

## Examining School Elements through Collective Awareness: A Case Study of Six Students at a Special Education Day School

Rebecca Godwin, Tristan Hann, Karin Sandmel  
*Johns Hopkins University*  
*United States*

### Abstract

*This paper presents and utilizes a method to explore and describe a school using the voices of those within it. Six case studies of students with special needs attending a special education day school in the United States provide data for the analysis. Qualitative coding of student-cited elements of the school allows for categorization of the elements by degree of collective awareness by students. The analysis reveals the elements at the forefront of student focus, ranging from academic content structure to cultural and environmental contexts of the school. These elements are presented as a holistic conceptualization of the school experience, drawing attention to voices and perspectives that are often overlooked when describing schools through quantitative external accountability measures. Implications for educational research, accountability systems, and school improvement efforts are discussed.*

### 1. Introduction

In the age of external accountability, schools are increasingly described through numerical metrics of student, teacher, and school-wide performance [1], [2]. These quantitative measures are used with the expectation that they will lead to school improvement [1], [3]. However, quantitative measures insufficiently describe the complex experience offered by a particular school [4], [5] and lead to a lack of understanding of the school context. They often provide no insight into the genuine experiences and perceptions of the people within the school; this qualitatively-oriented piece is ignored. School improvement efforts based only on external measures may consequently be missing key information for successful implementation.

Perhaps more importantly, external accountability measures disempower and silence those within our schools [4]. Student voices, for instance, are largely absent in external accountability measures. Yet students form a

particularly central part of the internal experience of a school, as they live the school experience every day and can therefore be considered experts in describing it. Their perceptions of the school context provide detailed and valuable understandings, warranting recognition. Teachers, parents, and administrators also live this experience in differing ways unique to their roles within the school; their voices hold understandings of the school that are inadequately uncovered through external accountability measures.

Alternately, the use of internal accountability has increased both in contrast to and in collaboration with external accountability. The internal accountability system involves using in-school practices to promote school improvement and opens the door for a more internally-focused understanding of schools [6]. Inquiry-minded practices that reflect and focus investigation on the ideal, the actual, and the gap between provide an opportunity for internal accountability systems to integrate qualitative measures and to allow the voices of those within the school to be heard. We argue that these voices should be included in internal accountability systems, and we demonstrate a method with which to elicit, organize, and consolidate these voices when describing and explaining the school experience.

This study aims to form and present a more holistic description of a special education day school through the qualitative conceptualizations of different groups, bringing focus to largely ignored components of the internal experience. Particular attention in this paper is given to students, allowing their voices to describe the school. The omission of student voices in current measures used to describe schools is especially problematic in the case of students with special needs, as these students may have different understandings of, responses to, and desires for their school experiences.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

This paper presents an alternative perspective from which to investigate a school setting, termed *anautonomous perspective*. We treat all data as occurring independently in the current setting, regardless of origin, timing, or association. This perspective allows us to investigate and form understandings of all data without preconceived notions of directional relationships.

### 2.1. Existing Directional Perspectives

In studying elements of a school, it is evident that a ‘school’ is not a single, unified construct. Rather, a school is an organization which exists within the context of a variety of groups, both inside of and beyond its walls. We conceptualize this context in the frame of governance. As Barbazza and Tello [7] explain, governance encompasses the processes that are in place to apportion responsibility and accountability to those who serve as actors within any system. These processes serve to facilitate, guide, or control the way in which public goods are obtained [8]. Educational organizations, under these definitions, qualify as governance structures. Moore and Hartley [9] refer to schools in their discussion on innovations in governance, supporting this categorization.

Traditionally, governance structures have largely been hierarchical, also referred to as vertical or monocentric [7], [10]. There is a central authority from which policies are disseminated vertically to reach lower levels of the structure, a directional organization which is dominant in many governance structures today [8]. In schools, this vertical structure would manifest in the conceptualization of federal, state, and district policy makers as central authorities that push initiatives down through the continuing hierarchical levels of school administration, of teachers, and finally of students and families.

In the past few decades, a paradigmatic shift has taken place in the field of governance. Vertical governance has given way to the concept of horizontal governance, a shift which calls attention to the proliferating appeal of networks, interdependence, and collaborative relationships within organizational structures [10], [11], [12], [13], [14]. In schools, this horizontal structure would manifest in the conceptualization of parties such as policy makers, school administrators, teachers, students, and parents as a team, working

towards a common goal and accepting shared responsibility for decisions and outcomes.

In reality, both of these structures are likely not implemented exactly as described. As Phillips [13] warns, for instance, “it would be myth to assume that horizontal governance is being practiced as conceived” (p. 400). The same is likely true in many vertical structures. Moore and Hartley [9] bring up the scenario of a school creating a parent board to oversee the work of the school administration and teachers. This change would shift the school from a strictly vertical governance structure to a more horizontal, networked one. However, the original vertical structure would still exist, just with less extremity. This example demonstrates the existence of a vague and ill-defined area in the middle of vertical and horizontal structures. The “conceptual confusion” [7] within this ambiguous realm is problematic in the study of governance structures.

When investigating a school, it warrants recognition that we are likely not looking at a purely vertical or purely horizontal structure. Assuming the presence of either structure results in preconceived notions of how various actors within school systems relate, either interacting as vertical chains or as a system of horizontal networks. These notions and assumptions would inevitably shape our developing understandings about the structure, guiding them into assumed vertical or horizontal forms. An unfortunate result may be the inability to acknowledge or even recognize characteristics which operate outside of the pre-set directional structure and assumed relationships. The assumptions could be both blinding and inaccurate. In this paper, we choose to depart from the vertical and horizontal extremes and propose an autonomous perspective with which to investigate a school.

### 2.2. The Autonomous Perspective

The autonomous perspective resists the temptation to assign directional characteristics to data which are situated within the context of organizational structures, instead studying different groups within a system in and of themselves. Assumed interactions and directional relationships are set aside, allowing the data to speak to each group independently. We recognize that this perspective does not capture everything that is happening in a school; rather, this perspective allows for assumptions around directional relationships within a school to be momentarily withheld. With this framework, we hope to be able

to describe the elements in a school as they exist rather than how they are assumed to exist.

The adoption of this perspective does not mean that directional relationships will be forever excluded from consideration; instead, these relationships are temporarily set aside to collect, analyse, and form a description of the data. We invite the possibility of reintegrating existing relationships within schools with the assertions from our approach. However, this reintegration is beyond the scope of our work and is not required in a descriptive approach. Such an integration would be relevant to a more action-oriented investigation.

This perspective developed naturally through our collection and analysis of the data as our own assumptions surfaced and became explicitly problematic. We utilize this as an underlying framework throughout our work as a guiding influence. It frames our approach, our analysis, and our understandings.

### 3. Methodology

In this article, we draw on data from a study of student-centred case studies to present a method to describe the elements within a school in an innovative way. In the following section, we present terminology which provides foundational understandings for the method and subsequent analysis.

#### 3.1. Terminology

In this paper, *element* is defined as a component of the school experience that exists within the school. An element can be offered intentionally as a conscious part of the school (such as an action or service that the school is providing) or can exist as an abstract and/or intangible part of the school (e.g. supportive presence). The term *domain* is used in reference to a conceptualized grouping/entity that is part of the composition of school (e.g. students, teachers).

Elements existing within schools may have different origins, influences, actors, characteristics, and purposes. Nonetheless, elements of a particular school always share the common feature of presence. Whether or not intentionally so, these elements occur and exist in the school environment. These elements are thus considered to be *active* in that, by virtue of their presence, they form a piece of the school's composition. However, while all elements of a school are active, some elements are given a great deal more attention by various groups within a school and are

therefore more prominent than others in the way these groups ultimately come to conceptualize the school. Highly prominent elements that receive a great deal of attention are considered to be more active than elements that are present but are rarely noticed or largely ignored.

*Energy* within an element is conceptualized as the capacity or power that the element derives from various possible sources (e.g. a student, a teacher). Energy can be intentionally dedicated or unintentionally directed to an element. For example, a weekly school assembly that requires several staff members' and students' time and effort to plan and execute is receiving *intentional* energy from those individuals, whereas the acute awareness and recognition by parents, students, and staff members of the weekly assemblies compared with other school events is an *unintentional* prioritized noticing of the element by those domains.

Both the intentional dedication of energy and the unintentional directing of energy to an element contribute to its power and capacity. This increases the element's *level of activity*, conceptualized as the degree to which the element is deriving energy from various domains within the school. An active element can derive a certain degree of energy when considered exclusively in terms of an individual (i.e. a single source of energy), but could derive a different degree of energy when considered in terms of a group of individuals (i.e. multiple sources of energy). For example, if the principal of a school is contributing high amounts of energy to an element within the school, such as the attendance rate, it would have a high level of activity *for that individual*. That same element, however, could be less active when it is considered in terms of a greater number of sources of energy within the school, such as the entire staff. Undoubtedly, some staff members would be more aware of the school attendance rate than others (or are dedicating more effort into improving it), and thus contribute more energy (either intentionally or unintentionally) than their colleagues. The element's level of activity may be considered more broadly still, such as for the entire school and all of the domains of which it is comprised.

For an element to have a high level of activity for a particular domain (e.g. students), the element would have to be deriving energy collectively across the various energy sources that comprise that domain (e.g. all students). For example, the element of 'small class sizes' would be highly active in terms of student energy if the student body were *collectively* contributing energy to the

element (such as through the prioritized noticing of the school's small class sizes over other elements).

Regardless of whether a person is intentionally or unintentionally contributing energy to an element, he or she is aware of the element's presence. Because we cannot measure collective energy directly, our study utilizes the *collective awareness* of an element to approximate the degree to which the element is deriving energy. If awareness of an element is occurring across an entire domain, it is drawing energy collectively. Therefore, collective awareness is utilized to suggest collective energy.

Intentional or unintentional contributions of energy from an individual to specific active elements in a school will likely bring mention of these elements to the forefront of his or her description of the school. Rather than simply asking students to describe and focus on specific elements of the school that were of interest to the researcher, broad prompts were intentionally used to guide the interviews. This allowed for the elements receiving greater amounts of energy to come up naturally through the thoughts and dialogue of those in the different domains, rather than artificially through directed answers to more specific questions.

### 3.2. Research question

This analysis investigates the following question in the context of the student domain:

*How can the collective awareness of elements be used to understand how different groups (domains) within a school are conceptualizing the school?*

### 3.4. Sample

This study was conducted at a private day school in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States that serves students in kindergarten through the 12<sup>th</sup> grade with mild/moderate learning disabilities. Dowsland Youth Academy (DYA) (name of school has been changed) addresses student needs consisting primarily of learning disabilities and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). With 134 students and a faculty of 26 staff/administrators, 38 teachers/aides, and 15 related service providers, DYA is a relatively small setting.

The selection of the setting was originally driven by a desire to document the experiences of the student population and by an interest in the reputation that had reached the researchers through

the broader community. The rumoured innovation of the school revealed a potential opportunity for the identification of uniquely successful practices for students with special needs who typically have not experienced success in other school settings.

In selecting a sample for the study, the researchers made three requests:

- That two students would be selected from each of the following grade ranges: elementary (grades 1–5), middle (grades 6–8), and high (grades 9–12).
- That each of these age-group pairs include one female student and one male student.
- That selected students be able to participate in interviews without experiencing stress or anxiety due to social-emotional or communication needs.

The school selected six students based on these three requests. The school also considered the degree to which family members would be available for and willing to participate in interviews. Table 1 provides demographic information for the sample. It is important to note that the sampling procedure, number of participants, and type of analysis all limit the generalizability of findings. We do not claim that our case study findings are descriptive of all students at the school, or that they are generalizable to other students with special needs in other school settings.

### 3.5. Data Sources

Data collection occurred over the span of approximately six months. Thirty-nine semi-structured interviews lasting approximately 30 minutes were conducted, allowing us to sample four role types: students, parents, teachers, and school administrators. Although no related service providers were directly interviewed, one administrator had previously been a related service provider at DYA and spoke to both roles. The interview structure directed participants to describe their experiences at the school ("*Describe a normal day for you at DYA*", "*Tell me a story about [the student's] struggles, progress, or success*", etc.). The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed, and each interview was accompanied by researcher field notes which detailed relevant non-verbal gestures, cues, or actions. Twenty-nine classroom observation sessions were video-recorded and accompanied by researcher field notes which detailed the setting, activities, and interactions of the student and those around them. The observations took place in the classrooms of teachers who were interviewed. Work samples,

Table 1. Student demographics

STUDENT*	GENDER	AGE	ETHNICITY	GRADE LEVEL	TIME IN SCHOOL	DISABILITY CLASSIFICATION
CORY	M	18	Black or African American	11	4 years	Specific Learning Disability
RUTHIE	F	17	White	11	2 years	Other Health Impairment
JACOB	M	13	White	7	1 year	Cognitive Disorder NOS
SAMANTH A	F	13	White	7	1 year	Specific Learning Disability
KATHRYN	F	13	White	5	2 years	Specific Learning Disability
SEAN	M	10	White	3	3 years	Specific Learning Disability

Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), and diagnostic evaluation documents were provided by teachers, administrators, and related service providers. Finally, three methodological texts of the school founder, 14 published journal articles pertaining to the school's methodology, and the DYA mission and vision statements were obtained as additional data sources.

The vast amount of data gathered and analysed in the study of the school and six of its students naturally raised a multitude of questions and possibilities for research. This particular analysis sought specifically to investigate the level of activity of the school's elements in order to describe the school from the perspective of students attending DYA.

#### 4. Analysis

Our investigation of the student domain utilized the data sources which were relevant to our specific research question, giving priority to data that directed captured the voices of students at DYA. The analysis specifically drew from student interview data and student-composed IEP narratives.

##### 4.1. Element Inclusion Criteria

For our analysis, school elements were defined as "components of the experience that exist within DYA, as cited by those within a domain." The original criteria for inclusion of cited components of DYA as elements were as follows:

- 1) The element is mentioned in terms of the DYA setting specifically.
- 2) The element is offered intentionally as a conscious part of DYA (such as an action or service that the school is providing)

A sample of interview data was reviewed to assess the degree to which these criteria encompassed the cited components of the DYA setting. In this process, we realized that consideration of observable, conscious, and objective actions did not sufficiently encompass the more abstract, intangible elements that were being cited across data sources (e.g. supportive presence). While continuing to operate under the original definition of an *element*, the second inclusion criterion was expanded as follows:

- 2) The element is offered intentionally as a conscious part of DYA (such as an action or service that the school is providing), or can exist as an abstract and/or intangible part of the school.

##### 4.2. Coding

Our coding system was refined as it evolved so that the names of codes and their definitions could be applied with consistency across all data sources. Due to data format, NVivo software was used to code all interview data sources.

Adhering to the relevant first-cycle coding methodologies outlined by Saldaña [15] for elemental coding methods, we conducted simultaneous descriptive and concept coding of all interview data as a means with which to organize and categorize the cited elements as a preliminary

Table 2. First cycle coding process

Source Data	Element Emic code	Element Classification First-order etic code	Element Category Second-order etic code	Element Theme Third-order etic code
“you get more attention here”	one-on-one [support]	direct interaction with teacher	student support	individualized student support
“Everyone is super nice here [laughs] there’s no mean people here”	[everyone is] nice not mean	safety	safety, comfort, acceptance	culture/ underlying environment

analysis of the data’s central themes. This provided us with a broad inventory of all elements of DYA that were mentioned, each with its own emic code.

An initial review of all textual content of the interview data that had been assigned to emic codes led to the creation of tentative, broader groupings of elements. In order to establish an initial categorization of our data, the careful, continued examination between our emic codes and our data sources resulted in element *classifications* (first-order etic codes) to which the emic codes were assigned. A second iteration of code mapping led to further refinement of our emic and first-order etic codes into element *categories* (second-order etic codes). A final iteration of code mapping allowed us to “categorize the categories” [15] into elemental *themes* (third-order etic codes). These themes provided insight into the principal types of elements of BLS that were cited across our data sources and are our broadest grouping of elements. Table 2 illustrates the assignment of select interview data to the appropriate emic and etic codes.

Elements were considered to contribute more strongly to the students’ conceptualization of the school if they were mentioned by more of the individuals comprising that domain, suggesting higher levels of energy. These collectively-mentioned elements form the basis of our descriptions of DYA for the student domain.

### 4.3. Data Credibility

In order to establish and investigate data credibility, we chose to utilize credibility measures described by Brantlinger et al. [16]. Assertions were triangulated over a variety of data sources to

establish credibility. Multiple interviews were included in the analysis, providing many individual data sources with which to investigate consistency. Student-composed IEP narratives were added as available to further strengthen triangulation in this analysis. The variety and number of data sources provided multiple voices and contexts. The coding process was structured collaboratively. Two researchers independently completed all coding, and disagreements were documented. The proportion of agreement for all independently coded data was 0.818. More importantly, however, both researchers utilized the independently applied codes and identified disagreements to facilitate conversations leading to full consensus of all codes. Additionally, we began the data collection and coding processes with explicit discussions of biases, perspectives, and assumptions that were likely to be present while interacting with the data. This discussion resulted in metacognitive and collaborative understandings which transformed into the theoretical framework guiding all analysis within the project.

## 5. Findings

Students at DYA collectively mention elements that span across the broader themes of: *Content and Interactions with Content, Individualized Student Support, Formal Groupings and Organized Activities, and Culture and Underlying Environment*. These themes are described in Table 3. Within each of these themes, the differing degrees of collective awareness associated with each element allow us to view the school and the experience it offers through those elements of DYA of which the students are most acutely aware.

In an effort to form a useful and consolidated understanding of the school experience, elements with high degrees of collective awareness (elements cited by at least five of the six students) are selected to form the student description of the school.

The student domain has the highest number of highly active element categories within the *Content and Interactions with Content* theme. The high collective awareness of the types of learning utilized to access content at DYA is focused on the specific approach of active learning. The structured

Table 3. Elemental themes and their definitions

<b>Theme of Element</b> (third-order etic code)	<b>Definition</b>
<b><i>CONTENT AND INTERACTIONS WITH CONTENT</i></b>	Cited elements referencing the content (both academic and non-academic) presented to students at DYA, and/or the ways in which students interact with that content.
<b><i>INDIVIDUALIZED STUDENT SUPPORT</i></b>	Cited elements referencing the services, supports, and/or resources that are offered to students at DYA on an individual basis.
<b><i>FORMAL GROUPINGS AND ORGANIZED ACTIVITIES</i></b>	Cited elements referencing any formally organized activity, event, and/or student grouping at DYA.
<b><i>CULTURE/UNDERLYING ENVIRONMENT</i></b>	Cited elements referencing intentional and unintentional features of the school culture and environment. This includes abstract elements of the school atmosphere (e.g. community, safety), relationships between students and their abilities/disabilities, and judgments of DYA.

in-class activities, of which there is also high collective awareness, is described in further detail through the highly active element classification of non-product based activities. The type of learning and activities used to access content are related to the highly active categories of 'student freedom with content' and the 'use of technology'. These highly active element groupings provide the picture of the student domain and its high collective awareness relating to experiences with classroom content. This experience becomes even clearer through the *Individualized Student Support* and *Formal Groupings and Organized Activities* themes, in which the data demonstrate high collective awareness of student supports that involve direct interaction with teachers and specialists, as well as supports specific to the context of non-core and elective courses.

The *Culture and Underlying Environment* theme demonstrates high collective awareness of the general student judgments that exist regarding the school. In particular, collective awareness is focused around positive appraisals of the teachers and staff at DYA.

Holistically, the data from these themes paint a detailed picture of the experience offered by DYA through the voices of the student domain. Their voices describe an experience in which students engage in active learning, often through activities which do not have a product-based end goal. Technology is integrated throughout their learning activities. Students have freedom in terms of the content they access and the ways in which they interact with it. There is frequent, individualized direct contact with teachers and/or specialists. This relationship between students and their teachers and specialists is notably present in their non-core and elective classes.

While these features of the school could potentially be observed and described by those outside of the school, these external parties may not predict that these features are at the forefront of the students' understanding of their experience. In particular, the theme of *Culture and Underlying Environment* offers a perspective which may not be independently described by external groups. Students collectively mention elements of the school culture of DYA; in fact, all students in the

study discuss their perceptions of the school as a community. In particular, the majority of students describe the positive culture developed by the teachers and staff at the school. This underlying environment is explicitly noticed by the students, and is a unique part of describing DYA and the experience that it provides to them.

## 6. Discussion

In this paper we chose to focus on the high-energy, collectively-mentioned elements within the student domain to describe the conceptualizations of DYA by its students. The collective awareness of elements among the students contributes to our understanding of the school as it is conceptualized by a central group operating within it. This method and analysis can provide unique insight into the internal functioning of a school, honouring the school's complexity and the voices of those within it.

By identifying elements with high levels of collective awareness among students, a consolidated description of the school was formed from the student perspective. Newly-introduced reform efforts in a school may experience more success if, in their development and implementation, the consolidated student perspective from their school is considered. Consider, for instance, that a school decides to implement a new block of time dedicated to intervention support for students with poor performance in reading. Implementation choices could be made with the consideration of the students' conceptualization of their school experiences. For instance, the importance with which students regard their relationships with their teachers could lead to an implementation method which groups students with teachers with which they have an established relationship and/or feelings of security. The student focus on non-product based activities within active learning styles could lead to an evaluation method which integrates data collection into daily, formative activities. These choices would be uniquely responsive to the specific students within the school, allowing newly-introduced interventions to blend smoothly into the student conceptualization of the school and tap into the high-energy elements which already exist.

While the presented analysis and findings may cause elements to be viewed as binary (i.e., highly-active or not), we caution against this. Level of activity falls along a spectrum and is highly variable. While being able to identify which elements are drawing high amounts of energy is

informative, elements that do not pass the 'highly active' threshold should not be ignored. Knowledge around elements deriving lower levels of activity is also valuable.

## 7. Implications

This analysis provides an approach with which to investigate and describe a school, using the collective awareness of elements to form a holistic description of the school from the student perspective. Internal accountability systems in schools aiming to improve their practices could integrate the voices of the groups within their school, using the process documented here to organize and consolidate descriptions of the school from different groups' perspectives. These descriptions can be informative at multiple levels, as the insights could impact practice at a school-wide or individual level. We anticipate that each level may need to tailor the process of analysing collective awareness, as may each individual school. With more research, these individual needs can be apprehended more specifically.

While the student domain is presented here as an illustration of the ways in which individual student voices can be integrated into an analysis of the school, this is only done so in a preliminary sense. The domain's individualized nature and position of centrality within the school experience naturally creates a space for more detail. A continued in-depth investigation that takes these contextual findings and examines the ways in which they interact with students could allow for an increasingly informative analysis.

The approach is still in its foundational stages. It is recommended that analyses of the other domains within the school setting be conducted, and the full picture comprised of all domains be considered. While there is a general need for full replication of the approach in a variety of settings and with a more representative sample, there are multiple pathways with which to move forward which suit the needs of different schools and different populations.

Our theoretical framework guided us in setting aside directional perspectives to avoid assumptions about relationships between different domains and the subsequent impact on active elements. We do recognize, however, that directional relationships do exist. Once a description of the school has been formed which considers all domains through an autonomous perspective, directional relationships that specifically match those within the school can be reintegrated. With reintegration comes an opportunity to investigate alignment and cohesion

between and among different domains. For instance, a lack of cohesion in awareness and energy between students and teachers could be an indication of unfulfilled impact of the elements within a school, or of disjointed school culture. It may also be informative to investigate explicit instances of conflicting awareness. Where conflict exists, insight into areas for change may become clear.

## 8. Limitations

In this study, participants were chosen by the school, accommodating for particular researcher requests. As such, our sample is not representative of the whole school, but rather of those specifically involved in the study. Participants shared stronger communication and social-emotional characteristics than other students in the school. Additionally, these students and their parents were likely chosen due to other, less intentional characteristics. Strong family relationships with the school, dedication to family involvement, or flexibility and availability may have increased the likelihood that a particular family was asked to participate. The bias behind these selection characteristics becomes more problematic when the small sample size is considered. As a result, assertions made in this study are not suitable for generalization to DYA's entire student body or broader populations.

While our method enables us to infer how different domains within the school are conceptualizing the school, this type of analysis does not allow for causal conclusions or judgments of quality. The analysis also does not in and of itself allow for conclusions to be drawn regarding *why* elements are or are not highly active within a domain. Such claims would require further investigation.

## 9. Conclusion

We have conceptualized a school as a collection of elements to which distinct, autonomous domains contribute varying degrees of energy. Our study aimed to form a description of a special education day school from the perspective of its students. Tapping into the experience of students, particularly those with special needs, is a unique way to describe a school and the experience that it offers. These conceptualizations can play a vital role in strengthening our accountability systems, bolstering school improvement efforts, and empowering those who

experience our schools each and every day. This method can be used in future research to provide holistic understandings of an incredibly complex institution.

## 10. References

- [1] Robertson, E.J., (2003), 'Teachers' Perceptions of Accountability at an International School', *Journal of Research in International Education*, 2, pp. 277-300.
- [2] Knapp, M.S. and Feldman, S.B., (2012), 'Managing the Intersection of Internal and External Accountability: Challenges for Urban School Leadership in the United States', *Journal of Educational Administration*, 50(5), pp. 666-694.
- [3] Goertz, M. and Massell, D., (2005), 'Holding High Hopes: How High Schools Respond to State Accountability Policies', Consortium for Policy Research in Education, Philadelphia, PA.
- [4] Horn, R.A., (2004), 'The New Federal Definition of Educational Research: Implications for Educators', *The Teacher Educator*, 39, pp. 196-211.
- [5] Hall, J.N. and Ryan, K.E., (2011), 'Educational Accountability: A Qualitatively Driven Mixed-Methods Approach', *Qualitative Inquiry*, 17(1), pp. 105-115.
- [6] Rallis, S. and MacMullen, M., (2000), 'Inquiry-Minded Schools: Opening Doors for Accountability', *Phi Delta Kappan*, 81, pp. 766-773.
- [7] Barbazza, E. and Tello, J.E., (2014), 'A Review of Health Governance: Definitions, Dimensions and Tools to Govern', *Health Policy*, 116(1), pp. 1-11.
- [8] Termeer, C.J.A.M., Dewulf, A., and Lieshout, M.V., (2010), 'Disentangling Scale Approaches in Governance Research: Comparing Monocentric, Multilevel, and Adaptive Governance', *Ecology and Society*, 15(4), pp. 29-43.
- [9] Moore, M. and Hartley, J., (2008), 'Innovations in Governance', *Public Management Review*, 10(1), pp. 3-20.
- [10] Hill, C.J. and Lynn, L.E., (2004), 'Is Hierarchical Governance in Decline? Evidence from Empirical Research', *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*.
- [11] Ferguson, D., (n.d.), 'Understanding Horizontal Governance', Centre for Literacy of Quebec.
- [12] Hopkins, M., Couture, C., and Moore, E., (2001), 'Moving from the Heroic to the Everyday: Lessons Learned from Leading Horizontal Projects', Canadian Centre for Management Development.

[13] Phillips, S.D., (2004), 'The Limits of Horizontal Governance: Voluntary Sector-Government Collaboration in Canada', *Society and Economy*, 26, pp. 383-405.

[14] Termeer, C.J.A.M., (2009), 'Barriers to New Modes of Horizontal Governance', *Public Management Review*, 11(3), pp. 299-316.

[15] Saldaña, J., (2016), 'The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers', SAGE Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA.

[16] Brantlinger, E., Jimenez, R., Klingner, J., Pugach, M., and Richardson, V., (2005), 'Qualitative Studies in Special Education', *Exceptional Children*, 71(2), pp. 195-207.