

ABSTRACT

A Qualitative Study on Teaching Methods and Leadership Strategies Used by Six Legendary Texas High School Football Coaches

Hunter Taylor, Ed.D.

Mentor: Trena Wilkerson, Ph.D.

With this multiple case study, the researcher examined the different teaching methods and leadership strategies used by six coaches actively coaching in the fall of 2016 who are considered successful in their fields. Four of these coaches have won four state championships; which is more than any other active coach in Texas High School Football, and the other two coaches have won three state championships and are currently coaching at the highest level of college football, Division I. The research question was, “What teaching methods and teaching strategies are used by Texas high school football coaches in championship winning schools?” In order to probe further, the following sub-questions were formulated: (1) What methods did the coach use to understand his subjects in an effective manner? (2) What were the work and community environments like for the coach at his school and town? (3) What type(s) of leadership did the coach model with his team and staff? (4) How did the coach continue his development as a coach and teacher as well as the development of his staff?

This qualitative research was conducted by interview and all of the questions were connected to a four-part framework. The four parts of the framework were: Coaches as

More Capable Others, Orchestrators of the Environment, Leadership, and Coaching Development. After the interviews were recorded and transcribed, they were coded and analyzed by the researcher and two other people with research experience. After comparing with the other researchers' findings, 10 themes seemed to emerge from the study. These 10 themes seemed to be present in all or most of the six successful head coaches' teaching methods and leadership strategies.

A Qualitative Study on Teaching Methods and Leadership Strategies Used by Six
Legendary Texas High School Football Coaches

by

Hunter Taylor, B.A., M.A.

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Approved by the Department of Curriculum and Instruction

Larry J. Browning, Ed.D., Chairperson

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Approved by the Dissertation Committee

Trena L. Wilkerson, Ph.D., Chairperson

Larry J. Browning, Ed.D.

Tony L. Talbert, Ed.D.

Sandi Cooper, Ph.D.

Glenn A. Miller, Ph.D.

Accepted by the Graduate School
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J. Larry Lyon, Ph.D., Dean

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DEDICATION

To my parents
the best coach and coach's wife I have ever seen

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Physical and Sports Education

“In order for man to succeed in life, God provided him with two means, education and physical activity” (Plato). Physical education has been emphasized throughout time. Beginning with Plato, whose writings focused on how neither the intellectual nor the physical should be emphasized over the other in the education of the person (Ozoliņš & Stolz, 2013). Plato thought God had given man a body to physically train; and nutrition and a disciplined lifestyle should be included in this training (Ozoliņš & Stolz, 2013). Aristotle also joined in this view of physical education to be highly important (MacAllister, 2013). It is inferred from Aristotle’s writings that he believed physical activities to be very helpful in character and intellectual development, and he thought courage and temperance were byproducts of regularly participating in physical activities. He also understood that a healthier body promoted a heightened intellectual state (MacAllister, 2013). More recent studies also discuss the benefits of physical education. In 2009, Moreno Murcia, Coll, and Ruiz Pérez conducted a study with over 400 students between the ages of 14-16. The researchers sought to measure for psychological mediators, motivation types, and physical education importance. The results showed the students’ psychological mediators like competence and autonomy were positively related to the importance each student placed on their physical education (Moreno Murcia et al., 2009). Another study conducted in the Northeastern part of the United States evaluated

fitness scores along with Math and English state test scores for students ranging from fourth to eighth grade. The findings showed that students who scored higher in fitness had higher passing rates in both the Math and English state tests (Chomitz et al., 2009).

Sports education has also been linked to the promotion of other values such as peace, tolerance, social inclusion, intercultural dialogue, and the prevention of violence. However, according to Hartmann and Kwauk (2011), sports are most beneficial at accomplishing these values when they are structured and organized in a purposive way where intentionally seeking these values is the goal (Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011). The development of these values in players has been positively linked to sports education; and the orchestrator of the player's experience is the coach (Jones & Wallace, 2005). While there are existing knowledge bases that focus on product-oriented views of practice, Saury and Durand (1998) also point out that many coaches feel like these knowledge bases are unrealistic for the challenges a coach faces (Potrac, Jones, & Armour, 2002; Saury & Durand, 1998). A coach's orchestration of the environment must be able to adapt to whatever circumstances are presented, because he or she is the conductor. Their role as the coach is unique and vital to the educational experience (Parry, 2012).

Texas High School Football

Friday Night Lights

On fall Friday nights in Texas, community gatherings exist in the form of attendance at one of the state's most popular sports, high school football. The entire Friday at most of these schools and towns is a gradual build-up of excitement to the ultimate football game. Teachers and students wear clothes representing their school's

team, classes are let out early to attend pep rallies, and marching bands and dance teams rehearse all week for their pep rally and mid-game performances (Foley, 1990). Local businesses will even close early, so their owners can make their way to the stadium to get to their seats; but not before they have painted a sign outside their store windows wishing their team good luck. Player moms and other volunteers put together packages for “their boys” filled with their favorite snacks along with other spirit organizations illuminating the player locker rooms with pictures and school-colored decorations.

At the center of all of this attention are players ranging from ages 14-18 who play the sport, and the adults who direct them as coaches. While both groups are treated like local celebrities from school peers and community residents due to their performances, there has been little attention paid to the educational development that takes place on the football field and in the locker room (Bissinger 1990).

Coach as a Teacher

In Texas high school football, the public high schools are not allowed to recruit players from outside the school district to attend their school and play for their sports teams. This means that the development of players from elementary age to middle school to high school is crucial to a football program’s success. While college coaches are viewed to be some of the very best in the country at coaching, many college coaches view the best teachers of the game to be successful high school coaches, because they have to adapt their game plan to what each class of players does best. College coaches, on the other hand, get to recruit players to come and join their teams. High school coaches create the environments, and must use effective teaching methods to determine what works best for their players (Myerberg, 2015).

This researcher sought to examine the different teaching methods and leadership strategies used by six coaches actively coaching in the fall of 2016 who are considered successful in their fields. Four of these coaches have won four state championships, which is more than any other active coach in Texas high school football, and the other two coaches have won three state championships and are currently coaching at the highest level of college football, Division I. By studying these six football coaches, other teachers, coaches, and others who consider themselves a leader will be able to look at how each coach was successful with their players and may then be able to structure their classroom, program, or organization in a way that leads to higher student or employee performance.

Creating a Framework

While there are several existing studies that focus on coaching, none exists that examine the teaching methods and leadership strategies of six of the most successful head high school coaches in the context of Texas high school football. High school football in Texas has a unique culture that has been profiled in books, television series, and movies; and some of these describe in great detail the stresses and demands of the head coaching job (Bissinger, 1990). Playing a team sport like football has also been documented as a very important and formational time in a young person's life where character traits like perseverance, discipline, and teamwork are taught (Parry, 2012). Because the playing field has been shown to be an educational environment for participating players constructed by coaches, it is very important to hear how six of the most successful football coaches in the state of Texas implemented certain teaching methods and

leadership strategies into the construction of their programs to win multiple state championships. This study was accomplished through interviews with all six coaches.

In 2004, Gallimore and Tharp revisited a study on former Hall of Fame UCLA men's basketball coach, John Wooden. In the original study conducted in the 1970s, the researchers sought to look at how Coach Wooden gave information to his players, in other words, it looked at his teaching methods. Gallimore and Tharp's re-visitation of the study concluded the quantitative findings of Wooden's teaching methods were rich in detail and offered great insight into becoming a more effective teacher and coach. It did not, however, offer insight into the leadership strategies he used for his staff and team. The authors did offer limitations of the original study. More insight may have been gained if the researchers had done interviews with Coach Wooden to learn his intent for the way he conducted his program (Gallimore & Tharp, 2004). Thus an interview approach was used for this study.

All six coaches have experienced a significant amount of success that separates them from their peers in Texas high school football. This researcher aims at examining the teaching methods used by the six coaches. The following four areas will serve as the framework for the study:

1. Coaches as More Capable Others
2. Orchestrators of the Environment
3. Leadership
4. Coaching Development

Some detail is provided in the next section of this chapter regarding the support from the literature for each area with more detail provided in Chapter 2.

More Capable Others

Football is a game played with 22 players on the field. Half of them are on offense and the other half are on defense. Both halves are in opposition of each other. There are multiple officials who do not work for either team that are there to monitor the game in order to make sure the players comply with the rules of the game. The coaches and the rest of the players who are not on the field playing are on the sidelines of the football field. While coaches will give instructions on the type of offenses or defenses to execute, they are not on the field with their players. Players have to execute what they have been taught by themselves on the playing field. Because of this aspect of the game, coaching research has largely ignored providing coaches with an opportunity to reflect on how their instruction looks to their players (Jones, 2004). In Vygotsky's (1978) writings, he discusses how coaches are faced with the task of developing knowledgeable players who can execute tasks without direct supervision. Coaches have to be *more capable others*, and this requires a strong learning relationship with the player. One way this is done is by creating opportunities for guided discovery in practice that fosters player problem solving (Cassidy, Jones, & Potrac, 2008, Coffey & Duyn, 1997). For instance, a coach may put his or her players in a situation in practice that closely resembles a game and have them direct each other on how to execute the game plan for this particular situation. This type of example facilitates cognitive development in the participating athletes. In addition to game-specific activities, Kidman, Thorpe, Jones, and Lewis (2001) wrote about the use of questioning being essential to player development. It does not have to be only tactical or game analysis types of questions either. Low-order questions that pertain to ideas and concepts are very beneficial as well, because they

strengthen the overall relationship between the coach and the player (Kidman et al., 2001). In the current study, the researcher examined how each coach developed relationships with his players.

Orchestrators of the Environment

In 1986, Lou Holtz took over as the head football coach at the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana. After looking through some historical documents of the University's football team upon arrival, he saw an old black-and-white sign that said, "Play Like A Champion Today." He discovered that the sign was a way to invoke past players to do their very best when they left the locker room and took the field. Coach Holtz decided to have the sign re-done and hung in the tunnel that his players would go through before they took the field. The sign would be a reminder to give their very best just like the past players did at Notre Dame (Reilly, 2012). The choosing of certain signs, music, uniforms, and captains are some of the ways coaches try to create an environment that yields success for their teams (Wallace & Pocklington, 2002). There is also the environment that encompasses the community and the rest of the school. Coaches have control over some aspects of their environment, and then there is some ambiguity in the control they possess. The community's stakeholders, the parents, administrators, and other teachers may have differing views about the coach or team that are contrary to what the head coach is seeking to instill. Managing this aspect of the environment can be a very difficult process for a head coach (Jones, 2004). There is also the contradictory beliefs or values held by a player or another coach on the team that differ from the head coach. While the head coach may emphasize team goals, a certain athlete or assistant coach may be more focused on his or her own individual success (Côté, Salmela, Trudel,

& Baria, 1995). In the current study, the researcher sought to examine ways that six successful Texas High School coaches constructed and managed their environments.

Leadership

The subject of leadership has been studied in a variety of vocations. In the business world, Harker and Sharma (2000) researched topics like organizational turnaround and substantial business growth. They concluded the reasons for a company's decline showed a lack of vision by the company's leaders (Harker & Sharma, 2000). In a similar study, Kanter (2003) investigated over 20 companies that experienced a turnaround and came to the conclusion that the psychology of having people believe they can turn their misfortunes around is a necessary component to turnaround success. In education, Nicolaidou and Ainscow (2005) conducted a study on a group of English primary schools who were labeled *failing*. Their results showed changing how the staff and students viewed the school was necessary to getting the desired amount of productivity they were aiming for (Nicolaidou & Ainscow, 2005). Once productivity begins to take place, it can then be a tough task for the leader to keep his or her employees satisfied and managed. In Inglis, Danylchuk, and Pastore's (1996) study, they were able to identify a group of factors most effective with retention. Those factors were inclusiveness, recognition and collegial support, and work balance conditions (Inglis et al., 1996). Whether it is organizational turnaround or employee retention, the coaching profession offers insight into leadership, and all six of the coaches interviewed for this study were able to lead their programs to a level of success not seen before. This researcher aimed at examining the teaching methods and leadership strategies used by six

of the most successful Texas High School head football coaches during their leadership tenures.

Coaching Development

Coaching has been described as a complex social encounter. There are elements of the profession that are hard to describe unless they have been experienced (Jones, 2004). Therefore, it would be highly beneficial to cultivate communities of practice in order to learn from other coaches in the profession. Wenger (1998) writes the fundamental process by which we learn is engaging in the social practice. This leads us to become who we are as educators (Wenger, 1998). The communities do not even need to be with coaches from the same sport. Darling-Hammond (2008) writes about how teachers getting advice from teachers in other departments sometimes are the most beneficial, because these interactions offer fresh perspectives as opposed to what they are used to being around. In his memoir, former National Football League (NFL) coach Jon Gruden (2003) talks about how much he learned from Indiana head basketball coach, Bobby Knight. While they each coached different sports, Gruden talks about how Knight taught him so much about teaching life skills to players in addition to sport-specific skills. This goes along with Allee's (2000) research that shows how people begin to formulate a sense of mission after experiencing shared understanding. Unfortunately, formal education of coaching has focused too much on sport-specific knowledge, and many other important factors that play a part in coaching are left unlearned (Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2003). This study will be helpful to other educators as the researcher examined how each of the six coaches continued their personal professional development as well as the development of their staff.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of these narrative case studies was to examine the teaching methods used by six football coaches who are considered successful in their field. Four of them have won four state championships in Texas high school football, while the other two have won three state championships and are currently coaching on the Division I college level. This qualitative study will showcase the intent behind their selected teaching methods in response to the contexts and challenges facing their respective schools' teams through the lens of each coach. The framework for this study consists of four areas:

1. Coaches as More Capable Others
2. Orchestrators of the Environment
3. Leadership
4. Coaching Development

In this study, the researcher provides a voice for Texas high school football coaches and reveals what their lives are like. The researcher reveals the decisions coaches have to make on a daily basis as well as the cultural uniqueness of high school football in Texas.

Narrative Case Study

Narrative case study research gives each participant a voice to offer connections between his actions and social contexts. The results are thought-provoking tools for teacher education, since insight from all six coaches was sought on different teaching methods used to better reach their players and utilize their staff (Moen, 2008).

Throughout this study, each coach was given the opportunity to provide details and anecdotes about the context of their state champion high school program and the

community before their arrival, during their tenure, and at the completion of their time. The decisions they made and the results of their actions are documented.

Research Question and Sub-Question

Each coach providing information may reveal critical insights into the teaching and coaching profession. It was the intent of the researcher that this examination of six exemplary football coaches' teaching methods and leadership strategies will be able to help teachers, coaches, and anyone else who calls him or herself a leader, especially of young people, be able to structure their classroom, program, or organization in a way that leads to higher student or employee performance. Thus the purpose of this study was to address the research question, "What teaching methods and leadership strategies are used by Texas high school football coaches in championship winning schools?" In order to probe further, the researcher formulated sub-questions (their correlating framework topics are in parenthesis):

1. What methods did the coach use to understand his subjects in an effective manner? (Coaches as More Capable Others, Orchestrators of the Environment, Leadership, Coaching Development)
2. What were the work and community environments like for the coach at his school and town? (Coaches as More Capable Others, Orchestrators of the Environment, Leadership, Coaching Development)
3. What type(s) of leadership did the coach model with his team and staff? (Coaches as More Capable Others, Orchestrators of the Environment, Leadership, Coaching Development)

4. How did the coach continue his development as a coach and teacher as well as the development of his staff? (Leadership, Coaching Development)

Significance of the Study

Texas Football is Different

Twenty-five years ago, *Friday Night Lights* was released, and it is still one of the most insightful pieces of literature about high school football culture and its significance to a community (Bissinger, 1990). The book spawned a television show and a major motion picture, and it did so by displaying how significant and consuming that time period was for the players who participated on the high school football team in Texas. While the book offered insight into the players' and coaches' stories as well as the context, it did not go into great detail about the teaching methods and leadership strategies used by the head football coach.

The team featured in the book had won multiple state championships in its history, so what exactly was the coach doing to be so successful? Also, was he educating the team with the promotion of a certain set of values? By interviewing the six successful coaches about the teaching methods and leadership strategies each one used as head coach of their state champion high school programs, this researcher could capture invaluable information that would help other educators or leaders in their own practice.

High school sports are changing, football in particular. Television contracts, new stadiums, and clothing deals all amass to a more money driven culture that expects winning results from administrators and community leaders. In 2012, the national average salary for a high school football coach was \$39,000. In Texas the average salary

jumps up to \$88,000, with many head high school coaches making well over \$100,000. Many of these head coaches also serve as the athletic director of the school in order to help bolster their salary. The pressure to succeed has also increased, and more coaches are getting fired due to not winning enough games (Koba 2012). It is therefore highly significant to conduct a study of the teaching methods and leadership strategies used by successful head high school football coaches given the complexity of their contexts.

Criteria for Selected Coaches

What makes what each of these six coaches accomplished as a leader so unique? First of all, since a state championship is the highest achievement a team can accomplish, this accomplishment is used as a way to distinguish coaches who are the very best at what they do. In the history of Texas high school football, Table 1 shows the coaches who have won the most state championships from 1900 until the summer of 2016 (J. L. Smith, 2016):

Only eight of the 35 coaches listed on Table 1 are actively coaching, and two of those eight are currently coaching on the Division I level in college football. The hiring of successful high school coaches to Division I college football staffs is a rare and unique occurrence that often denotes exceptional talent at the high school level. This job promotion usually entails a significant rise in salary and professional status (Myerberg, 2015). The two coaches, who currently coach on the Division level in addition to winning at least three championships, are Chad Morris and Jeff Traylor. The other four coaches, Scott Surratt, Todd Dodge, Gary Joseph, and Tom Westerberg, have won more Texas high school state championships than any other active coaches in 2016 at four each.

Table 1

Texas High School Football Coaches of State Championship Football Teams

# of State Titles – 1900-2016	Coach			
9	Gordon Wood			
8	G. A. Moore			
5	Tim Buchanan			
4	Art Briles	*Todd Dodge	Joe Golding	*Gary Joseph
	Jim Lineweaver	T. J. Mills	D. W. Rutledge	*Scott Surratt
3	Paul Tyson	*Tom Westerberg		
	Emory Bellard	Barry Bowman	Blair Cherry	Don Cowan
	Terry Cron	Charles (Chuck) Curtis	Sam Harrell	Jerry Hopkins
3	Mike Johnston	Tom Kimbrough	Bob Ledbetter	*Joey McGuire
	*Chad Morris	Charles (Chuck) Moser	Jim Norman	John Parchman
	Gary Proffitt	*Rich Rhoades	Prince E. (Pete) Shotwell	*Jeff Traylor
	Tommy Watkins	Alan Weddell		

Note. *Denotes coaches who are actively coaching

Description of Participants

Tom Westerberg won four state championships at Allen High School in Allen, Texas. He is currently the head football coach at Barbers Hill High School in Mont Belvieu, Texas. Scott Surratt has spent his entire head-coaching career at Carthage High School in Carthage, Texas. He has won four state championships. Gary Joseph has also spent his entire head-coaching career at one school. He is the head football coach at Katy High School in Katy, Texas where he has also won four state championships. Todd Dodge won four state championships at Southlake Carroll High School in Southlake,

Texas. He left there to become the head football coach at the University of North Texas. He is currently back in high school as the head football coach at Westlake High School in Austin, Texas. Chad Morris won one state championship at Bay City High School in Bay City, Texas and two more at Lake Travis High School in Austin, Texas. After Lake Travis' second state championship, he accepted a coaching assignment at Tulsa University. He is now the current head football coach at Southern Methodist University (SMU) in Dallas, Texas. Jeff Traylor won three state championships at Gilmer High School in Gilmer, Texas. He accepted a coaching position at the University of Texas in Austin (UT) after Gilmer won its third state title. He is currently an assistant coach at UT.

Framework

The narrative case studies of the six coaches will give the reader a dense understanding of the teaching methods and leadership strategies used by each coach in their state championship winning programs. Questions covered in the interview process were based off of the framework previously described:

1. Coaches as More Capable Others
2. Orchestrators of the Environment
3. Leadership
4. Coaching Development

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine the teaching methods and leadership styles used by six football coaches who are considered successful in their fields. The

narrative case studies of the six coaches will give the reader a dense understanding of the teaching methods and leadership strategies used by each coach in their state championship winning programs. The six coaches chosen for this study have separated themselves from their peers. Four of them have won more Texas High School state football championships than any other active coach at four titles, and the other two have won three state titles and are coaching on college football's highest level, Division I. This qualitative study highlights the intent behind their selected teaching methods and leadership strategies in response to the contexts and challenges facing their respective schools' teams. With this study, the researcher provides a voice for Texas high school football coaches and reveals what their lives are like. The researcher reveals the decisions these coaches have to make on a daily basis as well as display the cultural uniqueness of high school football in Texas.

The information collected from interviews, and the interviews provide rich, descriptive evidence and required fieldwork on my part (Merriam, 1998). By giving each coach a voice, insight was gained for the education research community on how to raise the performance of teachers and students. The study may also benefit anyone in leadership. The remaining chapters consist of a literature review (Chapter Two), a description of the methodology (Chapter Three), the presentation of the results (Chapter Four), and a discussion of the findings (Chapter Five).

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Chapter One of this dissertation provided information about the purpose and significance of the study. Given the nature of this study, a narrative case study research design gives each of the six different coaches a voice to offer connections between his actions and social contexts. Chapter Two is information on existing studies that relate to the four different categories of research that make up the theoretical framework for this study. The categories are: more capable others, orchestrators of the environment, leadership, and coaching development.

The overall intent of this study was to examine the teaching methods and leadership strategies used by six high school football coaches considered successful in their field. It was important to look at existing coaching studies to see what researchers had already discovered in this particular category of education. There is a lack of research examining teaching methods and leadership strategies conducted by successful high school football coaches; an existing framework on the role of a coach was selected by the researcher from *The Sports Coach as Educator* (Jones, 2006). The framework was selected because it incorporated several categories together that other researchers had mentioned in pieces.

Existing coaching articles that fell into one of these four categories were read along with research about leadership in other vocations. Leadership research was expanded into other avenues because of the number of players and staff on high school

football programs today. While sports like basketball and baseball carry between 10-15 players on their Varsity team, football may have close to 40-50 players. For instance, the 2015 Katy High School football team had 74 players on it. A typical football program may have a Junior Varsity team, a Ninth Grade team, an Eighth Grade team, and a Seventh Grade team. This often depends on the size of the school, since some of the smallest schools in Texas are unable to field multiple teams. Because of the sheer mass of numbers involved in a football program coupled with the high status among the community, it would seem important for coaches to possess strong leadership skills (Bissinger, 1990).

More Capable Others

In 1994, a Ph.D. candidate, Daniel Gerdes, came up with a plan of action to study coaching excellence in the college basketball coaching world. He sent out a questionnaire to all NCAA Division I head coaches asking who they thought were currently the best in their profession. The three coaches that appeared the most were Dean Smith of North Carolina, Denny Crum of Louisville, and Roy Williams of Kansas. Gerdes then travelled to each campus and interviewed the selected head coaches, their staffs, and their players. The information Gerdes took away from the qualitative study had several commonalities including viewing their profession as part of the education process and possessing a strong spiritual strength and integrity.

Transformational Coaching is a term used by Joe Ehrmann (2011) in his book, *Inside Out Coaching: How Sports Can Transform Lives*. Ehrmann, a former professional football player in the National Football League (NFL), was the subject of Jeffery Marx's (2007) book, *Season of Life*. In this book, Marx told the story about Coach Ehrmann's

transition into high school coaching in the Baltimore, Maryland, area. The school where he coached was located in an area of the city deemed dangerous for its large amount of crime and high school drop-out rate. Ehrmann focused on loving the football players he coached and valuing them as people before just viewing them as objects to try and win a game. The experience, documented by Marx, describes how the players were transformed into better young men due to the coaching style Ehrmann used. Coach Ehrmann (2011) describes the methods he and his staff used in further detail in his book, *Inside out Coaching*; and he calls it *transformational coaching* because it transforms the players' lives.

Correct instrumentation to measure a coach effectively is something that has been discussed by researchers. Tharp and Gallimore (1976) did a study on the UCLA men's basketball coach, John Wooden. The instrument they developed consisted of 10 categories to observe Coach Wooden at his practices. The categories were: Instructions, Hustles, Modeling-positive, Modeling-negative, Praises, Reproofs, Nonverbal reward, Nonverbal punishment, a *Wooden*, and Other. A *Wooden* was when Coach Wooden would scold, then use modeling-positive, then modeling-negative, and end with another modeling-positive. Instruction had the highest percentage of his practice coaching behavior at over 50%, while Hustles came in second at 12%. Three years later, Langsdorf (1979) observed the head football coach at Arizona State University, Frank Kush, during 18 spring practices using an instrument based on the one Tharp and Gallimore used for Wooden. Again, instruction came out the highest of all the behavior categories; this time at 36%. Lacy and Darst (1985) then used an 11 behavior category instrument in a research study about 10 winning high school football coaches in the

Phoenix, Arizona, area. This instrument had the following categories: Use of first name, Praise, Scold, Instruction, Hustle, Nonverbal reward, Nonverbal punishment, Positive modeling, Negative modeling, Management, and Other. This report also had instruction as 42.5% of the total behaviors measured.

Coaches are also evaluated by the number of games they win compared to the number of losses they acquire each year. Dr. Andrea Becker (2012) chose to study the characteristics coaches have who are able to take a program from losing to winning in one season's time. She chose to measure this in men's college basketball; and rather than interview the head coach and/or assistants, the interviews were done exclusively with the players on the team. All of the interviewed players were on teams that registered a losing season, experienced a coaching change, and then followed up the next season with a winning record. Questions focused on the new coach's personality characteristics, philosophy, coaching style, practice environment, and how he influenced them as individuals. The most significant finding that emerged from the interviews was relevant to the coaching style. Coaches described by the players as a *player's coach* seemed to offer the most positive player experiences (Becker, 2012).

Claxton (1988) studied nine high school boys' tennis coaches. Based on their win-loss records, five of the subjects were viewed as successful, while the other four were viewed as unsuccessful. Claxton used the Arizona State University Observation Instrument to measure 14 behavior categories exhibited by the coaches. The characteristics measured were: Pre-instruction, Concurrent Instruction, Post-instruction, Questioning, Manual Manipulation, Positive Modeling, Negative Modeling, First Name, Hustle, Praise, Scold, Management, Silence, and Other. The goal of the study was to

gain insight into what categories were found in the successful coaches as opposed to the unsuccessful coaches. Findings included instructions as the predominant behavior for all nine measured. However, the four less successful coaches actually used more instruction than the five more successful coaches.

Gender differences have also been measured with the Arizona State University (ASU) Observation Instrument to see if there is a difference in teaching behaviors. The ASU Observation Instrument measures 14 behavior categories: Preinstruction, Concurrent Instruction, Postinstruction, Questioning, Manual Manipulation, Positive Modeling, Negative Modeling, First Name, Hustle, Praise, Scold, Management, Silence, and Other. Lacy and Goldston (1990) analyzed the behavior of five male and five female high school basketball coaches. After looking at the behavior categories, they found there was actually consistency in the percentage of coaching behaviors for both genders. Another similar study done by Rupert and Buschner (1989) observed the behavior differences in how a teacher/coach handles both duties. The same 14 behavior categories for nine teacher/coaches were observed, and the results showed coaching behaviors favoring pre-instruction, praise, and silence the most. On the teaching side of the job, the teacher/coaches put a greater emphasis on management.

The idea of what is a successful coach is also something that has been researched. Gearity (2010) conducted a study about how winning has become the primary characteristic of a good coach. He offers examples from the media, the academic community, other coaches, and sports stakeholders to back this claim. He even shows how a lack of moral decency does not negate a coach from being described as successful

as long as he or she is winning on the scoreboard. Gearity then makes an argument to assess coaches correctly by how they educate, care for, and empower.

In order to reach players effectively, coaches also have to incorporate certain teaching methods into their coaching lessons. Jon Gruden (2003), who won a Super Bowl with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers of the National Football League (NFL), writes at length about one particular teaching strategy in his book, *Do You Love Football?: Winning With Heart, Passion, and Not Much Sleep*. When he was an assistant coach with the San Francisco 49ers of the NFL, he learned so much about daily assessing his players' progress. The staff, on a daily basis, videotaped and reviewed every drill, every teaching segment, and every scrimmage. They constantly analyzed their players' progress. The staff would also assign grades to each player for every drill; and then go over their daily progress with each player at the end of the day. This was very powerful to Gruden (2003), because it showed him how important player assessment was to the student as well as the coach.

An authentic assessment is one in which the student is given a genuine learning experience that benefits both the student and the teacher. The desire is for the student to be able to apply and produce knowledge as opposed to just memorizing correct answers (Darling-Hammond, Ancess, & Falk, 1995). This is especially important when football players have to make decisions based on what an opponent does and their coach is not right next to them (Gruden, 2003).

The studies mentioned in this chapter offer multiple ways of measuring a coach's effectiveness. They fail to mention, however, the context and intent behind certain decisions and behaviors exhibited by the coach, and none of them offer a study as unique

as the narrative case study examining the teaching methods and leadership strategies used by six highly successful Texas high school football coaches. With the current study, the researcher provides rich insight into a culture of success that will benefit the education research community. Texas high school football culture has already proven to be fascinating research on a national scale (Bissinger, 1990). According to Bissinger, the head football coach not only has to navigate the job of trying to teach and lead a football team, but also takes on many tasks in the community that involve significant political skill. The current study results will provide further detail into that culture and provide leadership lessons from the head coach's point of view.

Orchestrator of the Environment

High school football in Texas has a very unique culture. It has been the subject of books, movies, and television series. One significant contributor to the stereotypes of this culture is the popular book by H.G. Bissinger (1990), *Friday Night Lights*. Bissinger's book is about the 1988 Odessa Permian High School football team. The book focuses on the lives of six players and their head coach as they navigate through the pressures of a high school football season in West Texas. Community attention and pressure are strong themes within the book; it especially highlights the challenging life of the head football coach. In the book, the head football coach not only has to navigate the job of trying to teach and lead a football team, but he also takes on many of the tasks in the community that involve significant political skill. Dinners with elected officials, private meetings with boosters, and in-office meetings with parents who believe their son or daughter deserves more playing time. The head coach is the orchestrator of it all. The book has been turned into a movie as well as a television series.

Another book that documents similar themes mentioned in *Friday Night Lights* is *Katy Nation* by Dexter Clay (2007). In this book, the author discusses the history of Katy High School's football team and how the community has been affected by its success. The community is known among its neighboring peers as a high school football power, and the book documents how the head coach orchestrated the entire experience. Currently, Katy has won eight state championships.

Ty Cashion's (1998) *Pigskin Pulpit* is another book that demonstrates the significance of high school football to the state of Texas. It contains over 80 interviews with Texas high school football coaches about their experiences. The book also portrays high school football coaches as community icons who are like celebrities in their small towns. The head coach was also viewed as somewhat of a teacher of values to the kids who came through the program too (Cashion, 1998).

Orchestrating, or managing, any educational environment can be a very complex ordeal for a leader according to Mike Wallace (2003). Wallace's research focuses on the attempts of a group of educators to reorganize schools, and in the process reaches the conclusion that the change process is limited due to high ambiguity in regards to human agency. Several characteristics of complexity are identified, and the evidence supports the author's notion that managing an environment with that much human agency is incredibly difficult (Wallace, 2003).

In Saury and Durand's (1998) study of expert coaches in the sport of sailing, they analyzed the coaches from the French national team as they prepared for the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta, Georgia. Five team-training sessions led by the coaches were observed followed by in-depth interviews that were coded inductively. The study results

showed how complex the coaches' jobs were in navigating and directing the team's training environment. Flexibility with their plans, instilling organizational routines, leaning on past training experiences, possessing joint control of their athletes, and displaying adaptability to the environment all proved to be necessary characteristics of the expert coaches (Saucy & Durand, 1998).

Jones and Wallace (2005) argue that research on the management of complex change should be the basis for viewing the coach as an orchestrator of the environment. Their study results showed that evaluating the coach any other way is unrealistic. There is more potential for the future of coaching research to look through the lens of the coach managing with complex change (Jones & Wallace, 2005).

Gilmer, Allen, Southlake Carroll, Carthage, Lake Travis, and Katy High Schools' football programs are extremely influential and complex environments. While the previous studies mentioned offer interesting insights on managing environments, none of them cover the specific type of environment that a head high school football coach in Texas would have to manage. Texas high school football is a subject that has been well documented for its cultural significance, and the six head football coaches and their respective state championship programs are more than worthy of this study.

Leadership

Taking over a high school football program and leading it to a state championship involves many decisions by the leader and leadership staff. Some of the subjects interviewed for this study took over a program that had experienced success in the years prior to them taking over as the head coach, while other subjects inherited a program that had not experienced much success. The ones who took over programs that had not won

at a high rate had to turn the program around. While studies about turnarounds in high school sports are not prevalent, there are existing studies about school and business turnarounds, and what the leaders did correctly and incorrectly. The following studies provide insight into how an organization experienced turnaround and the leadership that was used to make this happen. Many of the coaches in this study led an organizational turnaround in their high school football programs.

One particular study by Harker and Sharma (2000) looked at businesses located in Queensland, Australia that had experienced a decline in sales performance for at least two years, and then followed it up by an increase in sales performance over the next two years. The businesses were labeled medium in size, meaning they were between 300-500 employees. The researchers reviewed archival material, interviewed employees, and observed the people and processes. Findings showed effective leaders were the ones who gave clear direction for the company and encouraged other leaders within it to grow, develop, and improve. The years of decline showed a lack of vision by the company's leaders, and this vision was restored in the years of prosperity.

Along the same lines as restoring vision is the psychology of having people believe they can turn their misfortunes around. Kanter (2003) investigated over 20 companies that experienced a turnaround. The investigation looked at the organization at different stages of the turnaround process and reported on what each leader did to set the company on a stronger course. The study acknowledges strategic decision-making by the leader or leadership staff, but the findings reveal one key ingredient. The restoring of confidence in the company's employees was a necessary component to the turnaround. Without it, the employees would not have been inspired to take on new actions.

Recognizing what needs to change to make the turnaround is another part of the equation a leader has to reconcile. Barker and Barr (2002) looked at firms who were once profitable, had experienced a decline, and were now attempting to revive their company. The study used field and archival data sources to measure the firms' causes for an increase or a decline in profitability, and found firms who attributed their decline to internal sources rather than external ones were far more likely to get their firms out of its decline.

When a team has not been in a culture of winning, there often times can be a barrier to each player feeling that they can achieve a certain goal. Nicolaidou and Ainscow (2005) conducted a study on a group of English Primary schools who were labeled *failing*. The schools' experiences were shared, and the overwhelming response was the reputation of the school served as a hindrance to future collaboratives working.

Leadership in an organizational turnaround is a component of the current study. It will be very insightful to the education research community as well as the business community to look at how a football coach navigates through unique challenges to lead a team to a championship. While the experiences are unique to this profession, the lessons learned from this study may be transferrable to any leader.

Once a program is turned around or in the process of turning around, the leader's duty of keeping the employees satisfied and managing stress levels can be a daunting task, especially with high school coaching's demanding work environment (Barr, 2011). In another study on high school coaches in Texas, a major reason why coaches were not retained was for failure to win games, so there is a lot of pressure on the head coach to choose wisely in hiring other coaches (Glenn, Lutz, Shim, Fredenburg, & Miller, 2006).

While there are few research studies on employee retention in coaching, there are many for the business world that transfer well for this study.

One study addressing coaching retention was done by Inglis et al. (1996). They examined 359 Canadian and American college coaches and sports administrators using an analysis that elicited how much fulfillment was attached with each task as well as how important it was to stay in the person's given position. The factors identified with being most effective with retention were inclusiveness, recognition and collegial support, and work balance conditions. The study did offer the limitation of needing to investigate further into women's experiences because it did not account enough for gender differences.

Another study done by Pastore (1994) involved trying to understand the different strategies used to retain high school head coaches who were female. A sample of 354 athletic administrators and coaches responded to a questionnaire about retention strategies focusing on these categories: developmental opportunities, program support, financial incentives, communication, and job definition. The findings gave evidence that developmental opportunities were the least used method to help with retention, and communication was the most used. This might explain why a big part of high turnover in coaching is due to advancement for a job with more responsibility (Myerberg, Schnaars, & Berkowitz, 2013).

As previously mentioned, there are several insightful studies about employee retention in the business world. Ramlall (2003) did a review on why employee retention is critical for any organization. Retention efforts are often expensive endeavors by companies, so it is important to identify what motivates a company's employees. Hale

(1998) released a study that stated how 58% of companies are having a difficult time with retention. Ramlall (2003) goes on to express that humans need different things over different periods of time. These needs range from hearing praise to raising esteem to encouraging creativity to help with self-actualization. Ramlall endorses understanding motivation theories and then seeking out ways to connect the correct motivation to what each employee desires. This will ultimately increase an organization's overall performance.

All of these studies demonstrate how important the topic of employee retention is to an organization's long-term success. However, there have not been any studies on how crucial this is to a high school football program's success. The topic of how a head high school football coach effectively seeks out ways to retain his or her best assistant coaches is one that is worth studying; and if retention plays an important role in organizational success, then this topic should be included in the studies of each of the six coaches and their state championship football programs.

After identifying the coaches and players a leader wants on the team, it is then one of the head coach's tasks to develop them (Krzyzewski, Phillips, & Hill, 2001). A head high school coach must develop the players as well as the assistant coaches. This is very important in sports teams, because the head coach has too hard of a task to be the sole driver of leadership on a team (Krzyzewski et al., 2001). While there are not that many leadership development studies in high school football coaching, there are some that may be useful from other sports or business areas.

Sports allows for leadership development. Wright and Côté (2003) conducted a study examining six leader-athletes and how they were developed. The six athletes were

interviewed about how their coaches, peers, and parents all took part in the development of their leadership in athletics. Different interactions were discussed in the interviews such as how they received feedback and acknowledgement, how they handled physical encounters with older players, and how they talked with adult figures. The findings from the interviews showed all of these interactions focused on the development of “high skill, strong work ethic, enriched cognitive sport knowledge, and good rapport with people.” (Wright, & Côté, 2003, p. 268). Leader athletes had stronger relationships with peers, accepted roles in organizations better, had strong work ethic, and had a higher enjoyment of playing sports. While Wright and Côté’s study offers insight into player-leadership, in the current study on the six high school head football coaches, the researcher examined how player-leadership formation aided in the creation of a winning culture.

More specific research on leadership development also exists with a study on six former university male ice hockey team captains (Dupuis, Bloom, & Loughhead, 2006). The purpose of the study was to identify and examine the behaviors that each of these captains exhibited. What the research results showed, however, was how important it is to have formally designated team captains on a team. The selection of team captains helps reinforce the coach’s message to the rest of the team. By selecting athletes who seem to have the respect of their peers, the goal of team formation is easier to accomplish. The research does neglect the intent that goes into each selection by the head coach and coaching staff.

In another player-leadership study, Kim and Sugiyama (1992) looked at athletes from 114 different schools in 1972 and sought to look at the way team captains exhibited four different types of leadership. One type had high goal achievement, another type had

high group relations orientation, a third type exhibited high levels in both, and the last type showed low levels of both. The leaders who exhibited high levels of both goal achievement and group relations orientation were the most effective leaders and positively affected the performance of their teams. The second best type exhibited only high goal achievement followed by only high group relations orientation, and then low levels of both. The current study on six high school football programs could offer great insight into if and how the coaches used team captains to enhance team formation.

Greenleaf (1977), a significant voice in leadership studies, wrote a book about what he thought was the key ingredient to greatness in a leader. The ability to be a servant first was what made a great leader. The desire to serve must be authentic and not part of a plan to appear that way. The focus is on others and trying to take care of their highest needs. Tims, Bakker, and Xanthopoulou (2011) conducted a diary survey of 42 employees to investigate how leaders' styles contributed to how much the workers followed their vision. The results pointed to employees engaging in their work more due to the leadership demonstrating a servant-like model every day. The leadership's daily engagement with employees helped tremendously with motivation.

Shamir and Eilam (2005) talk about how important it is for a leader to be authentic with his or her followers. Their study discusses how a leader's life-story aids in the development of authentic leadership. A life-story is composed by attaching self-relevant meanings to personal experiences that the leader has gone through. The authenticity that the leader presents through this life-story helps the followers judge whether or not they want to follow the leader. The leader's convictions and values are

more easily presented through a story, and the follower can identify with similar experiences.

Fulmer, Gibbs, and Goldsmith (2000) reported on how General Electric has placed a high premium on leadership development from within their company, and takes great pride in how they have promoted from within for their leadership. They also give other examples from other firms, and this leads to the unveiling of five critical steps that are important to have effective leadership development from within a company. The first one is awareness, which is to look inside and outside the company for leadership approaches that work. The second is anticipation, expectancy for the future with careful planning. The third step is action, and this is to emphasize workers have the capabilities to solve problems on their own. Alignment is the next step. It is critical for a company's departments and systems to be in sync. The last step is assessment. Great leaders reflect upon their output and find ways to make something better. They also rely heavily on evidence, and they are always looking to make sure that the output reflects the values of the organization.

These studies demonstrate an importance placed on the development of an organization's leaders. A high school football team is an organization that requires the same necessary component. The six high school head football coaches in the current study are responsible for the Varsity, Junior Varsity, Ninth grade, Eighth Grade, Seventh grade, and Little League coaches under their direction. Some of the schools are even one-school districts, which means the elementary and middle schools feed into one high school. Players at each level have to be identified and groomed to be future leaders on the Varsity one day. This means that the staff and program must be aligned in a way that

seeks the head coach's ultimate vision. This is similar to a business model that requires alignment from its employees to achieve the company's profit goals. The only difference is that the context is now Texas high school football. This study was necessary, because there is a gap in the literature about leadership development in a high school football setting.

Similar to leadership development is the idea of empowering the subordinates to take ownership of their roles without a leader's oversight. Zhang and Bartol (2010) measured this idea when they tested a theoretical model that linked worker creativity with empowering leadership. A survey was sent by email to 670 employees in a major technology company in China, and 498 responded to the survey. Data was collected from the professional employees and their supervisors, and the findings showed empowering leadership strongly affected psychological empowerment. This in turn influenced the creative process for employees as well as strengthened their intrinsic motivation. For the current study, it would be insightful to see what methods each of the high school head football coaches used to increase their assistant coaches' psychological empowerment through a season that entails long work hours for months at a time.

Another study took a close look at how the intervening roles of team efficacy and knowledge sharing impact team performance (Srivastava, Bartol, & Locke, 2006). In Argote's (1999) study, it was inferred that team efficacy and knowledge sharing were key determinants in a team being successful. The same results showed up in Srivastava et al.'s (2003) study that knowledge sharing and team efficacy strengthened empowering leadership. After surveying 102 hotel properties on these items and using a time-lagged market-based source, findings showed the employees knew they were trusted. This in

turn increased the team's performance. A similar study by Xue, Bradley, and Liang (2010) looked at the impact empowering leadership could have on knowledge-sharing behavior. The findings again showed teams who trusted one another and led with empowering leadership had a much higher level of knowledge sharing. Again, this trust has proven to yield higher results in team performance.

School leadership studies, just like business studies, are also comparable to the current study over the six high school head football coaches' leadership. Empowerment from an administrator to a teacher also leads to attracting teachers with a high level of competence. Short (1998) argues competent teachers want to work in schools where they are given freedom to teach how they want. This in turn will also aid in the development of new resources and solutions, because teachers and students feel empowered to act. Schools that have an empowered culture exhibit a high trust level between students, teachers, and administration; are focused on the students' well-being with all decisions; look forward to mastering tough problems they face; have a high belief in its teachers' competence; strongly support student empowerment; and diminish boundaries between the school and community. All of these characteristics are also part of great coaching staffs (Meyer 2009), which could be very insightful in looking at six of the best programs in the state of Texas on the high school level.

Empowering leadership can have unintended consequences though. Van Dijke, De Cremer, Mayer, and Van Quaquebeke (2011) examined two different empowering leadership types, encouraging self-development and encouraging independent action. Ninety-one Dutch business students arrived at a laboratory to take part in an experiment for course credit. They were asked to imagine working for a furniture company and

about to get a performance appraisal from their boss. Each one was given a form of leadership empowerment, either encouraging self-development or encouraging independent action. One consequence of encouraging self-development was that employees started to desire more status information about themselves, and one consequence of encouraging independent action was that it weakened the procedural fairness that some employees felt existed. The findings ultimately revealed that different types of leadership are needed and even empowering leadership can have detrimental consequences to employee culture. This study on the six high school head football coaches could be significant to see how each one motivated his assistant coaches in order to create a championship culture.

These studies all offer noteworthy findings about empowering leadership. However, none of them offer a study on using empowering leadership through the complexity of a high school football staff in Texas. Studying each of the teaching methods used by the six high school head football coaches in the current study could be very significant for uncovering effective leadership methods used in a highly competitive environment. The next section focuses on the final category of the framework, Coaching Development. This category encompasses existing studies that focus on collaboration, reflection, and sharing knowledge.

Coaching Development

Another teaching strategy discussed by Gruden (2003) is using collaboration in order to find a strategy that best reaches your players. As he got into the part of his career where he was a head coach, Gruden would give his assistants four games apiece to give the pre-game speech. The pre-game speech is normally reserved for the head coach

to speak. Gruden saw that a team hearing from multiple voices with a consistent message was more effective than a team given a different variation of the same speech over and over from himself. It also empowered the other members of his staff and allowed him to continue to grow as a teacher and a coach by learning from his peers (Gruden, 2003).

In order for powerful shared learning to occur, collaboration is a strategy that teachers and coaches need to know. Structuring meaningful interactions between other teachers and coaches can lead to generating new ideas for the players. The collaboration does not have to be within the same department. Math teachers may collaborate with history teachers, just like basketball coaches may collaborate with football coaches. One department's way of solving a problem might work for the other department as well (Darling-Hammond, 2008).

Whether coaching youth sports or coaching on the professional level, Gilbert and Trudel (2005) are strong proponents of coaches taking time for reflection. Coaches learn a great deal through experience, but then need to take time to reflect on those experiences in order to grow in their profession. This can be accomplished by discussing the team's previous practice or game as a coaching staff. It can also be completed by an individual coach reflecting in written form about his or her thoughts. Reflection will enhance life-long learning (Gilbert & Trudel, 2005).

In Diane Culver's (2004) study on collaboration among sports coaches, she did a research project focusing on three groups of coaches. The first group of coaches had access to Culver whenever they wanted, but nothing was coordinated by Culver. Most of the coaches would visit with Culver, who is a sports psychologist, in a one-on-one setting and ask questions that mostly pertained to Sports Psychology. In the second group of

coaches, Culver took an active role in leading discussions among the coaches. This group of coaches thrived and felt that the exercise was extremely beneficial to them as coaches and also to their players. The third group was given the freedom to handle the collaboration by themselves. Collaboration failed to happen effectively though, and leadership problems emerged (Culver, 2004).

Knowledge has taken on a different mindset according to Verna Allee (2004), and companies are now implementing new strategies to make it more easily shared among its employees. Knowledge sharing is viewed by some experts as the most important factor in a company's economic life. If employees do not talk and share ideas, then the ideas have a less likely chance of coming to fruition and benefiting the consumer. For this very reason, Allee offers examples of companies shifting from developing strategies that have very complex technologies to instead finding simpler ways for people to connect (Allee, 2004).

While many coaches learn from their past playing experiences, a great deal is also learned about coaching as an apprentice to a master coach. They work for someone who knows more than them, and they study their methods and habits with hopes of adopting similar practices. Admiration for the master coach can cloud future judgment, however, when it comes to adopting similar practices during the apprentice phase. This is why reflection becomes even more important to adopt as a practice. By doing this, the apprentice coach can uncover perceptions or beliefs that are actually not very effective for his or her players (Cassidy et al., 2008).

These studies all offer noteworthy findings about coaching development. However, none of them offer a study on coaching development within a high school

football staff in Texas. This study could be very useful in uncovering effective coaching development for the head coach as well as the staff.

Coaching is Teaching

The teaching methods used by Jeff Traylor, Gary Joseph, Chad Morris, Todd Dodge, Scott Surratt, and Tom Westerberg more than likely influenced the way their teams were able to achieve state championships. The coaches are viewed as highly successful Texas high school football coaches, and their teaching methods are more than worthy of this study.

As previously stated in Chapter One, the research question was: “What teaching methods and leadership strategies are used by Texas head high school football coaches in championship winning schools?” In order to probe further, the following sub-questions were formulated with their correlating framework topics in parenthesis:

1. What methods did the coach use to understand his subjects in an effective manner? (Coaches as More Capable Others, Orchestrators of the Environment, Leadership, Coaching Development)
2. What were the work and community environments like for the coach at his school & town? (Coaches as More Capable Others, Orchestrators of the Environment, Leadership, Coaching Development)
3. What type(s) of leadership did the coach model with his team and staff? (Coaches as More Capable Others, Orchestrators of the Environment, Leadership, Coaching Development)
4. How did the coach continue his development as a coach and teacher as well as the development of his staff? (Leadership, Coaching Development)

Each coach's story was documented through a narrative case study design. Chapter Two provided existing research on the theoretical framework for this study. This framework consists of more capable others, orchestrators of the environment, leadership, and coaching development. All of these topics are addressed in the interview process. Chapter Three is a description of the methodology used to conduct the research.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Purpose and Framework

In this study, the researcher examined the teaching methods used by six exceptional head football coaches when they were coaching their state championship winning high school teams in Texas. Four of the six coaches have won four state championships on the high school level, which is more than any other active Texas high school football coaches. The other two have won three state titles and are currently coaching on the highest level of college football, Division I. The research was conducted using a narrative case study design to answer the research question: “What teaching methods and leadership strategies are used by Texas head high school football coaches in championship winning schools?” In order to probe further, sub-questions were formulated with their correlating framework topics in parenthesis:

1. What methods did the coach use to understand his subjects in an effective manner? (Coaches as More Capable Others, Orchestrators of the Environment, Leadership, Coaching Development)
2. What were the work and community environments like for the coach at his school and town? (Coaches as More Capable Others, Orchestrators of the Environment, Leadership, Coaching Development)

3. What type(s) of leadership did the coach model with his team and staff?
(Coaches as More Capable Others, Orchestrators of the Environment, Leadership, Coaching Development)
4. How did the coach continue his development as a coach and teacher as well as the development of his staff? (Leadership, Coaching Development)

The study's focus was on what teaching methods and leadership strategies are used by Texas high school football coaches in championship winning schools. The six coaches were interviewed, and the findings should provide keen insight into helping other leaders improve their teaching and leadership. The qualitative study will highlight the intent behind each coach's selected teaching methods in response to the contexts and challenges facing their respective schools' teams. The study results will also provide a voice for Texas high school football coaches and provide insight into what their lives are actually like. In this chapter, the researcher describes the research design, participant selection, data collection, and data analysis that was used to make sense of the six coaches' interviews in relation to the targeted research questions.

Context and Participants

In qualitative research, the number of participants is characteristically small in size. This study was done with criterion purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2007). The criteria for being selected for this study was to have won four state football championships on the high school level, which is more than any other active Texas high school football coach at the time of this interview, or to have won three state titles coupled with Division I college coaching experience. At the time of this study, there were only four active coaches who had accomplished this feat; so in order to get a larger

sample size yet still maintain the exclusiveness of being included in this group, the characteristic of winning at least three state championships and also coaching on the Division I level of college football was added. Two more coaches were then added to the group. All participants had to be active in the coaching profession at the time of these interviews as well. Participants needed to be accessible, willing to share, and their credibility needed to be obvious (Creswell, 2007). Only six coaches met the criteria: Todd Dodge, Gary Joseph, Scott Surratt, Tom Westerberg, Chad Morris, and Jeff Traylor.

Since interviewing the participants was necessary for this type of qualitative study, participants were contacted and interviewed based on their convenience and location. Interviews were intended to be face-to-face and take place in Texas in the following locations: Austin, Carthage, Dallas, Katy, and Mont Belvieu. Some of the interviews had to be conducted over the phone due to unavailability to meet face-to-face. While it is best to conduct the interviews in their natural settings, some exceptions had to be made due to scheduling conflicts (Creswell, 2007).

Coach Traylor was interviewed at his home in Austin, Texas. The original intent for the interview with Coach Dodge was to interview him at his office in Austin; however, the interview had to take place on the phone instead due to scheduling conflicts. Similar occurrences happened for Coach Surratt, Coach Westerberg, and Coach Joseph. The intent of all three of their interviews was for the interviews to take place in their coaching offices in Carthage, Mont Belvieu, and Katy, Texas respectively. All three had scheduling conflicts, so the interviews had to be done over the phone. The interview with Coach Morris was done in Dallas at his office on the campus of Southern Methodist

University (SMU). Context is a large part of the interview process, and being able to interview him in his personal office at SMU was very helpful in making sense of interview findings (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Todd Dodge–Southlake Carroll HS (Southlake, TX)

The Southlake area was known as a rural area prior to the 1970s, but that all changed with the completion of the Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport. Due to the proximity to the airport, the area grew into a booming suburb. In 2008, *Forbes* magazine named Southlake the most affluent neighborhood in the United States (Sherman, 2008), and in 2012 the population was almost at full capacity at 27,000. The ethnic makeup of the community is over 90% Caucasian. Southlake Carroll High School had become a football power in the late 1980s and early 1990s winning three state titles in six years. But after failing to make the playoffs in 1999, Carroll High School hired Todd Dodge to become the head football coach. In his first season, the Carroll Dragons went 9-5. Two years later, they embarked on a five-year stretch where the high school football team only lost one game. The Dragons won four state titles and finished runner-up for the other year; a remarkable feat considering they competed in the largest classification in the state. At the conclusion of the 2006 season, Dodge accepted the head coaching position at the University of North Texas in Denton. He coached there for four seasons. He is now back in high school coaching where he is the head football coach at Westlake High School in Austin, Texas. This past season he led Westlake to the state championship game for the first time since 2001 (J. L. Smith, 2016).

Gary Joseph–Katy HS (Katy, TX)

Katy is a city located in the Houston metropolitan area that has experienced tremendous growth in residents over the last 25 years. Its population grew from 81,559 to 256,984 in the time period of 1990-2010. In 2016, its residential total was 309,555 (Herrera, 2016). The city headquarters several corporations and is also a hub for retail centers. This has resulted in multiple high schools being built to accommodate the growing number of residents, with all of the newly created schools being given a 6A classification, which is the largest school population classification in Texas. Katy High School is the original public high school in the community as it opened its doors in 1898. It, along with the other newer high schools in the Katy community, is classified as a 6A high school, and its racial makeup is 35% Hispanic, 50% White, and 8% African American. In 2004, Katy High School promoted Gary Joseph from defensive coordinator to head football coach. The school had just won the 5A state football championship under the previous head coach, Mike Johnston. The school had won three state championships in a seven-year span prior to Joseph taking over as head coach. Coach Joseph was on the coaching staff for all three titles. As head coach, he won his first state championship in 2007, and then followed that up by winning another one in 2008. His third and fourth state titles came in 2012 and 2015. Under Coach Joseph's leadership, Katy has never lost more than two games in a season; and in 2016, Joseph was named the National High School Coaches Association's Football Coach of the Year. The award recognized Joseph as the best high school football coach in the United States (J. L. Smith, 2016).

Scott Surratt–Carthage HS (Carthage, TX)

Carthage is located in Panola County, which is 42 miles west of Shreveport, Louisiana, 168 miles east of Dallas, and 196 miles north of Houston. Its population in 2010 was just under 7,000 people, and the main industry in the area is oil and gas. The racial make-up, in 2010, was 69% White, 21% African-American, and 10% other (Areavibes, 2017b). In 2006, Carthage High School hired Scott Surratt, who was then an offensive coordinator at Texas High School in Texarkana, to be its new head football coach. Surratt had been an assistant coach at Texas High when they won a state championship in 2002 and also mentored future National Football League (NFL) quarterback, Ryan Mallett. Carthage had never won a state championship prior to the hiring of Surratt. He accomplished the feat in his second, third, and fourth year at the school. His fourth state championship came in 2013. The 2016 season marks his tenth season at Carthage (J. L. Smith, 2016).

Tom Westerberg–Allen HS (Allen, TX)

Allen is an affluent suburb of Dallas, Texas, that is over 60% White and under 10% African American (Areavibes, 2017a). The median income for a family in 2007 was over \$100,000, and the local high school is one of the largest in the state of Texas with over 4,700 students. In 2014, the National High School Coaches Association named Tom Westerberg its Football Coach of the Year. The award designated Westerberg as the best high school football coach in the United States for that year as he had just led Allen High School to its second straight state championship. Ten years earlier, in 2004, Allen High School hired Westerberg to be its head coach. Previously, he had been an assistant on the staff, and they had never won a state championship. As head coach, Westerberg achieved

the feat four times, with his first championship coming in 2008. He then won three in a row from 2012-2014. At the conclusion of the 2015 season, Westerberg accepted the job of head football coach and athletic director at Barbers Hill High School in Mont Belvieu, Texas (Smith, 2016).

Chad Morris–Lake Travis HS (Austin, TX)

Approximately 20 miles west of Austin in Travis County is Lake Travis High School. The high school was established in 1981 as a split from the Dripping Springs School District. The school has had significant growth in the past decade and now competes in the highest classification in Texas due to its size. The top two percentages in the demographics of the school in 2011 were 73.5% Caucasian and 17.4% Hispanic. The football team has been a great source of pride for the community. From 2007-2011, the football team became the first Texas high school football program to win five consecutive state championships. After the first state title, the head coach left for another high school job. Lake Travis then hired Chad Morris for the upcoming 2008 season. Coach Morris directed the Lake Travis football team to a perfect 32-0 record over the next two seasons and captured the second and third state title in the five-year streak. After his second year at Lake Travis, Coach Morris then took an assistant coaching position at the University of Tulsa. He is currently the head football coach at Southern Methodist University (J. L. Smith, 2016).

Jeff Traylor–Gilmer HS (Gilmer, TX)

Gilmer is located in the “heart of East Texas” almost 20 miles north of Longview and 40 miles east of Tyler. The racial makeup is over 70% White, and over 20% African

American (Texas.com, 2000). It is the county seat for Upshur County, and is most famous for its annual East Texas Yamboree, which is a four-day festival celebrating the sweet potato or *yam* as a cash crop. Gilmer is also well-known for its high school football team, the Gilmer Buckeyes. In the last 15 years, the Buckeyes have made it to the state championship game on five occasions and won three of them. In all three of their state championship teams, they never lost a game for the entire season. Prior to 2004, the Buckeyes had never won a state championship in the entire history of the program dating back to 1914. The head coach who led them to all three titles is Coach Jeff Traylor. Traylor's first year as head coach of the Buckeyes was in 2000. He came from Jacksonville High School, a neighboring East Texas school, where he was an assistant. In his first year as head coach, Gilmer won six games, lost four, and failed to make the postseason playoffs. This was a one-win increase from the previous year's record of five wins and five losses. The very next year, the Buckeyes won eight games and lost three, and won their first of nine straight District Championships. Gilmer had not won a District Championship in 10 years prior to the 2001 season. Two years later they won the school's first state championship; and during the 15-year stretch where Traylor was the head football coach, Gilmer had seven consecutive 10-win seasons (2003-09). This is remarkable considering that the regular season without the playoffs has only 10 games in it. After the 2014 state championship season, Traylor left Gilmer for an assistant coaching position at the University of Texas. In his first season at Texas, he was named Big 12 Recruiter of the Year (J. L. Smith, 2016).

Participant and National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Permission

The primary method for obtaining information was to conduct interviews with the participants. This required obtaining permissions from all participants as well as the NCAA. Keith Miller, head of compliance at Baylor University, was contacted to make sure all requirements and regulations were met with the NCAA and there were no conflicts of interests or violations. Keith granted me full permission to conduct the interviews, and a copy of his email approval is found in the Appendix A. In addition, IRB approval was obtained in order to gain permission to conduct this study. A copy of the IRB approval is in Appendix B. All others were contacted and asked to participate in the interview. Prior to each interview, every participant signed a consent form, and the forms are found in Appendix C.

Research Design

Qualitative Research

For this particular study, the desire for understanding the teaching and leadership strategies used by each of the six coaches was so great that a qualitative research study was selected to get a dense amount of information. This researcher's goals were to examine the teaching methods and leadership strategies of each coach in the context of their Texas high school football setting using a qualitative case study research design to capture a dense amount of information that will provide insightful findings for educational research. The findings may help teachers, coaches, and other leaders who are in a position to structure their classroom, program, or organization in a way that leads to higher student or employee performance. By magnifying each coach's strategies, the

study results will provide evidence for how they made their high school programs into state championships, and give the reader a comprehensive look into what it is like to be a head high school coach in Texas.

Case Study Research

According to Yin (1994),

Case study research excels at bringing us to an understanding of a complex issue or object and can extend experience or add strength to what is already known through previous research. Case studies emphasize detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and their relationships. (p. 23)

This qualitative case study focused on the teaching and leadership experiences of six high achieving head coaches. The interviews revealed the complexity of their vocations as well as highlighted the teaching methods and leadership strategies that made them so successful. Researchers have used the case study research method for many years across a variety of disciplines. Social scientists, in particular, have used the qualitative research method extensively “to study contemporary real-life situations and provide the basis for the application of ideas and extension of methods” (Soy, 1997, para. 1). Yin (1994) defined the case study research method as an empirical inquiry that “investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used” (p. 89).

Miles and Huberman (1994) explained that the boundaries of the case study are determined by the “context in which one is studying events, processes, and outcomes” (p. 27). Merriam (1998) highlighted the strengths of case study research in education by stating,

A researcher selects a case study design because of the nature of the research problem and the questions being asked. . . . [The case study] offers insights and illuminates meanings that expand its readers' experiences. These insights can be construed as tentative hypotheses that help structure future research; hence, case study plays an important role in advancing a field's knowledge base. Because of its strengths, case study is a particularly appealing design for applied fields of study such as education. Educational processes, problems, and programs can be examined to bring about understanding that in turn can affect and perhaps even improve practice. Case study has proven particularly useful for studying educational innovations, for evaluating programs and for informing policy. (p. 41)

Weaknesses in the case study approach include the bias and credibility of the researcher, lack of clearly defined understanding among multiple field workers, and reluctance of participants to provide true, accurate, and retrospective responses (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2002). Merriam (1998) suggested that dilemmas involving ethics are likely to emerge at two distinct points in a case study: during data collection and during information dissemination. At these two points in the study, the researcher should pay close attention to the variables that might compromise the integrity of the study. In order to prevent these pitfalls from occurring, the interviews were recorded with an audiotape, and the transcriptions were analyzed and coded by two other individuals with experience in coding and qualitative approaches.

Other weaknesses in the case study method may involve the researcher becoming too vested in the issues, data confidentiality concerns, interest groups competing for data access and control, issues concerning publication (for example, the need to protect the identity of the participants), and problems resulting in the inability of those discerning the data to distinguish between the data and the interpretation of the researcher (Walker, 1980). Again, two other individuals with experience in coding and qualitative approaches separately analyzed and coded the data in order to eliminate researcher bias.

Strategies may be used to maximize the strengths and minimize the limitations of the case study approach. Internal validity is one way to achieve this goal and may be addressed in several ways, including triangulation of the data, member checks, peer examination, participatory modes of research, and researcher biases. Reliability is another important aspect of data collection that must be considered. Measures taken to ensure reliability may include the background and position of the investigator, triangulation of the data, and the establishment of an audit trail. External validity may be addressed through rich, thick descriptions of observations, impressions, and interactions as well as the establishment of the typicality of the cases being studied (Merriam, 1998, 2009). Field notes were taken by the researcher immediately after each interview, and the audio of each interview was transcribed and analyzed in order to assist with validity.

Cross-Case Analysis

Using cross-case analysis is another way to maximize the effects and limit the liabilities in the case study approach to research (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984; Lincoln & Guba, 1986; Merriam, 1988, 1998, 2009). Such analyses can lead to the conceptualization of the data from all cases and provide an integrated framework for closely examining results (Merriam, 1998). At the end of Chapter Four, a cross case analysis was done to find themes among the interviews.

Role of the Researcher

As the primary researcher for this study, it is very important to empower each coach's voice to tell his story fully. They must feel comfortable enough to give thoughtful, authentic answers. A qualitative design can accomplish the goal of attaining

authentic answers from each coach by allowing the relationship between researcher and participant to be less formalized and more relational (Creswell, 2007). My desire was for each coach to feel comfortable telling his story, so that authentic, rich findings could emerge to contribute to educational research. I sought to do this by giving each participant the freedom to greatly elaborate with no time restraints and/or go into another topic that was not a part of the original set of questions. My intention was for them to feel comfortable telling their story, and make them feel like they were in control of the interview.

Data Sources and Collection

Data analysis is an exploration for meaning in the researcher's findings (Hatch, 2002). As soon as data is collected, the researcher needs to make notes. This is the first time analysis takes place, and it is an ongoing process from the time the interviewing takes place all the way to the report writing (Creswell, 2007). The researcher's job is to make sense of the findings and translate the data into a form that can be spread to the masses (Stake, 1995). The theoretical framework that was used to analyze the data was:

1. More Capable Others
2. Orchestrator of the Environment
3. Leadership
4. Coaching Development

The insight and recollections of Coach Coach Todd Dodge, Coach Gary Joesph, Coach Chad Morris, Coach Scott Surratt, Coach Jeff Traylor, and Coach Tom Westerberg were captured through field notes, interview transcripts, archived newspapers, and online state records (Clandinin & Connelly, 1989). Substantial time was

spent talking with each participant. In the current study, the researcher examined the teaching methods and leadership strategies used by each coach in each of their championship tenures on the high school level.

The primary method of data collection was through either a face-to-face or phone interview. The participants' experiences and thoughts came out of a less structured, open-ended interview. The unstructured method of this interview is characteristic of the qualitative case study design (Merriam, 1998). Once the questions were completed, the coding for each study was analyzed through the formation of four categories as a result of the framework that emerged from the literature review. These four categories were:

1. More Capable Others—Data from the interviews that revealed the strategies the coach used to develop strong, learning relationships with the players (Becker, 2012; Ehrmann, 2011; Gerdes, 1994; Tharp & Gallimore, 1976).
2. Orchestrator of the Environment—Data from the interviews that demonstrated strategies used by the coach to orchestrate an environment that yields success. It can encompass signs, music, uniforms, community support or overall school spirit (Bissinger, 1990; Jones & Wallace, 2005; Saury & Durand, 1998; Wallace, 2003).
3. Leadership—Data from the interviews that revealed the leadership strategies the coach used with his players and staff. It may include things such as organizational turnaround, employee retention, or fostering player leadership (Barker & Barr, 2002; Fulmer et al., 2000; Greenleaf, 1977; Harker & Sharma, 2000; Inglis et al., 1996; Kanter, 2003; Pastore, 1994; Wright & Côté, 2003).

4. Coaching Development—Data from the interviews that revealed how a coach continues he and his staff’s growth in the coaching profession. Examples can be things such as attending clinics or visiting other coaches practices (Allee, 2004; Darling-Hammond, 2008; Gilbert & Trudel 2005; Gruden 2003).

Interview Questions

Interview questions were developed and connected to the theoretical framework to help navigate the interview process to provide data to answer the questions. The interview questions are found in Appendix D. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. Field notes were made during each visit. If a participant did not want his interview to be taped, then I made written field notes during the interview. Follow-up questions were brought up during subsequent interviews if needed after analyzing the participants’ answers by email. In addition to the interview documentation, I also looked through archived newspaper stories about each coach during their championship seasons, and I went through the University Interscholastic League’s (UIL) website to look through state football records to provide added clarity, context, and credibility for each subject.

Transcription and Coding

The first step in the analysis portion occurred in the transcription of the participants’ responses. Interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed. Transcribing took place by typing up the interview responses, and then notes were inserted to help classify themes that emerged. Every participant’s account was coded and analyzed. This form of coding is called theoretical coding. It should be noted, however, the participants’ behaviors were also factored into what was being observed in the

interview (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). Once the coding process was completed, the information was categorized in the existing theoretical framework, inserted into new categories based on similar characteristics, and the coaches took part in re-storying their responses in order to clearly inform the reader about the teaching methods and leadership strategies they used. Two other individuals with experience in coding and qualitative approaches then reviewed the original interview transcriptions and coded them individually. This led to the process of comparing categories with each other and restructuring the information to help develop follow-up questions, reach conclusions, or uncover additional themes. In order to provide clarity for how the coding process was conducted, the following are examples for how themes were classified into the four-part framework previously mentioned in this chapter.

More Capable Others

In one of the interviews, a coach mentioned that he met with every player in the program in order to find out what they wanted from him as their new head coach. Ehrmann (2011) writes how this is an example of coaches spending time with the player outside of the playing field in order to teach them better. It falls under the first category of this case study's framework, which is More Capable Others.

Orchestrator of the Environment

A second example from the interviews is when one of the coaches talked about how he set up his office for a meeting with one of his players. He talks about doing it in order to increase intimacy and reduce anxiety from the player's perspective. Wallace

(2003) writes about how this is an example that falls under the category, Orchestrator of the Environment. It is the second category used in the framework.

Leadership

Another example from the coaching interviews was when one coach talked about his thoughts on modeling his leadership example to the rest of his staff and team. He thought the best way to lead was to model it. Harker and Sharma (2000) write about this being an example that falls under the category of Leadership, which is a part of the framework.

Coaching Development

One final example from the interviews is when one of the coaches talked about offering a chapel service to his staff and team before games. Darling-Hammond (2008) writes about providing development and support for your teachers, and this example would fall under the category of Coaching Development, which is a part of the framework of the current study.

Reflective Notes and Verification

In addition to the writings from the participants' answers, reflective notes were written by the researcher after each session with the participant. These notes were descriptive summaries and daily logs. Both of these types of field notes are typically used in narrative inquiry research (Creswell, 2007). The notes aided the process in developing effective follow-up questions for the participants. Two other individuals with experience in coding and qualitative approaches also coded interviews and we compared them for validity.

Researcher's Perspective and Limitations

I am the son of a Texas high school football coach. My dad has been coaching for over 40 years, and he has been in coaching all of my life. He also coached for over 10 years in the Greater East Texas region where I grew up. I attended high school in East Texas, and I grew up playing football. I did not intend to coach high school football like my dad ever, but I always had great respect for him as a leader of men. A big part of my childhood was being in football locker rooms or on the practice field helping my dad and his teams. I thought it was the greatest way to grow up.

Ten years after graduating from high school in East Texas I came back to the area to teach and coach at a high school. I was hired as the basketball coach, but part of my job was also to help coach the junior high football teams and do film breakdown for the Varsity team. I stayed two years at the school teaching and coaching, and Gilmer was one of the teams in our district. Sports writers nicknamed our district “The District of Doom” due to there being three teams that had won a state championship in the past three years from the seven-team district (Brooks, 2011). Gilmer won our district both years.

The experience of living and watching the Gilmer Buckeyes football team in our district those two years left me with the belief that their program was as well run as any team in the state. When I was a boy growing up in the area, Gilmer was not this good. Their program organization, fan support, and coaching competence had become excellent, and it left me wanting to know how the Buckeyes made this transition. I believed it was due to the head coach's exceptional leadership. The teaching that their staff was doing seemed to be at the highest level too. This coach was one of the six that was interviewed for this study. As the researcher, I possess extensive experience with the

state's culture and the profession's etiquette. To reduce any bias, I had two other individuals with experience in coding and qualitative approaches examine my documents for validity.

Another limitation for this study focuses on the method that the data was collected. In qualitative studies, the volume of data and coding can be extreme. In this study, the researcher used interviews as the primary method for gaining information, and the responses from each participant were tracked and maintained by the researcher. Qualitative studies are also sometimes not accepted as strongly as quantitative studies in the scientific community due to the potential for researcher bias to emerge (Anderson 2010).

One final limitation for this study is that some of the interviews had to be conducted over the phone as opposed to face-to-face. All six subjects hold jobs that are very demanding of their time, and some were not able to do the in-person interviews like we had planned. While the phone interview is not as preferable as a face-to-face interview, it is at least comparable in quality (Carr & Worth, 2001).

Conclusion

The narrative case study research design was used to empower each coach to tell his story of the teaching methods and leadership strategies he used to build his championship teams. Other research designs could have been used to try and gain insight into this question; however, they would not be able to give dense detail into what exactly happened. Each participant was allowed to speak freely, and their answers were coded and categorized. Narratives were then developed to explain the teaching methods and leadership strategies each coach used. The findings are provided in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

As stated throughout this dissertation, the purpose of this study was to examine the teaching methods and leadership strategies used by six head football coaches who have achieved high levels of success in Texas high school football. Four of them have won four state championships, and the other two have won three state titles and are currently coaching on the Division I college level. All six subjects at the time of this study were actively coaching in 2016. High School football in Texas, from a cultural standpoint, has been well-documented in movies, books, and television (Bissinger, 1990). Head coaches are given an incredibly heightened status in the community, but they also experience a great deal of pressure to deliver a winning football program. At the center of high school football are the players, and many of them view the playing experience as one of their life's most formative. Character traits like perseverance, discipline, and teamwork are adopted on the playing field and in the locker room (Parry, 2012). Each of these environments is educational and constructed by the coach; therefore, it was important to examine the teaching methods and leadership strategies that these six successful coaches undertook with their state championship-winning teams.

Coaching high school football in Texas in today's context is big business. Many communities take on their identity through their local school's football program, and they are willing to spend large amounts of money to employ a coach they feel will lead their team to a championship. On the other hand, more schools are willing to fire a head

football coach for lack of wins, even if he or she is someone of high character. In 2012, a head high school football coach in Texas made almost \$50,000 more than the national average for head football coaches in other states (Koba, 2012). Schools are building video scoreboards and indoor practice facilities; and some of them have television contracts. Navigating through this high-pressured context is an element left out in what limited research is out there for high school football coaches. It is therefore highly significant to conduct a study of the teaching methods and leadership strategies used by successful high school head football coaches given the complexity of their contexts.

In this study, the researcher investigated the teaching methods and leadership strategies used by six highly successful coaches in the context of their state championship-winning programs. By using semi-structured interviews, the researcher presents findings from questions that were connected to a framework developed from the literature review (Jones, 2006). The framework consisted of four categories for the study:

1. Coaches as More Capable Others
2. Orchestrators of the Environment
3. Leadership
4. Coaching Development

Additional specific sub-categories arose within each category after coding the interviews:

1. Coaches as More Capable Others
 - a. Building Relationships
2. Orchestrators of the Environment

- a. Within the Program
 - b. Community
 - c. School
3. Leadership
- a. Mentoring
 - b. Employee Retention
 - c. Character Development
 - d. Organization
 - e. Servant Leader
 - f. Modeling
 - g. Accountability
4. Coaching Development
- a. Professional
 - b. Personal

Each of the six interviews will be analyzed and discussed as an individual case. At the end of this chapter, there will be a discussion on the themes that emerged after the cross-case analysis.

Case 1—Coach Todd Dodge

In the first case, the researcher examined the teaching methods of Coach Todd Dodge while he was the head football coach at Southlake Carroll High School in Southlake, Texas. Coach Dodge served as the head football coach there from 2000-2006. In his third year at the helm, the school won its first of four state championships in five years under his leadership. During the last five years as head coach at Southlake Carroll, the football team only lost one game.

Coach Dodge is currently the head football coach at Westlake High School in Austin, Texas. My original plan was to interview him in-person in Austin; however, due to scheduling conflicts the interview was conducted by phone on June 9, 2016, at 11:40

AM. The phone conversation lasted 62 minutes, and was recorded and later transcribed with his consent. All evidence from the interview fit into one of the four categories that the framework entails for these case studies.

When asked about Southlake Carroll's past prior to his arrival as head coach, Coach Dodge was candid in explaining that there had been a culture of winning under previous coaches. In fact, the school had even won three state championships in the late 1980s and early 1990s; however, the year before he was hired the school went 5-5 and decided to make a change. "The production had gone down from what was Carroll's standards," said Dodge. The tone of this statement gave a clear indication that the school would not tolerate a lack of wins on the football playing field.

More Capable Others—Building Relationships

When discussing how he prioritized his time with his team upon taking on the new job, Dodge talked about the importance of building relationships with his new players.

I'm real big on getting to know the players' names as soon as possible. Like, it's always my goal within the first two weeks, and so I do flash cards. We get a picture from last year's program or get a coach to just put them up against the wall and take a mug shot of them so to speak, and then I put their name on the back and I just grind it – the quicker you know their name, the quicker you can build a relationship with them.

Coach Dodge even mentions later in the interview that this is a practice that he still does to this day. He believes in it. "It's all about as quickly as possible starting to build those relationships with those kids, and letting them know that you care about them." Dodge's statements illustrate how he believes coaches play many different roles as opposed to just the lead instructor of the sport. To the players, a coach is part teacher, part disciplinarian,

part motivator, part friend, and part family member. Trust is a big part of attaining advancement in these roles, and Dodge talks about how this is a process with the players.

To me, you really have to have a period of time before you can say I trust someone or that person's loyal. I want you to know that you have trust in me. I want to make sure you understand that I'm going to be loyal to you but sometimes we're going to have to go through some adversity before we trust each other.

The trust built between Dodge, his staff, and his players enabled a fertile educational environment where the players received extremely competent instruction that readied them for their games from their position coaches. "The most important relationship in a program is a position coach with his position players," said Dodge.

Orchestrators of the Environment—Within the Program

Coach Dodge also talked about strategies he used to create an environment that expected high achievement.

One of the things I always want to do is first of all be a historian of that place and find out all of the things that had come before us, and make sure that I can teach that to our players and make sure that they respect what came before them.

He knew that Southlake Carroll had a history of success, and he believed in reminding the players about that history and build upon it. Cantu (2015) in the *Austin American-Statesman* mentioned Dodge doing this very thing again at his current coaching job, Austin Westlake. "I tell (the players) a story each day about what this program's about, what it means to a lot of people," Dodge said. "A lot of times, when you're on the inside looking in, you don't realize what you have. I want to make sure they understand what they have here, what the traditions are and what a great opportunity this is." In the *Dallas Morning News*, Corbett Smith (2015) wrote about the culture that Dodge has put in place at Austin Westlake and how it compared to his run at Southlake Carroll. "I don't

know if you can ever say you can do the type of things that we did at Carroll--as far as the run that we were on,” Dodge said. “But yes, the blueprint that we used at Carroll is absolutely what I believe in and the way that I like to run a program; it’s in place, full-fledged, here right now. The culture feels like 2006 to me.”

Orchestrators of the Environment–Community

Coach Dodge also recognized the importance of having parental and community support for his program in order to foster the type of successful environment that he envisioned for the football program.

A lot of times people from the outside looking in would think that parents in a wealthy school district would be all up in your business all of the time and it was just the opposite, to be honest with you. I took the time two times a year to have what we called our Dragon Football Family night. One was the week before spring ball and the other was the week before football season started. I brought all of the parents in and basically just painted a picture of what their sons were going to be doing, what expectations were, and what our program had to offer to their sons outside of throwing, catching, blocking, and tackling.

Coach Dodge also went on to impart some advice that he got from one of the first coaches he ever worked for in High School. “You’ve always got to leave the door open for parents; because if you’ll talk with them about anything that will make their son a better football player or a better young man, there’s a partnership there,” said Dodge. “But make sure you set the tone early in your tenure somewhere that there’s two things you’ll never talk to a parent about: you can’t have a conversation about someone else’s child or playing time.” The partnerships he created with the parents and community ended up paying off as his team got gradually better. The school even built a new football stadium during his tenure that provided the team and community with an enhanced setting for Texas high school football.

The new Dragon Stadium got built and we opened it in 2001 – I mean, it’s just one of those things that it was dripping with people every Friday night. You know you really don’t see in high school football a ton of tailgating like you do in college but I mean, when we would drive our players from the high school (it was about two miles) over to the new stadium, when we would get to the stadium at 5:30 to walk the field there were people in Winnebagos, lined up on to the parking lot tailgating and getting ready for the game. It was great, great support.

Coach Dodge concluded his interview by talking about the challenges his staff faced in the development of their players in the difficult setting that is Texas high school football.

Well, once we got on our roll, I mean we had literally over a five-year window we had 2 winning streaks. We went 31-0 over 2002 and 2003 and lost the State Championship game, and then we turned around and went on another streak and went 48-0 over the next three years. And so to say it was off the chart as far as the expectations, probably the toughest thing to do is to keep the expectations that matter in the field house. Because if you’re not careful, I mean everybody in town expects another State Championship the next year. But the thing that people don’t realize is the pressure that can be put on 15-16-17 year olds when you play in one of those programs. And I think at some point, the coaching staff has to protect them from that pressure.

Leadership–Organization

Coach Dodge also talked about the leadership strategies that he and his staff practiced throughout their time at Southlake Carroll. He first talked about how he led his staff and what he demanded from them.

That they needed to make sure that they were good building a relationship with their players that was conducive to the player to know that the coach cared about them as a young man way before. He could care less about him as a player before he got to know him as a young man and everything going on in his life. He was responsible for him in the classroom. He was responsible for him when he did good. He was responsible for him when he missed assignments. So that was huge.

As far as our coaching staff, they knew day in and day out that I went into length at knowing what everybody’s day-to-day duties were and they were mapped out during our coaches work week before we got started.

Leadership–Employee Retention

Coach Dodge talked about how his expectations for his staff translated into professional growth and future opportunities for them in their own careers.

One thing that our coaches just knew throughout from the 7th grade level on up is when/if we have an opportunity to move from our staff to go be a head coach or coordinator that I am absolutely going to look inside the program first before I go outside to hire a coach. So, at the middle school level, I told our coaches that we kind of had a policy that when we hired a new middle school coach that he was either moving up or out in 3 years. I told them it's not a negative, it's just this.

Dodge added this about the kind of guys he wanted to hire at Southlake,

I don't want a guy that has a desire to be a career middle school coach. I want him to be a guy that's going to be the best middle school coach in North America for 3 years and then I'm either going to move you to a freshman or JV position or I'm going to help you go, in a lot of cases, go get a varsity position.

Leadership–Accountability

When it came to leading his players, Dodge believed in talking with his players honestly and directly in one-on-one settings to promote personal growth. He also did this to prevent contradictory messages from people not associated with the team to inhibit what the player and his teammates were trying to accomplish.

If you're not careful, a lot of times the guy may have a tremendous junior year and all of a sudden the coaching staff starts coddling him, the community starts telling him how great he is, and he loses his edge.

Dodge even adds, "I never wanted to feel like we had arrived." Coach Dodge also practiced reflection in one-on-one settings with his players at the end of the football season to talk about what they needed to do next in order to achieve better individually and collectively.

What I do is immediately when we get back from the Christmas holidays is I bring those kids into my office and I tell them, "alright, this is the deal." My expectation for you is for you to be the very best player in the state of Texas.

And, more importantly, your expectations should be at your position. And I'm telling you that not for your personal accolade. If you raise your game to be the very best player, the very best linebacker in the state of Texas, then that's going to make us a good football team.

Dodge also added he thought one of the main reasons why they were so productive through the years is he and his staff did a really good job of holding players accountable.

Leadership–Character Development

Teaching player leadership through character development was also a practice of Dodge and his staff's at Southlake Carroll. For 25 minutes each school day, members of the coaching staff would take turns instructing the team on a different character lesson for the day. The curriculum was called: Coaches Change Lives. Dodge even went on to explain the unintended effects it also had on the staff, "As I've gone through the years, my coaches have said to me, coach you may have been doing that for the players, but that's the best thing I've ever done for myself to grow as a leader also." Cantu (2015) wrote that Dodge does an effective job of praising his players during adversity, and preaching character over results. After his Austin Westlake team lost in the state championship game in 2015, Dodge made sure they knew they had no reason at all to feel bad about their season. They accomplished great things, and they should be proud (Cantu, 2015).

Coaching Development–Professional

In addition to the coaching staff development that the leadership curriculum accomplishes, Coach Dodge also makes sure to practice other ways of coaching development. He and his staff attended coaching clinics as well as visiting successful college programs in hopes of learning what they do schematically. "We would go visit

with someone and try to get two or three little nuggets that we felt like would make ourselves better,” said Dodge.

Coaching Development–Personal

Dodge also talked about personal practices related to his family in order to promote a healthy balance between work and family life.

It was easy with my son because we were together all of the time. Whether he was a ball boy or he was the 7th or 8th grade quarterback or he was on the varsity football team. So he was always with me. The thing that I always had to make sure that I made the time for my wife and my daughter. During the season, Wednesday night was always my night with Elizabeth. We would go out to dinner every Wednesday night and I made sure that we did that. My daughter, Mollie, who just graduated from college—I made sure on Thursday nights—of course I would go to JV games and she would go with me and sit with me. She would sit up in the press box with me and I would spend that time with her and just get that quality time.

He also sought to help his staff with their work and family balance. This also proved to be a good leadership practice by not wasting their time and promoting their personal growth.

But with my entire staff I think one of the things is being real efficient on weekends. The one thing you’ve got to keep in mind with a staff is they’ve got families too. We had very strict guidelines on weekends and I wasn’t, as the head coach, going to go over those. We were going to be efficient in our work on Saturdays. We were going to be efficient in our work on Sundays. There wasn’t going to be a deal where we were going to have the mentality of we were going to just stay up here to let the community see all of our trucks parked at the field house until midnight every night. We’re going to work and when work’s over, we go home and be with your families.

Summary

Coach Dodge offered many teaching methods in the interview that he thought contributed to his team’s success. All of the evidence was organized into one of the four categories of the framework used for this study, and then broken up further into sub-

categories. Dodge offered evidence for the lone sub-category of More Capable Others, two sub-categories of Orchestrators of the Environment, four sub-categories of Leadership, and both sub-categories of Coaching Development. At the end of this chapter, his evidence will be compared with the other five coaches interviewed for this study.

Case 2–Coach Gary Joseph

In the second case, the researcher considers the teaching methods of Coach Gary Joseph as the head football coach at Katy High School in Katy, Texas. In 2003, the Katy Tigers won their fourth state championship in school history under legendary Coach Mike Johnston. Johnston would retire at the conclusion of the season, and the position was turned over to Coach Joseph, who was serving as defensive coordinator under Coach Johnston. Coach Joseph's first season was in 2004, and as of 2016 he is still the head football coach at Katy High School. During his leadership tenure, he led the Tigers to four more state championships and was awarded the 2015 National High School Football Coach of the Year.

My original plan was to interview Coach Joseph in-person at Katy High School; however, due to scheduling conflicts I conducted the interview by phone on June 11, 2016 at 9:00 AM. The phone conversation lasted 48 minutes, and was recorded and later transcribed with his consent. All evidence from the interview fit into one of the four categories that this study's framework entails for each case study.

After 22 years of serving as defensive coordinator at Katy High School, Coach Joseph was given the position of head football coach for the reigning state champions in the largest classification in Texas. "We'd been to five state championship games and

won three so it wasn't like the program was down or anything," said Joseph. What did begin was the growth in the area. Four new high schools have been built since Coach Joseph took over as head football coach, and Katy High School has remained the dominant football program in the area despite these changes.

More Capable Others—Building Relationships

The players and coaches in the program were all familiar with Joseph's style before taking the new role, because he had been a long time assistant. Upon taking over though, he described what his biggest objective was with players in his new role. "The biggest thing we did from a selling standpoint was reassure the kids that we were going to stay there and do things the right way," said Joseph. "Our players from around here have a lot of respect for me and I think that was a sign of relief for them more than anything else." He then talked about how important it was to him to get to meet with every kid in the program, and put together an evaluation plan that would be used going forward.

I met with them all – everybody in our program and we talked, just like everybody else talked. My thing was they knew who I was and what I stood for. They knew the work ethic that I had. I think that then to assure people and make sure that they had confidence. Confidence is such a fragile thing and I think that some of them were wondering, is it going to be the same? I think the only thing that you can do is let your work show what you're capable of doing. We rolled our sleeves up and we continued working.

Coach Joseph also talked about how important spending time with the players outside of practice was so they always knew where they stood in the program.

I think it's more, we meet at the end of – the first spring I meet with all of the senior parents and talk with them not just from a program standpoint but I talk to them about where their kid was and I explained to them what our evaluation process was for their kid. At the end of the spring I make our coaches evaluate each one of our kids and give them a written evaluation and give me a copy of it and that the kid has signed so when they come in the next year there won't be anything like "I didn't know." You know, it won't be that I didn't know he

wasn't getting to play. I was very, very honest and upfront with all of them. I think that's one of the things that's been a great thing for our program and it's helped me because I don't get as many people questioning me, "well I didn't know my son wasn't getting to play." It's here in writing, he signed it, and we send a copy of it home with him.

This also demonstrates how important relationships are to developing accountability with his players at Katy High School. Coach Joseph also brought up about how much he and his staff talk to their players about being responsible with social media.

That's something that's been very different in the last 10 years. It's just gotten bigger and bigger and bigger. Everybody's got phones and cameras on their phones so anything that they do is going to be sent out and we're going to find out about it. Like I said 90% of them tell on themselves.

Orchestrator of the Environment—Within the Program

It is obvious that Coach Joseph is very concerned with the well-being and development of his players on and off the playing field. He is also very passionate about the culture of his football program and making sure that it is maintained. When asked about the environment that he and his staff create, he said, "The great thing about Katy is, more than anything else, is the work ethic of our kids. Once you have it turned around and you add some tradition, the kids aren't afraid to work." He also mentioned that he does not allow profanity on the field from a coach, and he views the program to be very "values-oriented."

Orchestrator of the Environment—Community

The community has backed Coach Joseph and his program whole-heartedly, and the fan-base, which is known as "The Katy Nation," is somewhat of a cultural phenomenon with a book written about it by Dexter Clay (2007). There is even a sign in the locker room that reads, "When excellence becomes tradition, greatness has no limits."

Right below this sign is where the eight state championships are placed (Herrera, 2016).

When asked about the Katy Nation, Coach Joseph responded:

I'll just say, the Katy Nation is everybody getting behind Katy. Not just the Katy football team, it's the band, the brigade, the cheerleaders, and the people getting out and supporting their kids. It's the whole program and I think that's what people are so prideful of. It's just a whole atmosphere on a Friday or Saturday of Katy coming out and people coming out and supporting the kids.

Coach Joseph then spoke about how the environment was created, and why it has such a following.

Season tickets at Katy sell out because they believe in the kids and they want to come out and see the kids be successful. That's not the way it is in a lot of schools and especially in a multi-school district because you barely get the parents to come out and support the kids but around here it's still important that their kids do well. We have a lot of kids that grow up wanting to be part of Katy Tigers. The biggest selling point for that is when they come into the field house and see the trophy case then the expectations go up because of the traditions of the school and the values of the school.

He also spoke about the negative aspects that come with being a part of such a successful program.

The best thing is probably the hardest – it's the expectations. People expect you to sit there and stay on top, expect our kids to win and sometimes you get unrealistic about things. You're not going to win every year. I'm not naïve enough to think we are. We've been to the State Championship game 4 years in a row and that's almost unprecedented. And again, that's what the expectation is that we're going to play for every year. Again, is that reality? – probably not. Sometimes people start thinking that the kids have failed when they don't go 14-1 or they don't win a State Championship. So I guess expectations are probably unrealistic.

Orchestrator of the Environment–School

Football became a valuable part of the entire educational environment as well.

Coach Joseph spoke passionately about how the majority of his players did not go on to play professional football or even play on the Division I college level. He did, however,

believe that players benefited from their time in the football program, and he believed in partnering with the other teachers and administrators in this pursuit.

Our school is still a school with a great building principal. I've had three building principals, since I've been here. Each of them understood the value of athletics and understood the value of football for the school. It gave teachers and students a source of pride. You know test scores are big here; our test scores are as good as anywhere. I've coached a kid here that was number one in his class at Texas A&M. I coached him and his dad here.

Leadership–Organization

When asked about leadership, Coach Joseph addressed how he leads his staff and how they lead the players.

My leadership model is I'm going to give our coaches an opportunity to coach. I'm not going to micro-manage them. They understand my expectations I go through with them at the beginning of the year what I expect of them, and what I expect of them as a coach, and what I expect of them as a person and what I expect of them as a teacher. I am one of those people that I am going to delegate responsibility and I have great coaches here obviously. I can give them something to do and it's going to be done.

He then elaborated on his staff leadership philosophy by saying, "We won't do anything different than anybody. It's not what we do, it's how we do it." He also attributes a lot of the school's success to the blue-collar nature of the kids (Cherry, 2016). Reflecting on the previous day's or week's practices or games is also a beneficial practice that Katy implements. This also serves as a reminder for the overall mission of the organization.

I meet with our coaches every morning and we have staff meetings for an organizational purpose of the day. We meet throughout the offseason and football season and again at the end of the year I meet with our coaches and have a staff development in-service with them and go over expectations and what we're doing and why we're doing it.

Father Wayne Wilkerson, a pastor at the Catholic church that Joseph attends, said, “He knows who he is and he knows whose he is and that speaks volumes,” when talking about Coach Joseph as a leader (Hardy, 2016).

Leadership–Character Development

On fostering player leadership, Coach Joseph talked about their captains program. He tries to get representation from players in different grade levels, and players are elected as captains exclusively by their peers. Coach Joseph is most in favor of developing a solid relationship with the player though as opposed to just issuing out expectations for what a leader should look like. He also spoke about trying to just get the player to do his or her very best.

But all you can do is go out there and do your best. That’s the one thing that’s been a common knowledge since I’ve been the head coach and they are told every day is I expect your best. And don’t tell me about the 110% and all that crap. The only thing a person can do is their very best. 100% is 100% - it’s all you can do. But don’t try to do any more than your best – just do your best. That’s one thing that’s been common throughout our program. They understand the expectations and they do their best.

In 2013, Corbett Smith wrote an article about Katy’s success as a suburban school. In it, Coach Joseph is quoted as saying, “There are too many people in this world that are worried about me instead of we. It’s not about them. It’s not about scholarships. It’s about championships.”

Coaching Development–Professional

He finished out the interview by talking about what types of practices he and his staff do to continue their development as coaches. His method is making development

opportunities available but not mandatory. He expects his staff to take ownership for their own continued development.

I don't make them go. They know I give them the opportunity to go if they want to go. They go because they want to be abreast of what's going on. They want to make sure that we're not going to go stagnate and we're not going to do the same thing just because it's the way we've always done it.

He then followed up by what he does in regards to his coaching development.

You attend clinics and things like that. I think that's important. You still listen to the leadership that people throw out – I still go to those types of things. I still listen to the AFCA people. You're not going to change everything that you do because you go to a clinic but what you're trying to do is pick up an idea.

He then concluded the interview by saying what he hopes the program is and will continue to be. “We don't cut corners, we don't do short cuts. We'll do it the right way and we're going to sit here and be a place where you enjoy coming to work every day.”

Summary

Coach Joseph offered many teaching methods in the interview that he thought contributed to his team's success. All of the evidence was organized into one of the four categories of the framework used for this dissertation, and then broken up further into sub-categories. Joseph offered evidence for the lone sub-category of More Capable Others, three sub-categories of Orchestrators of the Environment, three sub-categories of Leadership, and one sub-category of Coaching Development. At the end of this chapter, his evidence will be compared with the other five coaches interviewed for this study.

Case 3—Coach Chad Morris

Coach Chad Morris is the third case for this study. He is currently the head football coach at Southern Methodist University (SMU), which competes on the Division

I level of college football. This interview, however, focused on his time as the head football coach at Lake Travis High School in Austin, Texas. Morris was the head coach of the Lake Travis Cavaliers for two years where the team went 32-0 and captured two state championships in class 4A, which is the second largest classification in Texas high school football. The year prior to his arrival, Lake Travis won the 4A state title, and that head coach left for another job. Morris had been the head football coach at Stephenville High School prior to taking over at Lake Travis.

Coach Morris was interviewed in his office at SMU in Dallas, Texas on May 24, 2016 at 10:30 AM. The interview was recorded and later transcribed with his consent. Evidence from the interview fit into each of the four categories that make up the framework used for these case studies.

More Capable Others—Building Relationships

I began the interview by asking what he did when he first took over the program. Morris described how he knew it was imperative to get the parents and the kids on board with the new change, and he was going to have to build relationships in order to do this.

Individual meetings. One-on-one. And it literally took me about 2 weeks to meet with every kid in our program. It was a get-to-know you meeting but I had about 3 questions. What do you expect of me? If you could change one thing, what would it be? What are your expectations for this program? The final thing I asked was, tell me about our helmet here. I kept notes of everything I had on every player. So as he's talking, I'm taking notes. Now, it makes him feel that this coach is listening; he's taking notes.

He also spoke at length about some strategies he specifically used to develop trust with his new team. One strategy was to never sit behind a desk when talking with a player. "It becomes more of a connection when I'm sitting next to you," said Morris. He then talked about one strategy he used to honor the achievements made from the previous year

while still bringing about change in the program. The strategy was controversial too. He changed the helmet.

In a state like this, if you want to get fired quick, you change the logo and the color of the helmet in high school. The one thing I wanted them to know – and this is probably really important here – is that I didn't want to degrade or tarnish the State Championship that they had just won prior to me so there had to be a way that I would've walked in the door and didn't say "look, what y'all have been doing is bad," because it hadn't been. So what I did was I came in and that first year instead of changing the whole logo, I took the logo and represented their first State Championship with a star in the logo. And so now the players in the past who didn't play for me who had just graduated have a connection to us. So, if you look at their logo now, it has 5 stars on it and each one counts for a State Championship. That was just a way that I could bring the old past regime and connect it to me.

These strategies demonstrate how Coach Morris sought out ways to connect with his players outside of just teaching them football content. It was evident from the tone of voice in his answers that he believes those strategies aided in the process of them winning consecutive state championships. Morris also has a reputation of keeping up with his players once they are finished playing for him. Mike Foreman (2009) wrote about a time when Coach Morris came back to work the Bay City football camp several years after he was done coaching there. In fact, he was coaching at another high school in the state, but still took the time to go back and re-connect with former players.

Orchestrator of the Environment–Within the Program

When asked about the type of environment he tried to create, Coach Morris explained he wanted to create a culture of player ownership. Whether the topic involved practice plans or uniform equipment, he wanted the players to feel like they had a say.

I have always felt that every human being, me, you, every player wants three things in life to survive: they want to be loved, they want to love someone, and they want to have ownership of something. So I was providing them and building the trust to get the love and I was letting them know that, hey, I know you love

this program, and I know you're going to love me, and what we are about and the structure we're going to have – then you're going to have ownership in this program because I am now developing that with you.

Orchestrator of the Environment–Community

Coach Morris also talked about how he sought out to include the parents but also give them boundaries. “I had a parent meeting and I was very direct and straight forward with our parents that I needed their help; and I was not going to their place of business and tell them how to run their business; and they were not going to come up here and tell me how to run mine; but that I needed their help for us to continue to be successful we had to work together,” said Morris. He then talked about how great the parents ended up being, but also mentioned how they never lost a game in the two years he was there too. Regardless, he described how passionate the fan-base was and how much pride the community was having now that they were the most successful of the Austin communities.

The school itself was – man, they turned out for games – they loved it. They were tasting success, they were loving it. There was tailgating with the students before games. The Cavalier walk that we would have – I mean, it was a big deal. And so, it was what you would picture a Friday night in a beautiful hill country setting that they had had. Westlake had had so much success and the communities are very close and very similar that the people of Lake Travis, during the Westlake runs were – it was their time now. And so they were boasting and they had a lot to boast about. So, that first year when we beat Westlake for the first time in something like 50 years, you really saw a community just come to me. Once we beat Westlake, that was it. I knew that I had the parents and the kids.

Orchestrator of the Environment–School

Morris also talked about how the players on his team and the overall program were viewed by the rest of the academic community at Lake Travis.

They liked the fact that we were heavily involved and that we were recognizing those student athletes that were on the A honor roll and we were promoting what they were selling just as they were promoting what we were selling. Those teachers there knew that we had their back. They knew if there was a kid that wasn't acting right that the coaches were going to help take care of it too and vice versa.

Leadership–Modeling

On the subject of leadership, Morris said, “Everything was by example.” He said they established a culture, and then the staff sought out to uphold it every single day. Humility also seemed to be threaded into his leadership philosophy. He even talked about how a past mistake he made influenced how he led his staff at Lake Travis. While coaching at Stephenville High School, the school he was at prior to Lake Travis, he had followed a legendary high school football coach who had already won four state titles there. Some of that coach's former assistants were still on staff, and members of the school and community were still fiercely loyal to the former, legendary coach. Feeling unable to implement new ideas, he then tried to conform and be like the former coach.

I was trying to do things like Stephenville had always done them. I lost my culture; I lost my swag so to speak. And so I was able to overcome it even though going 6-4 my first year and not going to the playoffs; was probably going to get fired the second year. I wouldn't be sitting here today had I not experienced that. But I learned a valuable lesson if I ever change jobs again that I was not going to deviate from my culture. And so we came in and established our culture that we eventually had established in Stephenville but it was after some hard rock times that I got away from it. So that was a whole learning lesson that I learned. I had always said after Stephenville, any job that I ever took I would not take it unless I could fire the whole staff and then interview them to hire back. But they had to know that it was me who hired them back because at Stephenville I was forced to retain the majority of my staff and, it was good, they were good, but their loyalty wasn't to me. So, they felt like it was kind of like a “capture the flag moment” – I was protected. They were protecting the flag and I was trying to capture it. So, that was not good. But I learned after year one, I got rid of those guys and so taking the job at Lake Travis, I fired everybody and then I hired back a couple of them and we established our culture. Now they felt like, ok, I am one of Coach Morris' guys.

Morris also reached out to Gus Malzahn, who is the current head coach at Auburn, but at the time was also a high school coaching legend in the state of Arkansas. Morris adapted what he did offensively, and then was able to put Stephenville back on a winning course before leaving for Lake Travis with his newfound mindset (Woodberry, 2011). In 2008, ESPN did a story on Lake Travis's success and how Morris was following up a successful high school coach again, and that this time he was not going to change what he believed in (Miller, 2008).

Leadership–Mentoring

In fostering player leadership, Coach Morris talked about how he chose a small group of different aged players from the team and formed a leadership committee. This gave the players some form of representation when it came to issues that needed to be addressed.

One of the things we do is we have a Morris Committee that involves us taking a Freshman, Sophomore, Junior and 2 Seniors and they involve our player panel, and any pulse of the locker room comes through them. They meet with another member of my staff, because they may not be comfortable telling me. He in turn decides what needs to get to me and what he can handle. It's a big deal to be on it. So, they give us the pulse and from there we make decisions off of it.

Coaching Development–Professional

Coach Morris concluded the interview by talking about the importance of continuing his own and his staff's coaching development is to him. In 2012, the *Wall Street Journal* did an article on Morris while at Clemson and talked about how much he valued innovation (Cohen, 2012). He even had it built into his contract at Lake Travis that the school would pay for him and his staff to continue their coaching development by reaching out to other programs or attending clinics.

When I went through the first year at Stephenville and we didn't get to the playoffs I reached out to Gus Malzahn, who is a high school coach at this point in West Arkansas. But prior to that, I would do it every year we would go to LSU or I would take my staff every year – offense gets to go someplace, defense gets to go someplace and you get to choose. And we still do that to this day. You have to stay on the cutting edge. The game of football is changing. CEO's aren't running businesses like they ran them 5 years ago or 3 years ago. School teachers aren't teaching school like they did 3 or 4 years ago. It's changing, it's evolving and offenses are constantly evolving. It keeps me from getting comfortable, it keeps my staff from getting comfortable and complacent because I think complacency is basically the root of all destruction in any organization. Everything can be usually traced back to 2 things: being complacent and lack of communication. That's why going in they know up front that in the spring we're going to visit.

Coaching Development–Personal

He also talked about providing resources to develop his staff spiritually. They even do staff devotions where each member of the coaching staff takes a turn in leading it.

We provide our players, as our coaches, a chapel service before games just like everybody else does. Our team chaplain comes in and visits with us and we have a huge devotional on Thursday. Just trying to make sure that we stay as grounded as we possibly can.

Summary

Coach Morris offered many teaching methods in the interview that he thought contributed to his team's success. All of the evidence was organized into one of the four categories of the framework used for this study, and then broken up further into sub-categories. Morris offered evidence for the lone sub-category of More Capable Others, three sub-categories of Orchestrators of the Environment, two sub-categories of Leadership, and both sub-categories of Coaching Development. At the end of this

chapter, his evidence will be compared with the other five coaches interviewed for this study.

Case 4–Coach Scott Surratt

In the next case, the researcher examines the teaching methods and leadership strategies that Coach Scott Surratt implemented as head football coach at Carthage High School in Carthage, Texas. Coach Surratt took over as head coach in 2007. He had never been a head coach before, but had been an accomplished offensive coordinator at Texas High in Texarkana, Texas. In his first year, he led Carthage to their first District Championship in over 10 years, and then followed that up by winning three state championships in class 3A over the next three years. He has won a total of four in his tenure thus far, and he is still currently the head football coach of the Carthage Bulldogs.

My original plan was to interview Coach Surratt in-person at his home in Carthage; however, due to scheduling conflicts I conducted the interview over the phone on June 14, 2016, at 11:00 AM. The phone conversation was recorded and later transcribed with his consent. Evidence from the interview fit into each of the four categories that make up the framework used for these case studies.

More Capable Others–Building Relationships

Upon taking over the program, Coach Surratt talked about how hesitant the players were at first to a new football coach coming in. Prior to Surratt getting the job, the last two head coaches only stayed two years before departing. Some players in high school would be playing for their third head coach in four years.

But if I was sitting in their seat I would probably have thought, well here we go again. We're hearing the same things. And what we did was follow through with

a lot of our promises – all of them that we could – and just brought the positive attitude. We told them it was going to be a culture change. It was a little while rough and we had to take those things and we had to look in their eyes every day and show them that we cared about them not just in the field house or on the football field.

Surratt made a point of meeting with every senior in the program individually as well.

He wanted to learn about them; learn who their guardian was and where they lived. He also made his entire staff more visible to the student body.

The first thing I did was got all of our coaches and we did all of the morning duty because obviously coaches can't do it in the afternoon because we are working the athletes at this time. My goal was that those kids when they come in, not just the athletes in football, but the whole student body to come in and see not only my eyes but all of my coaches' eyes and we were greeting them every morning. And that was a positive thing. I wanted to see the players every day.

Prior to Surratt and his staff turning the football program into state champions, Carthage as a community had experienced some setbacks.

On the boys side the only thing we had going in Carthage was baseball. That was the only thing positive about Carthage when I walked in there. We were low performing in our grades from the State. We had a big old gas leak before I got there on campus so they had to shut down school for a week before I got there. So there was a lot of negative things going on. We had to go in and change the culture. There was no positive in the football program whatsoever. It was really, really negative.

Orchestrator of the Environment–Within the Program

Surratt proceeded to change the culture by modeling positivity in his interactions with the players and what they could achieve. He demanded the same from his new staff.

I do remember when I first got here a junior high coach told me, I asked him well how's this 8th grade and he told me we got Epot and the rest of them are not very good. This is the worst group we've ever had. I did look at him and said you better the next time I ask you, you better have something positive to say about these kids or we're going to find somebody else who can do that. And he asked the defensive coordinator that I brought with me, Garrett Morgan, "Is he serious?" And he told him, "Dang right he's serious. This place is so negative and we've got to change that culture." I did not fire all of the guys there. They held

everybody's contract so I could release them or keep them. I kept three of the junior high coaches and he was one of them. He's still with me today and he's very positive.

Once the staff followed Surratt's example, the players started to buy into the new philosophies. Surratt's positive mindset seemed to carry over throughout his tenure. In 2015, he was quoted as saying, "We made some mistakes, but when you do that you just have to just keep on playing," after his team upset No. 1 ranked Navasota High School in the 2015 playoffs (Daniels, 2015).

Orchestrator of the Environment–Community

Early on, the community was still a little skeptical as to how much they would invest in the program though, but all of that changed when the school bond was passed to build a brand new stadium.

I got here and in the spring the bond was being voted on and everybody said it was 50/50 whether it's going to pass after I had taken the job and I said you've got to be kidding. So the first thing we did we went around the community and we got this guy who has his own construction company and we got the Texas Country Music Hall of Fame, which is in Carthage, Texas. We rented that thing out for about \$200 for 2 hours and we had the whole community in. And this old boy with the construction company said if you get them there I will feed them barbeque all day free. So we got that out on the radio and the paper about free barbeque and all I did was educate them that it was not going to raise their taxes.

I'll never forget I had a big PowerPoint it's a win, win, win. I got to introduce myself to the community and this is right when I got there. I got to introduce my defensive coordinator and then I talked to them about a lot of the same things that we were going to do on how we were going to hold them accountable on grades, check daily grades and I think that helped the community turn a lot. But I was nervous as a cat on this bond and it ended up passing like 75%. Then we've had I want to say 6 more bonds since I've been here and the least number we've had on any one of them is 81% now. We got 90% on the indoor – full size football indoor. We had the biggest scoreboard screen in the State of Texas and it passed at 81%. We were really worried about it. We just passed a couple of more bonds to get new turf and we're getting 25 more yards each side of the press box that should be ready for this season.

Carthage's commitment to facilities even garnered the attention of national news. In 2012, the Wall Street Journal did a feature on the school after they constructed the largest high school scoreboard in the United States (Campoy, 2012).

Orchestrator of the Environment–School

Surratt also spoke at length about strengthening ties with the administration and the teachers in order to build school pride. He helped other teachers who were having classroom management issues, and he was even asked to make a presentation to the faculty on leadership by the principal.

Just staying positive in all of the things at the school and now we will have so many of the teachers on game day will send us cakes, cookies, or whatever just for helping them out because it is a struggle with young people now days in the classroom.

Leadership–Modeling

When asked about his leadership strategy, Surratt first spoke about his strategy for hiring other coaches to be a part of this program. He chose character over competence.

First of all we had to get my staff hired and I was able to bring a lot of guys that I coached before and I knew they were great leaders. And then I interviewed some guys, did my due diligence and made sure they were solid people. That's the first thing that I did. Then, I think if I knew their character and they had good character, that I could teach them what we wanted offensively and Coach Morgan could teach them what he wanted on defense. I think that hiring those guys leading them every day, being there every day. One thing we don't tolerate is coaches missing and players missing.

Leadership–Organization

Coach Surratt classified himself as highly competent in organization and accountability. In an interview in 2014 about his career at Carthage thus far, Surratt discussed what the interview committee saw in him as the ideal candidate. "You have to

be organized and have a vision and a plan,” Surratt said. “I have all that (Dennard, 2014).” One newspaper writer in East Texas even nicknamed him “The Mad Scientist” for how well his teams perform regardless of their talent-level (Daniels, 2015). The staff and players knew what was expected, and the instruction was very clear and concise. Even if certain members of the staff were unable to see the big picture with his ideas, he was very insistent on just knowing and doing your job today. You’ll figure out the rest as the season unfolds. “Go out there and know exactly what you’re doing that day because you will start figuring out the big picture later,” said Surratt. He also mentioned how naming team captains was not a part of how they did player development. Instead, he said they focused on keeping all of their players accountable. This proved to be a successful strategy, especially in 2013 when the Bulldogs won their fourth state championship after starting the season with a loss to Whitehouse High School. In that game they surrendered 63 points to Whitehouse in a loss, which was the highest amount scored ever on Surratt during his tenure at Carthage. The Bulldogs showed their resilience though, and only allowed 133 points over the last 11 games of the season. This demonstrated a drastic improvement by the team and coaching staff (Brooks, 2014).

Leadership–Employee Retention

Motivating his staff was also something that Surratt discussed when talking about leadership. He is very passionate about using rewards as a way to motivate them.

It’s like Christmas, right before we go to a coach’s retreat, it’s like Christmas. You’ll get so much clothes it’s unbelievable and then when we get to the playoffs because it’s going to get cold you are going to be getting a whole other wardrobe. And you know, I drop them emails or letters and tell them you’re doing a great job and keep up the great work – just keep the positive stuff going. But every now and then coaches are like players. They will get stagnate every now and then and you’ve got to get them going and we have a deal there. We ask our players to

compete and be the best player on the team and be a better player than your buddy right here and also be able to lead and then be able to compete against all of the other schools and that's the same thing with coaches. I said who is the best coach on the staff? I said if you look around and you're saying well I think he's the best coach on the staff, why aren't you the best coach on the staff? You need to be competing to be the best coach on the staff. See we are competing against each other who is the best coach on the staff and then as an overall staff we are competing to be the best staff in the State of Texas.

Coaching Development–Professional

In regards to coaching development, Surratt finished up the interview by talking about the ways in which they continue to learn individually and as a staff.

We send all of our coaches to clinics and we will take something each spring and we will study whether it be red zone or third downs. If we were not very good in third downs, let's study. Another thing we do is we have six or seven DirecTV boxes and there are DVR's in our office and now the cameras and stuff are so good on these college games and pro games that we will have a list of a coach – ok, you get all of Boise State games this year or you get all of the Oklahoma games this year or Texas games and they are responsible for getting it when they come on and we have it. If we have seven Texas games and that is the offense we want to run or the defense we want to run and we can go back and break every one of those games down and put it on Hudl and study on what we want to do.

Another practice is paying for an expert to come in and speak with Surratt and his staff. He then gave an example of when the University of Texas won the 2005 national championship, he paid for the offensive coordinator to come and spend time with him and his staff in order to teach them what they did to have so much success. He then concluded the topic by preaching how important it is for his staff never to get complacent. “Here's the deal–everybody is trying to figure out how to be on top and we've luckily been on top quite a bit so everybody is studying us and how to stop us offensively and how to score on us defensively,” said Surratt. “So we have got to keep on top of our game too by studying and adding a few things to our repertoire.”

Summary

Coach Surratt offered many teaching methods in the interview that he thought contributed to his team's success. All of the evidence was organized into one of the four categories of the framework used for this study, and then broken up further into sub-categories. Surratt offered evidence for the lone sub-category of More Capable Others, three sub-categories of Orchestrators of the Environment, three sub-categories of Leadership, and one sub-category of Coaching Development. At the end of this chapter, his evidence will be compared with the other five coaches interviewed for this study.

Case 5—Coach Jeff Traylor

Coach Jeff Traylor is the fifth case for this study. He is currently an assistant football coach at the University of Texas at Austin, which competes on the Division I level of college football. This interview, however, focused on his time as the head football coach at Gilmer High School in Gilmer, Texas. Traylor captured three state championships in his 15-year tenure at Gilmer, and made it to the state championship game two more times. The Gilmer Buckeyes had never won a state championship prior to Traylor taking over as head coach.

Coach Traylor was interviewed at his home in Austin, Texas, on May 24, 2016 at 9:00 PM. The interview was recorded and later transcribed with his consent. Evidence from the interview fit into each of the four categories that make up the framework used for these case studies. Traylor is the only subject in this study who coached at the high school that he graduated from.

More Capable Others—Building Relationships

Upon taking the new job, he talked about taking a different approach than what had been done before.

I refused to listen to what anybody else had said about any kid. I just went in with a blank slate. I let every kid back in the program. I just treated it as all sins are forgiven and I just gave everybody a clean slate. I tried to spend as much time with them as I could. Believe it or not, they had never practiced after school. They had practiced during the period so they weren't use to practicing after school. That was kind of different for those guys. They thought I was a pretty mean person for having an actual practice. So that was not an easy sell. I came in and put carpet down—the cheapest carpet I could find. I painted whatever I could paint. I got them these new t-shirts and shorts that matched. I washed their clothes every day and hung them in their lockers. I really didn't do anything that crazy but they had been so neglected.

The reception was initially mixed. He went on to share how some of the older players even quit.

A lot of them quit. I really spent a lot of time in my junior high. Those kids are so excited and all they knew was me. They hadn't really kind of been corrupted to apathy and finger pointing. So I spent a lot of time down there and I just tried to hold on for those few years up top. We only had like 25 on varsity and probably 20 on JV, maybe 18 freshmen. It was pretty poor. I just tried to have 3 teams compete and make it through. My JV went 0-10 and we got the crud kicked out of us on Thursday nights, it was terrible. The really good kids, I attracted a lot of the really good kids back. It's kind of like a transformation – all the kind of knuckle heads left and all the good kids came back and I had a core of really good kids. I just enjoyed being around them.

Traylor also added that while he did not think he was a very good head coach in the beginning, he did possess an unwavering belief in himself and his staff that allowed them to do better than they had previously. Traylor's first year yielded six wins, which was one more win than had been accomplished in the previous year; but they still had missed out on the playoffs. He knew the program was in better shape though.

After we won 6 and we kind of got a little buzz about us, both of our junior high groups went undefeated. We spent a lot of time down there. We killed people in junior high. We had a little moxy about us down there and the buzz kind of got

out. I did brash things. Looking back I'm not sure I would do that again. I predicted a State Championship. I said we were going to kill everybody and we were going to kick their butt. I stirred up mess, you know. Everybody was talking about us. I'm sure they were laughing at us. I created a little storm. I knew what I was doing. I wanted our kids to have a little swagger about themselves.

Later in the interview, Traylor talked about how he attributed his program's success on the field to things that go unseen by the common fan. In 2014, after his team defeated Atlanta High School 64-25 to get to the semi-final round of the state playoffs, Traylor was quoted in a local newspaper about what he ultimately attributed to their success.

"That's the thing people miss. They love the play calls, the chatter but it's about effort, it's about trust, it's about love. I know it sounds corny but that's what it's really about," said Traylor (Henry, 2014).

Orchestrator of the Environment—Within the Program

The very next year Gilmer won their first District Championship in 10 years. Three years after that, the Buckeyes would go 16-0 and win the first state championship in school history. Traylor attributed their success to implementing a "championship culture" within the program among the players.

A championship culture is, first of all, when everybody does their job. You do your job and everything you do in your job you should do it to glorify God. And, when you hire people that don't work for me they work for God, you don't have to monitor them like you do your other employees because they're not working for you.

Coach Traylor also attributed a great deal of their success to his staff's belief system at Gilmer.

You know it's unique in the sense that there's a culture in East Texas and Texas in general where almost everybody played. It's saved so many young men's lives. It's given kids a reason to come to school, changed their lives. It's just given kids reasons to get out of the house that was good for them. It's given them

examples of men that love them. Black men love them, White men love them, old men love them, young men – just a mentoring. Just a way to get young men – boys to become young men. Dick Sheffield gave me a poem years ago. I loved Dick – he was a legendary coach in Jacksonville who mentored me. He gave me a poem called “A Coach Never Loses.” In the poem it’s really that our careers won’t be judged now our careers will be judged in 30 years. And in 30 years it won’t be your won-loss record, it will be how many men you made out of how many boys. For example, I had 25 seniors approximately every year average so I had 15 years of 25. So if you do the math it would be 25×10 would be 250, 5×25 would be 125 so approximately 375-400 young men I coached. How many of those became men. Married, stayed married, and took care of their families, had a job –that’s where my real percentage of coaching is going to be one day not my won-loss record. My won-loss record is 175-26. That’s not what we’re going to be judged as a coach, it’s gonna be how many men out of how many boys. And that poem I put up in Gilmer. It’s right where I spoke every day, right above my head where I spoke. And that’s pretty much what our belief system is in Gilmer.

Orchestrator of the Environment–Community and School

Prior to that culture being implemented, Traylor talked about the community and school’s shortcomings. The community had a lot of racial tension. The school was under-performing academically. Teachers did not like the coaches, and coaches did not like the teachers. To counter these obstacles, Traylor began implementing initiatives that would seek to build bridges and create an environment that took great pride in being a Gilmer Buckeye.

Well, we did tutorials every Tuesday after school. We didn’t start football practice until after 6:00 at night. We did that all 15 years. We never lost a kid to grades at Gilmer – not one kid on Varsity. We had all of the coaches in the halls and at 4:00 all of our kids were in tutorials til 5:00 whatever it took. It was a late night for the coaches. We didn’t want one teacher to ever say we only showed up the last week of the 6 weeks. We wanted every teacher to know we were there all the times.

After a while, he said the perception of what his coaches were trying to do changed, and the school began to endorse the football program more. He also came up with a creative way for the community to get involved with players more.

We started an Adopt A Buckeye Program and it was big time. We had a lot of kids who didn't have parents come to the games – just didn't have any. So all I did was challenge everybody in the community to pick one player and all I asked them to do was write them a card one time a week and be there when the game was over and talk to them when the game was over. From there it spun into a huge deal. Now almost every kid in Gilmer has 2-3 parents that adopt them. We just kept getting our community involved and the teachers. The winning always helps but I think doing it the right way and winning is what helped seal the deal. Those little things made it right.

Once the culture started to change from the inside out, the entire community began to support the Buckeyes.

It was unbelievable. Our crowd, and they still are, they are the first ones there and they're crazy now. It got really fun. It was fun to show up at the ballgame. When we left the pep rally and we walked back to the field house there was a line of people already at the gate. We only have 5,000 in our whole town but we traveled with a lot more than that a lot of times. I don't know where they came from but that was pretty cool.

Traylor also gives a lot of credit to his superintendent for the strong support of extracurricular activities. In 2014 in the playoffs leading up to his third state championship win, Traylor was quoted as saying, "My superintendent has been a huge support. He believes in extracurricular activities, and I don't just mean football - the band, the ag program, cheerleaders, the Stars (Gilmer's drill team). He believes in what we do" (Lane, 2014, para. 28).

Leadership–Servant Leader

When asked about his leadership philosophy, Traylor began talking about what he looks for in an assistant coach. "I only looked for IQ and character – I don't look for anything else," said Traylor. Then, collectively as a staff, he said that servant leadership is the mantra that they adopted. "I just used the model of Jesus Christ," he said. I followed by asking why he picked this style.

You know Matt Turner was a great influence for me and so was Danny Long at Jacksonville. Danny loved God. I worked for Danny and he tried his best to be that example for me and that was big. Tom Landry was big in my life just watching him from a distance. I always liked the way Tom Osborne carried himself. Bill McCartney came along with Promise Keepers in 1991 or somewhere around there—that spoke large to me. Understand that none of those people were perfect and I’m not either but that’s not what this is about.

Leadership–Mentoring

In 2013, a newspaper article was written about Traylor and his Gilmer Buckeyes in their 100th year of existence (Greene, 2013). One portion of the article revealed an instrumental moment in the leadership development of Coach Traylor. When Traylor was an assistant at Jacksonville High School, he was 24 years old, and Matt Turner, who ended up working for him at Gilmer, was the offensive coordinator for Jacksonville. After evaluating Traylor’s talent, he cautioned him to temper his ego and spend time learning the craft of football coaching.

He said, “If you’ll just shut up for one year and watch and listen, I’ll make you one of the greatest head coaches Texas has ever had.” And you know, no one had ever spoken that much truth to me in my life, said Traylor. (Greene, 2013, para. 33)

Turner’s mentorship aided Traylor’s own development as a leader (Greene, 2013).

Traylor was intentional about developing player leadership too. In his time at Gilmer, they had a “Captain’s Council,” which is made up of eight to 12 seniors. The council meets every Monday night after practice, and they go over leadership lessons and share a meal together. When asked about how they players got selected, Traylor said,

There were a lot of times that votes didn’t even matter to me. I was going to put on there who I wanted on there. I had to give the appearance that they all had a say in it. And they did. There were times that the coach and players might vote for a player I didn’t even listen to. Well, that was pretty strong, and I was going to take that kid. A lot of the times I put some knuckle-heads on there because they were my best players. They were knuckle heads but what’s the old saying

about keeping your enemies close or something? We had dinner every Monday night, you know feed them for 30 minutes and then we always did a leadership study every Monday night whether it might be locker room lawyers or front runner – the definition of those things.

In 2013, an article was written about Traylor and his Captains Council. Overton (2013) disclosed that the coaches and captains first congregate on the initial Wednesday of football season workouts. They agree on a motto for the year, they sign a contract stating their intent to uphold the standards of being a captain, and they learn the history of the Gilmer Buckeye football program. The first council they ever had together when Traylor took over came up with the acronym PRIDE, which stood for Positive, Respectful, Intensity, Discipline, & Every Play (Overton, 2013). In the final year of Traylor's tenure at Gilmer, the motto DEZign8 was chosen to honor Desmond Pollard, a member of the football program who had died the previous spring. "We're a close-knit community and football is pretty important to Gilmer," Traylor said. "It rocked our community pretty good." The motto was another example of Traylor allowing his players to take ownership of their program and decide what they would use as motivation for the upcoming season (Henry, 2014).

Leadership–Character Development

Traylor made sure to include the coaching staff in the leadership development process as well.

During the season our coaches, each coach would have 2 times a week where they would do a character trait. We would have a preacher come in on Friday to follow up on that and I would speak on it too so 4 times a week. During the spring we always did it 5 days a week and I would meet with my captains on Monday night. So we were big and old fashioned on teaching some character. My Captain's Council was really a huge thing.

Coaching Development–Professional

Even after achieving so much success, Traylor is consistent about him and his staff continuing to develop. Traylor is an avid reader, and explained how he takes notes on all of his books in the offseason.

I read a lot of books and I have a certain way of marking those books. It's been big for me through the years. Like, exclamation point to me means I already do that. A means I want to apply this to my program, slightly different possibly. C would mean I want to change it to totally radical different. S would mean this is a long story that I want to read to my kids at some point. Question mark means I don't understand this. I want to look deeper into this. V means bible verse. I would use that somehow. Q means quote. I'm going to use this quote somehow. Because when I read I look back and pull stories out and when I used to read I didn't mark my books so I couldn't ever find the stories and stuff. Now when I look back in my books, I can find the quotes quicker, I can find the verses quicker, I can find the stories quicker.

Coaching Development–Personal

When asked about his staff's development, Traylor mentioned that they did a lot of the things other staffs do. They went to clinics and visited other college programs to learn. He also brought the Christian ministry, Coaches Outreach, to Gilmer every Thursday morning to lead a Bible study for his staff; and they had also done staff retreats. Traylor is also a believer in evaluations and staff reflection at the end of the year.

My coordinators evaluated my assistant coaches. I evaluated my coordinators and I helped my coordinators evaluate my assistant coaches. I let my coordinators do my assistants just so I could empower them. Now, I would sit in there on these evaluations. Then I would evaluate my assistants. I always had all my assistants and my coordinators evaluate me. I have always let them evaluate me. I've always given them the last straw and I used a lot of their ideas. I always used one question, "if there was one thing you could do in this program, that you would change if you were the boss for a day, what would you do?" And, a lot of great ideas came from that. A lot of things I dismissed but a lot of great ideas.

Summary

Coach Traylor offered many teaching methods in the interview that he thought contributed to his team's success. All of the evidence was organized into one of the four categories of the framework used for this dissertation, and then broken up further into sub-categories. Traylor offered evidence for the lone sub-category of More Capable Others, three sub-categories of Orchestrators of the Environment, three sub-categories of Leadership, and both sub-categories of Coaching Development. At the end of this chapter, his evidence will be compared with the other five coaches interviewed for this study.

Case 6–Coach Tom Westerberg

In the final case, the researcher investigates the teaching methods used by Coach Tom Westerberg when he was the head football coach of Allen High School in Allen, Texas. Westerberg is currently the head football coach at Barbers Hill High School in Mont Belvieu, Texas. While at Allen, Coach Westerberg served as the head coach from 2004-2015. His first state championship came in 2008, and then he won three consecutive titles from 2012-2014. In 2014, he was named the National High School Football Coach of the Year. Prior to taking the head coaching job at Allen, he served as the offensive coordinator on staff.

My original plan was to interview Coach Westerberg in-person at his home in Mont Belvieu; however, due to scheduling conflicts I conducted the interview over the phone on June 15, 2016, at 3:00 PM. The phone conversation was recorded and later transcribed with his consent. Evidence from the interview fit into each of the four categories that make up the framework used for these case studies.

In 2004, Allen High School promoted Coach Westerberg from the position of offensive coordinator to head football coach. Since he already knew the players in the program, his initial tasks were focused on evaluating players through competitive drills.

The whole thing is you're in a little bit different role as the head coach and just mainly through off season (I took over in January) so I really used our off season and our competition in off season trying to put them in as many competition type events to evaluate who could thrive under competition and who couldn't along with getting our off season stuff done.

More Capable Others—Building Relationships

The reception he received from the players was very positive. In fact, when the superintendent broke the news, Westerberg said they all jumped up, celebrated, and gave him a standing ovation. His players trusted him and responded well to his motivation. This was no more evident than in an article by Welch (2015) discussing Allen's defeat of Desoto High School to make it 55 straight wins in a row. "Coach looks at us and all he has to say is, 'Let's go get 'em,' and our defense gets hyped up," added one player. "It's just straight heart" (para. 11).

Orchestrator of the Environment—Within the Program

From a culture perspective, Allen is one of the premiere football jobs in the state of Texas. It is the largest high school in the state of Texas with close to 6,000 students. They built a brand new 18,000 seat stadium when he was the head football coach, and it was full most of the time. Allen also set a record for attendance with 54,000 people viewing one of their state championship games, and had one of the biggest Nike® contracts for high school in America. "It was important to play football at Allen High School. They knew they were going to get to play in front of a bunch of people and they

were going to get treated right. It was an important deal.” “I’m just so proud to have been part of this program,” one player said after losing to Austin Westlake in 2015 to break their 57-game winning streak (Wixon, 2015, para. 27).

Leadership–Mentoring

When asked about his leadership strategy at Allen, Westerberg talked about giving his coaches freedom.

Probably the biggest thing on leading a staff is letting them coach. I worked for a guy, Joe Martin, who is now one of the Executive Directors of the coaching association and he allowed me to coach. He allowed me to make mistakes and corrected it. He corrected me but not out in front of everybody and I try to do the same thing with our guys. I try to coach the coaches behind the scenes and let them go out and coach on the field. I don’t know what type of leadership model that would be but that’s kind of the way we do it. Kind of the way I’ve done it over the years on coaching coaches. As far as the players, I’m not a guy with a thousand rules but I try to teach them that they know what to do, what the difference between right and wrong is, and try to live your life right. I’m not real military on coaching the kids. They’re going to make mistakes and we’re going to correct them as we see them.

Leadership–Employee Retention

They also enjoyed a great deal of continuity as a staff. With the exception of two coaches that had gotten head coaching opportunities, the staff stayed relatively consistent during his tenure at Allen. “I think that helps with kids, them being able to see the same faces when they come in our program as seventh graders all the way to when they leave as seniors,” said Westerberg. He also implemented an academic advisor that helped with player tutoring and allowed the staff to stay on top of each player’s academic support better. “The administration loved that the Allen football staff cared about this part of each player’s life, said Westerberg.

Leadership–Character Development

Westerberg also tried to be innovative with how he developed player leadership.

We've done it a couple of different ways. We developed a class for leadership. What I did was I had so many coaches on our staff (about 45) that I had each one of them put on a sheet of paper. I said if you could talk to the kids about 3 things on leadership, what would you talk about? So they all sent me something, got it all in writing, and from there I kind of developed a class or curriculum and talked to them about the main thing our kids wanted to do was impress their position coaches so we went through all of the things that the coaches wanted to talk to them about. We did that for a little bit and then recently, at the end, we had a leadership group that I had the 11 kids – brought them in and we brought in some guest speakers sometime in the summer and had them teach them about leadership. Sometimes it was some former players, sometimes it was just other coaches, sometimes it was people from the community. So we brought in different leaders and talked to them.

The leadership class also touched on character issues like being a good teammate and representing your family in a positive way. Westerberg also made a point to talk with his players about winning the district championship. That was Allen's main goal every year, and then their goals would gradually elevate after accomplishing that first target (Welch, 2015).

Leadership–Organization

There were plenty of leadership challenges as head football coach of the largest high school in Texas though.

The numbers is probably the hardest thing to navigate. In Allen everything is big so we had a 95 Varsity roster. We had two JV teams that had 100 kids a piece on them. We had a freshman team that had 225 kids. We had three junior highs that had probably anywhere from 100–130 seventh and eighth grade kids per class. So there was about 1,200 kids in all that played football so just managing the numbers with 45 coaches that coached those kids. So you had to be very organized. That was probably the biggest thing.

Coaching Development–Professional

During Allen’s reign as state champion, the school earned a reputation as having some of the best players in the nation. Because of this, many college coaches were constantly coming through to recruit their players. This proved to a great advantage for Westerberg and his staff when it came to continuing their coaching development.

Any time, because we had so many players that went on and played college, any time a college coach came in recruiting they knew when they stopped by us that at some point in time they were going to talk some football so we didn’t have to go to a lot of college campuses because we had a lot of college recruiters coming through us. We pretty much had clinics all of the time. We would ask them questions and they would ask us stuff. So it was a pretty good give and take. We weren’t big on going to a bunch of clinics but we did talk a whole lot with college coaches.

Coaching Development–Personal

Coach Westerberg concluded the interview by reiterating why he thinks his staff enjoyed being at Allen so much.

I think, one, letting them coach. Two, making sure that they knew that family was important and that family was first. Our coaches all had little kids from like Saturday that were playing and we’re working on Saturdays during football season and if their kid was playing in a football game or fall baseball or something like that. Coach would say hey I’ve got a baseball game – I said sure, go do it. They knew that family was first and it was first for me. There were times that even early on that my oldest son was playing college football that I would leave on Saturday to go watch him play. So the coaches knew that family was first and I think they liked the environment that they worked in.

Summary

Coach Westerberg offered many teaching methods in the interview that he thought contributed to his team’s success. All of the evidence was organized into one of the four categories of the framework used for this dissertation, and then broken up further into sub-categories. Westerberg offered evidence for the lone sub-category of More

Capable Others, one sub-category of Orchestrators of the Environment, four sub-categories of Leadership, and both sub-categories of Coaching Development. At the end of this chapter, his evidence will be compared with the other five coaches interviewed for this study.

Cross-Case Analysis

All six coaches had similarities and differences when analyzing and comparing the evidence from interviews and articles. The first category in this study’s framework is More Capable Others, and all six coaches yielded evidence that supported the same sub-category, Building Relationships, as shown in Table 2. This was mostly through one-on-one meetings with players away from the practice field.

Table 2

More Capable Others

Sub-category	Dodge	Joseph	Morris	Surratt	Traylor	Westerberg
Building Relationships	X	X	X	X	X	X

The next category in this study’s framework was how coaches are Orchestrators of the Environment. In this category, three different sub-categories emerged and four of the six coaches offered evidence to support their use of all three sub-categories as shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Orchestrator of the Environment

Sub-categories	Dodge	Joseph	Morris	Surratt	Traylor	Westerberg
Within the Program	X	X	X	X	X	X
Community	X	X	X	X	X	
School		X	X	X	X	

Coach Dodge and Westerberg were the only two that did not offer evidence in their interview about focusing on the school’s environment, and Coach Westerberg was the only one who did not mention how he tried to orchestrate the community’s environment. All six of the head coaches talked about how the environment within the program was a high priority for them to focus on though.

Leadership was the category that was discussed the most from all six head coaches. Since it appeared so much in the interviews, the following sub-categories emerged in order to find similarities between the head coaches as shown in Table 4. Organization and Character Development were the two most common Leadership sub-categories among the coaches with four of the six discussing their use. Employee Retention and Mentoring were the next two after that with half of the coaches discussing how they implemented the two practices into their organization. Coach Traylor was the only one to discuss using a Servant Leader model.

Table 4

Leadership

Sub-categories	Dodge	Joseph	Morris	Surratt	Traylor	Westerberg
Organization	X	X		X		X
Employee Retention	X			X		X
Accountability	X	X				
Character Development	X	X			X	X
Modeling			X	X		
Mentoring			X		X	X
Servant Leader					X	

The last category from this study’s framework is Coaching Development. All six head coaches talked about they have successfully implemented coaching development for their staff in order for them to become better football coaches as shown in Table 5. Four of the six head coaches went on to also talk about how they provide development for their staff in order to become better in their personal lives. Table 6 is a summary of all the sub-categories.

Themes

After the data was collected from the interviews, the researcher and two individuals with experience in coding and qualitative approaches coded and synthesized the evidence independently in order to reveal commonalities and differences among the subjects (Hays & Singh, 2011). The evidence was then compared and 10 themes

emerged from the six personal interviews. These 10 themes provided meaning for the data collected from all six subjects. The themes that emerged were:

Table 5
Coaching Development

Sub-categories	Dodge	Joseph	Morris	Surratt	Traylor	Westerberg
Professional	X	X	X	X	X	X
Personal	X		X		X	X

1. Priority on Player Relationships–All of the coaches talked about meeting one-on-one with each player in the program. This addresses the research question: What methods did the coach use to understand his subjects in an effective manner?
2. Understand the History and Context–Every coach talked about the context of the school and community, and how they found a way to build a football culture that embodied those values. This addresses the research question: What were the work and community environments like for the coach at his school & town?
3. Innovative & Strategic with Building Alliances–Every coach talked about strategies they implemented to win followers from community and school. This addresses the research question: What were the work and community environments like for the coach at his school and town?

Table 6

Summary of the Sub-Categories

Sub-Categories	Dodge	Joseph	Morris	Surratt	Traylor	Westerberg
More Capable Others						
Building Relationships	X	X	X	X	X	X
Orchestrator of the Environment						
Within the Program	X	X	X	X	X	X
Community School	X	X	X	X	X	
Leadership						
Organization	X	X		X		X
Employee Retention	X			X		X
Accountability	X	X				
Character Development	X	X			X	X
Modeling			X	X		
Mentoring			X		X	X
Servant Leader					X	
Coaching Development						
Professional	X	X	X	X	X	X
Personal	X		X		X	X

4. Organizational Excellence—Four of the six coaches talked about how they set clear expectations and ran an organized program. This addresses the research question: What type(s) of leadership did the coach model with his team and staff?

5. Cared for Their Employees–Every coach talked about policies they had in place to develop their staff from a professional and personal perspective. This addresses the research question: What type(s) of leadership did the coach model with his team and staff?
6. Consistent Accountability–Half of the coaches talked about having a high level of accountability with their players; making sure they are doing the right thing throughout a season. One of the coaches talked about high accountability with the staff. This addresses the research question: What type(s) of leadership did the coach model with his team and staff?
7. Character Education Teachers–Over half of the coaches discussed practices within the program from the head coach as well as the staff towards the players on character education. This addresses the research question: What type(s) of leadership did the coach model with his team and staff?
8. Expressed having a spiritual life–Every coach discussed how their faith plays a part in their work life and what they believe in as a coach. This addresses the research question: What type(s) of leadership did the coach model with his team and staff?
9. Highly driven–Every coach demonstrated an unwillingness to be satisfied on past achievements. This addresses the research question: How did the coach continue his development as a coach and teacher as well as the development of his staff? It also addresses the research question: What type(s) of leadership did the coach model with his team and staff?

10. Valued loyalty—Five of the six coaches expressed how much they value loyalty from their staff. This addresses the research question: What type(s) of leadership did the coach model with his team and staff?

These themes aided in the organization of the data collected in this study.

Implications of the findings are discussed in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion

In this study, six of the most successful head coaches that have coached in Texas high school football were selected to examine the teaching methods and leadership strategies that they used to win multiple state championships in their respective programs. Four of the coaches have won at least four state championships, and the other two have won three and were currently coaching on the Division I College level during the 2016 football season. The Division I level is considered to be the highest level for amateur competition. All six were interviewed using questions based on an existing framework for effective coaching. The purpose of this study was to address the research question, “What teaching methods and leadership strategies are used by Texas high school football coaches in championship winning schools?” In order to probe further, the following sub-questions were formulated with their correlating framework topics in parenthesis:

1. What methods did the coach use to understand his subjects in an effective manner? (Coaches as More Capable Others, Orchestrators of the Environment, Leadership, Coaching Development)
2. What were the work and community environments like for the coach at his school & town? (Coaches as More Capable Others, Orchestrators of the Environment, Leadership, Coaching Development)

3. What type(s) of leadership did the coach model with his team and staff?
(Coaches as More Capable Others, Orchestrators of the Environment, Leadership, Coaching Development)
4. How did the coach continue his development as a coach and teacher as well as the development of his staff? (Leadership, Coaching Development)

The following four areas served as the framework for the study:

1. Coaches as More Capable Others
2. Orchestrators of the Environment
3. Leadership
4. Coaching Development

Narratives of each coach's thoughts and experiences were recorded and analyzed using a narrative case study design. The six participants (Coach Dodge, Coach Joseph, Coach Morris, Coach Surratt, Coach Traylor, and Coach Westerberg) were treated as individual cases with a cross-case analysis of all six coming at the end of Chapter Four. In this chapter, the implications of the study in terms of effective teaching and leadership strategies will be considered. This chapter also includes a summary of findings and discussion of contributions to the field, as well as recommendations for future research.

Discussion of Results

After reviewing the transcripts of each interview and conducting a cross-case analysis of all six cases, 10 themes emerged as key findings answering the original research questions. Each theme discloses a unique aspect to the coaches' overall teaching and leadership framework that made them so successful. The themes are as follows: Priority on Player Relationships, Cared for their Employees, Understand the History and

Context, Innovative & Strategic with Building Alliances, Organizational Excellence, Consistent Accountability, Character Education Teachers, Expressed Having a Spiritual Life, Highly Driven, and Valued Loyalty.

Priority on Player Relationships and Caring for their Employees

All six coaches talked at length about how important meeting with players and developing relationships with them was to their success as coaches. Coach Dodge talked about how when he first arrived at a place one of his top priorities was to learn every player in the program's name. He would even use flash cards to aid in this objective. "The quicker you know their name, the quicker you can build a relationship with them," said Dodge.

Coach Joseph spoke about building relationships with his players and putting together evaluation plans. He always wanted a player to know where he stood in the program. "I was very, very honest and upfront with all of them," said Joseph. The trust his players had in him was evident when he was promoted from coordinator to head coach. This was true for Coach Westerberg as well. He even shared a story of when the superintendent broke the news to the team about his promotion to head football coach, his team gave him a standing ovation.

Coach Morris also spoke of taking the time to meet with every player in the program to get an idea of what they expected from him as the coach. The project took almost two weeks to accomplish, but he was very adamant that it paid off in gaining their trust. Coach Surratt and Traylor both spoke about taking over programs that had cultures of distrust and low expectations from the leadership. They spent a lot of time with their players and had to demonstrate daily that they believed in what their players could

accomplish. “I really didn’t do anything that crazy but they had been so neglected,” said Traylor.

Ultimately, the emphasis each coach placed on player-relationships proved to be extremely beneficial in leading their teams to a state championship, and the findings from these interviews aligned with this category of the framework. In one study mentioned in Chapter Two, coaches who put an emphasis on relationships not only seemed to achieve more success on the playing field, but they also offered the most positive player experiences (Becker, 2012).

On the topic of employee development and retention, all six coaches talked about how they valued it and sought to do it in their programs (Hale, 1998). Dodge, Joseph, and Westerberg talked about how they put an emphasis on having a culture of promotion within their programs. If they had a coach that was doing an excellent job at the middle school level in the program and a spot opened up at the high school, then they wanted that coach to get the job before looking at outside candidates. “The one thing that our coaches just knew throughout from the seventh grade level on up is when/if we have an opportunity to move from our staff to go be a head coach or coordinator that I am absolutely going to look inside the program first before I go outside to hire a coach,” said Dodge.

Coach Surratt talked about how he tries to reward his staff with incentives. “You’ll get so much clothes it’s unbelievable and then when we get to the playoffs because it’s going to get cold you are going to be getting a whole other wardrobe,” said Surratt. He also talked about seeking out opportunities to write a staff member an email or a letter to let him or her know they are doing a great job. Traylor also added

something different in how he would take his staff and their families on a retreat with the Christian ministry, Coaches Outreach, in Hot Springs, Arkansas.

Understand the History/Context and Build Alliances

In Bissinger's (1990) book, *Friday Night Lights*, the author goes into great depth about the complex contexts that players face in certain Texas towns that are obsessed with football. The community pressures presented on 15-18 year olds in these towns is very high, and the head coach must have a good feel of how to navigate it effectively and build strong alliances with community leaders. All six coaches discussed experiences they had that demonstrated their knowledge and political skill of the schools and communities that they coached in.

Coach Dodge said:

One of the first things I always want to do is first of all be a historian of that place and find out all of the things that had come before us, and make sure that I can teach that to our players and make sure that they respect what came before them.

Dodge knew that Southlake had success in the past, and it was important to him to remind the players that it could be done again. Dodge also had a high awareness for how affluent the community and school was at Southlake; and instead of excluding parents and other highly successful people in the community, he sought out ways to include them with events like Dragon Football Family Night:

A lot of times people from the outside looking in would think that parents in a wealthy school district would be all up in your business all of the time and it was just the opposite, to be honest with you.

Coach Morris mentioned a similar experience at Lake Travis. He talked about having to be very straightforward with parents in the community about boundaries, but that they ended up being terrific assets for the program. He did note that he never lost a

game while he was there though. Morris also mentioned about how important it was for them to have the academic community on their side. “Those teachers knew we had their back,” said Morris.

Coach Joseph, Coach Surratt, and Coach Traylor also spoke about having great relationships with their administrators. Regardless of who it was they made sure to prove that they were going to value academics just as much as athletics in their roles as head football coaches. Coach Surratt and Coach Joseph even told of how they were asked to give leadership presentations to the teachers on how to reach their students better. Coach Traylor talked about how his staff participated in the tutoring of their players. This resulted in sometimes not starting practice until 6 PM at night until all of the players were finished. “We wanted every teacher to know we were there all the time,” said Traylor.

Community expectations for the football program can grow stressful after a great deal of success has occurred. Coach Joseph talked about one of the toughest things in his community after winning four state championships. “Sometimes people start thinking that the kids have failed when they don’t go 14-1 or they don’t win a State Championship,” said Joseph. Maintaining focus on the job at hand alleviates this worry according to Joseph, and the benefits of his success have created a culture in the community that is so rare it is even the subject of a book, *The Katy Nation* (Clay, 2007). Coach Westerberg offered similar experiences that were a direct result of his team’s success at Allen. The community even voted for the construction of a new 18,000 seat stadium, and Allen had one of the biggest *Nike*® contracts for high school in America. “It was important to play football at Allen High School,” said Westerberg.

Organizational Excellence and Consistent Accountability

Since each head coach was in charge of not only the players but also a staff of assistant coaches, the interviews revealed that it was very important for each head coach to be highly organized and to keep everyone accountable. Coach Dodge stated:

As far as our coaching staff, they knew day in and day out that I went into length at knowing what everybody's day-to-day duties were and they were mapped out during our coaches work week before we got started.

Coach Dodge also talked about how he attributed Southlake's continued success to how well the staff held each player accountable to getting better at their position each season.

Accountability is something that Coach Joseph talked about in one particular instance in guiding his players through potential setbacks that can occur in their personal lives. He and his staff talk with the players about how to use social media responsibly, because it has gotten so big in today's culture. Joseph and Westerberg were very similar in their responses about how they managed their staff. Both coaches talked about giving clear expectations, and then letting their staff actually coach (Harker & Sharma 2000). Both talked about not wanting to micro-manage; however, they both talked about holding their coaches accountable to a standard. "I try to coach the coaches behind the scenes and let them go out and coach on the field," said Westerberg.

Surratt talked about holding his staff to a standard of executing their daily tasks every single day, even if they do not quite see how everything fits together in his overall plan for the team. "Go out there and know exactly what you're doing that day because you will start figuring out the big picture later," said Surratt.

Character Education and Having a Spiritual Life

In this study, every single coach expressed how their faith as a Christian influenced their coaching. One example was when Coach Traylor talked about the leadership style that he chose. “I just used the model of Jesus Christ,” said Traylor. A spiritual life was not discussed in the literature review, but it is a commonality that appeared in the interviews of all six coaches. The relationship of their spiritual beliefs to their work not only connects meaning to work but also spurs on more action (Fairholm, 1996). This belief directly influenced certain initiatives in Coach Traylor’s program at Gilmer. He started an Adopt A Buckeye Program that assigned players in his program to a family in the community. The family would show up to all games and support that particular player by writing them a card once a week, and then waiting to talk with them after each game. This initiative was put into place because a high number of players in the area did not have a full set of parents. Traylor also stressed character education through his “Captain’s Council,” which was made up of eight to 12 seniors each season. Every Monday they would share a meal together and go through leadership lessons from a selected book for the season. Traylor was a big believer in *transformational coaching* (Ehrmann, 2011).

Coach Morris also did something similar with his “Morris Committee.” This committee was made up of one freshman, one sophomore, one junior, and two seniors. These players are identified as leaders and mentored with the intention of them influencing their teammates for the greater good. Coach Joseph also does a captain’s program where the main theme he hopes that emerges from this time is players valuing

the team over the individual. “There are too many people in this world that are worried about me instead of we,” said Joseph.

Dodge and Westerberg both spoke of implementing a character development curriculum that the coaches all take turns doing for the team. “As I’ve gone through the years, my coaches have said to me, coach you may have been doing that for the players, but that’s the best thing I’ve ever done for myself to grow as a leader also,” said Dodge.

Highly Driven and Value Loyalty

All six coaches have won at least three state championships, and all six gave the impression that they fully expected to compete for their next championship in the near future. When talking about his current team at Austin Westlake, Coach Dodge said, “The culture feels like 2006 to me.” This was when he was at Southlake Carroll creating a dynasty in Texas high school football. In Coach Morris’s interview, he talked about his commitment to evolving as a leader and a coach. He gets very passionate when talking about making sure his staff and team does not get complacent (Kanter, 2003).

“Everything can be usually traced back to 2 things: being complacent and lack of communication,” said Morris. He then talked about how he always has it written into his contract that the school will pay for him and his staff to travel in the offseason for professional development.

Coach Surratt talked about how he expects everyone on his staff to be constantly striving to be the best coach on the staff. “See we are competing against each other who is the best coach on the staff and then as an overall staff we are competing to be the best staff in the State of Texas.” He also listed off anecdotes about how they bring in expert coaches to consult with on how they can improve.

While every coach alluded to loyalty being a non-negotiable trait in a staff member, Coach Morris spoke at length about a lesson he learned early in his career that affected his philosophy on loyalty. When he took the Stephenville job, he was following a legendary high school coach who still had members of his previous staff working at the school. Their loyalty was still towards that legendary coach, and not Coach Morris. Coach Morris tried to make it work; however, his leadership was diminished due to certain staff members remaining disloyal. “But I learned after year one, I got rid of those guys and so taking the job at Lake Travis, I fired everybody and then I hired back a couple of them and we established our culture,” said Morris.

Summary

The 10 themes that came about after analyzing the interviews are: Priority on Player Relationships, Cared for their Employees, Understand the History and Context, Innovative & Strategic with Building Alliances, Organizational Excellence, Consistent Accountability, Character Education Teachers, Expressed Having a Spiritual Life, Highly Driven, and Valued Loyalty. Each emerging theme allied with at least one part of the framework that was based off of the literature review. Themes that tied back to Framework 1 included Priority on Player Relationships, Cared for Their Employees, and Consistent Accountability. The themes that linked back to Framework 2 are Understand the History and Context as well as Cared for Their Employees. Framework 3 was connected to every theme that emerged, and Framework 4 included Cared for Their Employees, Character Education Teachers and Expressed Having a Spiritual Life.

The findings from this study showcase the teaching methods and leadership strategies of the most successful Texas high school football coaches currently coaching.

Themes that aligned with teaching methods included Priority on Player Relationships, Understand the History and Context, Innovative & Strategic with Building Alliances, Organizational Excellence, Consistent Accountability, and Character Education Teachers. The most talked about area from all six coaches dealt with the category of leadership. All 10 of the emerging themes dealt with aspects of leadership strategies.

Implications

Evidence from this research study offers insight into what makes each of the six head football coaches so successful. Another football coach could share this with his or her staff in hopes of developing similar successful programs. This evidence is not limited to football coaching though. Teachers, school administrators, and other leaders not in education could all potentially benefit from this information. This study's focus was six public high school football coaches. In the public high school setting, coaches are not allowed to recruit players from outside the school district into their programs. They must teach and develop the players they are given. Teachers and school administrators do the same thing. They must teach and develop the students they are given (Myerberg, 2015). They have to develop a relationship with students in their classrooms in order to understand how to teach them better. They have to navigate the school and community's cultures in order to create an effective learning environment for their classrooms. They also have to utilize different leadership strategies in order to yield higher productivity from their students. Finally, they also must continue to develop their teaching skills by learning new developments in their profession and collaborating with other highly skilled teachers.

The four-part framework used for this study can enable similar success by placing a priority on getting to know their students, orchestrating an environment that yields student success and develops future leaders, and putting an emphasis on continuing the teacher's personal development. This framework can be taught to other teachers and leaders too, and can serve as a reference point for assessing classrooms, schools, or organizations.

Recommendations for Future Research

I would recommend the researcher interview former players and former assistant coaches of each of the six subjects. This way the researcher can get more insight into what strategies the head coach used as leader of their program. I would also recommend interviewing the principals at each of the high schools that each head coach won his state championship at in order to hear what impact it had on the school.

Another recommendation for future research would be to focus more on the development of each coach prior to achieving their first state championship. They all mentioned mentors they had along the way, so it would be insightful to learn more about their mentors and what they learned from them.

It would also be insightful to learn more about the role religion played and how each coach's personal spiritual life influenced his or her coaching. Each coach from this study indicated they were a Christian, and they either implied or clearly stated how that influenced their decision-making as a coach.

Since the original research question asked for the teaching methods that each coach used as head coach of their state championship programs, I would recommend the researcher obtain access to watch and document multiple practice sessions led by the

coach. This could potentially add an important quantitative aspect as well as enrich the qualitative data providing a deeper understanding of the phenomena and add a fidelity aspect to compare what coaches reported being valued and what actually occurs.

One final recommendation would be to conduct a formal study of retention methods used by Texas high school football coaches today as supported by Ramlall (2003) and Hale (1998). Every coach for this study was questioned about how they led their staffs. It would be very insightful to ask this question on a much larger scale.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Keith Miller, Head of Compliance-Baylor University Permission to Conduct Interviews

From: Miller, Keith
Sent: Monday, February 29, 2016 3:31 PM
To: Taylor, Hunter A
Subject: RE: Dissertation Change - Just Checking with You

I think this is fine. Go ahead and proceed.

Keith Miller

Associate AD for Compliance / Baylor University Athletics
k_miller@baylor.edu / (254) 710-3007 (Office Line) / (254) 710-1522 (Fax)
1500 South University Parks Drive / Waco, Texas 76706

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From: Taylor, Hunter A
Sent: Monday, February 29, 2016 10:02 AM
To: Miller, Keith
Subject: Dissertation Change - Just Checking with You

Keith,

After receiving feedback from my committee saying my topic needed to have more coaches in it, I have changed my subjects to include four coaches rather than one. My original study was going to be on Jeff Traylor, former HC at Gilmer HS and current assistant coach at the University of Texas. My study now involves Traylor, Todd Dodge (current head coach at Westlake High School), Chad Morris (current head coach at SMU), and hopefully Coach Briles. Three of the four have confirmed they would be a part of the study, and I'm waiting on Coach Shillinglaw to get back to me to see if Coach Briles would also participate.

My reasons for selecting these four are because I had to narrow down the field to match a certain criteria. I wanted to do no more than five coaches, so I made the criteria be that the selected coaches must have won at least three state championships in Texas High School football and also have coached on the Division I level. The four coaches mentioned are the only active coaches to achieve such a feat. My study will also be more focused on education research, so the interview questions with each coach will center around the teaching strategies they used while they were coaching their state champion high school football teams.

I know we had obtained permission from the NCAA to study Coach Traylor. Do we need to do a new one for Coach Morris, Coach Dodge, and hopefully Coach Briles? Coach Dodge is the only one who is still coaching in high school. No current or former players of the coaches will be interviewed for this study. The only people interviewed will be the four coaches.

Just let me know what you think.

APPENDIX B

IRB Approval

From: Deb Penney <no-reply@irbnet.org>
Sent: Monday, May 9, 2016 9:30 AM
To: Talbert, Tony L.; Wilkerson, Trena L.; Taylor, Hunter A
Subject: IRBNet Board Document Published

Please note that Baylor University Institutional Review Board has published the following Board Document on IRBNet:

Project Title: [907287-1] A Qualitative Study on Teaching Strategies Used by Four Legendary Texas High School Football Coache
Principal Investigator: Hunter Taylor

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Should you have any questions you may contact Deb Penney at debbie_penney@baylor.edu.

Thank you,
The IRBNet Support Team

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APPENDIX C

Consent Form

Baylor University
Curriculum & Instruction

Consent Form for Research

PROTOCOL TITLE: **A Qualitative Study on Teaching Strategies Used by Six
Legendary Texas High School Football Coaches**

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Hunter Taylor

Purpose of the research: The purpose of this study is to examine the different teaching methods used by four coaches considered successful in their fields. We are asking you to take part in this study because you have been deemed extremely successful based off of the criteria found in the research.

Study activities: If you choose to be in the study, you will be interviewed about the teaching methods you used while you were the head high school coach of a state championship program.

No foreseeable risks

To the best of our knowledge, there are no risks to you for taking part in this study.

Taking part in this study is your choice. You are free not to take part or to stop at any time for any reason. No matter what you decide, there will be no penalty or loss of benefit to which you are entitled. If you decide to withdraw from this study, the information that you have already provided will be kept confidential. Information already collected about you cannot be deleted.

By continuing with the research and completing the study activities, you are providing consent.

Participant's Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX D

Interview Protocol

Time of the Interview:

Date:

Place:

Coach _____

I. What methods did the head coach implement in order to understand and evaluate the players on his team? (Framework 1 – More Capable Others)

1. Where had you coached prior to _____?
2. What had the school been like prior to your arrival?
3. What methods did you use in order to understand and evaluate your new players? How did you get to know them?
4. How did they receive you?
5. What did you feel like was the most important thing in this initial process of getting to know them? Why was this important?

II. What was the school and community's environment like during the head coach's tenure at the school? (Framework 2 – Orchestrators of the Environment)

1. Describe _____.
2. What was the administration like?
3. How about the parents?
4. General community?
5. Environmentally, what was the hardest thing to navigate as the leader of this state championship program?
6. What was the best thing about the environment?

III. What types of leadership strategies did the head coach and his staff utilize during their time at the school and why did they choose them? (Framework 3 – Leadership)

1. Describe the leadership strategy you used while at _____ (this includes how you led your staff).
2. Why did you choose that one or one(s)?
3. What did you get right?
4. What did you get wrong?

5. How did you foster player leadership?
6. Why did it work and yield a state championship?

IV. How did the head coach continue he and his staff's development as coaches and teachers? (Framework 4 – Coaching Development)

1. What types of things did you do to grow yourself while you were there?
2. How did your staff grow? How did you help them grow?
3. How did you make sure and grow yourself personally (spiritual, family, etc.)? Same question for your staff (spiritual, family, etc.)?
4. What strategies did you use, if any, to retain your staff?

V. Would you mind if I sent a follow up question or questions later on?

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