THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL IN SCHOOL CHANGE: AN INTERNSHIP REPORT

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The Role of the Principal in School Change: An Internship Report

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CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW OF INTERNSHIP REPORT

Introduction

With society's changing needs and priorities come calls for educational change. By this change, proponents do not solely mean what is termed in this province and in others as 'reform.' What is also meant is the transformation of the traditional school into one which is more effective, which better serves the needs of its population and community, which helps its students what they learn what they want to know, but which does it in a manner more suited to their age and characteristics. Often, this is seen to be accomplished through the type of leadership provided to the staff and students by the administrative team, or more specifically, the principal, whose very personality, attitudes and behavior are sometimes seen as the key to effective school change.

If leadership is so very important to desired change, then it is valuable for all educators to understand and support its essence. This report examines the role of the principal in school change, and is intended to shed light on the importance of this individual in responding to society's calls for transformation of our schools into institutions which will better serve the needs of the next century.

Throughout this report, an attempt is made to integrate theory and practice, as I endeavor to make sense of the study of educational leadership with its true practice in the school. This report consists of three chapters. Chapter one presents an overview of the report and the internship experience. Chapter two is the research component, examining

the literature pertaining to school change, including its history, types of school change, obstacles to school change, the change process, approaches to change, and the role of the principal in initiating and implementing school change. Chapter three, which consists of a personal journal, presents my own reflections on what was learned and experienced during the internship period. Lastly, chapter four outlines conclusions that I have drawn from the internship and the implications that they may have for administrators contemplating change in their schools.

Rationale for Internship Option

I chose the internship to complete the requirements for the Degree of Master of Education (Educational Leadership). This route was selected to allow me to work side by side with administration in an analysis of administrative duties, thus providing practical experience. Elliott, Russell and Hackman (1999), on the topic of administrative internships, state that "as a result of [the interns'] immersion into administration, students learn practical application of classroom knowledge" (p. 2).

As a teacher aspiring to be promoted into an administrative position, the choice of an internship rather than a paper, portfolio, or thesis, was a logical one. I wished to gain daily, practical experience in, and make in-depth observations of, the role of the administrators of a junior high school. For many years, I made these observations from the point of view of a classroom teacher and department head, and now wished to apply the theory learned in graduate courses to the administrative role.

I had no experience as a high school administrator, but was a department head for

ten years before school reorganization in my district. From this experience, my interest in educational leadership was born. I now wished to experience the role of administrator from a first hand perspective.

The Internship Setting

The setting chosen for the internship was a junior high school. The school has a population of 400 students with 24 full time staff, including a full-time principal and a vice-principal with some teaching duties, two part-time staff, one secretary, and two student assistants.

In the geographic region, with two high schools, this school was the only possible choice for a teacher from the other high school. In addition, and more importantly to my research, this school has made notable progress and innovation in the area of school change over the past three years since becoming a junior high school in the process of education reform. The setting allowed me to work with the school administration to obtain knowledge and information related to my research focusing on the principal as instrumental in successful school change. Secondly, I became cognizant of the role of many other staff members including the vice-principal in initiating and implementing these changes.

Supervision of the Intern

Field supervision was conducted throughout the internship by the principal and vice-principal of the school. The university supervisor, Dr. Jerome Delaney, and the field supervisors engaged in discussions during the period of the internship. I was encouraged

by the continuing and consistent positive feedback from all three supervisors. During my internship, I engaged in many reflective discussions with the administration of the school, as well as many e-mail and telephone conversations with Dr. Delaney.

Internship Activities and Experiences

My research focused in particular on the role of the principal in school change. In addition, as a prospective administrator, the internship allowed me to achieve practical experience in an administrative setting and to understand the role of the school administration in the daily school routine. As a teacher in another school in the district, I gained important knowledge in school policy and procedures and school board policies. As a student of educational leadership, I had the opportunity to develop an understanding of the difficulties of implementing successful school change, to develop leadership skills through observation of the interaction and cooperation between administration and staff, students, parents, and the general public, and to relate theoretical issues studied throughout the graduate program to practical settings. Furthermore, I was able to confirm my interest in pursuing this avenue to career advancement and to discern any skills and capabilities that I may possess which would help me be successful as an administrator. In this rural setting, I was further able to understand the community demands on the rural principal, in addition to the expectations inherent in the job description of the school principal.

Specifically, the internship afforded me many diverse opportunities:

1. The initial week of the internship was spent developing a working relationship with

the staff and administration of the school, and to make myself known to the students. The administration introduced me to staff members and had explained the purpose of my placement prior to my arrival. I then proceeded to speak individually with teachers in order to explain the reason for my placement at the school.

2. I accompanied the principal and vice-principal as they progressed through the day. This helped me to become aware of the many roles and responsibilities of the administrators and to observe how the administrators effectively deal with the daily situations that arise. Attention focused especially on time tabling, student discipline, planning of staff meetings, evaluation, staff allotment, school identity and culture, and school change. Other areas of focus included decision-making, performance appraisals, and staff morale. I proposed questions for, and observed (without participating in), staffing interviews for a new French teacher.

3. I attended all monthly meetings and many emergency meetings which arose. Through these meetings I became further aware of the concerns common to the junior high school setting. I focused on the approaches taken to cooperatively and collaboratively solve problems. I also attended school council and school growth meetings, to observe the administrators' roles in these activities and the team dynamics at play in these varied settings.

4. I reviewed the Schools Act (1997) and the school and board handbooks in order to become familiar with the various policies in place, discussed with the

administration the effect that these policies have on the various school groups and how follow-up action is taken on these policies. Procedures followed to set policies were also discussed and observed.

5. Extensive conversations were conducted with the administrators, focusing on the need for positive school change for both staff members and students. Discussions focused on how positive change can be implemented, the effect of school culture on successful school change, and the role of administrators, teachers, staff and students in this process. The role of a guiding school mission or philosophy in school change was also discussed. All of these topics were discussed, observed and analyzed in the context of effective leadership.

6. Discussions with staff members centered on discipline issues, curriculum concerns, and standards.

7. My observations also focused on the importance of open lines of communication with all groups within the school and within the school district, with students and with parents, and how the administrators acted to ensure this open communication.

8. I prepared the final exam schedule and teacher supervision schedule, and made revisions to the school calendar, the school handbook, and student agenda for the following school year.

9. Through interactions with the staff, I became aware of the differences in, and possible advantages of, the female administrator as compared to the male counterpart.

10. I was involved in a number of unanticipated activities as part of the internship process. These unforeseen activities served as evidence of the unpredictable nature of educational administration and demonstrated the need for time management and leadership skills on the part of the administrators.

11. I kept a bi-weekly journal as a way of reflecting upon my experiences and observations. This journal served as a basis for a critical reflection on the internship at the end of the ten-week placement. The choice of writing these reflections bi-weekly instead of weekly was a deliberate one; more time was required and desired to observe and reflect upon the longer-range consequences of some actions and decisions than a weekly journal would permit.

Self-evaluation

During my internship, my primary goal was to acquire practical experience which would assist me in becoming an effective leader. I was able to gain a clearer understanding of the 'middle school philosophy' of this staff, while at the same time conducting my personal research into the role of the principal in effective school change. To assess the success of my internship in meeting my goals, I kept a chronological journal of my experiences, observations and reflections. Frequent discussions with Dr. Delaney, the principal, vice-principal, secretary and other staff members were invaluable in gaining insight and in evaluating these experiences.

Research Component

A literature review prior to the commencement of my internship set the stage for my research into the role of the principal in school change. Specifically, an examination of the literature revealed the history and progression of thinking on school change, and the role and conducive characteristics of the school principal in this change. Given the current societal and political call for school change, understanding how the principal could inspire such change will be an asset to a teacher aspiring to an administrator's position. As a teacher, this understanding may help to clarify the teacher's ability to assist the principal in attempts to initiate changes.

Limitations of the Report

The personal reflections contained in chapter three are of a subjective and informal nature. As such they may be colored by my own past experiences and opinions, and in no way are intended to make generalized statements pertaining to school settings in this, or any other, locale.

In addition, as understood at the outset, my participation in certain situations during my internship made me privy to information of a sensitive nature. To protect the identity of the participants in these situations, and in the interests of confidentiality and anonymity, certain identities have been concealed and certain incidents omitted totally from this report. Nor could the authenticity of every situation be assured, since, due to the artificiality of my presence, certain behaviors, attitudes and actions of some participants may have been influenced. In spite of these limitations, the true value of the

insights and experience gained through the internship itself was immeasurable.

Summary

This chapter has outlined the rationale for choosing the internship option, and the activities in which I participated as an administrative intern. As well, I have indicated the process whereby evaluation of my experiences took place, and suggested a basis in literature for the focus of my internship, the role of the principal in school change. An indication of possible limitations of my study was also given, as well as a brief outline of the remaining chapters of the report.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL IN SCHOOL CHANGE

Everything must change at one time or another or else a static society will evolve.

- Anonymous first-year university student on an English language proficiency test, (cited in Fullan, 1991, p. 3).

Introduction

The current emphasis on school change has evolved from similar calls for reform in the 1970s and 1980s, when suggestions made by the effective schools movement led to changes with specified and agreed-on purposes and in precise practices. In this case, control-oriented leadership strategies proved highly successful. Conversely, the purposes of the current period of change are not as clear, and for that reason, commitment-oriented, rather than control-oriented, leadership strategies are necessary (Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 1999). As suggested by Fullan (1991), "ten years ago we 'studied innovations;' today, we are 'doing reform'" (p. xiii). This suggests a shift from passive observation to active participation, from a narrow perspective to a comprehensiveness of solution (Fullan, 1991). A more creative and open approach to change is called for since "it is not possible to solve 'the change problem,' but we can learn to live with it more proactively and more productively" (Fullan, 1993, p. vii).

System-wide change can originate from many sources, including government. Individual school changes, however, can emanate from the local school board or from the

school itself, either in times of crisis or out of a need for greater efficacy (Mortimore, 1998). Salisbury and Connors (1990) posit that organizations are motivated to change when *not* changing is more costly than changing (Cano, Wood, & Simmons, 1998). Runkel and Schmuck (cited in Owens, 1998) insist that readiness for change is also important.

History of Educational Change

Many educators cite the Soviet launch of Sputnik as the rebirth of interest in education and its possibilities and responsibilities. Fullan (1991) divides the ensuing forty-year journey toward "change" in four stages. The 1960s were characterized by the adoption of curricular changes and student-centered instruction. Fullan calls 1970 to 1977 the period of implementation failure, defined by change for change sake without follow-through. Implementation success marked 1978 to 1982, during which time research and practice, school improvement, effective schools, staff development and leadership were highlighted. According to Fullan, the succeeding phase, which we are now experiencing, could be entitled intensification versus restructuring, the former keynoting curriculum, textbooks, standardized tests, teaching and administrative methods, evaluation and monitoring, or *the how and why of teaching*, and the latter emphasizing site-based management, the enhanced role of teachers, multiple innovations, collaborative work cultures, reorganized teacher education, mentoring and coaching, and a shared mission among all educational levels.

Types of Change

Researchers have identified two basic types of change: *incremental change* (Hopkins, Ainscow, & West, 1994), or organizational drift (Owens, 1998), which occurs in a subtle, unplanned, gradual manner in any organization characterized dominantly by change, and *planned change* (Fullan, 1991; Hopkins et al.), or innovation, which is planned, novel and deliberate (Owens). In the case of planned change, one breaks with former practices to establish new priorities which will help the organization achieve existing goals more effectively, or to achieve new goals. Owens suggests that only the latter leads to real organizational change. Fullan further suggests that today's idea of planned change includes the notion of adaptability, that we must "get good at change" (p. xiii), knowing when to pursue and implement, or reject, certain change possibilities, and to know how to cope with policies and programs that are dictated to us.

Obstacles to Change

Any change must have impact at the classroom level to be meaningful, and therefore ultimately involves changes in individual teacher's practices (Hopkins et al., 1994). This very individual transition is often considered threatening, and thus encounters resistance. This resistance typically occurs when one's basic work needs are threatened, such as one's need for clear expectations, for future certainty, for social interaction, for control over one's work environment and work events (Sergiovanni, 1991), all of which vary greatly among individuals. Fullan (1991) adds that "changes in beliefs are even more difficult; they challenge the core values held by individuals regarding the purposes of

education" (p. 42), complicated by the fact that these beliefs are often unspoken and not clearly understood.

The agenda for change is further compounded by the knowledge that educational change is inherently difficult because of the isolation of teachers, the unpredictability of interpersonal relations between administrators, teachers and students, and the interdependence of schools within the entire educational system (Sergiovanni, 1991). School boards often discourage the introduction of initiatives which, if successful, may be expensively desired by other schools in the area where they may not be successful due to the unique setting and culture present in each school (Lortie, 1988). Fullan (1991) further suggests the vagueness of school change goals, the lack of incentives to change, and the false belief that change has already successfully happened as deterrents to change. He further advances that "it isn't that people resist change as much as they don't know how to cope with it" (p. xiv), and that the neglect of the phenomenology of change, or the realization that how people experience change is different from how it was intended, is at the heart of the lack of success of most propositions for change. In addition, Hopkins et al. (1994) propose that not all change is good, as in times of reform or 'innovation overload,' and therefore the timing of the introduction of innovations must be carefully chosen to counter any natural resistance.

Principals are among those who do not always throw themselves wholeheartedly into the change process. Fullan (1982) suggests that pressure to maintain stability and to run an orderly school, in addition to keeping the staff happy, does little to invoke

enthusiasm for change among principals. Furthermore, lack of incentives to introduce changes in a system that has seen the principals themselves succeed, in which eighty-eight percent of them were satisfied with their previous classroom careers, and who were perhaps chosen as principals because they represented the norm, do not advance the change agenda (Lortie, 1988). Moreover, Lortie suggests that most principals have not experienced diversity, having been educated and employed in one single geographic region. Most have little opportunity to observe change in other settings, and have been mentored by other principals who, because of similar circumstances, have done little themselves to pursue change. Fearful of negative evaluations if the staff is unhappy or if change is unsuccessful, and lacking school improvement team and school council support, many principals accept to maintain the status quo (Lortie).

Interestingly, Fullan (1991) cites research that shows that principals who are the most committed to change are often the least successful in implementing it. The irony of this cannot be lost in a system in which there are few principals courageous enough to actively pursue and support change (Fullan, 1992; Lortie, 1988), since, for principals,

> change is difficult because it is riddled with dilemmas, ambivalences, and paradoxes. It combines steps that seemingly do not go together: to have clear vision and be open-minded; to take initiative and empower others; to provide support and pressure; to start small and think big; to expect results and be patient and persistent; to have a plan and be flexible; to use top-down and bottom-up strategies; to experience uncertainty and satisfaction. Educational change is above all a very personal experience in a social, but often impersonal, setting. (Fullan, 1991, p. 350).

In spite of resistance to change, Fullan (1991) categorically states, "it is not as if

we have a choice whether to change or not. Demands for change will always be with us in complex societies; the only fruitful way ahead is to carve out our own niche of renewal and build on it" (p. xiv). Therefore, "the new mind-set is to exploit change before it victimizes us" (p. 345).

The Change Process

"School improvement? Oh, we're not doing that this year. We did that last year."

- Overheard in a Newfoundland secondary school staff room.

Fullan (1991) suggests that as much attention must be paid to the process of change as to its content, stating that "change is a process, not an event" (p. 49). Telford (1996) concurs that ignoring the processes of change destines an initiative to failure It must also be remembered that "change is a journey, not a blueprint" (Fullan, 1993, p. 21), implying that change is non-linear, uncertain, exciting and difficult. Owens (1998) suggests that effective change cannot be imposed on a staff, suggesting that schools will intuitively create a method by which emerging problems are sensed and identified, goals, priorities and objectives are established, valid, alternative solutions are generated, and selected alternatives are implemented. Fullan (1991) agrees that change finds a basis in shared meaning, quoting Marris that "any innovation 'cannot be implemented unless its *meaning* is shared' " (p. 31, emphasis by Fullan). These shared capabilities, meanings and processes may be used by a group as the launching point for school change.

Fullan (1991) suggests a four-stage change process, including initiation, implementation, continuation, and outcome. He proposes that these stages are not linear,

that each stage may be revisited after the successive stage has begun as evaluation and revision of initiatives occur. Furthermore, Fullan offers four insights into change; what is needed is active initiation and participation by governing groups, *positive* pressure and support, changes in behavior leading naturally to changes in beliefs, and ownership of the entire process in one's clarity, skill and commitment. Although a time-consuming and work-intensive process, "ideas acquired with ease are discarded with ease" (Pascale, 1990, cited in Fullan, 1993, p. 23), and thus attention to the process is critical for enduring change.

Approaches to Change

School change often involves changes in structure and organization of the school, such as time tabling and working groups, new or additional teaching materials, new knowledge, new behaviors and teaching styles, and changes in beliefs and values of some teachers (Hopkins et al., 1994). Fullan (1991), as well as Leithwood, Jantzi, and Steinbach (1999), suggests that school changes fall into two categories, first-order, such as changes in core technology, learning and teaching, and second-order, including changes made to the standard operating procedure of the school, such as time tabling or length of the school day. Exclusive focus on first-order changes has been the cause of many past failures of school change; second-order changes are essential in order for first-order changes to succeed (Leithwood, Jantzi,& Steinbach).

Bennis, Benne, and Chin (1969) instead define three approaches to change (Hopkins et al., 1994). The power- coercive approach is direct, legalistic, authoritarian,

and involves predominantly one-way communication in a top-down fashion. The rational-empirical approach to change is based on expertise, aimed at reason and intellect, and characterized by the proliferation of books, advertisements, lectures, and, again, one-way communication. The normative-reeducative approach, conversely, emphasizes changes to attitudes, norms, opinions, group work, and uses primarily two-way, interpersonal communication. Owens (1998) suggests that these priorities are instrumental for the essential improvement of school culture in the face of, and in preparation for, change. A more open culture, as opposed to a more closed one characterized by low interpersonal communication and lack of shared goals, is more conducive to adaptability and more responsive to change (Owens). Changes in attitudes are, however, as suggested by Hersey and Blanchard (1977), very difficult to accomplish, followed in degree of difficulty by changes in behaviors, and in group and organizational performance changes (Owens). These difficulties reinforce the reality of the obstacles faced by staffs, and indeed by the education system in general, when attempting to implement change. Fullan (1991) suggests that "in order to get better at change, we must practice it on purpose" (p. 350).

Implications for Leaders

Hopkins et al. (1994) indicate that initiators of change must accept that change takes time, but will, as suggested by Owens (1998), stabilize over time, "when new, more efficient levels of performance can be maintained without coercion and without continuous expenditure of administrative energy and vigilance" (p. 316). Leaders must also understand that multiple perspectives on proposals for innovations are healthy, not

destructive as often considered, and that resistance is natural. In addition, leaders and school board officials must invest in schools and teachers, the latter being a great, untapped resource in educational change (Hopkins et al., 1994). "The knowledge needed to plan and carry out change in schools is possessed by people in the schools themselves" (Owens, p. 303). In any case, as pointed out by Telford (1996), "change is developmental, and takes place over time and is implemented by individual people who will only take it on board at their own pace. (Some will never do so.)" (p. 131).

The Role of the Principal in School Change

The theories of Owens (1998) and Hopkins et al. (1994) seem to suggest the importance of a centralizing force in coordinating school change. In many schools, this force is the principal. In others, it is a staff member empowered by the principal and staff to lead the way. In either case, it cannot be contested that the principal plays a key role in ensuring the success of school change. Fullan (1982), citing Berman and McLaughlin (1977), states that the principal's actions more than his words, carry the message as to whether change is to be taken seriously. Schmoker (1997) suggests, in fact, that "there is a virtual one-to-one correspondence between leadership and measurable success" in goal-oriented efforts (Hargreaves, 1997, p. 145). Fullan (1992) concurs that principals are key figures in blocking or promoting change. In addition, "it would probably be impossible for school-wide change to occur if the person who sits in the principal's chair wished to block it" (Maehr & Midgley, 1996). Instead, Berman and McLaughlin state that "projects having the *active* support of the principal [are] most likely to fare well" (Fullan, 1992, p.

82, original emphasis). Such support must be sincere; symbolic changes adopted for personal or political reasons, to appease community pressure, to appear innovative, or to gain more resources, is not *real* change (Fullan, 1991).

Actions and Behaviors of Principals

This being the case, it is logical to assume that certain actions and characteristics of these principals could encourage, or conversely, discourage the process of school change. A democratic approach to leadership, which includes a participative inclusion of the staff in decision-making, has been suggested as an important element in building shared vision and goals throughout the school (Trafford, 1997), as are administrative presence, interest, and feedback (Schmoker, 1997). Initiation, experience, and assessment of particular situations, along with a knowledge of the change process, are essential (Fullan, 1991). Bailey (1999) adds the ability to articulate a mission, to encourage staff to believe in their own capabilities, to create conditions for staff to work together, and to provide opportunities for reflection and discourse with colleagues as necessary to the change process. As agents of change, principals should develop professional relations with staff members and demonstrate continuity of vision and purpose (Smith, 1999). Brown (1993) suggests that principals leading the path to effective change should be problem-solvers, administrative decision-makers, team players, vision builders, change instigators, power sharers, and, perhaps most important, staff facilitators. Facilitative actions of the principal include "strong leadership which nurtures and guides change, usage of learning as a driving force in change, [and] assisting those experiencing change to

bridge the chasm between theory and practice" (Shute & McKinnon, 1995, p.11), whereas inhibiting behaviors include forcing change, controlling behavior, hidden agendas and dependence on quick fixes (Senge, cited in O'Neil, 1995; Shute & McKinnon, 1995).

Creating a Positive Culture for Change

Creating a strong support culture for change is instrumental (Shute & McKinnon, 1995), since the change agenda requires cultural changes in the classrooms, the school, the districts, and the universities (Fullan, 1991). As suggested by Leithwood and Jantzi (1990), principals working for effective school change have been shown to strengthen the school's improvement culture by using a variety of mechanisms. These include efforts to stimulate and reinforce cultural change, foster staff development, communicate frequently with the staff about cultural norms, values and beliefs, share power and responsibility with others, and use symbols to express cultural values (Fullan, 1992). The role of cultural change in school change cannot be over-emphasized. Discussing school improvement, Fullan states categorically that "the role of the principal is not in implementing innovations or even in instructional leadership for specific classrooms . . . The larger goal is transforming the culture of the school . . . The principal as collaborative leader is the key . . ." (p. 82).

Fullan (1991) suggests that

> change requires intensive action sustained over several years to make it possible both physically and attitudinally for teachers to work naturally together in joint planning, observation of each other's practice, and seeking, testing, and revising teaching strategies on a continuous basis (p. xiii).

It is the principal who must provide these opportunities. Leithwood, Dart, Jantzi, and Steinbach (1993) suggest that by clarifying the school's vision for teacher collaboration and for the care and respect of students, and by sharing with the staff norms of excellence for both staff and students, the principal plays a primary role in modifying school culture for change (Cano, Wood, & Simmons, 1998). Telford (1996), citing Fullan (1988), Leithwood and Jantzi (1990), and Fullan and Hargreaves (1991), also emphasizes a collaborative culture as the key to successful and enduring school transformation.

Nias, Southworth and Yeomans (1989) summarize the leader's contribution to school culture, stating that "headteachers were the significant figures; all other leaders were dependent on them. They provided their schools with a mission based on their educational beliefs, which in turn, helped to develop or sustain schools' culture" (Fullan, 1993, p. 73).

Administrative Support for Change

Hall and Hord (1987), cited in Fullan (1992), posit that, instead of responders or managers, principals should be initiators, with clear, decisive, long-term policies and goals that include implementation of current innovations, but who transcend this function to introduce new ideas and build common vision. "Planned change, school improvement, effective schools and staff development all bear the mark of the principal as central for leading and supporting change" (Fullan, p. 82).

Administrators must also support change with funding, time, discipline, personnel, opportunities to develop collaborative school atmosphere, empowerment, building of a

common vision and mission statement, and bottom-up leadership (Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 1999; Senge, cited in O'Neil, 1995). Fullan (1993) states that "neither centralization nor decentralization works" (p. 22) and thus both top-down and bottom-up approaches are necessary. The principal, as primary change facilitator with the key role in planning, providing leadership for change, and inspiring adoption and implementation of goals, also requires a team-oriented approach and a comprehensive view of identified problems (Sergiovanni, 1991). "The school is the center of change, and that is where focus, coherence, and consistency must be forged. And that is why the principal is so central to successful school improvement and reform" (Fullan, 1992, p. 96).

One of the principal's prime administrative responsibilities in the change process is the broadening of the school's leadership capacity, empowering staff members to take on the role of mentor, peer coach, curriculum resource liaison, department head, school-based planning committee member (Fullan, 1993), or, in the case of this province, school council member or school improvement team member. "*Every* person is a change agent" (Fullan, p. 22, emphasis added).

Professional learning opportunities must also be provided to the staff by the principal during the change process. Professional development "is a learning habit that permeates everything we do. It is not enough to be exposed to new ideas. We have to know where new ideas fit, and we have to become skilled in them, not just like them" (Fullan, 1993, p. 16). Block (1987), cited in Fullan, states that the goal of professional development or learning is "(to learn) as much as you can about the activity you are

engaged in. There's pride and satisfaction in understanding your function better than anybody else and better than you thought possible"(p. 16). Rosenholtz (1989) suggests that teachers in schools characterized by learning-enriched environments are more confident and more able to cope with change (Fullan). Senge, cited in Fullan, asserts that in order to be effective at change, mastery is essential. Principals understanding this need "[are] habitual learners themselves, valu[ing] learning, and . . . willing to contribute to the growth of others, particularly to that of their colleagues . . . They actively support the interests of staff and respond to their concerns by recommending courses, other schools to visit, people to talk to or appropriate reading. They initiate developments themselves and support the initiatives taken by others" (Nias, Southworth & Campbell, 1992, cited in Fullan, 1993, p. 64). In other words, principals with a change agenda recognize the necessity of professional development to the success of such efforts. By transforming their school into a learning organization for all involved (Senge, 1990, in O'Neil, 1995), principals equip their staff to initiate new ideas and to implement them efficiently and successfully.

Open communication is another essential element. As suggested by Fullan(1992), not only should principals talk with their staffs to assess and express their views on change, but Barth (1990), cited in Fullan, suggests that "if the teacher-principal relationship can be characterized as helpful, supportive, trusting, revealing of craft knowledge, so too will others. . . . The relation between teacher and principal seems to have an extraordinary amplifying effect. It models what *all* relations will be" (p. 96,

original emphasis). Therefore, trust is also necessary, fostered by personal principles, values and beliefs, and being kind, pleasant, cheerful, patient, thoughtful, friendly, approachable, flexible, humourous, and by accepting failure with dignity (Cano et al., 1998). Beare, Caldwell, and Millikan (1989) propose that the leader, regardless of his or her gender, should also demonstrate both traditional *feminine* and *masculine* leadership qualities, caring about and responding to the personal needs of the staff, while at the same time, inspiring competition and structural organization (Hopkins et al., 1994).

Transformational Leadership and Motivation for School Change

Many of these suggested behaviors, attitudes and characteristics of leaders of successful change correspond with accepted definitions of transformational leadership. VanderStoep, Anderman, and Midgley (1994), cited in Maehr and Midgley (1996), suggest that in many cases, transformational leadership and venturesomeness on the part of those in leadership roles are needed. Burns (1978) defined this 'new' form of leadership as being exercised "when persons with certain motives and purposes mobilize resources, so as to arouse and satisfy the motives of followers" (Sergiovanni, 1991, p. 125). Transformational leadership, as opposed to transactional, "focuses on higher-order, more intrinsic, and ultimately moral motives and needs" (Sergiovanni, p. 125). In doing so, Burns (1978) suggests that leaders and followers elevate one another to higher levels of morality and motivation. Sergiovanni calls this 'leadership by building' and 'leadership by bonding.'

Transformational leaders increase staffs' commitment to change by appealing to

their self-concept, and increasing the prominence of certain identities and values to the organizational vision and mission (Leithwood, Menzies, & Jantzi, 1994). Frequently quoted dimensions of transformational leadership (e.g. Beare, Caldwell, & Millikan, 1989, cited in Hopkins et al., 1994; Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 1999) contribute to the success of school change. These behaviors include fostering the acceptance of group goals, providing an appropriate model, high performance expectations, providing individualized support, providing intellectual stimulation, using contingent rewards, and practicing management-by-exception. Perhaps most important, a transformational leader identifies and fosters a vision. Senge (cited in Jacobowitz & Michelli, 1999), describes vision in the following way:

> A shared vision is not an idea. It is not even an important idea such as freedom. It is rather a force in people's hearts . . . . Few, if any, forces in human affairs are as powerful as a shared vision (p. 233).

Combined with charismatic leadership style, often considered to be conducive to transformational leadership, these behaviors are likely to create a positive sense of success and accomplishment, and inspire colleagues to exert extra effort, since the staff perceives the leaders to possess valuable experience, and to be visionary in a crisis (Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 1999) Charismatic leaders are said to possess excellent communication skills, to inspire trust, to make team members feel capable, to be energy and action oriented, to use unconventional strategies, to have minimum internal conflict, and to be emotionally expressive and warm (DuBrin, 1998). Studies by Koh (1990), Leithwood, Dart, Jantzi, and Steinbach (1993), Skalbeck (1991) and Smith (1989) show

that under charismatic and transformational leadership, improvements are seen in morale, behaviors and attitudes, satisfaction, living up to central expectations, and perhaps most important in this discussion, commitment to change (Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 1999).

Summary

This chapter has provided a theoretical framework for the focus of the internship on the role of the principal in school change. Outlined in the chapter are predominant thoughts on the history of school change, types of change and obstacles to it, the change process, approaches to change, and the role of and implications for principals in school change.

In spite of the attention to the role during the past twenty years, "principals as dynamic change agents are still empirically rare" (Fullan, 1992, p. 82). Knowledge of the reasons for school change, the approaches and obstacles to successful change, and the role that the administrator can play in such change would permit, and possibly encourage more administrators to take the risk of initiating change. This internship has provided an opportunity to work with and observe a principal who seems to have successfully inspired and maintained change in his school, and to gain understanding into the process of change and its various effects on staff, students, and the school environment.

CHAPTER 3

INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCES: A CRITICAL REFLECTIVE JOURNAL

Introduction

Sergiovanni (1991) states that reflection is the key to self-evaluation and improvement. To this end, I kept a chronological, reflective, and critical journal of my experiences as an intern. The bi-weekly journal presented in this chapter has permitted me to constructively analyze my activities and observations as an administrative intern and to identify personal areas of weakness and strength, as well as to collate and understand my observations of the role of the principal in school change in this progressive school. In addition, it has proven to be an effective means of evaluating how successful I have been in meeting my stated goals and objectives.

The journal presented below is presented in its original form and consists of activities and reflections recorded as they were completed. This is reflected by use of the present tense in the writings.

CHRONOLOGICAL JOURNAL

Weeks 1 and 2

During the first two weeks of my internship at this intermediate (or, as the principal prefers to call it, middle) school, I have been warmly welcomed by the administrators and staff of the school. During these two weeks, I have worked primarily with the vice-principal rather than the principal, as this seems a logical place to start in familiarizing myself with the roles of each player in the administration, and in getting a feel

for the day-to-day operations of the school. The various routines and practices of this school, however, are somewhat unique to this setting, and do not necessarily represent those of other schools of this or any other level or locale. In this time, I have discerned that in this school, the principal seems to deal primarily with the teachers', the board's and the public's concerns and needs, while the vice-principal is primarily involved with student issues. I think that this is fairly typical of the organization of many administrative teams. Of course, there is no definitive line dividing the responsibilities of administrators, with both becoming involved in situations as they arise. Since I am at the moment shadowing the vice-principal, I have spent much of my time observing various approaches to dealing with students, from their personal concerns to discipline issues of first time and repeat, even chronic, offenders. I think that these approaches will enrich my personal repertoire of student-centered approaches in the classroom as well as in any potential administrative position in the future. I have also attended two parent conferences and been involved as an observer in follow-up actions involving students and teachers.

Interestingly, on two separate occasions, the principal and vice-principal have noted that the school is missing a female presence on the administrative team. This corresponds to literature I have read concerning the differences in, and often times, advantages of, female administrators (see Hopkins et al., 1994). I do consciously try to show the listening, caring side of administration in the dealings I have had with staff members and students, particularly when they are upset, although I realize that a downside of this may be more difficulty with student discipline, especially at first, if students

perceive me as vulnerable. These differences and difficulties may emerge as a minor theme in my internship.

I have deliberately started to do corridor duty before the morning and afternoon sessions, and at recess time. Not only do I feel that an extra teacher on duty would be an asset, but that by doing this duty I am establishing my presence with the students here at the school as an individual with a certain, albeit limited, authority. I also help to do lunch duty once a week, and find that more and more staff and students are approaching me for my assistance and opinion.

At the moment, as mainly an observer of the process, I am very aware of the demands on the administrative team's time and energy, and sincerely hope that, as time goes on, I will become an asset to the team and to the school. Since I already know the staff and the vice- principal fairly well, and am quickly getting to know the principal, I feel that I will be able to accomplish this goal. In the next few weeks, the scheduling for next year, as well as the final exam and exam supervision schedules will have to be finished, and I am hoping to use my past experience with these processes to help to complete these tasks. The principal has also asked me to accompany him into some classes of probationary and replacement French teachers, in order to observe and give feedback on curriculum matters as he completes teacher appraisals.

Discussions with the vice-principal have dealt mainly with the day-to-day running of the school. Both the principal and vice-principal, as well as certain staff members, have expressed their interest in the internship as a fairly new element of the Master of

Education Program at Memorial University, commenting on the value of the experience to a potential administrator. Discussions with the principal have revolved around more philosophical matters, such as staffing, school change, empowerment, the necessity of knowing your staff's weaknesses and strengths, both individually and collectively, management, performance appraisals, teaching styles, standards, supervision duties, and time tabling. I have had the opportunity in my second week to help in time tabling for the next school year, using WinSchool, with which I was not at all familiar, and to assist the principal in several performance appraisals involving probationary teachers of French, my curriculum area. In this way, I feel that I am, at the same time, learning to appraise and give feedback, and to assist the principal in a subject area in which he has limited knowledge. Although I have had teacher interns in the past and therefore am used to evaluating lessons and giving feedback, I was a little uncomfortable giving suggestions to the teachers, for fear that it would be taken as criticism of their teaching and not as a tool which they could use for their professional growth. When comparing my evaluation sheet with the principal's, I also noticed that mine was more exacting than his, whereas his was very generous, indicating satisfactory performance unless the opposite was demonstrated in the lesson. Perhaps it was because these teachers were in replacement positions that their evaluations were this way, but I am not sure that this approach encourages much professional development since weaknesses will have to be recognized before improvement can take place. I am also unsure as to whether this is a district-wide approach, or if it pertains to this school. Further discussions may clarify this.

The principal and I have also had occasion to discuss the community's expectations of the rural principal, arising from an incident which occurred on a Sunday evening, when a member of a community organization arrived at the principal's house to ask to borrow some equipment from the school. This type of incident, combined with the requests for the principal and vice-principal to participate in town committees and events, is an indication of the demands on administrators' personal time and energy that perhaps do not occur to such a large degree in a more urban area.

I have also had discussions with certain staff members concerning school climate and student issues. These discussions usually arise in dealing with certain concerns with particular students, and then become more general in nature. The staff here perceives itself as a team, with a lot of give and take on everyone's part. This is the perception that the principal works to create, knowing that this will be in everyone's best interests. The principal seems to have intuitive insight or perhaps insight gained through personal experience into staff needs and his personal philosophy seems to be one of "catching more flies with honey than vinegar." He perceives his position very much as a facilitator and realizes that when unpopular decisions have to be made, the blow can be softened by giving something back on the other hand. Although bureaucratic decisions are unavoidable, he is also a believer in consultation and often puts out feelers to assess the potential impact of decisions on the staff. Even course assignments for next year are run by the staff before anything is finalized, although, of course, not everyone can teach exactly what they want to teach every year, given student population and teacher

reductions. There is a general feeling here that things are going well and that there is progress being made as each year goes by.

I am very pleased with the path that this internship has taken, and am encouraged that I do not feel "out of my element" in the placement. Although we were all unsure of our roles at the beginning, the day to day situations have started to become familiar, and I feel more comfortable in my role. The administrative team and staff have been excellent, and in the vice-principal's three-day absence, I have taken on some of his responsibilities concerning student and staff issues, and thus have gotten a real taste of the job, more so than if I was never left on my own to experience the position. It did make me aware, however, of how much there is to know about school culture and day-to-day procedure.

In the next two weeks, I will attempt to be a little more openly questioning of certain practices in the school to find out why things are done the way that they are. I have been a little hesitant to do this in the first two week block, but am now feeling a little more at home. I will also try to focus discussions with the administrators on their role in school change, specifically the origins of identified areas of improvement, the process of implementing change, and the procedure by which changes are evaluated and modified.

Weeks 3 and 4

During these two weeks, the principal has asked me to complete several small tasks, such as compilation of the Grade 10 results of last year's Grade 9 borderline students, the book list for next year, a review of last year's teacher handbook in preparation for next year, estimated exam corrections by teachers, and a preliminary exam

schedule. Much time has been spent on the computer software for scheduling for next year. I have also attended several French classes in order to assist the principal with untenured teacher appraisals, and participated in discussions afterwards. The philosophy of the principal about teacher appraisals was enlightening. Instead of entering the classroom looking for certain elements, he enters the classroom assuming that the teacher is satisfactory, unless he or she demonstrates otherwise during several classroom visits. This leaves the way open for acceptance of a variety of teaching approaches and strategies, rather than for a judgement call on the way that things "should be done."

During the past two weeks, I have had several occasions to talk to school staff about various issues, such as evaluation, curriculum issues, standards, and discipline. Several main themes have emerged in the discussions with the principal and vice-principal: due process for students, team building through staffing, avoidance of burn out, teaching styles, and school growth teams and school councils. The main philosophy of the administrative team is based on keeping students in school for as long as possible. Therefore, a creative approach is often needed to ensure that this happens, especially when a confrontation with a student will exacerbate matters. When a situation with a student is reaching a boiling point, the administration feels that its job is to prepare the parents for the possible outcomes and consequences. The administration also tries to promote and recognize acts of kindness around the school in order to encourage a positive school climate.

The principal of this school strongly feels that nothing will improve without the

willingness to take risks, and that new initiatives should be tried before they are abandoned. In reviewing already-introduced initiatives, he feels that unless an alternative can be demonstrated to be better, then the initiative should be kept, albeit with possible fine tuning. The principal has cautioned me about the effects of negative public perception and the amount of energy which needs to be expended to manage the small percentage of individuals holding them. This often takes as much, or more, energy as managing the *majority* of individuals who hold positive perceptions. There is no doubt as well that we must always cast an eye to possible negative public opinion and how such opinion can be countered with facts.

During these weeks, along with the routine discipline situations sent to the office, there was a major incident involving several students who came to school after using marijuana. These students were questioned and sent home and their parents requested to return to school with them the next day. Although some teachers wanted the police called, the administration did not do this. The explanation was given that the police would be called the next time but that the parents should be given the chance to handle the first incident. Not all teachers agreed, but the decision prevailed.

During the week, a senior teacher due to retire next year mentioned to me that I was the first 'administrator' in her entire career who had asked her how her day was, which I had apparently done during my first week here. This made two points with me: firstly, that administrators are often so busy that the little human touches are forgotten, and secondly, that the little things that we sometimes unconsciously do every day have a

lasting effect on others and their impression of us. Since that day, I have consciously tried to show more people this type of concern. I am not unaware, in the mean time, of potential staff attempts to manipulate an administrator with such comments, an issue which has been echoed in discussions with the principal.

Weeks 5 and 6

Along with the routine matters of student discipline and staff concerns, or, in other words, "the nuts and bolts" of the administrative position, the discussions that I am now having with the administration are becoming more theoretical in nature. Many such discussions have centered on the unofficial motto of the principal, "Together we make a difference," which he places at the bottom of all memos and agendas. This phrase seems to embody all that the principal tries to accomplish, including risk-taking, empowerment, vision, and school change. He has often reminded me that the principal does not have to do or know it all, but needs to ensure that things get done, and to know who would be the best person to do them. Therefore, it is essential that a principal know the personalities, talents and interests of the staff.

This principal also has the long term vision to ensure that the school ultimately accomplishes what the staff deems important, without "sweating the small stuff"; for example not getting caught up in a teacher's recurrent minor lateness if the teacher habitually gives much free time with the students after school. There is a definite philosophy of give and take between the staff and principal. The principal feels that it is often necessary to keep the staff happy in order to get the ten or fifteen extra hours a

month from each teacher that he feels is necessary to make the school a productive place for the students. This vision also extends to the hiring of staff, since a decision may potentially be made to permanently hire a teacher who is known for extra contributions, but who may not be the most qualified in the classroom, since this person may ultimately make more of a contribution to the school than the more qualified individual.

We have also discussed the idea of deliberate sabotage to initiatives by certain staff members, who will often vocally criticize such changes, or who will make silent protest by not efficiently doing their part in the change process. Although these teachers may be in the minority, they do exist, and as such, the school leaders must be prepared in advance with facts to counter any criticisms that these teachers may make. Similarly, in staff meetings, limited time may be allotted for discussion of positive and negative points, with the invitation to all staff members to meet with the principal privately to discuss further. This is done with the intention of hopefully limiting the negative effect of individuals who want to create a bandwagon effect. Once again, the attitude is one of trying new things unless convincing arguments can be made as to why such change should not be attempted. This principal thrives on change, and enjoys a bit of controversy in order to keep his enthusiasm for the job and to add life to the institution.

The principal feels that the vice-principal's job is a "dirtier," more hands-on position, which can become discouraging without a change of pace. Therefore the principal encourages any pet projects that the vice-principal wishes to take on as part of school improvement, since they may serve the double purpose of keeping the vice-

principal fresh and enthusiastic. In the case of this school, the vice-principal has introduced some important technology initiatives which have put this school ahead of many others in the district, and in this way, has become a curriculum leader.

Discussions have also touched on consultation versus the principal's individual decision- making, which, interestingly, is alternately encouraged and criticized on the part of the staff. Although it is pragmatically impossible to consult or even vote on every issue if one wants to be productive, many staff members wish to be consulted on even the tiniest matter, ever since the principal has started to use widespread consultation on many issues. Others may sometimes say that the principal cannot make up his own mind! In the name of the consultative process, the principal must grin and bear these criticisms!

School councils and school growth teams have also been the topic of conversation, with both being seen as very useful by the principal. The two very active groups, who represent the larger thinking of both parents and staff members, are often used as sounding boards for new ideas, as "devil's advocates," and as support for the principal when presenting new initiatives to the staff or school board. Although more time consuming than if decisions are made unilaterally, these two groups are worth the investment of time. The school growth team in this school also plans professional development activities for the staff.

Weeks 7 and 8

Over the past two weeks I feel that I have been given more liberty and responsibility by the administration team to deal with student and staff issues. I have, for

example, addressed issues in two different staff meetings, during which time I have observed and experienced the juggling act that an administrator has to play in order to lead discussion in a productive way and to avoid counterproductive differences of opinions among staff members. Although discussion is useful, there are occasions in which power struggles reveal themselves while individual staff members try to have their own opinions prevail. I have also dealt with many students who have been referred to the office for various reasons. Sometimes I feel, as does the vice- principal, that students are sometimes sent to the office for very minor offenses, such as forgetting a textbook, but it must be remembered that these students probably have a history of such incidents and therefore the teacher feels that more severe consequences should be dealt out. The question remains, however, if teachers have exhausted all possibilities to modify the students' behavior before the office referral. Understandably, there are times when a student has to be removed from the classroom due to disrespect or because teaching or learning is being impeded.

Again, the question arises as to the power of the administration to impose consequences on students. Many teachers do not realize that it is not always possible to apply the consequences that the teacher would like to see imposed. Court orders, due process, desire to keep students in school, even time factors, may be obstacles to teachers' desired results. Cases are not at all as clear cut as teachers would like for them to be.

The thing that I find the most frustrating with the responsibility that I have been given is the uncertainty on my part as to the usual practices of the school. It is also the

case that the principal often changes his mind after discussions have taken place, procedures have been 'finalized,' or memos written. This has sometimes meant a complete revision of some plans, such as the exam supervision schedule, for which I was entirely responsible. I do understand, however, that as an intern, it is very likely that I will bring a perspective to some tasks that does not parallel the thinking of this school, since it may be the result of my experience in another school. It is also the case that certain aspects of some situations are not considered until another staff member points them out. This is the benefit of brainstorming, as one individual, or even a small group, cannot possibly contemplate every aspect of every situation.

I have also started doing the announcements on the P.A. every morning, something which I quite enjoy due to my experiences as an anchorperson on the local volunteer television station. It was quite a perk to hear some staff members and students say that I did a good job. It was quite interesting to discover how slogans and other practices can become part of the school culture. At the end of the announcements, the principal habitually says "Have a pleasant and productive day," which has become a personal trademark of his. Since it was so closely identified with him, I felt it better not to use this phrase, simply saying "Make it a great day" at the end of the announcements. Many students have mentioned that they miss hearing the principal's phrase every morning. It is this kind of practice that helps to give the school an identity, making the students feel part of something which is constant and stable.

This internship experience has been invaluable in exposing me to so many different

aspects of administration that it would be difficult to articulate all of them. It has shown me, however, that administration is something which I would like to pursue as the next step in my career, something which I now feel more confident about doing. It has been a great confidence booster, and an enriching and mind-broadening experience. I am disappointed that the internship is ending so soon, but I am sure that upon returning to the classroom in September, there will be many new or enhanced skills, especially interpersonal, that I will be able to bring with me to my staff and student relations next year. I have had the added benefit of learning a great deal about technology during my internship, as this is the vice-principal's area of interest. As indicated in the literature, not every administrator is a leader, and not every leader is an administrator, and perhaps through these new skills I can become more of a leader on my own staff. To describe my experiences during these ten weeks, I have submitted an article on my internship to the district newsletter (see Appendix 1).

Weeks 9 and 10

As I conclude my ten-week internship here at the school, I am taking stock of my experience from a more global perspective. I am increasingly convinced that I have chosen the best program option for my situation, and am encouraged by the interest shown toward the internship program from staff and administration from this school and others. Having been exposed to so many varied experiences and situations, having been given responsibility for several administrative tasks, and having built relationships with many staff and students in the school, I am more certain of the professional development

route I have taken in pursuing educational leadership. I am also more convinced than ever that I possess the building blocks of the skills I would need as an administrator. The lessons I have learned could not, I feel, be rivaled through additional graduate courses or research, and I also feel that I have developed further skills and understandings which will help me as a classroom teacher and as a member of a staff of educators.

Having come from a school where planned change has not been a priority, I am now very enthusiastic about initiatives and risk taking. I am a little fearful that, since I am returning to the same school as before my internship, that this enthusiasm may be dampened by the lack of interest in change that is existent in this setting. I now feel, however, that change is essential to keep the school vibrant, that risk-taking is necessary to progress, and that it is not a serious setback if attempted changes do not succeed. Many times, it is this fear of failure and of experimenting that squashes attempts at improvement. It is important not to let this fear hold us back.

Specifically, during the past two weeks, I have experienced much more confidence in the tasks that I have taken on. I feel that I have succeeded in making my 'female' administrative presence felt by the staff, and that I have helped to make the administration more aware of the needs of their French program, in terms of curriculum, classroom practices and staffing. To this end, the principal asked me to prepare a list of curriculum-based and general questions to be used in the interviews for a new French teacher, which I was very fortunate to be able to observe this week. Through discussions with the administration, I have learned the importance of staffing, especially in a school which

endeavors to be progressive. The chosen candidate has to be able to adapt to and support change, and must be able to work both independently and as part of a team.

I am especially glad to feel that I have made a contribution to the school through assisting with such time consuming tasks as scheduling, book order forms, exam supervision, the principal's organization of the materials for his own performance appraisal, teacher coverage for various reasons, memos, revisions of the school agenda and handbook for next year, the school calendar for next year, and even policy discussions. Many of these tasks I have volunteered to do, understanding that if I could not do them, then they may have been passed on to a staff member who would already be over-burdened with marking and report cards at this time of year. This is an important consideration for administrators, who may feel that taking on such tasks themselves may ultimately result in happier teachers who see the administration as lessening the work of staff members, and as such more gladly give of their own time and energy.

I have also found that the type of stress, while perhaps not the amount, is very different from the type experienced as a classroom teacher. While I do understand that the relative lack of stress that I have experienced as an intern is far different from the reality of an administrative position, I was able to observe that the stress as an administrator manifests itself very differently than it does in a teacher in the classroom, and, to some degree may be more manageable, depending on the nature of the individual. The administration here has discussed with me several times the importance of breathing room and time for reflection, the necessity of remaining on an even keel and not internalizing the

stress that it is possible to feel in such a position of authority and responsibility. In this way, the administrator may be better able to serve the needs of the school than if such stresses were permitted to govern one's mood and enthusiasm. Time management is, then, of the utmost importance, in order to allow oneself the time for such consideration.

Time management is, however, a difficult task, given the prevalence of "crisis management" that comes with the job. No plans can ever be written in stone, since, at any time, interruptions of any scheduled meetings or tasks could arise. This is perhaps why many administrators find it necessary to put aside any jobs requiring intense concentration until the evening hours. There are many days when none of the things the administrator had planned to do can be accomplished, and as such must intrude into the so-called free or family time of the administrator. Last week, for example, at the most inopportune time, as it is apt to do, the school computer network crashed, and consumed the entire day of both administrators and several other staff members. This type of interruption is typical of any administrator's day. Because of this, the administrator must develop the ability to switch gears very quickly and to focus on the task on hand, while at the same time not losing the thread of other ongoing matters. Multi-directional thinking is a necessary capability of a leader.

Throughout my internship, I have been fortunate to participate in a school which is actively and enthusiastically pursuing school change. Through this experience, I am sure that my own leadership abilities have been influenced. If ever in a position to act as a leader, whether officially or unofficially, I am sure that the array of qualities that I have

observed in the leaders in this school will serve as a model for my own experience. In the literature, many interpersonal and professional leadership qualities have been emphasized. I am encouraged to learn that these qualities do not merely occupy theory but are apparent, even prevalent, in actual leadership situations.

Summary

This chapter has presented a chronological and reflective journal written during the ten-week internship period. It contains tools which I have found useful in assessing the degree of success that I may have experienced in meeting my goals and objectives, and also many lessons that I have learned about both school change and school leadership, as well as about teaching and learning. In reading and rereading my journal, I notice once again the growth and evolution of my thinking as a teacher and as a potential school administrator, and am again reminded of the value of the experience which I have completed. In addition, I have noticed several recurrent secondary themes of which a principal seeking to implement school change must be aware. These secondary themes, as well as my self-evaluation of the internship experience, form the basis of chapter four.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

It is difficult, of course, to objectively assess an experience into which one has put so much heart and soul. While it is relatively easy to pinpoint the successes, one is naturally emotionally distanced from areas of personal and professional weakness. However, to grow professionally, this is perhaps more important than identifying the things which one does well. Should I have asked more questions? Were there experiences that I perhaps should have tried to include in my internship, which would have shown me even more of the role of the administrator as an instigator and facilitator of school change? Should I have been less hesitant to offer my professional opinion, especially at the beginning? I believe that many of these answers will not reveal themselves immediately, but may much later, when and if I am in a leadership role. Only at that time, perhaps, will potential gaps in my experience reveal themselves.

While I have learned a great deal about the complexities of the principalship in general, and of the principal's role in school change, I do realize that what works in this school at this present time may not necessarily work in another school, with another staff, at another time or place. The administrative team at this middle school, with great assistance from staff leaders and students, has successfully created a climate accepting, even desiring, of change. The principal plays no small part in this circumstance.

An intuitive principal will also realize that the prospect of change cannot be the

sole focus of the principalship. A multitude of other factors must be considered and nurtured in order for growth or change to successfully occur. These factors are not influential on school change in isolation, but may also play a function in other items on the administrator's agenda.

Recurrent Themes

The internship has revealed to me many aspects of school change, including several secondary contributing themes. As well as a knowledge of the school change process, an administrator who includes this item on his agenda must be aware of many secondary but important factors which may influence the attempts to introduce planned change into the school. These factors, or themes, include the role of the vice-principal, school climate, reciprocity between the administrative team and the staff, the situation of the female administrator, and shared decision-making and empowerment.

Role of the Vice-principal

The role of the vice-principal may be highly underrated in the discussion of school change. Without an administrative partner who is, on one hand, supportive of and in agreement with the principal's vision of school change (not to be confused with the staff-developed vision for the direction of the school), and who, on the other hand, will unhesitatingly offer valuable and informed opposing viewpoints on the principal's ideas, the principal will undoubtedly experience much difficulty launching the steam-gathering "rolling stone" which is school change.

The vice-principal, as a member of the administrative team, must be encouraged to

seek interests and opportunities outside of the mundane tasks that could, if untended, define the job. Furthermore, the vice-principal must be willing to assume a significant number of additional administrative tasks, so that the principal has sufficient time to reflect upon and develop her school change strategy. This is to suggest that positive change will not happen accidentally, but must be cultivated in order to fulfil the principal's image of the future school. This cultivation is time-consuming, but is undoubtedly worth the additional effort if a vibrant and enthusiastic school is the result.

School Climate

Change is not always popular, especially among those staff members who find nothing wrong with the "way things are," and who perceive changing policies and practices as "too much work." It is also true that nothing is to be gained from open, incessant, conflict on a proposed change of practice. Therefore, the principal must invest significant time in creating the conditions whereby the staff is accepting of risk-taking. An administrator who attempts to push an unpopular agenda, as well as one who cannot convince staff members to take a leap of faith toward a new idea, will be unable to implement lasting change. An administrator who, on the other hand, demonstrates enthusiasm for risk-taking, and who, through listening to the ideas of others designs a well thought out plan for change, is more likely to be successful. The other themes under discussion in this chapter, such as reciprocity and shared decision-making and empowerment, may all play a role in the development of a conducive climate for school change.

Reciprocity

Along this same vein is the idea of "catching more flies with honey than vinegar." Realizing that staff members are human beings with lives in which school is only one element, but who, on the other hand, are genuinely interested in promoting the best programs and policies possible for the students, leads the administrator to realize that there are times when rules must be broken and teachers must be given some leeway. Small infractions must often be ignored in favor of the big picture of staff members who give tirelessly on weekends and after school in order to enrich the school experiences of the students. A staff leader may be permitted to attend inservices which will, in turn, profit the staff as a whole. Teachers may be encouraged to attend their own children's school events in order to keep the teachers contented and willing to contribute. A principal may agree to cover a class for a teacher so that the teacher realizes that this administrator is willing to give as well as take. These are examples of small services which the administrator can perform which will, in turn, help to create a favorable school climate not only for change, but for other school experiences as well. This may be an important element in avoiding either overt or subtle forms of sabotage by unhappy staff members.

The Female Administrator

Much research has been published on the perceived advantages of female administrators in the school change agenda. Such natural female characteristics as concern, willingness to listen, and empathy may help the female administrator present herself as one of, not apart from, the rest of the staff. The female principal has been

shown to be more democratic and participatory than her male counterpart, to spend more time on individual differences and morale building, to communicate better with staff members and parents in an informal way, and to resolve conflict in a collaborative manner (Eagly, Karau, & Johnson, 1992; Shakeshaft, 1987). By presenting herself in this manner, school change may be more readily perceived as a staff-developed plan, not a top-down dictate. Both male and female administrators alike can take care to develop and demonstrate these constructive characteristics when dealing with staff, students and parents.

This point may have been even more clearly demonstrated than if the school had a female administrator. On numerous occasions, even as early as the second day of my internship, the principal himself and other staff members commented on the differences in, and the lack of, a female administrator in the school. These differences were apparently noticeable in dealings that I had with both students and staff.

Shared Decision-making and Empowerment

Administrators must avail of opportunities to involve other stakeholders in decision-making. These stakeholders include students, staff members in general, the school growth team, the school council, and community partners. The purpose of this may be twofold. Firstly, stakeholders may provide opposing or supportive evidence and viewpoints of an emerging issue on the school change agenda. The support, above all, may be used to further propel the initiative to other levels of school district bureaucracy. Secondly, these stakeholders will take ownership and interest in the school, increasing

community support and participation in the school. This may ultimately even have the effect of enhancing the educational experience for students, although the effect of such involvement on student achievement is still under debate (Local school councils, 1994; Sebring, Bryk & Easton, cited in Collins, 1996).

Equally, those who wish to do so should be empowered to make decisions and design courses of action of their own initiative. The principal should resist the tendency to micro-manage, even if it is his or her nature to do so. Trust between the principal and staff members should be established through collaboration, so that the principal feels confident in delegating authority to others and staff members feel confident in accepting the same if it is so bestowed.

Implications for Administrators' Professional Development

This discussion may raise more questions than answers when considering the implication of these themes for principals. Evidently, the principal must be well-versed in the factors that may contribute to or detract from the principal's attempts to realize productive school change. In addition, the contribution that others can make to the principalship must be acknowledged. The principal's interpersonal characteristics being instrumental, those which may be beneficial to school change must be developed and demonstrated, and those which may be damaging must be suppressed. A personal vision of where the principal is going and where to lead the school is imperative. Considering that the success of school change hinges on the unpredictable responses, behaviors and attitudes of others, it is very difficult to achieve the optimum balance of all of these

elements to create just the right climate for school change. The principal must understand the dynamics which shape the interactions among stakeholders in the process of change.

However, if the role of the principal is to encourage others through the process of school change, then who encourages the principal? The principal must remain current in the literature on school change and enthusiastic for the process, and needs his own supporters and professional development in order to do so. The vice-principal, the staff, parents, students, and district personnel all have an important role to play, as does the principal's family.

How does a progressive principal get to be that way? Is it intrinsic, or can it be developed? I must believe that both are true, with an innate positive nature accepting of change and risk- taking being of real benefit. I also believe that a principal, through experience and either formal or informal mentoring, and with a personal drive to educate herself in the process of school change, can further develop the necessary skills.

Summary

This chapter has presented my observations of recurrent themes on the topic of the role of the principal in school change. These themes, arising from the internship and the chronological journal, have the potential to make a serious impact on the success of any school change initiatives, and as such, should be forefront in any attempts of school growth. This chapter represents a personal effort to assess my internship experience and to express the major lessons which I take away from it.

In doing this, I rely on the suggestions of Elliott, Russell and Hackman (1999),

who advise that administrative mentors should formally ease the transition of the intern into and out of the school, should provide quality and challenging experiences, and should assume the role of a true mentor in revealing information of a personal and professional nature, thus exposing the intern to all aspects of administrative life. Equally, the intern is advised to be a "sponge," to be professional, efficient and dependable, and to be proactive and assertive. In giving me *carte blanche* to explore any interesting aspect of the school, in hiding absolutely nothing, and in discussing with me both positive and negative aspects of administration in a professional manner, my field supervisors surpassed any expectations that might have been held of them. Similarly, in treating my internship role as professionally as possible, in seeking out opportunities, and in attempting to give back to the school a little of what I received, I feel that I gained more from my internship than I could have hoped. Elliott, Russell and Hackman propose that "an internship must provide a longitudinal and complete perspective of the principal's [and by extension, the vice-principal's] responsibilities" (p. 10), and that "activities must be authentic" (p. 12) and realistic, increasing in complexity as the internship progresses. The connection must be made between knowledge learned in the classroom, and practice in the field (Elliott, Russell & Hackman). My journal confirms these types of experiences.

As a potential administrator, I realize that this experience is invaluable in exposing me to the various roles and responsibilities of an administrator. It has taught me important lessons in leadership styles, interpersonal relations, organization, decision-making, reflection and, of course, school change. Lortie (1988) suggests that an administrative

mentor's attitude toward change is also reflected in the intern. As such, I may be expected to pursue educational change more actively because of my experiences with these change-oriented administrators. Furthermore, I have gained insight into personal strengths and weaknesses which may potentially be a benefit or an inadequacy in any future role as an administrator or leader. The principal and vice-principal having become valued mentors, I feel that I may realize the benefit of this relationship at various times in the future. As a current classroom teacher, I have gained further understanding of the challenges of an administrator and insights into classroom management which will be a definite asset to me in this role.

Verbalizing the worth of the internship experience is extremely difficult. As I can see its potential from many different viewpoints such as mentioned above, I would merely say that it has proven to be one of the most rewarding and important educational and professional experiences of my career to date, and one to which more potential administrators should have access. I feel that, through this experience, new administrators would gain valuable insight and experience in their new role, which could possibly assist them into a more effective transition into their new position.

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Appendix 1

The following is an article which I submitted for publication in the district newsletter on the topic of my administrative internship in the intermediate school in the area. For reasons of anonymity and confidentiality, any identifiers such as school or individual names, as well as names of places or school boards, as well as the name of the newsletter itself, have been omitted.

From January to June 2000, I am fortunate to be on paid educational leave from my position as Senior High Core French / French Immersion teacher at (*name of school*) in (*name of community*) to pursue my Masters Degree in Educational Administration from Memorial University of Newfoundland.

Instead of choosing the traditional thesis route, I have chosen instead to complete six additional credit hours, and to conclude my studies with a ten-week administrative internship at (*name of school*) under the supervision of its principal and vice-principal.

I chose the little-known and fairly new internship option for several reasons, including the difficulty of researching for a thesis from this remote location. Primarily, however, I opted for the in-school placement because of its practicality in providing me with a wide variety of real - life circumstances. Many educators would agree that the school situation often bears limited similarities to the description of it in textbooks! In addition, it provides an excellent opportunity to apply the theory studied in university courses to observation and practice.

The internship experience could perhaps be best described as a job-shadowing situation. In working with the principal and vice principal as they carry out their daily

activities, I have the opportunity to observe student discipline techniques, leadership styles, administration-staff and administration-student interpersonal relationships, school council and school growth team organization and undertakings, end-of-year activities such as final exam and supervision scheduling, and planning for next year, such as time tabling and course allotments, as well as the 'routine' daily operations. I also have the chance to familiarize myself with Winschool and with other software that is being used in the school for scheduling and student records. Furthermore, I am conducting my own research into the topic for my major report for the internship, the role of the administrator in school change. As (*name of school*) is a school encouraging important change initiatives, it is the ideal setting for such observation and research.

Being very aware of the demands on time and energy of the administration at this time of year, I am very anxious to make a contribution to the school, as well as use the school as the subject of my own research. Accordingly, as time goes on, the focus of the internship will hopefully change from *shadowing* to playing a small part in *assisting* the administrative team with the wide variety of challenges it faces on a day to day basis. I feel that this happens naturally and incrementally on a daily basis. This change of focus will also serve me well in gaining the most out of my placement.

I would like to thank the ** School Board for their cooperation in permitting me to pursue this program option, and especially (*names of the principal and vice-principal*), and the staff at (*name of the school*) for the opportunity to 'invade their space' at this very busy time of year. The welcome and guidance that they have offered to me is very much appreciated, and has helped to make the internship experience invaluable.