goals—and into a realm of deeper community where members from across the school community were actively demonstrating care and consideration for other members as part of what it meant to belong to this school community.

In retracing the origins of the professional learning community concept, Stoll et al. (2007) note that the literature is infused with descriptions of the importance of an interdependent ethic of care necessary for creating safe spaces for teachers to learn about their practice with the goal of improving student learning. What the stories from our respondents highlighted is that this ethic of care is not intellectual, it is visceral and that the feeling of care that extends between teachers and students can create energy and motivation for a human experience that goes beyond academic learning and that can make a significant impact in how the community continues to work together towards the common goals that do centre on student outcomes. As was described by the principal in the example above, cultivating caring relationships with students and teachers is an essential aspect of the role of the principal and these relationships become an important indicator of flourishing in school.

## **Passion at work**

According to the respondents in this study, a flourishing school is one in which teachers and students engaged together to take risks in their learning, innovate in their teaching and “open their doors to the outside world.” The respondents shared their belief that creating a safe climate for teachers and students to make mistakes was essential to a sense of flourishing. Trust was a recurring thread in the responses around what kind of climate might promote a sense of flourishing in schools. One principal described

The first thing I usually notice about a flourishing school is the relaxed and comfortable way that staff interact with each other. It is a comfortable environment where jokes are common and taken in a positive manner. It is a place where risks are taken safely and without fear of personal criticism. When this trust is utilized by the staff to push each other outside of their comfort zones by engaging in research-supported practices, I believe the school is flourishing.

The principals in this study acknowledged the important work of creating a climate of learning where students and teachers felt safe to experiment and explore alternate ways of teaching and learning and that this was an important piece of helping teachers to see the possibilities for innovating in their work. One principal noted how she “believes a culture exists here which allows for risk taking and confidence building. People are innovative and open to trying different things.” Trust has been identified as an essential piece of school climate, a precursor to improvement (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Walker et al., 2011). The stories from these respondents supported the research findings of the essentiality of trust in creating a climate where teachers and students feel safe to take

risks toward improving their teaching and learning. Part of what was shared in the stories from these principals is that the work of creating trust in schools reflects back on them to give them a deeper sense of meaning in their own work. Creating trust and being trustworthy is not only good for ensuring the work of the school happens in an effective way, as captured by much of the current research on trust, but it was also described as a positive and enriching feeling for the person doing the work of building trust and created a stronger sense of passion for their own work—this was a noticed virtuous cycle.

The two parts of what these school leaders were describing was the need to create a climate in which all members of the learning community felt safe to experiment with new ideas as well as developing and engaging a sense of passion in their work.

In exploring the work lives of teachers, Christopher Day (2004) noted the importance of maintaining passion in the work of teaching as a key to sustaining quality teaching throughout teachers' careers. He argued that researchers who advocate for school improvement plans "often fail to grasp the need to bring the teachers with them in ways which do not simply ask for 'more' or 'different' but which acknowledge their primary need for self-fulfillment, job satisfaction, being valued; and which provide time and space to allow the creation, recreation and sustaining of the passion for teaching that enables them to teach at their best" (Day, 2004, p. 3). In explaining the importance of enacting the passion teachers feel for their content, for their students and for the role as agents for creating a democratic and just society, Day uses a quote from Nias (1996) communicating the dire need for teachers to be able to express the fullness of their passion at work

Teachers have hearts and bodies, as well as heads and hands, though the deep and

unruly nature of their hearts is governed by their heads, by the sense of moral responsibility for students and the integrity of their subject matter which is at the core of their professional identity. They cannot teach well if any part of them is disengaged for long. Increasingly, social and political pressures give precedence to head and hand, but if the balance between feeling, thinking and doing is disturbed too much or for too long, teaching becomes distorted, teachers' responses are restricted, they may even cease to be able to teach. Teachers are emotionally committed to many different aspects of their jobs. This is not an indulgence; it is a professional necessity. Without feeling, without the freedom to 'face themselves', to be whole persons in the classroom, they implode, explode—or walk away" (Nias, 1996, p. 305 as cited in Day, 2004, p. 14).

This understanding of the need for teachers to engage in their passion at work was evidenced in the stories from our respondents. The fullness of passion as described in the above quote, evokes a holistic or integral aspect to teaching, one in which educators engage the fullness of who they are as they interact with their students, and, we would argue, their colleagues. Similarly, Arthur Zajonc and Parker Palmer (2012) argue for an integrative model of higher education in which teaching and learning makes full use of both the mind and the heart to engage a broader awareness of what it means to be fully human on a learning journey. One of the interesting, but under-researched, aspects of learning communities is the role of emotions in professional learning. The influence of emotions in the work of leading schools has received some attention (Crawford, 2009, Hargreaves, 2001, Leathwood & Beatty, 2007), however, there is little research on the

generative influences of positive emotions for creating conditions within which teachers and other school leaders may thrive as professional learners and leaders of learning.

### **Play, laughter and joy**

The third theme that emerged from the stories of these principals was the importance of laughter, joy and play as integral to how these school leaders defined flourishing. As a general description, one principal described moments of flourishing as "... happy times, lots of laughter, lots of support for each other." There was a sense among the respondents that flourishing was about feeling good in their work at school as individuals and as a community and that this sense of feeling good often spilled over into other areas of their lives and vice versa. One principal recounted the memory of a particular feeling of flourishing as a triad of feeling a sense of achievement as a teacher, of a sense of closeness with colleagues and a sense of well-being in aspects of life outside of work

I have experienced these feelings various times during my career as a teacher and an administrator. My favourite year as a teacher was probably when the basketball team I was coaching was ranked in the top ten in the province, I had two of my 18 math 12 students get 100% on their provincial exams and I had a lot of close friends on staff with whom I spent a lot of time. I felt this year to be rewarding both because of the positive contributions I believed I was making to students' lives and because I was feeling really balanced in my life outside of work.

Another respondent echoed this sense of individual and collective well-being in how flourishing in school was described

I believe I work in a flourishing school. It is not a perfect school by any stretch, but every day I see people who are positive and passionate about what they do. They get down and frustrated like anybody, but they are masters at shaking it off because at the end of the day they love what they do....And there is definitely a culture of fun and sense of humour which supports the flourishing that takes place.

The narratives of flourishing as an experience of fun and much laughter and a sense of joy at work relates to findings from positive psychology on conditions and states of mind necessary for deep engagement in activities and learning. This psychological state of joy called, flow, is produced from engagement in an activity in which individuals demonstrate an intense and focused concentration, a sense of losing track of time, a loss of self-consciousness, a feeling of control of one's actions and environment, and high levels of intrinsic satisfaction (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997; Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2003; Seligman, 2011). In a state of flow, teachers might experience deep levels of engagement, passion and joy, all of which produce positive feelings in and through their work. From the work of positive psychology, such as Frederickson's (2008) broaden and build theory of positive emotions, we know that experiencing positive feelings in one area of work can open up possibilities for positive experiences in other areas of work and and life, as was described by the one respondent who talked about the memorable year when positive events and work and in his private life created a confluence of flourishing. Research on play and positive behaviours at school tend to focus on the benefits of play for students (Goouch, 2008) with little research focusing on the benefits of play in the work of teachers. From the business literature, play at work has had modest attention in

research and writing (ie. Pink, 2010), where studies show that the positive physiological and psychological benefits of play can likely transfer to the work environment if employees are able to engage in moments of play during their work.

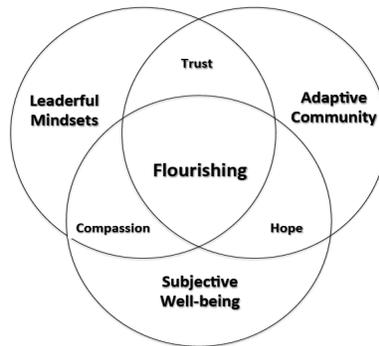
### **Discussion**

From the stories and related insights from these school leaders we have been able to glean initial understandings about what it means to flourish as individuals and to be a member of a flourishing school community, where members feel a sense of thriving, vitality, joy and engagement among other descriptions. The three aspects of purpose, passion and play resonate with and are linked to ideas of trust and shared leadership in ways that evoke a rich sense of teaching and learning that we have tried to capture in a conceptual model offered in the next section. There were a number of stories of flourishing and insights related to learning communities being adaptive (i.e., in roles, approaches) to meet challenges or needs. In his extensive research on the work lives of teachers, Day (2004; Day, Sammons, Stobart, Kingston & Gu, 2007) indicated the connections between teachers' sense of efficacy and commitment and their feelings of well-being and resilience capabilities. Day et al. (2007) recommended that policy-makers ensure provision for personnel support structures to "address the associations between teachers' well-being, and their commitment, self-efficacy and resilience" (p. 238). We know from research in positive psychology about interventions that can increase personal feelings of well-being and so we suggest that starting with teachers and other school leaders themselves can be an important step in understanding how to support well-being and resilience among those who teach and learn in schools. Further, teacher education and leadership development programs could become the initial point for

conversation and practice about the kinds of practices and habits of mind that support a sense of flourishing in self and others in the work of teaching and leading learning in others (Cherkowski & Walker, 2013).

From the findings, we are led to wonder about the kinds of conditions, collective values or virtues that might be necessary to give rise to school learning communities which are adaptable, resilient and responsive to the needs of teachers and other special needs, or changing circumstances. We are interested in the potential interdependence of a learning community's adaptability quotient, the leadership mindset of the school and the school's general, subjective well-being and have begun to develop a conceptual model to represent the initial findings from this study (Figure 1). The emerging model is informed by the findings from this study and underpinned by the research literature from the positive fields of psychology and positive organizational scholarship and the body of research on learning community theory. Further, we aimed to underscore the model with a holistic view of the development of human capacity (Nussbaum, 2011; Scheffler, 1985; Sen, 2009) within the learning community model. Three intersecting domains of attention: (1) Subjective well-being; (2) Leaderful Mindsets; and (3) Adaptive community provide the foundation for exploring the phenomenon of flourishing in schools from an individual and an organizational perspective. We have identified the professional virtues of compassion, hope and trust as integral for establishing learning climates that are steeped in trust and care, where teachers and other school leaders may feel a sense of flourishing. We hypothesize that these aspects of flourishing are related. We aim to learn more about the impacts and effects on flourishing when, how and in what combinations these domains and aspects of flourishing interact and intersect at the

individual and collective level in schools to evoke and inspire the further development of purpose, passion and play in school leaders' work lives.



**Figure 1. Flourishing in Schools: A Conceptual Model**

### **Conclusion**

One of the aims of this study was to establish a definition for flourishing in school contexts. As we engaged more deeply with the data, we noticed that there is no clear definition that we can share. Indeed, the idea of a messy, murky and sometimes elusive understanding of flourishing underpinned the stories we heard from the leaders in this study. We noticed that there seemed to be a common thread of trust, compassion and a sense of hope that ran through the stories from our respondents and suggest that these professional virtues play a large role in establishing the conditions and climate where a sense of purpose, passion and play is felt and described as flourishing in the work lives of the educators in this story. From the principals' stories and recollections of moments of purpose, passion and play in how they feel a sense of flourishing in their work, we are guided to think about different integrative models of school improvement that would

empower teachers and other school leaders to inquire into their passion and their practice to notice when their hearts, minds and bodies are most fully expressed and alive in their work. How can teachers and other school leaders be supported in cultivating climates where the fullness of passion, purpose and play is encouraged in the work of teaching and learning? In this article, we have argued that the capacity for educational leaders to enliven passion in themselves and their learning community is an important, and perhaps under-researched, area of school improvement. As Day (2004) highlighted, it is through the passion of quality teaching that students are often most caught up in the confluence of strong teaching and learning. As we further explore the phenomenon of flourishing in schools and inquire into the domains of subjective well-being, leaderful mindsets, and adaptive community, we hope to test the usefulness of this understanding of flourishing in other contexts and in other organizations.

## References

- Achor, S. (2011). *The happiness advantage: the seven principles of positive psychology that fuel success and performance at work*. New York: Crown Business.
- Bakker, A.B., & Schaufeli, W.B. (2008). Positive organizational behavior: Engaged employees in flourishing organizations. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 29(2), 147-154.
- Ben-Shahar, T. (2008). *Happier*. Maidenhead, Berkshire, England: McGraw-Hill
- Bryk, A. & Schneider, B. (2002). *Trust in Schools : A Core Resource for Improvement*. Russell Sage Foundation: New York, NY.
- Cameron, K. S., & Caza, A. (2004). Introduction: Contributions to the discipline of positive organizational scholarship. *The American Behavioral Scientist*, 47(6), 731-739.
- Cameron, K. S., Dutton, J. E., & Quinn, R. E. (2003). *Positive organizational scholarship: Foundations of a new discipline*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.
- Carr, A. (2004). *Positive psychology: The science of happiness and human strengths*. New York: Routledge.
- Cherkowski, S. (2012). Teacher commitment in sustainable learning communities: A new “ancient” story of educational leadership. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 35(1), 56-68.
- Cherkowski, S & Walker, K. (2013b). Living the flourishing question: Positivity as an orientation for the preparation of teacher candidates. *Northwest Journal of Teacher*

*Education*, 11(2), 80-103.

Crawford, M. (2009). *Getting to the heart of leadership: Emotion and the educational leader*. London, UK: Sage/Paul Chapman.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1997). *Finding Flow: The Psychology of Engagement with Everyday Life*. BasicBooks: New York, NY.

Gallos, J. (2008). From the toxic trenches: The winding road to healthier organizations—and to healthy everyday leaders. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 17 (4), 354-367.

Fullan, M. (2006). *Learning Places: A Field Guide for Improving the Context of Schooling*. Corwin Press: Thousand Oaks, CA.

Fullan, M. (2007). *The New Meaning of Educational Change*. Teachers College Press: New York, NY.

Day, C. (2004). *A passion for teaching*. London, UK: Routledge.

Day, C, Sammons, P., Stobart, G., Kingston, A. & Gu, Q. (2007). *Teachers matter: Connecting work, lives and effectiveness*. Berkshire, UK: Open University Press.

Dillman, D. (2007). *Mail and internet surveys: The tailored design method*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. John Wiley and sons.

Dufour, R., & Eaker, R. (1998). *Professional learning communities at work: Best practices for enhancing student achievement*. Bloomington, IN: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Frederickson, B. (2008). Promoting positive affect. In M. Eid & R. Larsen (Eds.), *The science of subjective well-being*, pp. 449-468. New York: Guildford Press.

Fredrickson, B. L., & Losada, M. F. (2005). Positive affect and the complex dynamics of human flourishing. *American Psychologist*, 60 (7), 678-686.

- Gable, S. & Haidt, J. (2005). What (and why) is positive psychology? *Review of General Psychology*, 9(2), 103-110.
- Gallos, J. (2008). From the toxic trenches: The winding road to healthier organizations—and to healthy everyday leaders. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 17 (4), 354-367.
- Glaser, B.G & Strauss, A.L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Chicago, IL: Aldine Publishers.
- Goouch, Kathy. (2008). Understanding playful pedagogies, play narratives and play spaces. *Early Years*, 28 (1), 93-102.
- Haybron, D. (2008). Happiness, the self and human flourishing. *Utilitas*, 20(1), 21-49.
- Hord, S.M., & Sommers, W.A. (2008). *Leading professional learning communities: Voices from research and practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Johnson, B. & Christensen, L. (2012). (Eds.). *Educational research: Quantitative, qualitative and mixed approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Keyes, C., Frederickson, B., & Park, N. (2012). Positive psychology and the quality of life. In C. Keyes, B. Frederickson & N. Park (Eds.), *Handbook of social indicators and quality of life research*, pp. 99-112. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer.
- Keyes, C. & Lopez, S. (2002). Toward a science of mental health. In C. Keyes & S. Lopez (Eds.), *Handbook of positive psychology*, pp. 45-59. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Lencioni, P. (2012). *The advantage: Why organizational health trumps everything*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Hargreaves, 2001. The emotional geographies of teaching, *International Journal of*

- Educational Research*, 35(5), 503-527.
- Leithwood, K. (2006). *Teacher working conditions that matter : Evidence for change*. Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario: Toronto, ON.
- Leithwood, K., & Beatty, B. (2007). *Leading with teacher emotions in mind*. Corwin: Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Lilius, J.M., Worline, M.C., Maitlis, S. Kanov, J., Dutton, J.E., & Frost, P. (2008). The contours and consequences of compassion at work. *Journal of Organizational Behaviour*, 29, 193–218.
- Luthans, F. & Youssef, C.M. (2007). Emerging positive organizational behavior, *Journal of Management*, 33(3), 321-349.
- Maitlis, S. (2009). Who am I now? Sensemaking and identity in posttraumatic growth. In L. Roberts & J. Dutton (Eds.), *Exploring Positive Identities and Organizations: Building a Theoretical and Research Foundation*, pp. 47-66. New York: Routledge.
- Martin A.J. & Marsh, H.W. (2006). Academic resilience and its psychological and educational correlates: A construct validity approach. *Psychology in Schools*, 43(3), 267-281.
- McMillan, J. (2002). *Understanding and evaluating educational research*. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Merrill/Pearson.
- Mitchell, C. & Sackney, L. (2009). *Sustainable improvement: Building learning communities that endure*. Rotterdam, Netherlands: Sense.
- Nakamura, J. & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2003). The motivational sources of creativity as viewed from the paradigm of positive psychology. In *A psychology of human*

- strengths: Fundamental questions and future directions for a positive psychology*, pp 257-269. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Nias, J. (1996). Thinking about feeling: The emotions in teaching. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 26 (3), p. 293-306.
- Nussbaum, M. (2011). *Creating capabilities: The human development approach*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Pace, A. (2010). Unleashing positivity in the workplace. *T + D*, 64(1), 40-44.
- Palmer, P & Zajonc, A (2012). *The heart of higher education: A call to renewal*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Pink, D. (2010). *A whole new mind: Why right-brainers will rule the world*. New York: Routledge.
- Rasmussen, D. (1999). Human flourishing and the appeal to human nature. *Social Philosophy and Policy*, 16(1), 1-43.
- Roberts, L. & Dutton, J. (2009). *Exploring Positive Identities and Organizations: Building a Theoretical and Research Foundation*. Routledge: New York. NY.
- Robinson, V. (2007). *The impact of leadership on student outcomes: Making sense of the evidence*. Melbourne: Australian Council for Educational Research. Retrieved January 12, 2011, from [http://research.acer.edu.au/research\\_conference\\_2007/5/](http://research.acer.edu.au/research_conference_2007/5/)
- Rosso, B.D., Dekas, K.H. & Wrzesniewski, A. (2010). On the meaning of work: A theoretical integration and review. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 30, 91-127.
- Sackney, L., & Walker, K. (2007). Sustainable innovation in exemplary schools. *International Journal of Interdisciplinary Social Sciences*, 1, 1-10.

- Scheffler, I. (1985). *Of human potential: An essay in the philosophy of education*.  
Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Seligman, M. (2011). *Flourish: A visionary new understanding of happiness and well-being*. New York: Free Press.
- Seligman, M. (2002). *Authentic happiness: Using the new positive psychology to realize your potential for lasting fulfillment*. New York: Free Press.
- Seligman, M. & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2000). Positive psychology: An introduction, *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 5-14.
- Sen, A. (2009). *The idea of justice*. London: Allen Lane.
- Sergiovanni, T. (1994). *Building school communities*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Stoll, L., & Louis, K.S. (2007). Professional learning communities: Elaborating new approaches. In L. Stoll & K.S. Louis (Eds.), *Professional learning communities: Divergence, depth and dilemmas* (pp. 1-13). Berkshire, UK: Open University Press.
- Wheatley, M. (2005). *Finding our way: Leadership for an uncertain time*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.
- Wright, T.A. (2003). Positive organizational behavior: An idea whose time has truly come. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 24(4), 437-442.