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ABSTRACT

Researchers have found the categories of transformational and transactional leadership to be effective descriptors of administrator behavior. While the direction of the management literature has stressed the value of transformational over transactional leadership, the recent direction of many school reform efforts has, in many cases, emphasized the opposite, at least in regard to the principalship. This study attempts to provide additional empirical support for the value of transformational leadership by building principals. The work of Greenfield (1991) is used as a knowledge base that distinguishes between personal qualities, behaviors, aims, and outcomes of leadership. The paper provides documentation for the thinking and behaviors of three principals who have been leading schools (two elementary, one middle) in a teacher-centered school development process as part of Project LEARN (League of Educational Action Researchers in the Northwest). While the outward styles of those leaders often varied, similarities in the impact of their work were consistently noted in three specific features of their schools: the sharpness of school focus; the sharing of common cultural perspectives; and a constant push for improvement. Descriptive accounts of each principal are given including an examination of patterns in behavior that cut across these three faculties and their leaders. Three stages are identified and described in this process: pre-conditional behavior; development/implementation; and sustaining behaviors. Implications for policy and further research are given. (32 references) (RR)

OPERATIONALIZING TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP: The Behavior of Principals in Fostering Teacher Centered School Development

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Since Burns published his influential work Leadership in 1978 theorists and researchers have found the categories of transformational and transactional leadership to be effective descripters of administrator behavior (Bennis and Nanus 1985, Sergiovanni 1990, Greenfield 1991). While the direction of the management literature has stressed the value of transformational over transactional leadership, the recent direction of many school reform efforts has, in many cases, emphasized the opposite, at least in regards to the principalship. Some theorists have even argued that expecting transformational leadership in schools is unrealistic (Rallis and Highsmith 1986).

In many of the more celebrated approaches to school restructuring the role and function of the principal has been steadily diminishing. In a number of places the Principal has been cast as no more than a mere servant to the other players in the educational community. In Rochester, the role and importance of the building principal was seen by some as an oversight. In Chicago principals serve at the pleasure of local parents and community boards. In other venues as varied as Santa Fe, New Mexico (ADM 50,000 approx) and Washougal, Washington (ADM 2,046) some schools have even received notoriety for their decision to manage by committee without the benefit (or hindrance) of a principal at all. Each of these improvement initiatives have one thing in common, the belief that decentralized, bottom-up organizational relationships are the best means to foster educational excellence. They might also be seen as encouraging the belief that the only important work principals do is to serve the operational needs of the faculty and demands of parents. That view is unsupported by the research on effective schooling (Edmonds 1979, Rutter 1979, Brookover and Lezotte 1979, Wynne 1981) or analyses of school culture (Firestone and Wilson 1985, Schein 1985, Deal and Peterson 1990). The purpose of this study is to provide additional empirical support for the value of transformational leadership when provided by building principals.

It is the perspective of this work that teacher empowerment is and will be a critical component of any viable school development strategy. Furthermore, it accepts the fact that administrators, even in the most bureaucratic environments, cannot effectively compel teacher compliance against their will (Blase 1989, and Lortie 1975). However, we contend that meaningful school development cannot and does not occur in the absence of transformational leadership. Certainly transactional leadership can bring greater efficiency to an organization, but assisting an organization to strive for

and achieve higher purposes requires the triggering of a developmental experience (Glickman 1990).

The nature of a transformative relationship is that it moves both the leader and follower to new understandings and improved behavior. While we believe that the transformational principal may be having a tranaformative effect on children and parents the purpose of this study is to identify the means that exceptional leaders use to create transformation on the part of the faculty.

Although there is significant weight of opinion supporting the value of transformational leadership, we lack rich descriptions of the work of such leaders in school settings. In a recent paper reviewing the field, William Greenfield (1991) concluded, that researchers need to add to the knowledge base by helping us to distinguish "between":

> 1) the personal qualities associated with the ability to lead in a school, 2) the actual behaviors constitutive of the activity of leading, 3) the intermediate aims of those leadership behaviors (changes in norms organizational policies, procedures, and processes and activities stimulated by the leader which fosters the identification and solution of problems interfering with the school's effectiveness), and 4) the outcomes and effects of leadership.

This paper is an effort to build the knowledge base Greenfield called for. It does so by documenting the thinking and behavior of 3 principals who have been leading schools involved in a teacher centered school development process.

METHODS

All three subject schools are involved with an initiative of Washington State University-Vancouver, Project LEARN (league of educational action researchers in the northwest), a program which supports teams of teachers in the conduct of "collaborative action research." In each of these schools practitioner research projects have been underway for several years. These projects were all initiated by teachers who after identifying areas of concern committed themselves to the conduct of collaborative research involving their own practise. In spite of the high degree of teacher control over these site-based improvement efforts, earlier research (Sagor 1991, Sagor and Curley 1991) found evidence that the school principal still played a crucial role in inspiring, sustaining, and supporting these efforts.

In our earlier work, teachers were first asked to report on the principal's behavior in fostering the modes of professional discourse cited as significant by Judith Warren Little (1982): discussions about teaching and learning, critiquing of

professional work, and the collaborative preparation of materials and lessons. In addition they were asked to discuss their principal's work in regard to the behaviors cited by Leithwood and Jantzi (1990) as characteristic of instructional leaders, e.g. using procedures to reinforce shared values and beliefs, fostering professional development, conducting discussions on educational values and beliefs, sharing power and responsibility. An analysis of that data led us to select these three principal's as the subjects for this study.

This paper examines the work of these principals (two elementary, one middle). The goal is to deeply describe those specific behaviors that appear to have a transformative effect. The methodologies used were chosen due to a belief that leadership could be best understood through the perspective of those being led, rather than through an examination of the intentions of the leaders themselves. Therefore the examination of leadership behavior was guided by data originally provided by followers. Faculty interviews and written surveys were used to generate a composite of the organizational features of schools where the principals leadership was perceived by teachers as transformative. Shadowing, interviewing and observational data was used to flush out and categorize the specific behaviors that appeared to produce the transformative effect. The data set for this qualitative study includes material obtained during our earlier work as well as additional material obtained through further observation and focused interviews with faculty, and the principals themselves.

That data will be used to advance our understanding of the manner in which transformational leadership is carried out by site administrators in an organizational context marked by teacher empowerment. The paper will conclude with recommendations for administrative practice and the professional preparation of school administrators.

THE SCHOOLS

Why do some schools succeed when others fail? This is the question that has driven school reform for generations. In recent years the view that a school's organizational structure and culture are major determinants of school effectiveness has gained increased attention. In particular the trend to devolve power and decision making to those closest to the action and consequently to expand the discretion given to classroom teachers are directions that are gaining significant popularity and are showing some promising results. However, increasingly we are seeing that decentralization alone will not improve schools, as evidenced by the experience in Dade County (Collins and Hanson 1991).

As important as shared decision making and teacher empowerment are, they are unlikely to succeed absent transformational leadership from the principal. Clearly, the issue is more than simply deciding who is going to make which decisions. Rather, it is finding a way to be successful in defining the essential purpose of teaching and learning and then empowering the entire school community to be focused and productive. In earlier studies (Sagor 1991, Sagor and Curley 1991, Curley 1990) it was found that in schools where meaningful "focus" had been achieved, the teaching and learning experience became transformative for many members of the teaching staff.

In Project LEARN's work with dozens of faculties conducting "Collaborative Action Research" (Sagor 1991) several patterns emerged. Whenever a school presented an organizational culture that teachers and students reported as conducive to school success there happened to be a transformative leader in the principalship. While the outward styles of those leaders often varied, similarities in the impact of their work was consistently noted in three specific features of their schools: the sharpness of school focus, the sharing of common cultural perspectives, and a constant push for improvement. We have come to see these factors as the wake left behind the boat of transformational leadership.

Three Key Markers

Wherever transformational leaders practice one finds increased teacher professionalism. In this study, professionalism is defined as participation in the behaviors identified by Little (1982 and Leithwood and Jantzi (1990). That professionalism produces the above mentioned "wake of transformational leadership" and invariably contained three salient factors, focus, cultural collinearity, and press for improvement which were also highly predictive of school success (Sagor and Curley 1991). So the reader can understand the factors which lead us to identify these leaders as successful it is worth reviewing those key factors.

Focus

Perhaps no idea has captured more attention in the discussion of leadership than the importance of vision (Bennis and Nanus 1985, Blumberg and Greenfield 1986). While not wishing to diminish the importance of that concept, we are concerned with the way it may be interpreted by many leaders. Frequently, in staff development programs offered for administrators, school executives are lead to believe that their primary role is to develop and articulate a vision. They may well walk away believing that administrators are expected to be successful salespeople with a mass of followers

pledging allegiance to their vision. Adherence to that view reduces the role of the follower(teacher) to a mere pawn to the leader's(principal's) superior wisdom. That would lead to a transactional view of leadership that could hardly be expected to transform teaching into a meaningful and rewarding profession many want it to be.

One factor which has been shown to help semi-autonomous professionals to cooperatively accomplish complex tasks is having a clear and common focus (Peters and Waterman 1982). While followers need to be partners in the development of such a focus, its creation doesn't occur through spontaneous generation. Rather, leadership serves as a medium through which the collective yearnings of a group of empowered professionals can take on its own form and give direction for both group and individual work.

Cultural Collinearity

Psychologists use a term, cognitive collinearity, to describe the similarity of thinking among individuals. While "group think" is clearly not conducive to productive organizational performance, another form of unity does seem to be essential. It is having a collective perspective on the existing organizational culture. We asked teachers to rate 14 elements of their school culture which were known to influence school performance (Saphier and King 1983). In schools where high inter-rater reliability was obtained on the perception of organizational culture, school improvement seemed to proceed more readily. It is important to note that this measure did not indicate the degree to which a faculty valued the same cultural components, rather it indicated only if they were viewing their organization through the same lens.

In divided faculties, ones where teachers disagree on issues such as the degree of collegiality amongst the staff, or the appreciation of experimentation, or the presence of high expectations, academic performance was likely to be declining. Apparently, to be effective, it is important for members of an organization to share a common perspective on their social system.

Press for Improvement

Michael Fullan (1986) wrote of the importance of the simultaneous application of pressure and support when trying to sustain educational change. Our data lent support to this proposition. We studied schools where the district and building administration had provided significant financial and emotional support, yet the direction of improvement was disappointing. At the same time, we observed other schools, occasionally receiving less support, that were making impressive performance

gains. Likewise, we occasionally encountered settings where expectations for performance were high, yet the performance itself was low. Leadership appeared to be successful only when it was able to provide just the right combination of pressure for improvement with support for the improvement initiatives themselves.

THE PRINCIPALS

In three of the schools that we originally studied, the faculties reported sharp focus, high levels of cultural collinearity and a leadership press for improvement. Having identified these three markers as the "wake of transformational leadership" our task turned to an examination of the principal's themselves.

Clyde

Clyde came to Wilton Middle School as an already experienced principal. He had successfully lead two large high schools and two middle schools in other districts prior to accepting the principalship at this tradition bound, highly regarded, yet physically dilapidated school.

At Wilton student scores had historically been high, faculty turnover low, and attitudes of self-confidence and professional esteem ran as deep as the layers of paint which covered the old wooden building. The teaching staff was so sure of itself that we heard many teachers nodding agreement with the comment that, "This school runs itself, we don't even need a principal."

Clyde, a large, athletically built, middle aged man, didn't subscribe to the view that everything was copacetic. Although he esteemed what the staff had accomplished, his review of the data showed that not all Wilton students were achieving academic success. He believed much work remained to be done.

When we started studying Wilton I predicted conflict, confrontation, and Clyde coming out the loser. On the surface he looked right out of the classical masculine leadership model: self-assured, direct, and personally formidable. I would have bet that this self-confident, self-actualized, and professional teaching staff, armed with its long history of success, would put such a leader in his place and do so quickly!

If that prediction appears harsh consider this: Clyde came to the school deeply opposed to tracking as a means for organizing instruction. Yet, the senior faculty at the school was equally committed to maintaining this method of ability grouping and credited it as one of the chief reasons for the school's history of success.

Clyde began work in July. By August it became apparent that the maintenance department was behind schedule and wouldn't get to Wilton before school started. He

promptly donned overalls and along with the building custodian, painted the staff room, the cafetorium, and several other areas in the school. He scrounged carpet and draperies and on the day after labor day when the staff arrived they found a warm and hospitable staff lounge personally prepared by the principal.

During that summer Clyde hired 6 new faculty members (a number equalling 20% of the faculty). These individuals were generally young, enthusiastic, and hardworking. Clyde used the hiring and induction processes to let the new recruits know that they were to be actively involved in school decisions from day one. He did not intend to leave the veterans out. They were already accustomed to full involvement in governance. He had a deliberate agenda to expand and systematize the faculty's role in decision making. He explained his approach this way,

> "Every staff member is involved in a group or committee while we are working toward discussion and consensus. Once these are established we can make changes, and decide on beliefs. Faculty meetings provide an opportunity to bring together all the small committees. I like to let people try it out and am willing to allow for failure."

Thus his first year began with Clyde, the new faculty and the veterans deliberating on school goals, beliefs, strategies, and visions. Not surprisingly the issue of tracking emerged immediately as an area of disagreement. What was surprising was that the issue didn't generate any of the rancor one might have expected. I now suspect that can be explained by Clyde's approach to leadership.

Several times during our visits to Wilton we witnessed a particular pattern of principal-teacher interaction. Clyde would use some data (test scores, attendance reports, surveys) to raise perplexing questions. The meetings then took on a tone of intense inquiry, "What if we tried?" or "Could we find out if?" or "Can we?" Clyde was always ready, without hesitation, to grant whatever support was requested or required to conduct the inquiry. Interestingly, he never let the faculty deal itself any of the grunt work. If data had to be obtained, graphed, or sorted, he took it on the administration saying, "That's our job in the office. You don't need to waste your time on it!"

The Wilton faculty held their homeroom program in high regard. Upon arrival, Clyde constituted his own homeroom group, recruiting the most at-risk and marginal kids in the school. He made it his goal to have them become successful students. He also created his own basketball team, comprised of those kids least likely to ever try out for or make an interscholastic athletic team. His basketball team developed a tight

comraderie and was soon challenging the faculty, the varsity and others to good natured and competitive games.

Clyde commented that he saw, "collaborative action research is a way of sharing power." It came as little surprise that when looking for a focus for their inquiry, the Wilton action research team decided to take on tracking and study its impact on attitude and achievement. Each "action researcher" came to the project with deep biases. Half of the team was certain that tracking was a source of the school's success, while the other half thought it was responsible for holding students back. Rather than producing hostility and divisiveness, it became justification for collaborative inquiry, professional debate, and data-based decision making.

At Wilton, teachers persist in working hard, working together, and working for kids. In the words of a beginning teacher, "Teachers at this school share ideas and concepts and work together formally and informally for the good of the school. Caring is evident when you walk into the teacher's lounge and hear people sharing helpful ideas and encouragement." Another commented at Wilton, "We are honest and we open our big mouths all the time. There is no fear here about saying what's on your mind."

The work ethic of the school was captured by members of the action research team who confided,

> "We're buried right now. On the edge of burnout but there is celebration. There's no time. It's too much. We're stressed, but I guess if we laugh enough our sense of humor keeps us ready to go again the next year."

By the end of year one, Clyde was firmly established and well liked by the faculty, although their cockiness and self-confidence would result in many teachers still agreeing that, "This school could run without a principal." The faculty decided to dismantle the tracking process and committed themselves to making heterogeneous grouping work. School goals have been revised with a new focus on the disadvantaged learner and the faculty organized a paid academic coaching position to work after school with failing students much like an athletic coach.

Clyde did not direct that these changes be made. But we have reason to suspect that they would not have been made without him.

Nora

Nora was also a veteran principal. Two years ago she was given the opportunity to realize a dream, open a new elementary school. For a year Nora simultaneously served as the planning principal and as the district's personnel director. Contending

that Nora didn't take advantage of her personnel position to construct an incredible faculty for Bedrock Elementary, would be to sell this warm, soft-spoken, Grandmother, short. Nora has a reputation in her district for being able to get what she needs and wants. On ocassion her successes have engendered jealousy from colleagues. Whatever explains the secret of Nora's success, it certainly isn't traditional power politics.

If Clyde represents the classically masculine leader, Nora provides a sharp contrast. She is a nurturer, a listener, and a supporter of faculty, students, and parents. Over the years, a pattern was observed in her district wherein top performing teachers requested and received transfers to those buildings where Nora was principal. Likewise, weaker ones sought to transfer away. When asked about this trend Nora had no glib explanations, in fact, she seemed almost unwilling to acknowledge that she had anything to do with it. Yet, the data that emerged from our observations and interviews clearly illuminated her leadership behavior.

Nora neither lectures, nor does she debate. Rather she is found all over the building finding the good things that are happening for kids and openly delighting in them. The teacher's excitement is then visibly amplified by her enthusiasm, encouragement, and offers of assistance. When she later provides that same teacher with a suggestion or an idea, it is accepted as advise from a sage friend.

While Nora won't immediately strike you as a scholar (she is one of the only administrators in her district without a Doctorate) she clearly is perceived as having expert authority. She readily admits to enjoying the role of learner. She told us that one of the things she enjoys most about her job is that, "I'll never know it all, so I'm always looking for better things to do." She looks for opportunities to allow others to lead. Her instructional coordinator (the district's equivalent of an administrative intern) was acknowledged by many on the faculty as the instructional leader. In the words of one teacher, "The instructional coordinator is a wealth of knowledgeand I've learned a lot from her!" Nora's success as a delegator and mentor is evidenced by the fact that three of the other five elementary school principals in her district at one time worked for her as either instructional coordinators or lead teachers.

Nora insisted and faculty interviews corroborated the fact that hiring decisions at Bedrock were not based upon a commitment to specific educational practises. However, everyone agreed they were based upon adherence to certain core values. Specifically, Nora sought teachers who possessed inquiring minds, a history of collaboration, and a commitment to child centered education. When this new group convened at a summer retreat for program planning and decided to utilize multi-aged grouping as their organizing structure, an observer might have suspected a set up. Nora

was well known for supporting multi-aged grouping. Was this faculty assembled because they held a predisposition toward this approach? Not so, insisted the faculty. They firmly believe that chosing an organizational structure was their decision to make. Nora provided them data and offered reading material for consideration, but left the decision to implement up to the staff.

In September eight of twelve Bedrock teachers signed on as an "action research" team charged by their colleagues with documenting the impact of multi-aged grouping on all of aspects of the program. An active and large staff-parent advisory committee was also created to help guide the school. At first the parents (many middle class professionals who selected the community because of its academic reputation) were clearly suspicious of this new organizational structure and the faculty was understandably defensive about the critical parental attitude. Not Nora. She simply saw this as an opportunity to educate.

Bedrock is a school, albeit new, that seems to swim in data. Every question posed by a parent or a teacher is considered legitimate and Nora never shows or exhibits defensiveness when challenged. Instead she clarifies concerns, asks what, if any, data would help to allay or confirm the concern, and then she sets out to assemble the necessary facts. Consequently, concerned Bedrock parents have been given everything from scattergrams contrasting student achievement in the mixed aged classes to conventional assignments (the ranges were almost identical) to student and parent surveys on a variety of affective and academic concerns. As a consequence, these same parents have been converted and are now vocal supporters of the multi-aged approach. Nevertheless, each year Nora will leave the decision on continuation up to the faculty.

Although Nora is an active listener and communicator she is also a tenacious defender of her school. Both teacher and parent dissenters found her steadfast in her support of continuing the multi-aged approach throughout the trial period.

At year end, most measures of student achievement were high, faculty morale was soaring, parental support was strong, and the faculty had decided to go another year with their experiment in multi-age grouping.

Could she have directed such a staff to successfully implement this radically different organizational structure? Not according to the teachers. They told us assertively that the reason Bedrock is successful is because the teachers are accountable decision makers. Typical were these comments, "Its been exhausting but fun, because of the relationships, collaboration and support." and ""We worry about burnout, time is our enemy. It takes many extra hours for the success of the kids, but it is a real high to see kids perform."

Unlike Wilton, this faculty feels their principal is necessary ingredient. In the words of one teacher she "is receptive to teacher's attitudes and philosophies, so teachers are empowered.. she communicates confidence in me.. she repeatedly tells me 'I want you to be the best teacher in the school district."

Laura

Laura is an elementary principal in a district of 29 schools which historically did its administrative hiring from within. She was the exception. She joined the district with a well earned reputation as a maverick in a small neighboring community.

Early in her first year as principal, Laura became aware that "action research" training was being offered locally by Project LEARN and she arranged to bring a contingent of staff members. Their action research project, implementing the writing process, ultimately became the focal point for Riverview's school improvement effort.

A district administrator described Laura as a mixture of "charisma" and "chutzpah." Although she chose to describe herself differently, she seemed clear in her understanding of her own leadership style. She explained herself this way,

> I'm high energy. I took over a leadership role where teachers were isolated. I asked them to leave their doors open. It was tough the first couple of weeks. I spent a lot of time in classrooms, assisting in the classrooms. It was hard. Teachers wouldn't take responsibility. They hadn't ever worked together. I started real slow and asked, "What do you want to work on?" They brought up writing. Two teachers put together the plan. It came together very easily. Writing was a building need. The test scores showed that. I was having a tough time getting this group going, then I saw information on Project LEARN and thought it was a great way for administration to get people talking in the building. So I talked to two teachers who volunteered to be involved. That was the area they selected. Everything fell together easily. It was luck.

The teachers viewed the change in leadership similarly, yet they didn't ascribe it to luck. For example one teacher recounted that the new principal, "was immediately accepted by the old staff. She is an action person. If you have an idea she picks up the phone and it's done. She is very supportive. She takes care of things, she sees projects through." Another teacher added,

> This school is improving because of the principal. She had high expectations for students. She has completely changed this school. People are working harder, putting in more hours in the classroom. The principal observes teachers and holds them accountable. High expectations prevail for kids: she expects them to behave and expects teachers to do a good job.

This push for improvement is quite public, as one of the classified staff observed,

> Student achievement is improving. The atmosphere in the building has improved because of the new principal. We are busy with new projects and new ideas. The principal backs people, plus she gives follow through and support. She gives all of us responsibilities. For certain projects, she asks teachers to chair committees, to read the research and bring back conclusions to the faculty.

One thing that repeatedly came up in conversations was the manner in which Laura involved staff in critical governance functions. She pointed out,

> I try to get them to pick out a focal point. At the first of the year we establish goals and how we will reach those goals. We form committees, share and discuss research. I let teachers experiment with their ideas and research. They need to realize that this is a joint effort, a total school. Teachers here are responsible for all students not just their own classes. I expect teachers to give 100%.

One teacher explained,

> Committees have a floating chairmanship. The principal is not the chair of every committee. She asks people to work on something and get back to her. Students feel that they have a fair amount of power to decide things. We are not victims of a dictator. She is not a power hungry person. She doesn't hold it over you saying, 'I'm the boss.' I think she just enjoys her job. She has high energy. She wants the school to be good and wants the teachers to do a good job.

The teachers on the action research team describe her approach to governance this way, "She is always saying that the school improvement plan must be our idea. The teachers decide. She says, 'I need your help'. She delegates. This is a democracy!"

A long term member of the staff described her impact on the school this way, "The principal has strong values and beliefs. She evaluates what is happening and makes suggestions and so far she has been right!" One of the teachers noticed that she, "is in the faculty room all the time. The principal brings in new ideas and proposes those. Then people kick them around quite a bit." Another put it this way,

She puts things in the bulletin like, "So and so has a great idea. Go and see it. She praises teachers just like teachers praise students. She is just outstanding. She is up, funny, appreciates the little things. She will notice that I've spent a lot of time on something and will tell me I've done a good job. And when I'm praised....I want to do an even better job. She expects things and we do it.

Ultimately, Laura explains her success as a motivator this way,

> I survey the staff all the time regarding their needs and wants. The district supplies $500 per teacher per year. My staff goes over it all the time! I bypass the district restrictions on out-of-district in-service programs. I'm not afraid to disregard district policy. I bring workshops here to the school, right here where it is comfortable and teachers can participate. I get teachers here to share their talents with one another. That is a pat on the back for those teachers. And I delegate to those teachers who are not participating. I ask them to be in charge, to chair a committee. It gets people involved and all departments are represented. I seek people out, notice who is not participating, not in a threatening way, but encouraging.

That demonstration of commitment inspires additional effort from the staff. One of the teachers on the action research team observed that she motivates "through her actions. If we are going to have a long day, she is going to have a long day."

The teachers at Riverview regularly work well beyond their contract time on joint projects. This commitment was apparently the result of ownership obtained through participation on committee work and delegation of responsibility. It may also have something to do with expressions of appreciation from the principal, as one teacher put it, "It comes from inside, from being told that you are doing a good job--the success of students or parents and the giving of positive strokes. This needs to be encouraged by the administration and that is happening."

In many schools we noticed that teachers strike a de facto bargain, they do a reasonable day's work, follow the district's expectations and in turn are allowed a relatively stress free career. The teachers in Riverview have voluntarily opted for more.

Their return on investment is mostly intrinsic and most teachers credit this change in their work style to their principal. Her impact was summarized by one staff member this way,

> The principal is moving the lazy old staff out--bringing in new staff. The good old staff won't leave. The principal is bringing in high energy people who are willing to spend time, even their own money, on the school. She loves the kids, cares about them, uses humor. People know she likes them. People want to do a good job for her. She is always in the classrooms. She is positive about teachers and the work they put in.

Collaboration is the key at Riverview. Although only two teachers took the action research training, the entire staff participated in their writing project and after one year writing performance was up significantly. The next year two other teachers took the lead. This time the focus was using computers for word processing. Again everyone joined up and again student scores improved.

Did the talent and drive to make these accomplishments come from Laura? Clearly that wasn't the case, they came from the staff. Would this staff have manifest those talents without her? From our data it appears unlikely.

DISCUSSION

Laura, Nora and Clyde present disparate leadership styles yet all three produced similar results. In the wake of their leadership we found focused schools, common cultural perspectives, and transformed professionals. In analyzing our field notes we found that they shared certain specific leadership behaviors: e.g. each principal endeavored to visit each classroom at least once each day, each practised active listening and each saw teaching as an experimental science. In all three schools the faculty felt empowered, so much so that at Wilton many teachers even felt they could function without a principal. In each school the faculty took responsibility for the schools focus, even though the principal was credited with giving it voice, support and strength. Although Laura had been a writing process devotee, Clyde a fan of heterogeneous grouping, and Nora a deep believer in multi-aged grouping the faculties at their schools didn't report feeling manipulated into adopting those perspectives.

Some of the mechanisms that leadership used to foster common understandings of the culture were similar in all the schools. While large meetings and public symbolic actions played a part, the most significant cultural work was accomplished in one to one personal interactions. The combination of focused effort and collection of data

allowed teachers in these schools to feel efficacious and they then voluntarily worked countless hours for only the intrinsic rewards of teaching.

Finally, the continuous asking of those probing questions which go to the heart of the teaching/learning process enabled the three principals to maintain the pressure necessary to foster school improvement. Yet, in each case they also provided their teachers with enough meaningful personal support to create a willingness to go above and beyond the call of duty.

The previous discussion helped us define the wake of the "transformational leader. While the presence of these wakes clearly indicated that we were in the proximity of effective boats they didn't reveal much about those performance features that made the boat so effective. That realization took us into an examination of patterns in behavior that cut across these three leaders.

Patterns and Themes

In a large sense the key role for the transformational leader in schools is to provide meaningful and productive opportunities for professional discourse. It is through fostering professional interaction on issues concerning teaching and learning that leaders plant the seeds of transformative growth.

We have sifted through our data searching for themes that cut across the experience of these three faculties and their leaders. In doing so it became apparent that these leaders transformed teachers through their influence on organizational culture and professional discourse. This influence was exerted in three stages. Figure #1 illustrates the 18 most significant categories of common behavior and the three stages where they most often occured.

(insert table #1)

These leaders consistently engaged in actions which established a safe and secure platform for dialogue. We called this the "pre-conditional stage." They then initiated and participated in discourse and program development in a manner that was, at the same time, directive while not controlling. We called this stage "developmental/ implementation." Finally, they found ways to reinforce and support the faculty priorities that grew out of professional discourse. We called the third level the "sustaining stage." Certain coded behaviors cut across all three stages while others were more functionally related to a particular level.

For example the "buffering" of teachers from distracting district and state agendas is an essential pre-condition for focused discourse. However, the leadership function of buffering is also frequently needed throughout the development/implementation process. Another example was the strategic use of humor. This strategy assists followers in becoming comfortable when discourse is initiated, yet it also releases tension during the more stressful periods of development/implementation.

Stage#1 Pre-Conditional Behavior

Although their methods were different, these three principal's consistently engaged in actions which were effective in setting the stage for professional discourse. They had each mastered what could be dubbed as "effortlessly taking care of business."

Each of these principal's were excellent managers, and in fact they each spent considerable time and energy looking after management tasks however, the sweat and tears this required were generally hidden from the eye of the casual observer. Each principal was repeatedly observed doing two or three things at the same time. Be it signing purchase orders while talking on the phone, or scribbling notes for their secretary while supervising an activity. In each case it would appear to an observer that the management tasks were of little consequence, could be easily interrupted, and weren't absorbing a great deal of time or energy.

What was important was that these staffs viewed their schools as well managed thereby freeing the faculty for concentration on other more important professional matters. These principals were able to provide efficient management without appearing to pay a cost in terms of their zero sum attention.

These principal's were effective in taking care of the tough personnel issues. During the course of this study each leader had occasion to remove at least one staff member who wasn't pulling their weight or who was standing against the group. However, in each case it was handled in a manner that was at the same time, efficient, respectful of the employee, and minimally disruptive to the culture and climate of the workplace.

Each principal was a disseminator of research. All three found different ways to place reprints and summaries of pertinent professional articles in the hands of the right people. Their casual and matter of fact methods of dissemination (Laura had a newsletter. Nora used mailboxes and Clyde placed them along personally) were viewed by teachers as a service provided by the principal and weren't seen as a form of advocacy. Those perceptions serve as a testament to their relaxed style of leadership,

even if obscures the actual intent of the leaders. All three principal's came to these schools with well developed educational philosophies and the reading material they chose to distribute usually served to inform others of the underpinnings of those philosophies.

These principal's were completely conversant with relevant data on the performance of their schools, faculties, and students. They took in information like "data omnivores," yet they shared data discriminantly. Conversations with these three leaders never felt like a data dump. Rather their thorough knowledge of the relevant performance data enabled them to facilitate meaningful faculty discussion.

All three leaders appeared to have eagle eyes for grants and other funding opportunities which could advance the objectives of their school and faculty. While the work was not easy in any of these three schools, faculty members rarely reported feeling abused by the principal's high expectations. Much of this was attributed to the extra-mural support the principal were seen as providing.

Finally, all three principals, in a variety of ways conveyed a strong sense of caring for the students, staff, and parents who were part of the school community. Public and private acts of caring, ranging from hugging a child in the halls, to supporting a faculty member going through a divorce showed that the leader to be a person with a big heart.

The consequence of this set of pre-conditional behaviors was a school culture which served as a foundation or a springboard for development.

Stage #2 Development/Implementation

The work of these principals at this stage, the time when active engagement in professional discourse was occuring, was in some respects the most surprising. All three clearly were acknowledged as having "expert authority," however their participation was hardly ever authoritative. They behaved as educators who came to their schools with vision, but without an agenda, and they found ways to be partners in the educational process even without having a classrooms of their own.

These three schools were not large, neither could they be characterized as small (they ranged between 300-500 students). Nevertheless it appear to us that each of these principal's was intimately knowledgeable about all the school programs and the progress of each individual student. This fact became clear when these principal's were shadowed. Typically they would make 2-3 visits to each classroom every day. It was rare to see a reaction when they entered a room. Their presence had become routine. Once in a classroom it was customary for the principal to bend over students and engage

them in discussion about their work or to pitch right in and contribute to the instruction. Only through this intimate familiarity with program and students could a principal so comfortably engage in instruction. Frequently, we observed these principals engaging teachers in a discussion regarding a particular student's progress in front of that student and his peers. When this was observed it seemed for purposes of positive reinforcement. Beyond the reward value for the student, what it reinforced for us was that these teachers and principals were partners in the student's education as well as the school program. Those regular and repeated interactions conveyed legitimacy on the principal when he or she became involved in discourse concerning crucial issues of teaching and learning.

The omnipresence of these principals provided them with another opportunity which supported their leadership. They were regularly observed "pitching in" and "supporting teacher's work." Occasionally we would code the same behavior in both categories. For example when Nora elected to supervise the doorway prior to the opening of school, she was not only helping with student control, but, she told us she was helping preserve the sanctity of teacher planning time.

"Pitching in" behavior was more than modeling, it truly built a sense of solidarity with followers. For example, during a homeroom session a student came into the hallway and pulled Clyde into his classroom to explain the school's homework policy which the teacher was reluctant to do. He cheerfully pitched in, while another principal might have asked the teacher to take care of it himself. These principals made it a habit of covering classes so teachers could attend to other matters.

Each saw their major management function as "supporting teacher work" and in most cases this translated to helping in the management of available time and assisting with student problems. For example, Laura recently crafted a schedule which provided each grade level team 2 uninterrupted hours per week for group planning. During one observation we saw Nora re-working the teacher aide schedule because the 4-5 team had a change of heart regarding their preference for a reading time. I asked her if she was upset about all the extra work that resulted from this flippant change of heart? She shrugged her shoulders and simply told me that it was her job to make the schedule work for the teachers. Finally "supporting teaching work" was demonstrated in the ability of these principals to provide staff development opportunities for their staff. When it appeared no money was available they were still able to find a way to send the right staff members to an appropriate workshop or visitation.

However, the most interesting and consistent behavior in the development/implementation stage was the apparent unwillingness of these leaders to

become the voice of educational authority. As mentioned above, these three leaders were viewed by most of their teachers as knowledgeable, perhaps even visionary educators, yet one wouldn't know if from listening to their discourse within the building. When important matters were under discussion we rarely heard one of these principal's directly answer a question on a instructional or pedagogical issue. They were more likely to be "asking a question" of the teacher, or "answering a question with a question." Their willingness to be someone who "does not know it all" was not a sanctioning of ignorance, rather it legitimated a collaborative search for understanding.

It wasn't until almost two years into this study that I noticed a blind spot in our analysis. Although all three principals spoke of the value of our action research program, we had discounted the fact that any credit might be due to our project. Instead we had been attributing most of the good things that were happening in these schools to the principals. We saw our project as inconsequential compared to the work of these leaders. Recently we noticed a pattern. Each of the principals was inclined to grant the credit for school improvement to factors outside of themselves and the Action Research Project became a choice target for attribution. The project itself was merely a supportive mechanism for a strategy that each of these leaders was already in pursuit of. Afterall, the only purpose of our collaborative action research project, was to encourage faculty members to begin engaging in data driven discourse on priority issues of teaching and learning. That aim was consonant with Laura, Clyde, and Nora's primary mode of leadership. Joining Project LEARN was simply a tactic to further their transformative behavior.

Stage #3 Sustaining behaviors

A particular pattern that we observed which helped to sustain initiative was what we coded as "centralized promotion-and individualized implementation." This was a pattern of leadership that clearly promoted what McLaughlin (1979) called "mutual adaptation. " Committees, task forces and teams were frequently used (with principal involvement) to do the early development work on an initiative. For example the writing process at Riverview or the de-tracked literature program at Wilton. However, once the outline of the initiative had taken shape and the core values were articulated, then maximum flexibility was delegated to the teachers to implement the program in whatever manner they determined fit their grade level or particular classroom context. The collaborative action research process in each building

promoted the sharing of adaptations, resulting in what amounted to a continuous public exalting of the "experimental process."

There were three other leadership behaviors we observed these leaders engaging in that had a clear impact on building school culture. While not directly related to either foundation building or the implementation of professional discourse, "grandstanding and cheerleading" were activities used by these principals to acknowledge and celebrate core school values and faculty accomplishments. Both Laura and Clyde engaged in what we might classify as "grandstanding." This meant taking the floor to expound upon a position, to gloat, or maybe even to ridicule a district policy or procedure. By doing so they were reinforcing a core value or direction of the school. Our field notes don't reflect Nora using this strategy and upon reflection we suspect it simply isn't in her repertoire.

"Cheerleading" on the other hand was a regular feature of the leadership of all three principals. It took many forms. Telling a visitor about an individual or team accomplishment in the presence of the person(s) responsible, presenting kudos in written bulletins or mailings, and informally acknowledging good work (frequently accompanied by a pat on the back) in the halls or faculty lounges are just a few examples.

Finally, humor was an essential component of the persona of each of these leaders. None of these principals would be described as a comedian per se and their sense of humor differed significantly from each other. For example, Clyde and Laura regularly used biting humor and sarcasm while Nora's constant laughter served to convey a lighthearted perspective on those ambiguities that invade almost every nook and cranny of school life. Nevertheless, the sound of their laughter was a constant identifiable feature of each school's environment.

One overarching behavior that we observed each of these leaders engaging in was a practise we called, "flexible determinism." Flexible-determinism refers to a mode of goal focused leadership. It differs from "situational leadership" in one significant way. Situational Leadership generally presumes that the leader is commited to getting the follower to accept a particular expectation, and the leader is willing to tailor his/her methods to in consideration of context and individual differences. Such an approach views the leader as a manipulator. The leader is employing stimulus response techniques in getting the followers to pursue the leader's goal.

Flexible determinism, on the other hand, presumes that the leader is in possession of a vision and the leader may even have a significant emotional and ideological commitment to that vision. Therefore, the leader would clearly like to have

the vision realized. However, with a "flexible/determined" leader the primary goal is not the realization of the vision per se, rather it is the development of the school. Therefore, when the road to the vision seems to run counter to the predisposition of the followers then the leader will become flexible in goals, outcomes and methods. We observed several examples of "flexible/determined" behavior with these leaders.

Nora's was not commited to the implementation of creating multi-age schooling, although she saw much merit in that approach. Rather her goal was to develop a school with the faculty working together to serve the interests of children and families. Had the Bedrock faculty been unwilling to pursue that end through the multi-aged structure, Nora declared she would not have fought them. A similar, although less significant, example was observed when one of Nora's teaching teams requested to change the format for "curriculum night" the day before the event. While the deviation they proposed ran counter to the pre-announced plan for the evening (they were proposing that Nora address the parents in a large group, rather that have the teachers orient the parents in the classrooms), Nora was clearly willing to accommodate the request. In this case, her "determination" was in the pursuit of child and parent service, while she had great "flexibility" when it came to the logistics of delivery.

Another illustration was observed with Clyde. Prior to coming to Wilton he had lead two schools in the de-tracking process. Yet he seemed sincere when he confided to us that he would never have pursued that route "if he didn't have the votes." "Flexible determinists" apparently intuitively understand the difference between battles, skirmishes and wars. They are determined to prevail with school and teacher development, yet they are maximally flexible about the means to do so.

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this paper was to identify and illuminate those transcendent qualities of the transformational leader that are deeper than style and might cut across school settings. While we can't generalize from 3 case studies, some patterns and non-patterns did emerge.

Clyde presented a classically masculine style, Nora a classical feminine style and Laura reflected a contemporary blend or an androgynous style. Nora and Laura worked in elementary schools organized with self-contained classrooms and Clyde lead a departmentalized compartmentalized middle school. All three schools served largely middle class families and each also served a number of handicapped learners. Riverview was one of 29 schools in somewhat large and bureaucratic school district, while Wilton and Bedrock were 2 of just 8 schools in a relatively small district.

All three principals were experienced, having served as principals in other buildings and were professionally self-confident . Each possessed a defined educational philosophy that was both child centered and teacher focused. They saw schooling as for the kids and they saw the teachers as the key ingredient making it happen. Each one clearly had their focus on the building level and showed more than occasional frustration with district level decisions.

In sum, the personality traits of these principal's were different. While in terms of the classical distinctions in leadership style they all appeared to have found a harmonious balance between relationship and task orientation. What however, seemed to make working with these leaders transformational for their followers was the manner in which they orchestrated the organizational culture and the resultant professional discourse in their buildings.

In that regard the similarities far outweighed the differences. Each leader emphasized questioning over lecturing. By acknowledging "that they didn't know it all" but expressing a confidence that it could be known, they stimulated what Susan Rosenholtz (1990) called "teacher certainty." They utilized modelling as an effective instructional tool and behaved in a manner that created partnerships with teachers in pursuit of the teaching and learning process.

Most importantly they rewarded professionalism with cheerleading and saw to it that detrimental influences and people were quietly, effectively and carefully removed from the school. As a consequence they were appreciated, if not credited for school improvements. The Bedrock and Riverview teachers were inclined to give their leader more credit for orchestrating their school culture, but even the cocky Wilton staff admitted that Clyde effectively fostered their collegial work.

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND FURTHER RESEARCH

The 18 categories of behavior identified in this study call for further scrutiny. It will be helpful to see if they are the same behaviors used by other transformational school leaders and to see the nuances of behavior which contribute to their potency.

From our examination of these three principals several issues emerge for consideration by policy leaders wishing to have an impact on the effectiveness of the next generation of school leaders.

First, schools need to be of manageable size, if they are to be well lead. All three of these administrators had intimate knowledge of the teachers in their buildings, the programs being offered, and the individual students attending their schools, allowing them to fully participate in both the program development and instructional processes.

By doing so they were able to become true partners with their teachers in the important work of teaching/learning. These three principals sustained those partnerships with staffs and student bodies larger than many people could handle. However, even these talented individuals could not maintain this set of leadership behaviors in substantially larger schools. When schools get too large these potent tech niques which foster the creation of a transformative culture would be lost.

Second, while these Principal's enjoyed pretty good reputations when they were rookies, it may be no surprise that they are all now veterans. This leaves us to speculate that the confidence necessary to become a leader rather than a director may take both time and a supervisor who is also a "flexible-dterminist. How we can provide the time and latitude necessary for beginning principals to develop is a matter worth pondering.

Third, the mentorship may be the most valuable and least utilized tool for the preparation and development of transformational leaders. Teaching the nuances of leading, specifically "easily taking care of business", and "supporting the teaching process" are not best done in the educational administration classroom. However, they may be learned from prolonged contact with master professionals. Clyde and Nora have served as mentors to numerous teachers they've worked with. At least 10 successful current principals in the metropolitan area can trace their tutelage to these two leaders. Laura, although newer to the field, has already been sought out as a mentor by aspiring educators in her district. Finding ways to legitimate and facilitate this mode of on-site learning is clearly in the interest of the professorate and the field.

Finally, we need do more to educate aspiring administrators to the powerful influence played by organizational culture. It now appears clear that culture may be the medium through which leaders have a transformative effect on followers. Future leaders need to understand both how to read organizational culture and how to lead in a manner that has a positive influence upon cultural development.

Warren Bennis (1990) observed that, "Empowerment is the collective effect of leadership. " He went on to assert that the type of empowerment that flows from effective leaders can be seen in four themes: followers would feel significant, learning and competence would be valued, followers would feel they were part of a community, and the work that followers engage in would prove exciting. Those themes were clearly evident in the work environment at Riverview, Bedrock, and Wilton. The task before us is to find ways to make those themes and the leadership that produces it, far more commonplace in our public schools.

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Figure 1

LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR	CLYDE	LAURA	NORA
Stage #1			
Pre-conditional			
1) Buffering	x	x	x
2) Easily Taking Care of Business	x	x	x
3) Analyzing Data	x	x	x
4) Disseminating Information	x	x	x
5) Modeling	x	x	x
6) Providing Growth Opportunities	x	x	x
7) Opportunism (Resources)	x	x	x
8) Caring	x	x	x
Stage #2			
Development/Implementation			
9) Not Knowing It All	x	x	x
10) Flexible Determinism	x	x	x
11) Supporting Teacher's Work	x	x	x
12) Pitching In	x	x	x
13) Visual Presence	x	x	x
14) Asking Questions	x	x	x
15) Answering With Questions	x	x	x
Stage #3			
Sustaining Behavior			
16) Grandstanding	x	x	
17) Humor	x	x	x
18) Cheerleading	x	x	x