THE MAN IN THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE: REVISITING HARRY WOLCOTT'S RESEARCH DURING AN ERA OF INCREASED COMPLEXITY AND HIGH STAKES ACCOUNTABILITY

By

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To three men who taught me many lessons about life,
Dad, Poppy, and my dear friend, Jerry

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The purpose of this study was to revisit Harry Wolcott's classic qualitative case,

The Man in the Principal's Office, and explore how a principal conceptualizes and enacts

his role in an era of high stakes accountability. Specifically, case study and ethnographic

methods were combined with a phenomenological lens to inquire into the lived

experience of one elementary school principal, Tom Smith. Data collection consisted of

phenomenological and dialogical interviews and participant observation. During analysis,

data were coded and categorized thematically using a four-step phenomenological

process. This process consisted of epoche, phenomenological reduction, imaginative

variation, and a synthesis of meanings and essences. In total, blending the researcher's

and participant's perceptions strengthen the trustworthiness and credibility of this study,

and allowed a composite picture of the experience to come into focus.

As a result, to report the findings the researcher used a three-story framework of (1) Who I am, (2) What I do, and (3) Where we are going to identify the underlying meaning driving Tom's leadership. The *Who I Am* story identifies how the principal's core leadership beliefs and attitudes were shaped by his life experiences. Results indicate that much of Tom's leadership beliefs emerged from his own lived experience of building relationships with colleagues. In particular, his core beliefs center on his metaphor of "lubricating the human machinery" to improve the lives of teachers and students.

The *What He Does* story outlines what the school administrator does as he leads his school in an era of high stakes accountability. This story revealed how the school leader enacted the metaphor of "lubricating the human machinery" in his practice by caring for and personally investing in his faculty in three overlapping ways: (1) buffering his staff from anxiety associated with teaching in an era of high stakes accountability; (2) nurturing his staff; and (3) promoting teacher professional growth.

Lastly, in the *Where Are We Going* story I use model for leading in a culture of change as a theoretical framework and discuss how Tom's actions help build capacity and subsequently foster a shared vision within his school community.

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Over three decades ago, Harry F. Wolcott (1973) published a seminal ethnographic

account of the work of the principal entitled *The Man in the Principal's Office*. Within

this text, Wolcott describes and analyzes the work life of an elementary principal during

an era of relative autonomy, limited accountability, and local control of schools. As

indicated in the following excerpt, Wolcott conducted this work to help others understand

what principals do, and provide insight into the demands to which they respond:

> The purpose of the study is to describe and analyze the elementary school
> principalship from a cultural perspective. The study focuses not only on a
> particular group of people—elementary school principals—but on the behavior of
> one specific elementary school principal during a particular period of time. Of
> necessity, however, attention is also given to those who customarily interact with a
> principal, such as the teachers, other staff members, pupils, and parents who
> collectively comprise 'his' school; his fellow administrators; his non-school
> acquaintances; and his family and friends. (p. xi)

The strength of this study was Wolcott's ability to capture the daily work of the principal,

and provide a rich ethnographic description, analysis, and interpretation of the principal's

work. Given that the work of an elementary principal has changed dramatically in the last

30 years, revisiting Wolcott's landmark ethnography to study a principal during an era of

increased accountability and school reform seems potentially fruitful. Thus, this research

returns to the methodology used by Wolcott and investigates how a principal leads a

school in an era of high stakes accountability.

More specifically, the purpose of this study is to understand the way a principal

conceptualizes, negotiates and enacts his role as leader within a school during an era of

increased accountability. Additionally, this research closely examines critical events that occur as the principal crosses borders outside the school and navigates the treacherous political waters associated with high stakes reform.

Historically, the principal's role has been shaped by many social and cultural forces. The principalship has evolved dramatically and become far more complex than it was originally conceived (Matthews & Crow, 2003). The principal's role was initially created from the notion of the "principal teacher" who not only taught, but also assumed the role of the "controlling head of the school" (Pierce, 1935, p.11). Two interconnected areas, management and supervision, helped distinguish the role of the principal as a separate and distinct role from the original role of "head teacher" (Matthews & Crow, 2003; McGurdy, 1983). This change began the evolution of the principalship as a full time administrator with varied responsibilities and duties.

In the 1920's the National Education Association created the Department of Elementary School Principals and the Department of Secondary School Principals. This signaled the official recognition of the principal's position, opened the door for many new roles and responsibilities for school leaders (Beck & Murphy, 1993), and helped to influence and establish the principal role as a profession (Matthews & Crow, 2003). During this time, principal's roles and responsibilities shifted away from the classroom and instructional supervision and toward professional management of the school (McGurdy, 1983). Thus, the predominant role enacted by American principals from the 1920's to the 1960's was that of an administrator focused on the many managerial tasks essential to leading a school (Beck & Murphy, 1993; Goldring & Greenfield, 2002).

During the middle part of the century these management roles and responsibilities began to shift radically. The *Brown vs. the Board of Education* decision, Sputnik, the rapid increase in educational and administrative research, the Civil Rights movement, and the passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), dramatically increased the complexity of educational leadership (Beck & Murphy, 1993; Matthews & Crow, 2003). For example, during the 1960's and 1970's, new roles of program and curricular manager emerged as principals became responsible for implementing new federally sponsored programming including bilingual education, special education, and compensatory education (Beck & Murphy, 1993; Hallinger, 1992).

During the early 1980's, the principal's role further evolved to focus on instructional leadership. Instructional leadership highlights the central role of the principal in coordinating staff development, as well as curriculum development when leading a school toward improved educational achievement (DeBevoise, 1984; Dwyer, 1984; McGurty, 1983). However, research indicated that competing managerial expectations required principals to continue to assume a variety of traditional roles that proved time consuming, thus limiting the implementation of the new role of instructional leader (Beck & Murphy, 1993; Hallinger, 1992). Given the evolving nature of the principal's role during the century, Beck and Murphy (1993) argue that the principalship is "influenced not only by contemporary forces within and, especially, outside education, but also by earlier conceptions of the role itself" (p. 206).

Everyday, school leaders are reshaping their roles because of the internal and external pressures associated with the job. Crow, Hausman, and Paredes-Scribner (2003) note that "this role reshaping takes place as part of the tension between continuity and

change" (p. 207). Some scholars suggest that even though principals are considered agents of change, many principals tend to monitor the continuity of both schools and society (Beck & Murphy, 1993; Wolcott, 1973). For example, some principals may prefer the traditional managerial roles that seek to perpetuate or maintain the status quo because balancing the mandates of public accountability with the traditional managerial roles, historically associated with the job, is overwhelming (Beck & Murphy, 1993; Crow, Hausman, & Paredes-Scribner, 2003). These school leaders "turn their attention to that which can be controlled, even if it takes them into the realm of the trivial or unimportant" (Beck & Murphy, 1993, p. 199) because many of these tasks have clear cut actions and observable outcomes.

The current wave of reform and high stakes accountability can be traced back to the mid 1980's. For example, the release of *A Nation at Risk* (1983) and the *Carnegie Report on Education* (1986) suggested that schools needed fundamental changes in the organization, professional roles, and goals of American education. By the late 1980s, these reform efforts increased the level of federal involvement in education and led to the development of standards and competencies for both teachers and students in many states.

Currently, the reform agenda across the country focuses almost entirely on the federal government's demand to improve student performance. The signing of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) (U.S. Department of Education, 2001) by President Bush heads the national push for accountability and standards-based reform. As a result, NCLB has increased the pressure on school leadership to deliver enhanced academic performance.

Increased documentation of student learning, the assessment and grading of schools, and the push for improving teacher quality have upped the ante for today's school leaders.

Simultaneously, traditional management tasks, such as paperwork and teacher supervision and evaluation, have become increasingly demanding. These tasks have created time management issues and role-related tensions as principals lead school improvement efforts (Beck & Murphy, 1993; Bredeson, 1995). These concurrent changes in leadership responsibilities have increased not only the demands but also the pressures placed on principals and bring an unprecedented level of public scrutiny to their job performance.

As the principal's leadership responsibilities have shifted substantially over the past decades and become increasingly complex, the principal's role becomes central to determining the quality of the education that students receive, and there is mounting evidence that the best hope for school improvement lies in the abilities and skills of the person in the principal's office to enact these complex tasks (Barth, 1990; Blase & Blase, 1998; Burello, Lashley, & Beatty, 2001; Elmore & Burney, 1999; Fullan, 2001a; Goodlad, 1984; Hargreaves & Fink, 2003; Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999; Lipham, 1981; Neumann & Simmons, 2000; Wolf, Borko, Elliot & McIver, 2000). In fact, research suggests that a principal's beliefs, actions, and commitment influence the degree to which school reform is conceptualized and ultimately, implemented (Blase & Kirby, 1992; Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Keyes, Hanley-Maxwell, & Capper, 1999).

However, many gaps in the research literature still exist (Crow, Hausman, & Paredes-Scribner, 2002; Hallinger and Heck, 1996; Lambert et al., 1995; Leithwood &

Riehl, 2003). Lambert et al. (1995) concur that the "failure to understand the nature and role of leadership may well be the missing link in our change efforts today" (p. 56) and that "many questions call out for inquiry and for vigorous conversation among practitioners, policy makers, and scholars who are part of, and who support, the educational leadership profession" (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003, p. 7).

Specifically, Beck and Murphy (1993) suggest research on principal leadership should "provide a more robust understanding of the tasks and roles of the principal" (p. 206). They assert that empirical results including individual case studies can inform the knowledge base about the ongoing "evolution" of the principal's role. This includes identifying how school leaders problem solve the many inherent dilemmas they face in the current era of high stakes testing. Furthermore, Hallinger and Heck (1996) reiterate the need to conduct further research that "places the principal in the context of the school and its environment" (p. 34). These investigations should focus on uncovering personal characteristics of principals such as teaching experience, values, and beliefs that influence how principals enact their role.

Thus, given the importance of the principal's role in school improvement and the current context of increased accountability, it is surprising that few research studies have examined effective principals, and even fewer studies have sought empirical evidence about the role of the principal from the principal's perspective (Day, 2000). For example, Crow, Hausman, and Paredes-Scribner (2002) indicate that the changing role of the principal is not a passive process and suggest that future research on the principalship should include the principal's own perspective.

> The changing nature of the work and the larger society in which schools exist is
> affecting how principals enact their role and how they are being pressured to

change that role. But any discussion of how the principal's role is being, or should be reshaped, also must acknowledge that principal's themselves in their daily routines, conversations, and actions shape and reshape their role. Reshaping the principal's role involves principals themselves in the process. (p. 190)

In sum, there is a need to conduct research specifically on principals who lead school change or improvement efforts in the current era of increased complexity and high stakes accountability.

To address this void in the literature, I revisit Wolcott's work to investigate how a principal's beliefs, actions, and commitment help him navigate the current educational context in an era wrought with issues of accountability, high stakes testing, and mandated school reforms. Thus, my research questions are: *(1) how does a principal lead in an era of high stakes accountability, (2) how does a principal perceive himself as a leader and enact that role to provide leadership in an era of high stakes accountability, and more specifically, (3) how does a principal balance the mandates of public accountability and the daily demands of leading a school?*

CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The principal emerges as a key player in the leadership of any school. In my analysis of the professional literature related to the principal's role in educational change, two conceptual threads appear. These threads include 1) the evolution of the principal's role, and 2) the principal's role in the school change process. Each of these threads contributes to our understanding of the school leader's role in contemporary schools. However, these threads cannot be easily separated since the principal's role historically has been shaped by social, cultural, and political forces of the time (Beck & Murphy, 1993). This review highlights the literature that frames my understanding of principal leadership in educational change.

Part One: Evolving Role of the Principal

An historical review of the principalship illustrates how the roles and responsibilities of the principal's job have changed over time, becoming far more complex than it was originally envisioned (Hallinger, 1992; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Matthews & Crow, 2003). Equally important, tracing the development of school leadership draws attention to the ways that larger social, cultural, economic, and political forces have historically influenced and shaped the principal's roles and responsibilities within the school. Thus, in this section, I summarize the literature related to the origins of the principalship (Messinger, 1939; Pierce, 1935), and examine the research that captures the changes in the responsibilities of school administrators over the past hundred

years (Beck & Murphy, 1993; Cooper, 1979; Goldring & Greenfield, 2002; Hallinger, 1992; Leithwood and Riehl, 2003; Tyack & Hansot, 1982).

Scholars highlight how the principalship has evolved over time. The principal's role originated from within the teaching ranks as head teachers assumed the position of "the controlling head of the school" (Pierce, 1935, p.11), in addition to their teaching responsibilities. Pierce (1935) reported that the American principalship was patterned after the role administrators played in the Western European private schools of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. For example, some of the earliest writing on school administration can be traced to Strasburg, Germany, in the fifteenth century and the writings of Johann Strumm (Matthews & Crow, 2003). Strumm's early writings highlight the role school leaders play in dealing with the school organization, the social justice of bringing education to the poor, the debate over individualized or whole group instruction, the question of teachers' salaries, and the challenges associated with student discipline (Matthews & Crow, 2003). Similarly, the English schools of the eighteenth century describe the position of headmaster (Matthews & Crow, 2003). Headmasters focus primarily on discipline and supervision of boarding students. Thus, the original American principalship was designed to be similar in nature to the European school headmaster.

During the second half of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century, the principal's role expanded to include the general organization and management of schools, minor administrative tasks, discipline, some teaching, school maintenance, and personnel supervision (Beck & Murphy, 1993; Matthews & Crow, 2003; Pierce, 1935). Beginning in the early twentieth century, Beck and Murphy (1993)

examined the evolution of the principal's role using metaphor to illustrate the shifting conceptions of the principalship. These authors also offered insight into how the social, cultural, and political events of the period influenced the role. In the roaring 1920s, principals assumed the role of *values broker*. Two separate forces helped to shape this metaphor, "the common sense-tempered, pseudo-religious beliefs" (Beck & Murphy, 1993, p. 13) about the purpose of education, and the emerging notion of scientific management. Though much of the writing during this period was technical in nature and focused on the "how to" of school leadership, the principal's role was elevated as communities envisioned principals as spiritual and civic leaders (Beck & Murphy, 1993).

Movement away from the metaphor of values broker occurred during the 1930's as the *principal as scientific manager* became a prevalent metaphor. This shift in metaphors recognized a movement away from the spiritual emphasis and movement toward the idea of the principal being an executive focused on efficiency. The scientific management perspective suggested that schools, like commercial businesses, could be run efficiently and become business-like (Matthews, & Crow, 2003). Thus, the school leader's role was equated with the manager's role in industry and emphasized the principal as organizer, executive, and supervisor of a school (Beck & Murphy, 1993; Pierce, 1935).

During the 1920s and 1930s, the National Education Association (NEA) influenced the professionalism of the principal's role by establishing the Department of Elementary School Principals and the Department of Secondary School Principals (Matthews & Crow, 2003). This official recognition of the principal's role helped not only to elevate the status of the school leader, but also to shift the principal's roles and responsibilities towards the scientific management leadership style. This ultimately led to the

establishment of standards for school administrators (Beck & Murphy, 1993; Matthews & Crow, 2003), and to more empirical research in the area of educational leadership (Beck & Murphy, 1993; Matthews & Crow, 2003; Pierce, 1935). In sum, the duties of school leaders during these two decades became practical in nature and more administrative in scope, including effectively organizing the school and supervising teachers, while also attending to the managerial tasks of the school such as ordering supplies and outlining school procedures.

During the 1940s, the roles and responsibilities of principals evolved further. School leaders were expected to become *democratic leaders* by linking schools with the prevalent values and beliefs of the day, including patriotism and social justice (Beck & Murphy, 1993). This metaphor "refers both to the style of management that is considered desirable and to the American democratic ideals that provide an ethical code to guide educators" (Beck & Murphy, 1993, p. 32). This perspective on the principalship emerged from the overarching cultural values that pervaded society at the time. During the 1940s, the principal's role called for shared responsibilities as principals became group facilitators, public relations managers, curriculum developers, and personnel supervisors while simultaneously managing their schools.

During the 1950s, the school principal's primary role was that of a *theory-guided* administrator (Beck & Murphy, 1993). The development of educational theories coupled with the political events of the decade, including the Brown vs. Board of Education decision, had a profound influence on the principal's role during this decade. The literature suggests principals held two distinct but divergent roles within schools (Beck & Murphy, 1993; Crow, Hausman, & Paredes-Scribner, 2002; Hallinger, 1992; Matthews

&Crow, 2003).   First, principals were expected to combine skills related to teaching and

managing schools by drawing on new research which grew exponentially during this time

(Beck & Murphy, 1993; Matthews & Crow, 2003). Therefore, the school leader became

the person responsible for the application of the administrative principles that were

emphasized in educational and organizational research. On the other hand, the literature

of this time period also focused on how school administrators should apply the new

theories in very specific ways. Thus, the principal often was seen as the authority

responsible for planning and implementing activities including the most trivial school

management tasks such as the management of filmstrips, attendance procedures, and the

minutiae of ordering pencils and toilet tissue (Beck & Murphy, 1993; Matthews & Crow,

2003).

    During the 1960s, the literature on educational leadership viewed school principals

as *bureaucratic executives* who sought to "maintain stability and a sense of normalcy"

(Beck & Murphy, 1993, p. 88) during the turbulent social and political times that

characterized this era of American history. Noticeably absent from the discussion was

any mention of the prevalent social unrest of the times, and how these conditions affected

the principal's roles and responsibilities. Instead, principals of the sixties were

encouraged to exercise, rather than share their authority and power, by working through

established educational hierarchies (Beck & Murphy, 1993). The overall scope of the job

became exceedingly impersonal, technical, and mechanistic. What mattered was concrete

ways to improve the quality of education. Additionally, principals shouldered increased

political pressures as they became accountable for the educational outcomes of their

schools (Beck & Murphy, 1993; Crow, Hausman, & Paredes-Scribner, 2002; Goldring & Greenfield, 2002; Hallinger, 1992; Matthews & Crow, 2003).

During the 1970's, new roles of *curricular manager* and *humanistic facilitator* emerged as principals became responsible for implementing new federally sponsored programs including bilingual education, special education, and compensatory education (Beck & Murphy, 1993; Hallinger, 1992). In addition, curricular reform focused on math and science programmatic instruction had an impact on the principal's role. During this time, specific principal roles included monitoring compliance of the new federal programs, assisting with staff development, and providing direct classroom support to teachers (Beck & Murphy, 1993; Hallinger, 1992). At the same time, principals were expected to relate well to people, facilitate positive interactions, and assume a leadership role in the surrounding community. Thus, an effective school administrator was seen as "a skillful juggler" (Matthews & Crow, 2003, p. 146) of numerous roles and responsibilities. Although these roles shifted and dramatically changed the work of the principal, it is noteworthy that the principalship continued to have a technical or mechanistic orientation of leadership during this era, as school leaders were evaluated on a list of "administrative competencies based on objective indictors of technical skill" (Beck & Murphy, 1993, p. 205).

In sum, the metaphors enacted by American principals from the 1920s to the 1970s often focused on the managerial tasks essential to leading a school (Beck & Murphy, 1993; Goldring & Greenfield, 200; Hallinger, 1992; Pierce, 1935). Specific duties of school leaders during this time frame included managing the school budget, organizing and overseeing the daily school schedule, being the school disciplinarian, managing

facilities, supervising custodial and food services, developing community relations, and completing necessary paperwork while at the same time delegating, most if not all, educational responsibilities to teachers.

It is noteworthy that during the mid part of the century, the principal's managerial roles and responsibilities began to shift, as numerous political events either directly or indirectly influenced the educational terrain. These events included the Brown vs. the Board of Education decision, Sputnik's influence on the rapid increase in scientific research, the Civil Rights movement, the Vietnam War, and the passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). As discussed each of these events dramatically increased the complexity of educational leadership (Beck & Murphy, 1993; Crow, Hausman, & Paredes-Scribner, 2002; Goldring & Greenfield, 2002; Matthews & Crow, 2003).

During the early 1980's, the principal's role expanded further to include a focus on the teaching and learning process, and the *principal as instructional leader* (Beck & Murphy, 1993; Blase & Blase, 1998; Goldring & Greenfield, 2002; Hallinger, 1992; Matthews & Crow, 2003). Instructional leadership was defined as "those actions that a principal takes or delegates to others, to promote growth in student learning" (De Bevoise, 1984, p. 15). For instance, evidence suggests that the role and responsibilities of school leaders included coordinating professional development and assisting in the development of effective curriculum and instruction with the goal of improved educational achievement (Dwyer, 1984; McGurty, 1983). Principals were expected to set high expectations for teachers and students, supervise classroom instruction, coordinate the school's curriculum, and ultimately monitor student progress (Blase & Blase, 1998;

Bredeson, 1995; Matthews & Crow, 2003). This metaphorical shift to principal as

instructional leader was accompanied by the release of *A Nation at Risk* (1983) and the

Carnegie Report on Education (1986). These reports suggested that fundamental

changes were needed in the organization of schools, professional roles, and goals of

American education. The increased federal involvement in education led to the

development of standards and competencies for administrators, teachers, and students in

many states during the late 1980s and 1990s (Matthews, & Crow, 2003).

Although the roles of the school leader continued to expand, research indicates that

competing managerial responsibilities required principals to continue to assume a variety

of traditional roles that limited the implementation of instructional leadership. Principals

began to experience role conflict as they tried to meet the competing bureaucratic

demands, and simultaneously assist teachers with the complex work of teaching and

learning inherent in the new role of instructional leader (Beck & Murphy, 1993; Crow,

Hausman, & Paredes-Scribner, 2003; Hallinger, 1992). Blumberg and Greenfield (1980)

summarize this phenomenon:

> While many principals might dream of being effective instructional leaders by
> enhancing the activities of teaching and learning in their schools, in reality their
> experience is shaped by the press of administrative and managerial functions that
> mitigate against that dream becoming reality. (p. 123)

Similarly, Wolcott's ethnography (1973) concluded that although principals were often

considered agents of change, their work tended to focus on monitoring the continuity of

both institutions and society.

These examples highlight how the principal's work has historically been organized

around the concept of loose coupling (Elmore & Burney, 1999; Weick, 1976). A loosely

coupled system has components that function together but are significantly independent

from each other. Loose coupling highlights the fact that school administrators' main

responsibilities focus on effectively managing schools while teachers handle the

instructional decisions and duties. In fact, administrators have enacted loose coupling by

conceptualizing their role as building public confidence by managing "the structures and

processes that 'buffer' or protect the technical core of teaching" (Elmore & Burney,

1999, p.8). As a result, the status quo is perpetuated and the buffer creates a "logic of

confidence" between schools and the public. The logic of confidence is "all in the name

of creating and maintaining public confidence in the institutions of public education" (p.

8). This explains why, at times, principal leadership may not enact the desired reform that

could improve actual teaching and learning for teachers and students. In today's era of

high stakes accountability, standards based reform creates dilemmas for school leaders as

it conflicts with the traditional loosely coupled roles principals have played. Therefore, to

respond to the pressures associated with high stakes accountability principals must more

tightly couple their leadership and shift their practice toward the core of instruction-

teaching and learning.

During the 1990s and continuing into the new millennium, the public outcry to

reform education and improve student achievement has reached a new level. The passage

of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) (2001) solidified and extended the national mandate

for accountability and standards-based reform. As a result, NCLB has increased the

pressure on schools and the principals who lead them to deliver enhanced academic

performance. Increased documentation of student learning, the assessment and grading of

schools, and the mandate to improve teacher quality has upped the ante for today's school

leaders.   Simultaneously, traditional management tasks, including paperwork, teacher

supervision, and evaluation, have become more demanding and have created time management tensions associated with leading school improvement (Beck & Murphy, 1993; Bredeson, 1995; Crow, Hausman, & Paredes-Scribner, 2002; Goldring & Greenfield , 2002; Matthews, & Crow, 2003). These concurrent changes in leadership responsibilities have increased the demands and pressures placed on principals and have levied "an unprecedented level of public scrutiny" (Matthews & Crow, 2003, p. 33) on principals' job performance.

Simultaneous to these increased demands, reform scholars (e.g. Elmore, 1990) have increasingly advocated for decentralizing the education system. The use of school or site based management introduced new theories of leadership and challenged the traditional roles principals have played. These changes introduced new and complex leadership responsibilities that emphasized leadership as an "organization-wide phenomenon" (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999) moving beyond the typical managerial roles that had occurred in the past. These new leadership roles require "distributing leadership" (Elmore & Burney, 1999, Goldring & Greenfield, 2002; Hargreaves & Fink, 2003; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003, Neumann & Simmons, 2000), which emphasizes the complexity of instructional leadership by attending to collegiality, teacher reflection, and school based professional development that places a premium on developing knowledge from within the school (Blase & Blase, 1998; Newmann & Wehlage, 1995; Wenger, 1998). Thus, distributed leadership focuses on developing relationships with stakeholders, building teaching and learning capacity, and facilitating the resolution of problems and dilemmas within schools (Hallinger, 1992; Spillane, 2006). As a result,

current school leaders assume yet another critical responsibility as the "leader of learners" (Barth, 1990).

This review of the history of the principalship provides insight into the evolution of the principal's role. Over the last century, the increasing demands for educational reform initiated by social, political and cultural pressures, have shifted and increased the complexity of the principal's role. Today, principals lead within an era of high stakes accountability characterized by unprecedented responsibilities, challenges, and managerial tasks. These responsibilities include simultaneously managing schools, creating organizational structures that support distributed and shared leadership, understanding research, responding to accountability mandates, providing instructional leadership, and becoming the leader of learners. Today's principals are expected to use data to drive decision-making and to demonstrate bottom-line student learning results. Given this environment, school improvement becomes highly related to the quality of school leadership and the ability for the school leader to navigate the complexity inherent in his or her job. Thus, an understanding of the conceptual underpinnings of the educational change literature and, more importantly, the role a principal plays as they respond to the complexity brought to bear by external pressures and the demand for school reform is essential.

Part Two: The Principal's Role in the School Change Process

Since leadership within the current context of high stakes accountability requires substantive changes in the way schools work, the principal's role remains pivotal (Fullan, 2001a; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Wolf, Borko, Elliot, & McIver, 2000). Given the the myriad of pressures associated with increased public scrutiny, principal leadership becomes situated between the internal work of teachers and the external ideas that inform

the current era (Fullan, 2001a; Muncey & McQuillan, 1996). This results in ongoing

conflicts and dilemmas as school leaders try to assimilate these often-divergent ideas into

workable solutions for their schools. According to Fullan (2001a), "how the principal

approaches or avoids these issues determines to a large extent whether these relationships

constitute a Bermuda triangle of innovations" (p. 137). Thus, leading in this era

"demands a more sophisticated set of skills and understanding than ever before"

(Lambert, 1998, p. 24). This challenging work requires that principals reconceptualize

their roles as they seek solutions to complex dilemmas associated with leading a school in

an era of high stakes accountability (Cuban, 2001). Thus, it is important to understand the

conceptual underpinnings of change and more importantly what principals do as they

facilitate the change process.

Conceptual Underpinnings of Change

Educational change is a complex endeavor because the challenging process is

"uncontrollably complex, and in many ways 'unknowable'"(Stacey, 1992, as cited in

Fullan, 1993, p. 19). The solution to transforming schools "looms as an overwhelming

mystery" (Bolman & Deal, 2002, p. 3), since all change includes the "search for

understanding, knowing there is no ultimate answer" (Senge, 1990, p. 282). This

"dynamic complexity" (Fullan, 1993) makes practical solutions difficult to envision and

put into practice. In fact, Fullan (1993) provides examples of settings in which resources,

such as time to collaborate and attend professional development are readily available,

internal and external long term administrative commitment is high, and a clear rationale

for change exists, yet the change is not sustained. Thus, even with sufficient resources

and commitment, it is difficult to accomplish fundamental change.

Consequently, principals must realize that leading in the current era of high stakes accountability is a complex and time consuming process that requires skills and experience not traditionally associated with leading schools. These skills include recognizing that the real power of change lies in "seeing interrelationships rather than linear causes-effect chains, and seeing processes of change rather than snapshots"(Senge, 1990, p. 73). Thus, to understand the dynamics of change, principals must appreciate the many contradictions and paradoxes associated with the change process.

More importantly, school reform is complex and difficult to achieve because efforts have historically focused on incremental (Cuban, 2001; Nadler and Tushman, 1995), or first order changes (Evans, 1996; Fullan & Miles, 1992) to the school environment. Currently, the trend to reorganize and reform schools to address the high stakes accountability pressures has led schools to attempt incremental change. Nadler and Tushman (1995) define incremental change as a series of initiatives, each of which "attempts to build on the work that has already been accomplished and improves the functioning of the enterprise in relatively small increments" (p. 22). Similarly, first order change seeks "to improve the efficiency or effectiveness of what we are already doing" (Evans, 1996, p. 5). Thus, incremental or first order change is a normal and ongoing characteristic of any effective school. For example, a first order change could include adding new courses to the master schedule, decreasing class sizes, creating better ways to involve parents in their children's education, or adopting a new series of textbooks. Each of these changes seeks to solve a problem and even though they may introduce new resources, more explicitly include stakeholders, and allow those within the school to do particular tasks better, they do not significantly alter the fundamental characteristics of a

school or the way the teachers enact their roles (Cuban, 2001; Evans, 1996; Fullan & Miles, 1992; Nadler and Tushman, 1995).

However, evidence demonstrates that focusing only on first-order changes has resulted in the failure of many reform initiatives to become institutionalized after implementation (Nadler & Tushman, 1995). Quinn (1996) states, first order change "usually does not disrupt past patterns-it is an extension of the past" (p. 3). Furthermore, strategies used as a part of first-order change often do not address the core of learning or educational practice – the teaching and learning process (Elmore, 1995), and result in a "change without difference" that reinforce "the underlying values, power relationships, and learning experiences embedded within conventional ways of educating children" (Goodman, 1995, p. 3). In short, first-order or incremental change involves "tinkering with the system" (Nadler and Tushman, 1995; Tyack & Cuban, 1995). Tyack and Cuban (1995) use the metaphor of fireflies to describe the multiple waves of first-order changes implemented in response to the current high stakes context. These "fireflies" appear on the educational landscape, shine for a few years, and than quickly burnout just as the next wave of reform begins to appear on the horizon. Although educators tend to invest much time and energy into these first-order changes, little evidence suggests that the changes will reap the kinds of benefits needed to reform schools.

In contrast, second order (Fullan, 2001a), fundamental (Cuban, 2001; Evans, 1996), or deep changes (Quinn, 1996) are characterized as reform efforts that can lead to substantive change. These changes are systemic in nature and concerned with modifying the way "an organization is put-together, altering its assumptions, goals, structures, roles,

and norms" (Evans, 1996). Deep change, asserts Quinn (1996), is much more difficult

and demands a great deal from those who are part of the system:

> Deep change differs from incremental change in that it requires new ways of
> thinking and behaving. It is change that is major in scope, discontinuous with the
> past and generally irreversible. The deep change effort distorts existing patterns of
> action and involves taking risks. (p. 3)

Similarly, Cuban (2001) asserts that second order change aims to transform the

social structure and culture of the system. Furthermore, Fullan and Miles (1992) indicate

that if school change is to be effective it must "focus on the development and

interrelationships of all the main components of the system simultaneously – curriculum,

teaching and teacher development, community, student support systems, and so on" (p.

751). Thus, principals must focus on the "deeper issues of the culture of the system" (p.

751) and this requires a type of principal leadership "that is sensitive to organization

building: developing shared vision, creating productive work cultures, distributing

leadership, and the like" (Leithwood, 1994, p. 501).

For example, the current context of high stakes accountability associated with

NCLB (2001) that currently challenges today's schools demands a serious commitment

to second order changes. Specifically, Peterson, McCarthey, and Elmore (1996)

discussed second order change as they examined the outcomes of a variety of school

reform efforts. They recognized the complexity associated with reform by noting that

changing "teachers practice was primarily a problem of learning, not a problem of

organization" (p. 119). They noted that "teachers who see themselves as learners work

continuously to develop new understandings and improve their practices" (p. 148) and

that "school structures can provide opportunities for the learning of new teaching

practices and new strategies for student learning, but the structure themselves do not

cause learning to occur" (p. 148). Peterson, McCarthey, and Elmore (1996) argue that, "school relations occur among school structure, teaching practice, and student learning in schools where, because of recruitment and socialization, teachers share a common point of view about their purpose and principles of good practice. School structure follows good practice, not vice versa" (p. 149). In this case, principals must help teachers see themselves as learners, develop school structures that support the reform, and cultivate a school culture characterized by shared vision and beliefs. These components underpin second order changes that have the power to improve schools within the current context of high stakes accountability.

Given these demands, second order changes that shift the core of teaching are the hardest to achieve and take years to become embedded in the culture of schools (Cuban (Fullan, 2001a; Peterson, McCarthey, and Elmore, 1996). This "reculturing" (Fullan, 2001a) requires a shift in both beliefs and perceptions related to the core of teaching and learning as well as questioning the widely held school practices that historically have been embedded in the school culture. Fullan (2001) states it is possible to fundamentally change a school or district, but it is time consuming process that takes approximately three years for elementary schools, six years for high schools, and eight years for school districts to institutionalize change. Thus, waiting for the positive effects of school reform to take root is problematic, particularly for school leaders within the current era of high stakes accountability where a sense of urgency to improve outcomes for all students is prevalent.

Supporting Teachers In The Change Process

Given the complex nature of change and the importance of moving beyond first order change, the ability of a principal to understand the change process remains key to

his effectiveness as a leader. Additionally, an emerging body of empirical evidence

suggests that the teachers' ability to succeed in a change effort is greatly enhanced by a

supportive and understanding principal (Gerstner, Semerad, Doyle, & Johnston, 1994;

McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001). For example, leadership for change requires school leaders

to understand the ways people respond to change and to adjust one's leadership style

accordingly. All change includes "loss, anxiety and struggle" (Fullan, 2001a, p. 30), or

put differently, provokes loss, challenges competence, creates confusion, and causes

conflict (Evans, 1996).

Evans (1996) describes a framework that emphasizes five tasks of implementation

that help leaders facilitate change, and help teachers address the countless dilemmas

associated with change. During the first stage, unfreezing, school leaders "make a case

for innovation, to emphasize the seriousness of a problem and the rightness of a solution"

(Evans, 1996, p. 55). The process of "unfreezing is one of the most complex and artful

human endeavors" (Schein, 1987, p. 98, as cited in Evans, 1996). Unfreezing recognizes

the tendency of people and systems to maintain the status quo, and occurs as people

simultaneously lessen one type of anxiety, the fear of trying, by increasing another type

of anxiety, the fear of not trying. Additionally, it is important to recognize that during

change people will feel threatened and will only consider joining the reform effort if they

feel they can retain their identity and integrity during the process. This is necessary to

reduce their personal and collective anxiety surrounding change (Evans, 1996; Fullan,

2001a).

The second task requires "moving from loss to commitment, from a letting go of

the old to a true embrace of the new" (Evans, 1996, p. 58). Recent evidence indicates that

resistance, though inevitable, is a critical part of the change process (Fullan, 2001a,

McLeskey & Waldron, 2000). In order to move past resistance, teachers must cope by

working out new meanings, making sense of the loss so that they can accept their new

roles and responsibilities (Evans, 1996; Fullan, 2001a). This typically requires continuity,

time, and personal contact. Continuity occurs as people connect the new reform effort

with past experiences and recognize that "the future is not disconnected from the past but

related to it" (Evans, 1996, p. 60). Individuals affected by change will also need time to

cope with the loss as well as create their own meaning of the change. Lastly, evidence

indicates that personal contact between the school leader and the teachers facilitates

faculty's progress in moving from loss to commitment. An effective school leader

acknowledges the staffs' emotions as they move forward with the change by offering

assistance, support, and a sympathetic ear. Thus, to move from loss to commitment,

school leaders must straddle the proverbial fence between "pressure and support, change

and continuity." (Evans, 1996, p. 58)

Next, change requires moving from an old competence to new competence that

requires new beliefs, behaviors, and ways of thinking. The need to help teachers acquire

new skills is clear. Professional development that is coherent, personal, and continuous

facilitates this process. Leaders can effectively facilitate change by presenting

professional development activities in a logical sequence that provides ongoing support

that is personally tailored to the needs and current practices of teachers (Evans, 1996;

Fullan, 2001a).

The next stage involves moving from confusion to coherence, which realigns

structures, roles, and functions (Evans, 1996; Fullan, 2001a). During this phase, clarity

regarding responsibility, authority, and decision-making becomes essential. For example, misunderstandings often occur over roles and responsibilities during the implementation of a new reform. This leads to anxiety, distrust, and role confusion among the school community. Thus, it is essential for the school leader to collaboratively clarify roles and responsibilities with the faculty. Additionally, discussing how decisions are made early in the change process will enhance the sustainability of the change effort.

Finally, change requires moving from conflict to consensus in a way that generates broad support for the innovation. This task requires a critical mass of supporters, pressure paired with support, and a positive use of power. To accomplish this task, school leaders must identify "who must be part of the critical mass and to what must they be involved" (Evans, 1996, p. 70), while simultaneously "exert influence to pursue visions and goals, to move an organization toward a larger good and its members toward growth" (Evans, 1996, p. 71). At its core, sustaining educational reform is not the capacity to implement the latest policy, but rather the ability to stay the course while learning, growing and developing both individually and collectively (Fullan, 1993, 2001b). Therefore, the five phases of unfreezing, moving from loss to commitment, old competence to new competence, confusion to coherence, and conflict to consensus, help school leaders and their faculty to understand and facilitate the change process during the current context of high stakes accountability.

Summarizing, the educational leadership literature has grown substantially as the role of the principal has evolved and the pressures associated with leading a school have substantially increased over the past few decades. Indeed, the way we understand, define and organize schools as systems, and conceptualize the role of the principal within these

systems has changed dramatically. Thus, a key question to answer becomes what skills should the school leader possess in order to become an effective change agent? Therefore, in the next section, I examine the literature related to what principals do as they facilitate the change process in their schools.

The Principal's Role in Facilitating School Change

Two decades of research underscore the importance of the principal in creating the conditions of an effective school. (Fullan, 2001a; Gerstner et al., 1994; Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Smith and Andrews, 1989; Wolf, Borko, Elliot & McIver, 2000). For example, Gerstner et al. (1994) assert:

> Without a competent caring individual in the principal's position, the task of school reform is very difficult. Reform can be initiated from outside the school or stimulated from within. But in the end, it is the principal who implements and sustains the changes through the inevitable roller coaster of euphoria and setbacks (p. 133).

More specifically, research indicates there are "persistent patterns that characterize what leaders do or leadership is" (Lambert et al., 1995, p. 30). At the heart of most leadership definitions are two primary factors: providing direction and exercising influence (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). Therefore, understanding how school leaders provide direction and exercise influence as they facilitate the change process in their schools is important.

Recent evidence supports Sarason's (1982) claim that the success of a school reform program is connected to the degree to which school leaders examine and respond to the culture of the school, and provide appropriate levels of support. For instance, in a study examining the Coalition of Essential Schools movement, Muncey and McQuillan (1996) found that successful school principals were not only "central to the school change process; they were often the central person"(p. 270). This research indicates that

changes were sustained to a greater extent across a school community when the principal was an active participant in the school-wide change process. Within the school community, the principal's role became "a balancing act, one that required knowing when to be directive and assertive and when to back off and allow faculty to direct change efforts" in order to "strike a balance between top-down decision making and grassroots change" (pp. 270-271). Effective principals found this balance in promoting change by "encouraging active involvement" (p. 272) of teachers in the change process. This occurred as leaders provided "multiple forums for discussing the many dimensions of change" (p. 272). At times, teacher participation in these open dialogues changed the course of school wide initiatives, and the forums allowed relationships to flourish and trust to develop within the school community. When taken together, the principal's ability to balance multiple roles while actively participating in the school community helped develop the necessary grassroots teacher support needed to engage in and sustain the school reform.

Similarly, Day, Harris, Hadfield, Toley and Beresford (2000) reported the central role the principal plays in reform. Data from a study of twelve schools conducted in the United Kingdom identified five core beliefs of effective school leaders who were recognized as being instrumental in the overall success of the school. Specifically, these leaders tended to be: (1) values led, (2) relationship centered, (3) focused on professional standards and monitoring school performance, (4) inward and outward facing, and (5) able to manage a number of on-going tensions. Day et al. (2000) conclude:

> Within this study, there was ample evidence that people were trusted to work as powerful professionals, within a clear collegial value framework which was common to all. There was a strong emphasis upon teamwork and participation in decision-making (though heads reserved the right to be autocratic). Goals were

clear and agreed, communications were good and everyone had high expectations
of themselves and others. Those collegial cultures were maintained, however,
within contexts of organization and individual accountability set by external policy
demands and internal aspirations. These created ongoing tensions and dilemmas
which had to be managed and mediated as part of the establishment and
maintenance of effective leadership cultures. (p. 162)

These characteristics emerged as leaders demonstrated values of care, equity, and high

expectations for achievement as they led schools during substantive reform.

In sum, the principal's skilled leadership is essential in order for school change

efforts to be successful and sustained. Therefore, this section is not only about what good

principals do to facilitate reform in schools but also addresses how they provide direction

and exercise influence during the process. Therefore, in the following section, I outline

three specific orientations—instructional, community and visionary leadership—that

research suggests principals should use as they facilitate change and lead schools during

the current context of high stakes accountability.

Instructional Leadership

Principals as leaders of effective schools must focus on improving instruction and

student achievement (Bender, Sebring, & Bryk, 2000; Day et al., 2000; Leithwood and

Riehl, 2003; Peterson, McCarthey, and Elmore, 1996). For instance, Elmore & Burney

(2000) articulated that the core of effective school leadership centers on the "management

of instruction rather than the management of structures and processes" (p. 6). In addition,

Leithwood and Riehl (2003), in their review of successful school leadership, indicate

that school "leadership has significant effects on student learning, second only to the

effects of curriculum and teachers' instruction" (p. 2). The authors also found that though

"school leadership is most successful when it is focused on teaching and learning, it is

necessary but not a sufficient condition for school improvement" (p. 7). Therefore,

instructional leaders "focus on strengthening teaching and learning, professional development, data-driven decision making, and accountability" (Laboratory for Student Success, 2002, p. 29).

In a review of the research on instructional leadership, Sheppard (1996, as cited in Blase & Blase, 1998) defined instructional leadership behaviors by examining interactions between leaders and followers. Sheppard's review confirmed a positive relationship exists between teacher commitment, professional involvement, and innovativeness and effective instructional leadership. Results indicate that teacher professional growth was connected to three influential principal behaviors: reframing school goals, maintaining high visibility, and promoting teacher professional development.

Recognizing the importance of the principal's involvement in the cultivation of learning opportunities for faculty within the school, Blase and Blase (1998) studied 800 public school teachers and asked them to describe in detail the characteristics of school leaders that positively or negatively influenced their instruction. In addition, the research inquired into the teachers' personal and professional interactions with school principals. This research identified three fundamental themes central to effective instructional leadership. The three themes, talking with teachers, promoting teachers' professional growth, and fostering teacher reflection, emphasize building a culture of collaboration that is focused on studying and sharing knowledge about teaching and learning. More specifically, principals utilized instructional conferences, targeted staff development, and fostered teacher reflection as they worked together to create change (Blase & Blase, 1998; Lieberman, 1995; Wenger, 1998).

Similarly, Byrk and his associates (1998) suggested that in improved schools in Chicago principals worked together with stakeholders on two interrelated goals – developing and strengthening ties to parents and the community, and working to expand the capacities of teachers by focusing on enhancing instruction through developing a professional learning community. Successful reform minded principals in this study exhibited: (1) an inclusive, facilitative orientation, (2) an institutional focus on student learning, (3) efficient management, and (4) a combination of pressure to improve with support. In sum, these leaders strategically used school improvement goals focused on improving classroom instruction to "attack incoherence" on an ongoing basis (Bender, Sebring, & Bryk, 2000, pp. 441-442).

In response to the pressure of high stakes accountability and the need to improve instructional leadership nationally, the National Association of Elementary School Principals (2001) identified six research-based standards of instructional leadership. These standards state that effective leaders: (1) lead schools in a way that places student and adult learning at the center; (2) set high expectations and standards for academic and social development of all students and the performance of adults; (3) demand content and instruction that ensure student achievement of agreed-upon academic standards; (4) create a culture of continuous learning for adults tied to student learning and other school goals; (5) use multiple sources of data as diagnostic tools to assess, identify, and apply instructional improvement; and (6) actively engage the community to create shared responsibility for student and school success. These standards raised the bar for school leaders and significantly impacted the way many principals have conceived their roles.

More specifically, school leaders must "embrace the inevitable conflict" that occurs when teachers discuss the complexity of teaching and learning (Day, et al., 2000; Peterson, McCarthey, & Elmore, 1996). By attending to the political climate associated with leading schools in an era of high stakes accountability, "principals will be better positioned to help teachers negotiate the tensions that arise from intrinsic motivations to act with professional autonomy and from schoolwide pressures to improve as a whole" (Crow, Hausman, and Paredes-Scribner, 2002, p. 200). This discussion occurs as principals engage in instructional leadership by actively involving the faculty in dialogue focused around developing a culture of collaboration that seeks to build capacity and results in a shared vision. Therefore, the next two sections focus on two essential characteristics of instructional leaders, creating opportunities for sharing leadership and collaboratively developing a shared vision with the school community.

School Community Leadership

Community leaders are "imbued with a big-picture awareness of the school's role in society; sharing leadership among educators, community partners, and residents; maintaining close relations with parents and others; and advocating school capacity building" (Goldring, 1995, as cited in Laboratory for Student Success, 2002). These characteristics are evident in the NAESP standards for instructional leadership. The standards infer that effective school leadership focuses on developing and creating a sense of shared responsibility for student and school success within the school community. Similarly, research suggests that principals play a crucial role in developing this shared responsibility (Day et al., 2000; Muncey & McQuillan, 1996; Sarason, 1982). For example, McLaughlin and Talbert (2001) compare the crucial role the principal played in their study of sixteen high schools:

> The utter absence of principal leadership with Valley High School…is a strong frame for the weak teacher community we found across departments in the school; conversely, strong leadership in Greenfield, Prospect and Isben has been central to engendering and sustaining these school-wide teacher learning communities…Principals with low scores (on leadership, as perceived by teachers) generally are seen as managers who provide little support or direction for teaching and learning in the school. Principals receiving high ratings are actively involved in the sorts of activities that nurture and sustain strong teacher communities. (p. 110)

Furthermore, research indicates that successful principals lead from the center and not the top (Evans, 1996; Lambert et al., 1995; Lieberman, 1995; Murphy 1994, Newmann & Wehlage, 1995; Wenger, 1998). Leading from the center involves delegating or distributing a great deal of leadership responsibilities and developing collaborative decision making processes (Blase & Blase, 1998; Elmore & Burney, 1999; Evans, 1996; Lambert, 1995; McLaughlin and Talbert, 2001; Newmann & Wehlage, 1995; Wenger, 1998). Thus, empirical evidence indicates that principals' roles must shift from a managerial and authoritarian style to a collaborative and facilitative style that distributes leadership across stakeholders and boundaries (Elmore & Burney, 1999; Neumann & Simmons, 2000).

Distributed leadership acknowledges a shared responsibility between teachers and administrators that results in a clear, coherent school-wide vision related to improving student outcomes (Elmore & Burney, 1999; Hargreaves & Fink, 2003; Neumann & Simmons, 2000; Spillane, 2006). This involves a facilitative leadership style that actively engages faculty in a shared decision making process (Newmann & Wehlage, 1995). Ancona (2005) suggests that distributed leadership cultivates and coordinates a school community around four core leadership capabilities: sense making, relating, visioning, and inventing (Ancona, 2005, p 3). Therefore, distributed leadership provides an avenue to collectively open the conversation on issues related to curriculum and instruction as

well as to break down the loosely coupled leadership structures that traditionally have

hindered school improvement (Elmore & Burney, 1999). Thus, the key to distributing

leadership is a "collective intelligence that is multifaceted rather than singular and

belongs to everyone not just a few" (Hargreaves & Fink, 2003, p. 696).

Likewise, Lambert et al. (1995) offer four lenses that help school leaders organize

systemic change and simultaneously foster a culture that values learning. First, the

leadership lens requires a conception of leadership that recognizes the importance of

building community and participation by all stakeholders in the change process. Next,

the *patterns of relationships lens* focuses on how leaders create patterns around goals of

community, care, and shared inquiry that are intrinsically guided by an underlying moral

purpose. Ultimately, these leaders develop structures that sustain the goals. As a part of

the *inquiry and the role of information lens*, school leaders provide opportunity for

community members to participate in inquiry as a form of professional development and

are encouraged to continue professional reading of their own. Glickman (1993) argues

that unless teachers engage in this type of knowledge construction, they will not gain

entry into the important conversations about teaching and learning. The final lens,

breaking set with old assumptions, requires leaders to help followers to, at times, let go of

old ideas in order to generate new ones. Leaders can facilitate this process by developing

a context of trust, relationships, and self-discovery. Thus, Lambert's concepts are central

to effective principal leadership as they seek to support teaching in the process of

developing cohesive school cultures and professional learning communities.

All told, the "dynamic complexity" (Fullan, 1993) associated with the school

reform process, coupled with the increased accountability pressures associated with high

stakes testing challenge school leaders today to create contexts that support teacher

learning. This complexity has deep implications for the role the principal plays as he/she

tries to cultivate a cohesive learning community during the reform process.

Visionary Leadership

The role of vision is also emphasized throughout the contemporary literature on

instructional leadership (Bolman & Deal, 2000; Fullan, 1993; Fullan, 2001a; Senge,

2000; Sergiovanni, 1996). Visionary leaders "demonstrate energy, commitment,

entrepreneurial spirit, values, and conviction that all children will learn at high levels, as

well as the ability to inspire others with the vision both inside and outside the school

building" (Laboratory for Student Success, 2002, p. 30). Inherent in this description of

leadership is the notion of an underlying moral purpose. The foundation of visionary

leadership is moral purpose that seeks to make a difference in the lives of the people

school leaders touch – their faculty and staff, the students, parents, and the community at

large (Fullan, 2001a; Sergiovanni, 1996). Fullan (2003) elaborates:

> Moral purpose of the highest order is having a system where all students learn, the
> gap between high and low performance becomes greatly reduced, and what people
> learn enables them to be successful citizens. (p. 29)

Likewise, other scholars (Bolman & Deal, 2000; Palmer, 1998; Senge, 2000;

Sergiovanni, 1996) have argued that effective leaders must have a deep moral conviction

that guides their vision, values, ideas, commitments, and leadership practices. Thus,

visionary leaders have an implicit moral dimension that envisions the principal's role as

more than managing tasks or exerting influence. Therefore, leading with a moral purpose

must be accompanied by strategies and actions that "energize people to pursue a common

goal" (Fullan, 2001a, p. 19).

To illustrate, Burns (1979) compares and contrasts transactional and transformational leadership. While each of these theories suggests changes in the principal's role in order for school improvement to take place, the assumptions and outcomes associated with these orientations are quite different (Burns, 1979; Evans, 1996). Transactional leadership is based on an exchange or bargain between people who are motivated primarily by self-interest. Starratt (1993) suggests that a transactional leader uses clear, evenhanded, and respectful exchanges that are "governed by instrumental values such as fairness, honest, loyalty, and integrity" (p.7). As a result transactional leadership often creates trade-offs, competition, and compromise.

Although transactional leadership may at times appear expedient, this leadership orientation lacks a moral dimension. On the other hand, transformational leadership is not only concerned with "what works", but also "what is good" (Burns, 1979; Evans, 1996), as it seeks "to unite people in the pursuit of communal interests" (Staratt, 1993, p.7). Sergiovannni (1992) echoes the importance of providing moral leadership:

> The leadership that counts is the kind that touches people differently. It taps their emotions, appeals to their values, and responds to their connections with other people. (p.120)

In order for this to occur, principals continually assess the work of teachers and dialogue with their faculties to "transform traditional top-down patterns of communication into more constructive patterns of social relationships that support innovative ideas and healthy values towards teaching and learning" (Crow, Hausman, and Paredes-Scribner, 2002, p. 199). According to Evans (1996), this moral responsibility emerges as:

> The leader works with the staff to make explicit the school's defining values and beliefs and to translate them into informal norms for performance and behavior, and he then relies on these norms to ensure fulfillment. (p.173)

Therefore, principals are responsible for providing safe spaces for ongoing dialogue for the faculty and staff to develop shared understandings. This dialogue leads to a cohesive shared vision that is grounded in "a moral imperative" (Starratt, 2000). Starratt asserts that the principal must help teachers deconstruct:

> Meanings, values, and assumptions – the analysis of their negatives and their positives, of what is to be rejected and what kept – *and* a reconstruction, and invention of new meanings, new metaphors, new organizational dynamics, new institutional processes which carry the playing of school into a more humanly satisfying and morally fulfilling story. (p. 20)

Thus, leading with a moral purpose "is about creating a sense of purpose and direction, it's about alignment and it's about inspiring people to achieve" (Fullan, 2001a, p. 19).

Sergiovanni (1991, as cited in Evans, 1996) provides insight into four stages of leadership linked to developing a vision of school reform. The first stage, *bartering*, occurs when the principal encourages interest or experimentation by making a trade. This level of leadership can only open the door to reform because without commonly shared goals, deeper change is unlikely. The second stage, *building*, is found after the innovation has begun and people are trying to "get through it." This is a period that the leader can use to generate interest and arouse potential, set expectations, and empower people. A great deal of support must be present during this stage. *Bonding* occurs at the third and "transformative" stage. At this point, a shared purpose exists throughout the school community and "everyone's involvement is not just intrinsic but also moral, based on a sense of obligation born out of commitment" (p.175). By creating leaders within the school, this stage can be facilitated. Finally, the fourth stage of leadership for innovation is *banking*. Banking exists when improvements become "routinized" as part of the school day. At this point, the leader becomes a "servant leader" who protects the school's vision and values by helping and assisting others carry out their roles and responsibilities.

Burrello, Lashley, and Beatty (2001) reiterate this argument and assert that the principal must move out of the bureaucratic, psychological, or rational-technical authority roles. They state, "Education lacks an informed public expression of its purposes, needs, or processes" (p.181). If school leaders are to be agents of change, they must engage in a re-evaluation of these areas and actively seek to engage in social transformation. Burrello and colleagues argue that principals will need to become public intellectuals who act as educational statesmen and representatives in the community if this is to happen. In fact, this work encompasses a reframing of the principal's job to include conceptualizing educational administration as a social practice.

In sum, school leaders must guide schools through "realms of chaos" (Wheatley, 1992) during the current era of increased complexity and accountability while collaboratively developing strong visions guided by moral purpose that create shared meanings, energy, and direction of the school community towards improvement. Thus, visionary leadership seeks to cultivate professional dialogue among stakeholders that is explicitly linked to a deep moral purpose for improving outcomes for all students.

Summary

These conceptual threads, the historical roles of the principal and the role of the principal in the school change process, contribute to our understanding of how principals might respond to the leadership challenges created by the current climate of high stakes accountability. The historical roots of the principalship highlight the tension between the managerial responsibilities and the instructional leadership responsibilities assumed by the principal. The sections that follow provide insight into how the role of the principal has become increasingly complex over the last century, and how these changes often were in response to social, political, and cultural pressures. Additionally, outlining and

understanding the instrumental concepts that underpin educational change, serve to

provide a better understanding of the challenges school leaders face as they navigate

reform in today's schools. The exploration of the literature related to the principal's role

in the change process also brings into the forefront the challenges associated with leading

change and the importance of a skilled school leader. Finally, emerging research helps

situate the principal as an instructional leader who must clearly move beyond the

managerial responsibilities of leading a school to embracing the moral, democratic, and

shared aspects of leadership today. This process is highly complex, as these areas overlap

and interact within the school context.

Although a well-developed conceptual literature base exists to help school leaders

frame the key concepts that should guide their work in today's schools, only recently has

emerging empirical research sought to understand and explain the intricacies involved in

principals' daily work as they lead for change. Wolcott's (1973) work provides an

example of the rich description necessary to understand the nuances that occur each day

within the context of the school and influence a principal's ability to lead for change.

Given that this landmark study occurred over three decades ago and that the political,

social, and cultural climate has indeed shifted since this study, my research seeks to

understand how the highly complex activity of leading for change within an era of high

stakes testing and accountability unfolds within the context of one particular principal's

life. Insight into the work life of this principal will allow others to more deeply

understand the nuances of the change process, and the pitfalls and possibilities a principal

might experience along the way during this highly challenging accountability era.

CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

This investigation revisits Harry Wolcott's classic ethnographic work on the nature of the principalship (Wolcott, 1973) and extends this work by seeking to understand the way a principal leads within an elementary school during the current era of increased accountability. I define "leading" as the way the principal conceptualizes, negotiates, and enacts his role as school leader. My intention was not to measure the progress of any reform effort or engage in an experiment. Instead, my intent was to use qualitative research methodology, informed by multiple forms of data (i.e., participant observation and interviews), to capture and understand the principal's role in the context of a contemporary school. Thus, the phenomenon being investigated, *how a principal leads an elementary school faculty in an era of high stakes accountability,* lends itself to an interpretive and naturalistic research paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

Specifically, case study and ethnographic methods were combined with a phenomenological lens to inquire into the lived experience of one elementary school principal to gain an understanding of how a principal conceptualizes, negotiates, and enacts his role in today's era of high stakes accountability. In this chapter, I describe how I conducted this study. First, I highlight some basic definitions and assumptions associated with case study and phenomenological research that inform this investigation. Second, I describe the design of the study, my research questions, the context of the inquiry, and my data collection and analysis process. Lastly, I outline how I verified my study's trustworthiness and quality.

Rationale for the Use of Case Study

Wolcott (1973) asserts in his landmark study of the principalship that it is only through an in-depth case study of the principalship that "the dynamics of the system and the interactions of the people within it can be seen in their functional totality" (p. xx).

Merriam (1998) identifies a case study as "an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a bounded phenomenon such as a program, an institution, a person, a process, or a social unit" (p. xiii). More simply, Merriam notes that a case is "a thing, a single entity, a unit around which there are boundaries" (p.27). These ideas are similar in nature to Smith's (1978) view that a case is a bounded system, Miles and Huberman's (1994) viewpoint that a case is "a phenomenon occurring in a bounded context" (p.25), and Stake's (1995) notion of a case as an integrated system.

Thus, this examination of the principalship is framed first and foremost as a case study. A case study approach allowed me to investigate one specific school leader as a single entity and better understand the role that this school leader plays in his school, bounded historically by the current period of high stakes accountability. Additionally, the case study approach allowed me to recognize the principal within an integrated system, acknowledging the many roles the principal plays in leading a school, and highlighting the complexities attached to leading a school in an era of high stakes accountability. Given the attributes of case study research, this methodology shows promise for studying the principal's many roles and uncovering the essence of how a principal conceptualizes, negotiates, and enacts his role as leader in an era of high stakes accountability.

More specifically, this investigation can be considered an intrinsic case study (Stake, 1995). An intrinsic case study was chosen because in all its "particularity and ordinariness" the case is of interest to the researcher (Stake, 1995) and helps the

researcher to better understand a particular phenomenon in context (Merriam, 1998;

Stake, 1995). The purpose of an intrinsic case study is not to build theory or understand

some abstract idea or construct. The purpose is to gain an in-depth understanding of the

situation, depicting the particulars of interaction within a context, and uncovering the

meanings of those involved regarding the phenomena being studied. The investigation

focuses on process rather than outcomes, on context rather than a specific variable, and

on discovery rather than confirmation. Previously conducted intrinsic case studies have

directly influenced policy, practice, and future research (Merriam, 1998).

Taking this point of view makes case study methodology a viable choice for the

study of many issues related to education including how a principal conceptualizes,

negotiates, and enacts his role as leader during a time of increased accountability and

high stakes testing. By concentrating on a single case, my aim was to examine the

particulars of this phenomenon, as well as to uncover the interaction of significant factors

that are characteristic of the phenomenon of leading a contemporary school (Merriam,

1998). As a result, phenomenology was intricately woven with ethnographic and case

study methods to provide an in-depth, rich description and analysis of how a principal

leads his school in an era of high stakes accountability.

Rationale for the Use of Phenomenology

Phenomenology aims at gaining a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of
our everyday experiences. (Van Manen, 1990, p.9)

I have chosen to re-visit Wolcott's (1973) case study *The Man in the Principal's*

Office. In his seminal text, Wolcott stated that the purpose of his ethnographic case study

was:

To describe and analyze the elementary school principalship from a cultural
perspective. This study focuses not only on a particular group of people-

elementary school principals- but on the behavior of one specific elementary school principal during a particular period of time…This study focuses on those human processes in which the principal engaged that were most directly related to his assignment as a principal. However, an ethnographic inquiry into what a principal does as a principal cannot ignore the broader context in which an individual lives and works, and the various ways in which circumstances that appear to be external to his occupational role may actually exert considerable impact. The attention to context and to complex interrelationships in human lives is what makes ethnographic accounts different from accounts written from the perspective of other social sciences. Ethnographic accounts deal with real human beings and actual human behavior, with an emphasis on social, rather than on physiological or psychological, aspects of behavior. (Wolcott, p. xi)

Although I used Wolcott's (1973) investigation as a guide in designing this study, I departed from his ethnographic approach to inquire into the lived experience and meaning of being a principal from the principal's point of view. My research differentiated itself in one distinct way. I used an emic, or insider's point of view as a lens by drawing on the meaning made by the leader himself. This phenomenological lens sets this study apart from Wolcott's previous work.

In Wolcott's study, the investigator assumed the role of a participant observer and took on the etic or outsider perspective (Patton, 2002, Merriam, 1998). The result was a wonderfully detailed account that focused on the description of what a principal's job entails (Wolcott, 1973). However, this etic perspective limited the study in a number of ways. First, the purpose of Wolcott's approach was to "observe and record rather to judge" (p. 5) as he became a "participant as observer" (p. 7). Thus, he purposely remained in the background deciding against discussing his interpretations with his participant while collecting or analyzing data. Wolcott's methodological decisions created a research design that resulted in a descriptive case study, which employed ethnographic methods.

Most of Wolcott's interpretations described the principal's observed behavior and did not seek to go deeper and uncover the reasons why the principal chose to act in certain ways in various situations. This is highlighted in the epilogue of the study that acknowledges the participant's mixed reaction to reading his final report for the first time. The principal being studied believed Wolcott placed too much emphasis on certain events and issues that arose related to the managerial aspect of the job. He was distraught by the notion that at times in the ethnographic case, he appeared "inept." Since Wolcott's sole purpose was to describe the principal at work, he did not try to understand the reasons the principal chose to act in particular ways in these situations. In fact, Wolcott discussed the contrasting purposes the two men had for participating in the research. The principal's purpose was to identify, eliminate, and solve issues as they arose. In direct contrast, Wolcott's purpose for being in the school was to uncover how people resolve problems "in an effort to describe and to understand how principals behave" (p. 317). His decision not to personally discuss his observations with his participant played into this mixed reaction from his participant, and limits his case study. Thus, the principal did not envision the finished report the way it turned out because Wolcott did not try and understand the principal's underlying beliefs or values that guided his decision-making and leadership.

In contrast to Wolcott's investigation, this phenomenological study of the principalship sought an emic (Patton, 2002, Merriam, 1998) or insider's point of view. Thus, I departed from Wolcott's classic ethnographic approach in my effort to inquire into the lived experience and meaning of being a principal from the principal's point of view. By using a phenomenological lens, I sought to uncover the meaning and

interpretations a principal attaches to the events that occur in a school on any given day. As a result, I became a participant observer and active learner who collaboratively helped to construct the fabric of the story with the principal, as we focused on uncovering meanings of events and situations within the principal's work. This adds depth to the case study by explicitly seeking to uncover the principal's attitudes, beliefs, or understandings regarding why he chose to act in any given way, in any particular situation. Thus, this study not only examined the behavior of a principal, but also sought to understand factors that influence *how a principal conceptualizes, negotiates, and enacts his role as leader within a school during an era of increased accountability.*

For the purposes of this study, phenomenology is defined as "the study of human experience and of the way things present themselves to us in and through such experience" (Sokolowski, 2000, p.13). The goal of this type of phenomenological investigation is to thoroughly describe the "essence of a phenomenon" through intense and careful study (Moustakas, 1994). Patton (1990) asserts *"the assumption of essence, like the ethnographer's assumption that culture exists, is important and becomes the defining characteristic of a phenomenological study"* (p.70, emphasis in original).

Similarly, Moustakas (1994) conveys that a phenomenological study seeks to "determine what an experience means for a person who has had the experience and is able to provide a comprehensive description of it" (p.13). This assertion is related to Husserl's (1913, as cited in Patton, 2002) basic phenomenological assumption that people only know what they experience by attending to perceptions and meanings that awaken their conscious awareness. In much the same way, Patton (2002) explicitly articulates a foundational question that guides all phenomenological research, *What is the meaning,*

structure, and essence of the lived experience of this phenomenon for this person or group of people? (p. 104, emphasis in original). To answer this foundational question, "requires methodologically, carefully, and thoroughly capturing and describing how people experience some phenomenon—how they perceive it, describe it, feel about it, judge it, remember it, make sense of it and talk about it with others" (p. 104).

Patton (2002) further describes two important orientations when using a phenomenological perspective. First, the researcher must realize that "what is important to know is what people experience and how they interpret the world" (p. 106). Second, the researcher must understand that the "only way for us to really know what another person experiences is to experience the phenomenon as directly as possible for ourselves" (p. 106). These two considerations provide a rationale for conducting in-depth interviews and participant observation while conducting this phenomenological case study.

Phenomenology seeks not only to understand the lives and experiences of others, but also inquires into how people react in various contexts and situations (Valle & King, 1978). Schutz (1972) asserted that a person's conduct and actions are rich examples of their motives, goals, and attitudes, and can be characterized as such. In this manner, I not only conducted phenomenological interviews (Seidman, 1991) to describe how a principal defined and discussed school leadership, but I also observed the school leader to see how he actually put his experience and knowledge into practice in his work. As a result of witnessing the principal engaged in his work, we could then discuss the observed situation and uncover the motives, goals, and attitudes central to the observed behavior.

Phenomenology is sometimes viewed as pure description of a phenomenon or experience. However, as Moustakas (1994) has argued, there can be no description without interpretation. Acknowledging that research is interpretive at the beginning of a study and that the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection (Merriam, 1998) is an essential feature of phenomenological research (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000). With the recognition that interpretation is vital for qualitative research, the issue of subjectivity often arises. For my interpretations to be believable, it was necessary that I attempt to set aside my pre-judgments, biases, and preconceived ideas. This is the first step in conducting phenomenological research and is known as "epoche" (Moustakas, 1994; Sokolowski, 2000). Sokolowski (2000) states, "Epoche is simply the neutralizing of natural intentions that must occur when we contemplate these intentions" (p. 49). Moustakas (1994) reflects on the nature and meaning of epoche as preparation for deriving new knowledge, but also as an experience in itself. He explains that epoche is a difficult task and requires that we allow a phenomenon or experience to be just what it is and to come to know it as it presents itself" (Moustakas, 1994, p.86). Thus, setting aside or bracketing one's predispositions, prejudices, and beliefs allows the participant's experience to present itself fully. Epoche was beneficial in this case, because I carefully analyzed and bracketed my own experiences, preconceptions and biases about leading a school in an era of high stakes accountability. This process ensures that the principal's own thoughts and ideas were represented in the final report.

In sum, phenomenology, for the purpose of this research, was defined as the study of the principal's lived experience as seen through a researcher's eyes. Thus, this case study moves beyond Wolcott's ethnographic account by utilizing a phenomenological

lens to inquire into a principal's lived experience as he leads an elementary school faculty in an era of high stakes accountability.

Design of the Study

Research Questions

The purpose of my study was to understand the way one particular principal conceptualizes, negotiates, and enacts his role as leader within one school during an era of high stakes accountability. Over the past three decades, the principal's role has shifted dramatically due to various internal and external factors that contribute to the growing complexity of our education system (Beck & Murphy, 1993; Bredeson, 1995; Hallinger, 1992; Matthews & Crow, 2003). Furthermore, we know that the role a school leader plays is critical to the success of the school (Fullan, 2001a; Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998; Wolf, Borko, Elliot & McIver, 2000).

However, at this time, the "missing link" in our current reform efforts is a full understanding of the role school leadership plays in navigating this complexity and improving schools (Day, 2000; Lambert et al., 1995; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001; Wolcott, 1973). More importantly, Day (2000) suggests that the research conducted in the area of school leadership has rarely sought the principal's perspective. To address this void in the literature, I reconfigured Wolcott's work using a phenomenological lens to investigate how one principal navigates the context of schooling in an era wrought with issues of accountability, high stakes testing, mandated school reforms, and meeting the needs of an ever changing and more diverse student population. Thus, my research questions included: (1) how does a principal lead in an era of high stakes accountability, (2) how does a principal perceive himself as a leader and enact his role to provide leadership in an era of high stakes accountability, and more

specifically, (3) how does a principal balance the mandates of public accountability and the daily demands of leading a school?

Selection of the Participant

Using Patton's (2002) notion of purposeful sampling, one school principal that exhibited an interest in sharing his experiences and the meanings he attached to such experiences was selected for this study. The logic and power of this type of purposeful sampling lie in selecting information rich cases for in-depth study, yielding insights and in-depth understanding rather than empirical generalizations (Patton, 2002). In selecting a participant, the researcher involved must think through what cases they could learn most from, and then select those cases for study.

This case combined two sampling strategies, typical case sampling and opportunistic sampling (Patton, 2002). Typical case sampling involved selecting a participant that one would call typical, normal or average for a particular phenomenon. Thus, I chose to closely follow Wolcott's (1973) criteria listed below for selecting a participant.

> I identified criteria for selecting a principal, which seemed either essential for the purposes of the study, necessary for the relationship between investigator and subject, or compatible with some personal biases of my own. These criteria included: that the principal be a full-time, supervising principal; that he be responsible for only one elementary school; that he not be new to administration or to a particular building at the onset of the study; that like the majority of elementary school principals, he be male: and that he regard himself as a career principal rather than someone consciously using the principalship as a stepping-stone to a "higher" position…. It seemed essential that the principal chosen for the study approach the principalship with an integrity evidenced by his concern for the role and by the appearance of sufficient confidence in himself to carry it out. I also counted on intuition to help us assess whether we had enough mutual regard that we could survive the projected period of fieldwork. (pp. 1-2)

On the other hand, opportunistic sampling involves following new leads that arise and taking advantage of this unexpected flexibility. For example, the particular selection

of a principal for this study evolved over time as I observed a school principal that

possessed intriguing leadership qualities, and also exhibited an interest in sharing his

experiences and the meanings he attached to such experiences.

My interest in studying the principalship and, specifically, examining this

particular principal emerged as I worked at his school over a three-year period. I first

met my participant in the spring of 2001 when I became involved in some collaborative

school-university partnership work at his school. Over the subsequent two years as I

developed an interest in studying the principalship, my interest in studying this particular

principal evolved from the many professional interactions I had with him. In particular,

these experiences centered around collaboration on two projects I worked on at the

University of Florida.

First, I witnessed his active participation with his faculty in a professional

development seminar targeting the development of school-based team efforts to improve

instruction to meet the academic and social needs of diverse learners in general education

classrooms during Project Include (McLeskey & Waldron, 2000). What was unique about

this situation and, of particular interest to me, was that other principals in this district did

not view participating in this professional development experience favorably, as the work

was not necessarily endorsed by the district administration. However, the school leader

saw this as an opportunity to move forward with his vision of helping all students

succeed. In fact, his purpose for participating was to focus the faculty on improving the

education of his school's students who were struggling academically and socially.

Second, I participated as part of a leadership team in creating a school-university

partnership at his school targeted at prospective teacher education. The principal's

participation in this partnership was instrumental in bringing this innovative program to his rural elementary school. He viewed this partnership as a win-win situation. His administrative and teaching staff participated actively in designing and implementing the teacher education program, and he viewed this as a form of ongoing professional development for his faculty.

During my experiences with these projects, the principal's friendly nature and willingness to openly discuss current issues, as well as his willingness to engage in an honest dialogue and share his thoughts were critical to his selection as the participant for this research project. Specifically, I recall on occasion that he openly shared with me his beliefs, successes and frustrations about a range of topics including teacher supervision, improving student learning, teacher professional development, and district leadership. These discussions were refreshing in an era of high stakes accountability, where many school leaders "play it close to the vest" and keep their ideas to themselves.

Data Collection

During the 2003-2004 school year, I conducted a series of interviews and participant observations with the principal of Hawk's Nest Elementary School, Mr. Tom Smith. Both the school and participant's names are pseudonyms and have been changed for the purpose of anonymity. A copy of the participant release form is included in Appendix A.

Interviews

Two types of interviews were used to capture the way the school leader conceptualizes, negotiates, and enacts his role as leader: (1) phenomenological interviews (Seidman, 1991), and (2) dialogical or informal conversational interviews with the

principal (Carspecken, 1997; Patton, 2002). These two forms of interviews also serve as a form of triangulation (Patton, 2002).

The first type of interview was phenomenological in nature. Phenomenological interviewing is a method that combines life history and focused in-depth interviews. Seidman's (1991) approach uses primarily open-ended questions to build upon and explore the participant's past and present experience (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). The very process of putting experience into language is a meaning making process. When participants describe and share details of their life, they are choosing critical life events from their experience and giving meaning to them. The goal of Seidman's (1991) interview process is to have a participant reconstruct his or her experience.

Since people's behavior becomes meaningful only when placed in context, this set of interviews was designed to capture the participant's experience and place it in context. This interviewing process included a three interview series (Seidman, 1991). During the first interview, the task was to put the participant's experience in context by asking him to describe as much as possible about the topic of interest up to that present time. Generally, this interview focused on the past experiences of the principal and what he felt as his life unfolded (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). In short, the principal reconstructed his past experiences by sharing his early experiences with his family, education, friends, and work. In particular, I asked the principal about his background, educational experiences and foundational beliefs about school leadership, teaching, and learning.

The second semi-structured interview served the purpose of identifying and sharing key stories or events that conveyed important cultural norms, values and understandings from the principal's perspective (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). This interview

thus focused on the details of the participant's present experience, as the principal was asked to reconstruct the details of the current context. During this interview, we avoided discussing opinions and instead focused on "the details of the experience upon which their opinions may be built" (Seidman, 1991, p. 11). Additionally, I asked Mr. Smith to describe what he actually did on the job and to reconstruct a recent day in his life.

The third interview encouraged reflection on the meaning the experience holds for the participant. This interview addressed "the intellectual and emotional connections between the participant's work and life" (Seidman, 1991, p. 12) by requiring the principal to look inward and make sense of how the many factors in his life interacted over time to bring him to his present situation. As Seidman (1991) stated, "The combination of exploring the past to clarify the events that led participants to where they are now, and describing the concrete details of their present experience, establishes conditions for reflecting upon what they are now doing in their lives" (p. 12). This process is the essence of the third interview. In conducting this interview, I asked questions similar to these: Given what you have said about your life before you became a principal, as well as what you shared about your work over the past ten years as a school principal, how do you perceive your leadership role today? How do you enact this role? Given what you have said in earlier interviews, where do you see yourself going in the future regarding your leadership role? Appendix B includes the three interview protocols used in this phenomenological interview series.

Given the importance of capturing the essence of the principal's responses, all phenomenological interviews were audio taped and transcribed as soon as possible after each interview. The interviews were conducted at the beginning of the study roughly a

week to ten days apart. This allowed the researcher and participant time to reflect about the previous session, but not too much time to "lose connection" between the interviews (Seidman, 1991).

The second type of interview conducted were dialogical interviews (Carspecken, 1997) or informal conversational interviews (Patton, 2002). Following each observation, I conducted a follow up interview to gain an in-depth understanding of the principal's actions, attitudes, beliefs, and understandings about the specific events of the day. During and after the participant observations, I developed a list of questions that were used to begin our follow-up interviews. The purpose of dialogical interviewing was to generate meanings from a participant's point of view by discussing how and why the events of a situation or interaction transpired (Carspecken, 1997). This interviewing technique allowed me to examine the details of the life of a school administrator as they arose, and get important insights into the meaning of the events from the principal's perspective (Patton, 2002).

During this stage, I generated information with the participant, thus democratizing the research process (Carspecken, 1997). The new data generated from these interviews served two important purposes. First, the data and discussion provided the opportunity to search for alternative explanations (Marshall & Rossman, 1999) and disconfirming evidence that challenged themes and patterns previously developed (Patton, 2002). Second, the discussion provided an open forum for examining and discussing the data, themes and patterns that I had generated, and for strengthening the findings by using analyst triangulation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2002). This is especially important because the focus was on developing a sense of the lived experience from the

participant's viewpoint (Moustakas, 1994). As with the phenomenological interviews, all informal conversational interviews were audio taped and transcribed as soon as possible after each interview.

Participant observations

Phenomenology also inquires into how participants act in various situations (Valle & King, 1978). Schutz (1972) articulated that a person's actions are rich illustrations of their goals, motives, and attitudes. Thus, in addition to conducting phenomenological interviews (Seidman, 1991), I also observed the principal to witness and document how he actually put his beliefs and knowledge into practice in the school. These observations were essential to member-checking as I sought to develop a clear picture of his conduct, and for practical purposes helped to uncover the connection between participant motives, goals, and attitudes, and actual lived experiences. I used these field notes of my participant observations as a base for follow-up discussions.

In this study, I conducted two different types of observations that helped to triangulate data: (1) descriptive shadowing participant observations, and (2) focused or selective observations (Spradley, 1980). For the first six weeks of the study, I shadowed the principal a minimum of one day a week. The purpose of shadowing the principal was twofold: (1) to observe his actions and see how he put his beliefs and attitudes about leading a school into practice, and (2) to observe others in the school in order to paint a picture of the school context in which he leads. This shadowing included attending group meetings such as faculty/staff meetings, grade level meetings, parent conferences, and district level meetings, as well as individual formal and informal interactions with various school stakeholders.

Additionally, I conducted focused or selective observations (Spradley, 1980) to follow up on critical events and issues that arose during initial shadowing experiences or during the interview process. These selected observations occurred during the last four months of the study from February 2004-May 2004. By attending to particular issues or tensions that arose, I developed a sharper focus of the principal's role (Spradley, 1980).

Specifically, selecting and targeting certain meetings or events for observation shed light on the principal's role in the school and allowed me to develop interview questions to use during the follow-up dialogical interviewing (Carspecken, 1997). These questions allowed me to gain an understanding of his thought processes and the meanings of the lived experience from his viewpoint. By focusing my observations in this manner, I captured a holistic picture of the school context, as well as an understanding of the meanings the principal attached to his leadership experiences.

Field notes were taken to document all observations. Observation notes were transcribed, reviewed, and analyzed as soon as possible after each observation. Researcher reflections or analyses were coded in the margins as Observer Comments (OC) to differentiate observation data from my beginning thoughts, questions, interpretations, and analysis.

In summary, the use of participant observation as well as phenomenological and dialogical interviewing allowed me to capture the lived experience and meanings made by the principal. Thus, my methodology calls for a general description of the context (Wolcott, 1994), and an analysis and interpretation of the individual's lived experience primarily focused on the development of meanings from a phenomenological point of view (Moustakas, 1994).

Data Analysis

Patton (2002) states "Phenomenological analysis seeks to grasp and elucidate the meaning, structure and essence of the lived experience of a phenomenon for a person or group" (p.482). My phenomenological data analysis followed a four-step process which involved: epoche, phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation and a synthesis of meanings and essences.

Epoche, or, researcher's bias

The first step in phenomenological analysis is epoche (Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2002). According to Moustakas (1994)), epoche "is a Greek word meaning to refrain from judgment, to abstain from or stay away from the everyday, ordinary way of perceiving things" (p.33). Epoche was a process used to set aside or "become aware of one's own prejudices, viewpoints, and assumptions regarding the phenomenon being examined" (Katz, 1987, p. 36, as cited in Patton, 2002). Epoche allowed the research to be conducted from a "fresh and open viewpoint without prejudgment or imposing meaning too soon…in order to see the experience for itself" (Katz, 1987, pp. 36-37, as cited in Patton, 2002). This step is similar in nature to the concept of clarifying researcher bias (Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 1998). Clarifying researcher bias at the start of any study is essential so that readers understand the researcher's stance and any assumptions, beliefs, predispositions, and biases that could impact the study.

My Bias. I have had a variety of personal and professional experiences that have impacted how I view education and, in particular, school leadership. Specifically, this included my life history as the son of a principal (my father) and a teacher (my mother), my role as a special education teacher and department head in a large middle school, my role as a doctoral student and graduate assistant, my position as a district level inclusion

specialist, and the nature of my thoughts about the leadership characteristics of the particular principal being studied.

First, it is critical to mention and discuss briefly my own life history of being a son of a middle school principal and a high school math teacher. Obviously, my family valued education. At dinnertime, we had many lively discussions around issues related to education that were pertinent to my hometown, a small rural town in upstate New York. Reflecting back, the great thing about these dialogues was that I was exposed to both a teacher and administrative viewpoint on important educational issues of the time, a time that is eerily similar to our current era of high stakes testing.

Growing up in this small town, I also had many opportunities to observe my mother and father in action since I attended both of their schools at different points in time. During this time, I witnessed how my father and mother chose to lead their respective school and classroom in a variety of ways that impacted my beliefs about education. First and foremost, I saw both of them thrive as they developed relationships with others. For example, I still distinctly remember the many gatherings my father either hosted or attended with his faculty. This was a critical part of his leadership, developing a collegial school culture. In fact, many of my parents' colleagues were our closest family friends, and we even traveled on vacation together yearly.

Additionally, I saw my parents' commitment not only to the school, but also to the community at large. For instance, my parents' values included always giving back to my hometown in a variety of ways and subsequently they were viewed as leaders in the community. In fact my father served two terms on the city council, and my mother was always involved with a variety of civic organizations. In sum, my experience of growing

up in a small, close knit community in a family of educators has had a lasting impact on how I view the role of education in society at large as well as the role educational leaders play today. My family experience provided me with the foundation of valuing education and making a difference in people's lives. That is why after more than four years working in the television industry for A.C. Nielsen Media Research and dreaming about becoming a teacher, I decided to join the teaching ranks.

In my movement to a career in teaching, I chose to focus in the area of special education for a variety of reasons. My social justice beliefs naturally aligned with the work associated with special education. For example, the decision to chose special education was impacted not only by my desire to help children that struggled to succeed and make a better life for themselves, but also by my own personal experience with my cousin who was diagnosed with autism at an early age. Watching my aunt and uncle struggle with the intricacies of the law, placement options, parental and student rights, and the entire special education process enabled me to see the many flaws in our system that needed to be improved. Thus, my belief that our current education system had failed to provide opportunities for students with disabilities and others identified as at risk was critical to my decision to become a special educator. I wanted to be part of the solution and help open the many doors that were closed for students with disabilities. I wanted to make education more accessible for their families. I wanted to make a difference in the lives of children, particularly those who constantly struggled with learning.

After teaching for six years in Orange County, Florida, I began to look into pursuing my doctoral degree for two reasons. First, as an inclusion advocate and having taught in inclusive settings during my 6 years of teaching, I had become increasingly

frustrated with the direction special education was taking not only at my school but on the district, state, and national levels. I critically reflected on and examined the issues, and realized more than ever, the current system of educating students with disabilities was flawed. More importantly, I wanted to be part of the change effort that I believed could remedy the dilemmas and issues teachers faced, including, but not limited to special education funding, the placement of students with disabilities in general education settings, and the lack of teacher voice or leadership in the current system. Thus, I left the classroom in pursuit of my doctoral degree at the University of Florida.

My initial purpose in attending graduate school was to help teachers gain the voice necessary to have critical input in the educational reform process that seemed severely lacking in the current era of mandates and high stakes testing.   Another goal was to educate teachers and administrators about best inclusive practices that could effectively meet the academic and social needs of all students in their schools. Thus, I sought to expand my area of influence and become a leader in the change process with the goal of developing teachers' knowledge about inclusive education while also building professional learning communities focused on improving educational outcomes of all students.

Next, my role as a doctoral student, graduate assistant, and district inclusion specialist during the past five years needs to be explicitly addressed. I initially enrolled in a unified program of study that embedded coursework in special education, general education, teacher education, and educational leadership. My experiences as a doctoral student on many research projects related to teacher education, inclusive education, and school leadership have influenced my beliefs about education, particularly about the

education of students with disabilities and the effect of high stakes accountability mandated by federal and state governments on all students and teachers.

Additionally, my experience working as a graduate assistant and now an inclusion specialist with local schools ,has only strengthened my beliefs about issues related to how students with disabilities should be educated and the impact the current accountability mandates have had in the area of special education. For instance, over the past four years I have facilitated a course titled Project Include with teams of teachers and administrators from local schools. This professional development activity allows teachers, administrators and other professionals to work in school-based teams to develop and implement school improvement plans (McLeskey & Waldron, 2000). This activity seeks to address dilemmas associated with implementing current state and federal mandates associated with No Child Left Behind, Florida A+, IDEA, and the Florida class size amendment and simultaneously seeks ways to effectively meet the academic and social needs of all students in their schools. This experience working with diverse faculties has opened my eyes to the many challenges and pressures facing educators today.

As mentioned previously, the principal and staff of Hawk's Nest Elementary School participated in Project Include, and this influenced my selection of the principal. Thus, it is necessary to state my assumptions about the nature of Tom's leadership characteristics. Coupled with my Project Include experience, developing a professional development school partnership provided me the opportunity to work directly with Tom. On these projects, I observed Tom collaborate with his staff on issues related to teacher education and inclusive education. Our numerous conversations provided me with access to valuable insider information, and allowed me to witness first hand many of his

leadership characteristics. During my time spent at Hawk's Nest, I was intrigued by how Tom valued teacher input in the decision making process, developed relationships with his teachers, sought creative ways to solve problems that arose, and was respected by his faculty and the community at large. Taken together these events and experiences made Tom an exciting candidate to study.

All told, this unique mix of professional and personal experiences influenced my beliefs and assumptions associated with schools and school leadership. I brought certain biases to this study, and it was critical to bracket these before and during the research process as a way of suspending my judgment. This process allowed me to see and hear the principal's lived experiences from the principal's point of view. Therefore, in an effort to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of this research, I have provided this statement, or epoche, describing my own positioning as a way of guarding against researcher bias. This statement is provided to make known my preconceived notions regarding *how a principal leads an elementary school faculty in an era of high stakes accountability*. As a researcher, I reflected regularly on these ideas, suspending my judgment to allow myself to see and hear the principal's experiences.

Phenomenological reduction

The second step of data analysis was phenomenological reduction. In this step, the researcher "bracketed out" the phenomenon and began to develop a description of the experience (Husserl, 1913; Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2002). Bracketing involved taking the data apart and searching for essential elements and structures to analyze and define (Patton, 2002). However, the phenomenon was not interpreted in terms of the traditional meanings assigned. These preconceptions were bracketed and examined on their own terms, as I worked collaboratively with the principal.

Bracketing involved five interrelated steps (Moustakas, 1994). First, I located key phrases and statements that related directly to the phenomenon being studied. Next, I "interpreted the meanings of these phrases as an informed reader" (Patton, 2002, p. 485). Third, I sought the participant's interpretations of these phrases and meanings. Fourth, the principal and I collaboratively examined these meanings for what they revealed about the essential, recurring features of the phenomenon being studied. Lastly, the principal and I collaboratively offered a tentative definition of the phenomenon in terms of the essential, recurring features identified in the previous step. During the bracketing process, data was "horizontalized" (Moustakas, 1994) as significant statements were clustered into meaningful themes or patterns.

Imaginative variation

After bracketing was completed, the researcher and participant began to develop an "imaginative variation" (Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2002) on each theme that sought to see the same data from a variety of perspectives. During this process, the researcher, with input from the principal looked beneath the experience and searched for deeper meanings. This step required searching for structures inherent in the phenomenon being investigated to develop an expanded version of the themes initially developed in phenomenological reduction. Using these expanded themes, I began to write a textural description of the phenomenon (Patton, 2002). This description uncovers the nature and meaning of the experience using examples from the data to describe what happened during data collection. Additionally, phenomenological analysis involves developing a "structural description" that contains the "bones" of the principal experience. In this description I looked "beneath the affect inherent in the experience to deeper meanings for the principal as he lead a school in an era of high stakes accountability.

Synthesis of meanings and essences

Lastly, I developed a synthesis of meanings and essences, or as Creswell (1998) states the researcher "constructed an overall description of the meaning and essence of the experience" (p. 150). This occurred as I integrated the composite textural and structural descriptions, seeking to provide a synthesis of the meanings and essences discovered in the study (Patton, 2002). Blending the researcher's and participant's perspectives of the lived experience helped to develop a composite picture of the experience and completed this analysis process.

Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1985) have identified criteria that relate to the trustworthiness and quality of a qualitative research report. Trustworthiness and credibility of this investigation were addressed by employing the following methods or techniques during the research process: (1) triangulation, (2) member checks, (3) prolonged engagement, (4) peer and advisor debriefing, (5) clarifying researcher bias, (6) providing a rich thick description, and (7) using a reflective journal (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). These criteria are described in more detail below.

One method that increases the trustworthiness of a qualitative study is triangulation of methods, sources and analysts. Multiple methods of data collection were used for triangulation in this investigation, including interviews and participant observation. Over the course of the research, I conducted three phenomenological interviews with the participant. Additionally, I conducted six shadowing participant observations and six selective focused observations. Following the focused observations, I conducted a dialogical or informal conversational interview (Carspecken, 1997; Patton, 2002) that addressed what occurred during the observation. The interviews and

observations were used to triangulate findings across methods. Additionally, I regularly met and debriefed regarding my research with my advisor and co-advisor. These meetings covered a range of topics including methodology, research questions, data collection, data analysis, findings from my investigation, and implications of my research.

Second, the trustworthiness of any qualitative research study is improved by employing member checks to ensure that the researcher's findings correspond to the views of the participants. In this study, member checks were a cornerstone of both data collection and analysis, as the principal took on a participatory role during dialogical interviewing and data analysis. The open interviewing technique (Patton, 2002) functioned as an ongoing member check, and served to triangulate data sources. Additionally, sharing my thoughts and ideas on a regular basis with the participant to get his feedback adds to the trustworthiness of this work.

Prolonged engagement is a third technique that aids readers in determining trustworthiness and helps provide scope and depth to the investigation. First, as mentioned earlier, I became a participant observer and conducted many interviews and observations with the principal over the course of the 2003-2004 school year. Field notes were taken to document all observations. Field notes were transcribed, reviewed, and analyzed as soon as possible after each observation. Additionally, both phenomenological and dialogical interviews were audio taped and transcribed as soon as possible after the interviews. Spending an extended period of time collecting data added to the credibility of this work.

Second, my prior experience and knowledge from working with the principal and his faculty at Hawk's Nest Elementary School can be considered prolonged engagement (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). During the two years prior to data collection, I worked closely with the principal on two projects, Project Include and the development of a school-university partnership. During these two projects, I invested many hours developing a relationship with the participant as well as learning the intricacies of the school culture. This prolonged period of time helped develop a level of trust needed to work together on this research effort and added to the trustworthiness of this study.

Peer debriefing occurred during this study through dialogues with other doctoral students and colleagues from the College of Education. A faculty member and a doctoral student, in particular, provided invaluable empathetic support during the process, as they personally understood the emotional and turbulent nature of doctoral research. Furthermore, I met periodically to debrief and share my ideas and thoughts with my advisor and co-advisor. These meetings were valuable and gave me a place to discuss and get feedback on a variety of issues related to my research including methodology concerns, preliminary findings, or issues that arose during the research process. These debriefing sessions assisted in protecting against researcher bias.

As described above, clarifying my researchers bias at the start of the study was also critical to establishing trustworthiness. Scholars have said "Every researcher brings preconceptions and interpretations to the problem being studied" (Patton, 2002). This step is vital so that readers of the research are aware of any personal or professional information, as well as the researcher's assumptions, beliefs and biases. At the beginning of this study, I bracketed my beliefs, biases, and assumptions about the nature of school

leadership and the role the principal plays in leading a school in the current era of high

stakes accountability. This reflective act continued throughout data collection and data

analysis. During this process, I specifically reflected on my own perspectives and life

experiences in a variety of areas including being a son of a principal and high school

math teacher, my experience as an ESE middle school educator, and my current position

as a doctoral student and inclusion specialist working at the district level. Consciously

reflecting on and taking into account these biases during this investigation enhanced the

credibility and trustworthiness of this research.

Another element essential to enhancing trustworthiness is to provide a rich, thick

description of the context, and a detailed account of the how the research unfolded

(Patton, 2002). In this study, a rich, thick description is provided of the context of one

school focusing specifically on the principal's leadership in an era of high stakes

accountability. In this description, I provide a variety of quotes and examples from the

data. Since it is impossible to replicate qualitative work, providing a rich description

allows the reader to identify similarities of the context studied and apply these ideas to

other settings. Therefore, providing a rich, thick descriptive account of the context is

necessary (Patton, 2002) and helps bolster the credibility and trustworthiness of this

study.

Additionally, a thorough description of a systematic process followed over the

course of the investigation is essential in determining the trustworthiness of any

qualitative inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2002). For example, I described

earlier how I chose to conduct a case study using a phenomenological lens to examine

how a principal leads a school in the current era of high stakes accountability and

additionally articulated in detail how data was collected and analyzed. Specifically, using inductive data analysis (Creswell, 1998; Moustakas, 1994), I identified key concepts and began clustering data into themes or patterns. During this stage of analysis, textural and structural descriptions of the phenomenon were developed and shared with the participant as well as my doctoral advisor and co-advisor. Furthermore, a search for disconfirming evidence and negative cases (Patton, 2002) during this stage, as well as during dialogical interviewing and data analysis, enhanced the trustworthiness of this research.

Lastly, following Lincoln and Guba's suggestion (1985), I used a researcher's journal to document my observations and thoughts, and this journal became a significant part of my research. In the journal I reported my understandings and interpretations of the research as it unfolded. It served as an outlet for emotions and also as a chronological history of my entire dissertation process. My journal was used to record personal reflections, hypotheses, and emerging ideas during the research process. Additionally, the journal allowed me to re-examine my earlier ideas about my research and determine if they were still relevant. Lastly, journaling was critical to my study because it was here where I began to find my voice as a researcher. Looking back at my journal I can see where I grew both personally and professionally. It was the place where I explored my deepest thoughts by putting pen to paper, and where I began to make sense of my research, whether it was related to research questions, data collection, findings, or implications.

In sum, the criteria I used to ensure the trustworthiness and credibility of this research includes: (1) triangulation, (2) member checks, (3) prolonged engagement, (4) peer and advisor debriefing, (5) clarification of researcher bias, (6) rich thick description,

and (7) a reflective researcher's journal. In the next several chapters, I share in detail my findings of this phenomenological case study using Gardner's (1996) three-story framework of (1) Who I am, (2) What I do, and (3) Where we are going. In the *Who I Am* story, I share how the principal's core leadership beliefs and attitudes were shaped by his life experiences. Next, in the *What He Does* story, I describe specifically what the school administrator does as he leads his school in an era of high stakes accountability. Lastly, in the *Where are we going* story I share how the principal's actions help build capacity and subsequently foster a shared vision within his school community.

CHAPTER 4
WHO IS TOM SMITH?

Setting the Stage

Tom Smith shared many insights and beliefs with me about education, leadership, and life in general. Apparent in both his talk and his actions was the primary value he placed on people and relationships. Developing relationships through embracing an ethic of care, similar to that suggested by Nel Noddings (1992) as key to teachers' work with children, appeared central to Tom's leadership. The centrality of this ethic of care for those he led was evidenced in his on-going assertion that "Human relations count"! As a result of this focus on relationships, Tom Smith introduced to me the metaphor, "lubricate the human machinery", as guiding his leadership beliefs and practices.

According to Gregory (1987), metaphor often reflects ingrained ways that human beings think and perceive. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) also contribute to our understanding of the value metaphor might offer in understanding Tom Smith's work life:

> Metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action. Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature. The concepts that govern our thought are not just matters of the intellect. They also govern our everyday functioning, structure what we perceive, how we get around in the world, and how we relate to other people. Our conceptual system thus plays a central role in defining our everyday realities. If. . . our conceptual system is largely metaphorical, then the way we think, what we experience, and what we do every day is very much a matter of metaphor. (p.3)

If metaphors govern the way we think, what we experience, and what we do in every day life, then understanding the metaphor Tom Smith used to guide his leadership work provides insight into his own work life activities.

What does the metaphor "lubricating the human machinery" mean to Tom Smith and where did this metaphor come from? Given that storytelling is a powerful linguistic tool that humans use to express their knowledge or thought, make sense of their experiencing, and share professional knowledge (Egan, 1995, 1999), this study incorporated storytelling as the vehicle for capturing and organizing Tom Smith's understanding of his leadership metaphor. As suggested by Bruner (1986), storytelling allowed Tom Smith to translate his individual private experience of understanding into a public and collaboratively negotiated form.

The power of story is also specifically acknowledged in the leadership literature that informed this study. Noel Tichy (2002), in his book *Cycle of Leadership: How Great Leaders Teach Their Companies to Win*, communicates that leadership is autobiographical and that effective leaders are shaped by the transformative life experiences that define who they are as people. Tichy continues, "Who we are as leaders comes from the ups and downs of our life experience, not the books we have read or the courses we have taken. When people look back at what shaped them, inevitably it is the tough times. Really good leaders learn from those experiences" (Sparks, 2005, p. 53). This emphasis on the value of understanding a leader's own autobiographical story and transformative life events highlights the importance of moving beyond Tom's current story to include his life story.

Peter Senge's (1990) concept of a *purpose story* also informs this study. For example, in each leader Senge (1990) studied, "A deep story and sense of purpose lay behind his vision, what we have come to call the purpose story—a larger 'pattern of becoming' that gives unique meaning to his personal aspirations and his hopes for the organization" (p.345). According to Senge, these *purpose stories* define a leader's life work by connecting the personal with the universal and by bringing "a unique depth of meaning to his vision, a larger landscape upon which his personal dreams and goals stand out as landmarks on a longer journey" (p. 346). Each leader's story is central to his ability to lead. Thus, a leader's visions are shaped by past experiences and continue to deepen as leaders listen to others and begin to see their vision as purposeful and a part of something bigger.

Howard Gardner (1996) outlines how great leaders enact three kinds of stories. These three stories include: (1) *Who I Am*, (2) *What I Do*, and (3) *Where Are We Going*. The first story, *Who I Am* explains the leader's values and motivation. The second story, *What I Does*, describes what this principal does as he enacts his role as principal. The third and final story, *Where Are We Going*, allows the leader to set the direction or course of the learning community. In an interview with Dennis Sparks (2005), Tichy states:

> It's important that school leaders be able to tell these three stories, that there is alignment among the stories, and that others sign up and mobilize around them…People don't think in PowerPoint; they think in and remember stories. Great leaders have always intuitively known that. (p. 53)

Gardner's three-story framework incorporates both Tichy's notion of leadership as autobiographical and Senge's concept of *purpose story*. Thus, Gardner's three-story sequence provides a theoretically based structure or guide for presenting the results of this study. In this case, the three-story framework illustrates the principal's "bird's eye

view" of these three essential questions: 1) *Who I Am*, (2) *What I Do*, and (3) *Where Are We Going*. By capturing Tom's impressions related to these questions, we can better understand how he leads within the current era of high stakes accountability.

In the remainder of this chapter, I describe Tom's life history in his *Who I Am* story. In Chapter 5, I illustrate Toms' *What I Do* story, focusing on how he enacts his role as school leader during the current context of high stakes accountability. In Chapter 6, I share Tom's *Where Are We Going* story that centers on Tom's vision and what he does to cultivate that vision for Hawk's Nest Elementary School.

Who is Tom Smith?

Tom's *Who I Am* story emerges from his life experiences and leads to the development of his leadership beliefs and attitudes about *Who We Are* as well as his vision for his school, *Where Are We Going*. This chapter introduces you to the influential people and life events that have helped shape Tom's beliefs and attitudes about leading a school. Initially, during the phenomenological interviews (Seidman, 1991), our conversations explored Tom's past experiences. In addition to inquiring into his family and school experiences, we addressed his past work history and the numerous experiences he has had as a teacher, district administrator, and principal that have influenced his leadership practices. By re-constructing the details and important experiences of his life, Tom and I provide snapshots of important events that transpired and how they influenced his current leadership ideas, beliefs and actions. In fact, we move beyond describing these life events to collaboratively interpreting how these life events led to his development of core beliefs that guide his decision-making about how to lead his school.

Family Experiences

Much of Tom's leadership attitudes and beliefs emerged from his own experience with his family. He grew up in a middle class family. Due to his father's job relocation, they moved from Michigan to South Florida during his elementary school years. Both his parents attended Catholic schools and received college degrees. His mother was from Iowa and was one of eight children. She graduated from college at twenty and worked in a hospital. Though his mother was a central and important presence in Tom's life, his father had a tremendous influence on his beliefs about leadership. His father was a veteran of World War II, had an intense work ethic, and by working throughout the depression, Tom's father was able to attend college and become an industrial engineer. As an engineer, Tom's father designed production and assembly lines for the boat maker, Crisscraft.

Given that Tom's father's work required organizing people to engage in the process of creating a product, leadership was a central part of his responsibilities. The core of his father's leadership belief system focused on developing relationships with people. His father believed that people are the most vital part of any organization. He shared with Tom the notion of "lubricating the human machinery" through his own example and ongoing discussions. In fact, one summer during Tom's adolescence he "tagged along" with his dad on a work trip because "his assistant wasn't going and he wanted some one to help with the driving." During this experience, Tom's dad discussed and modeled his ideas about work relations, management, and leadership. For example, Tom remembers his father knowing all the factory workers' names, asking personal questions such as "How are the wife and kids?" and always inviting the workers to share their ideas about solving issues that arose on the job. Tom recalls this experience vividly:

We stopped in Chattanooga and at that point I think I was old enough to understand what he was talking about when he talked about lubricating the human machinery. We'd go in and be down on the floor with our eye glasses and hard hats on and my dad would walk up to somebody working a lathe or a joint or something and say, 'Hey Bill, how are you doing?' So here's this guy that my dad would see once or twice a year, you know, who's a jointer operator or a paint mixer and he knew all about him. But he understood the human mechanics of this assembly line and it was all about relationships to him . . . One of the things that I heard my dad say many times about manufacturing, but I think it's true of any organization, he said if you really want to learn how an organization or how a company operates, he said you've got to get down on the floor and really look at the jobs that need to be done. Then you've got to understand the job that needs to be done, but he said you've also got to understand the man who does it everyday. I found that to be very insightful. (interview 1, 27971, 29083)

Thus, understanding people and their jobs helped Tom's father to build relationships that were essential to his success at work. The focus on building relationships and personal connections with production line workers brought an important level of "humanity" to the workplace.

The focus on relationships Tom witnessed taught him about the important bridge between management and labor, and the importance of "refusing to buy into" the adversarial management-labor relationship that defined many manufacturing companies of that time. In fact, the similarity between the pressures for productivity in the manufacturing industry and the current pressures of high stakes accountability are remarkably similar, and Tom's belief in developing human relationships is central in his leadership beliefs and practice. For instance, Tom's admiration extended to his father's company as they believed in treating employees "like family", and this was evident when his dad suffered a severe heart attack during Tom's high school years. He noted, "Crisscraft took care of him during his six-month recovery. They treated him like part of a family and they didn't have any fancy insurance plans." These examples of his father's leadership and of Crisscraft's commitment to taking care of their employees stuck with

Tom throughout his life and as a result is a value that underlies his work to "lubricate the human machinery" as he tries to create a family-like atmosphere and nurture human relationships.

In many ways Tom tries to model the role his father played in the factory at his school. Tom seeks to "lubricate the human machinery" by building relationships with his teachers and staff, facilitating many dilemmas and problems that arise, and developing a "family like atmosphere" where everyone helps each other out. Thus, these formative experiences with his father planted the seed in Tom's mind that today has blossomed into the central component of his leadership beliefs and practices.

School Experiences

In addition to sharing his experiences about his dad, Tom's own school experience is an important aspect of his *Who I Am* story and the metaphor "lubricating the human machinery." Tom's public school experience in Michigan and his Catholic school experiences in South Florida had a profound effect on his beliefs about education. Tom was born in Michigan and attended public school for a few years before his father was relocated to Broward County in South Florida. The schools in Michigan were different than the schools Tom attended in Florida. He remembers the schools in Michigan being incredibly wealthy. His hometown was a manufacturing community that included two prominent families, the Kellogg family and the Post family. These two cereal giants provided new schools, libraries, gymnasiums, and sports fields to the community.

When Tom arrived in Florida he witnessed a dramatic shift in the resources afforded by the community. The schools were not funded in the same manner and resources were "noticeably absent." In fact, the absence of resources led Tom's parents to enroll the children in local Catholic schools. Although the Catholic schools provided

some of the elements they had been accustomed to in Michigan, the Catholic schools

lacked the resources essential to a well-rounded curriculum such as a library, physical

education, music, and art.   To this day, this contrast remains vivid in his memory and the

memory often prompts him provide for a balanced curriculum and find ways to provide

resources for his teachers and students. He believes these are responsibilities he should

assume if he is committed to "lubricating the human machinery".

Additionally, three significant events occurred during Tom's Catholic school

experience that shaped his future beliefs about education. These key events also

contributed to the development of Tom's "lubricating the human machinery" metaphor as

a commitment to improving the lives of teachers and students. He recalls elementary

school (4th through 8th grade) as being "run by an angry Irish nun and things were pretty

harsh." For example, during his first few days after changing schools in 4th grade, Tom

was humiliated as his classmates ridiculed him while reading. Tom shares his

recollection of this experience:

> One of my most embarrassing moments was probably the 2nd or 3rd day of school. One of the things that we did in Catholic schools when you read or you recited was that you had to stand. That wasn't something I was used to doing. Well, I had been warned about that by my parents, so I stood up in front of the class as I read this passage essentially out of my book. We always sat alphabetically so I sat near the front. As I began reading the teacher said, 'Tom turn around when you read.' So I was like 'Ok,' so I started doing this (spinning around) and so I'm turning around and then you heard all this laughing. I didn't realize what was going on until she started laughing too. I finished and was pretty humiliated . (interview 1, 49511,50482)

As Tom illustrates in the following excerpt, the impact of this childhood incident

remains fresh in his memory, and as a result he learned the "skills of compliance":

> I managed to learn the drill and became very good at memorizing because that was an important skill. There wasn't much emphasis on thinking or learning, it was all about getting the right answers on paper, making sure things were lined up and neat and all of that. The emphasis was kind of discipline by fear.   Punishments were

harsh, not always consistent because sometimes you'd catch hell for just about anything. Most of the time it was fairly predictable because she was like always mean and angry. As long as she'd let you know the rules I could follow them. (interview 2, 3078,3420)

A second life-altering event occurred for Tom in elementary school as he

completed an extra credit report on Washington Irving. Tom finished this report and the

Sister loved it. She actually praised and complimented his effort and initiative in front of

the whole class and offered one piece of constructive criticism that could have improved

his work. Tom clearly remembers what happened next in the following interview excerpt:

The only thing the sister criticized was that I forgot to underline the title of the encyclopedia. She said it as kind of a joke. Well just as she was saying that, the principal walks in and so I'm standing up there and the teacher is saying he forgot to underline it, and the principal tore into me. She just humiliated me. I was pretty good at being stoic. You fight back the tears as she just got up in my face and kind of grabbed my shirt with this psychotic rage over this. You will never do this again and Sister you let me know if he ever does this again. I mean we knew she was wacko, but you never expect that. So the nun left, the principal was apparently nasty to the nuns as she was to all of us, so she couldn't just say, 'I'll ignore her, she's psychotic.' I'm fighting back tears. I almost think the nun was too and she just said, 'Thank you for doing that, I'll explain to the Sister that this was an extra credit report and I'm sure she didn't understand that when she walked in. She was trying to make it nice, but you know. I guess that was kind of like the old adage, you know, no good deed goes unpunished. (interview 2, 5733,7094)

These two formative experiences during his Catholic elementary school helped

form some key beliefs about teaching and learning and shape his current leadership

platform:

One of the things that I learned about using that kind of power, I learned as a kid. I remembered that today, public humiliation for the purpose of asserting power doesn't work for you, it works against you, because everybody in that room, probably including the teacher disliked that principal a little bit more for what she did. (interview 2, 7104,7454)

Thus, Tom's elementary Catholic school experience was marred by "institutional

harshness" and provided him with many non-examples of how classrooms and schools

should be. In fact, building relationships as a method of "lubricating the human machinery" was not a part of Tom's formative elementary schooling experience.

In contrast, when Tom graduated from this school and moved across the street to the Catholic High School, the culture and learning environment was dramatically different. In contrast to the harsh and punitive elementary school, the culture of the high school was caring, warm and nurturing. Tom shares that "the teachers and nuns in general at the high school were just superior," "they cared about us as people", and the "school culture resembled a family." To this day, Tom has continued to maintain relationships with his friends and teachers from high school. He recalls that he felt his needs were important to those within the school community in just the same way as a sense of community existed within his father's company:

> By developing a personal interest in their students the underlying message of the school was, in a sense, trying to find a way of maintaining humanity and personal interest. The family-like atmosphere sought to develop this. (interview 2, 2503,2854)

The power of community became particularly evident and important to Tom when his father suffered a heart attack. An ethic of care (Noddings, 1992) surfaced in the school community in a variety of ways. First, after his mother informed the school of his father's health condition, each of Tom's teachers responded by talking to him personally and letting him know they knew what was happening and assuring him not to worry about his school work. His family came first and his schoolwork was secondary at this stage of his life. This priority was made very clear to Tom and his family. In fact, Tom had to assume more responsibility at home. For example, when his father returned to work half time a few months later and was unable to drive, Tom had to drive him to and from work.

Dad was supposed to quit at noon and I would have to go back to get him at noon, which was around my lunchtime. I would go get dad, take him home, come back to school and I would miss about half of some class, history or something like that. I didn't want to miss class, but you hurry up and you hurry back and you're killing an hour, an hour and a half doing all that stuff. And after the second or third day, you know, the teacher kind of pulled me aside and said, "Is everything going OK? How's you dad?" And she asked, "You're not eating lunch, are you?" I said, "Well not really, I don't have time. I get something in the afternoon." She told me not to come to class tomorrow unless I ate lunch. "You need to go into the cafeteria or you need to stop at McDonalds or whatever, but you know, you need to eat lunch." But the whole thing was that it was very obvious that my needs and my family needs were of immediate importance and you know, the history and the assignments and that kind of stuff were less important. (interview 2, 16942, 17804)

This episode left a lasting impression on Tom. In fact, he reflects back to these incidents when discussing how he leads his school in the current era of high stakes accountability. He asserts that "the people work is what is important." The underlying issue is a sense of trying to find a way, especially "in big organizations, whether it's a lot of little people or a lot of big people, of maintaining a sense of a personal interest and humanity." Thus, Tom envisions building a school community that values people and relationships. He cultivates building relationships in productive ways to overcome and combat the current wave of pressure associated with high stakes accountability. In combination, Tom's lessons learned from school experiences and his father's beliefs regarding "lubricate the human machinery" reinforce each other and contribute to his own leadership style. By placing his primary interest in his faculty and students, these past experiences continue to live as he seeks to improve the lives of his teachers and students within a context of high stakes accountability.

Teaching Experiences

Tom's work experience as a teacher, district supervisor, and principal are also key ingredients of his *Who I Am* story and are related to the overarching metaphor of "lubricate the human machinery." In particular, he credits many mentors for helping him

develop his leadership skills. For example, Tom views his experiences working with his former principals at Jekyll Elementary School, Bryan Park Middle School and Presley High School as shaping his professional development. Additionally, he talks about an influential superintendent and a Catholic Priest who made a lasting impact on his leadership.

At Jekyll Elementary, Tom describes the principal as a "Benevolent Dictator." She allowed teachers to take part and participate in the leadership of the school as long as they followed her general path. She saw in Tom some leadership potential and encouraged him to pursue leadership opportunities. She appointed Tom to leadership roles such as department chair and team leader and gave him more responsibilities and duties at school which he enjoyed:

> The principal took a liking to me and really kind of encouraged me to pursue some things. There was a leadership pool they created, young teachers that might be interested in leadership positions. I thought that was kind of interesting and at that time the focus was on institutional change and being an agent of change. That kind of intrigued me. (interview 1, 2821, 3065)

The "Benevolent Dictator" had "lubricated the human machinery" by opening leadership opportunities for Tom Smith's career development.

Simultaneously, Tom became active in the development of the teachers' union. This provided the unique experience for Tom to see how different principals looked at the issue of teacher voice and shared decision-making:

> I had the opportunity to see some really good leaders and really good principals as we worked through these problems and some really sorry ones, too. It was really interesting to see how some principals were able to take the contract and make it work and accept it and deal with this whole issue of teacher rights and having a shared voice. They seemed to thrive in the role of principals and some people who just struggled with that for a couple of years. I worked with a couple of principals who were good at other things but that personal sense of commitment (to teachers) wasn't there. (interview 1, 3986,4341)

Once again Tom learned from these experiences the value of building personal ties with colleagues and this learning further deepened his commitment to personally investing in people. During his tenure at Jekyll, Tom had the opportunity to develop his leadership skills and participate in shared decision making while building relationships with many people. "Lubricating the human machinery" was once again a central piece of Tom's experience and positively influenced his beliefs.

After leaving Jekyll for a middle school position at Bryan Park, Tom continued to have meaningful mentoring experiences that influenced his emerging leadership style. At Bryan Park, he had the opportunity to work for a principal who provided distributed leadership opportunities. This principal focused on being flexible and supporting program development in areas that were targeted by his teacher leaders. Tom indicates that this principal's style is probably the most similar to his own current leadership style.

> He didn't feel a need to be an expert in everything. He just kind of directed the traffic and helped sometimes define the decisions and made the decisions he needed to, but he was very big on developing talent and giving people responsibility, and giving them opportunities for leadership. (interview 1, 7978, 8468)

Tom continues his reflection on this middle school experience by identifying the power and struggles he witnessed within this school associated with the principal sharing leadership with teachers:

> I had some real good teachers and administrators there to work with. The principal of that school was very big in shared decision making…democratic leadership… He had a bunch of very strong teachers and a lot of leaders, which at that time was not accepted by the district because people said he has too many chiefs and not enough Indians there…but what he did was turn a lot of stuff, even day to day scheduling and figuring things out over to the grade level teachers and we would hash it out and figure it out. It was frustrating at times because it was not his style to tell us what to do and that was very different than the principal I had come from who was kind of a good manager but a benevolent dictator. But what would happen was that there was a high level of engagement and buy in. We ended up

working through most of our problems and the principal would help us when we needed it. (interview 1, 5819, 6978)

Tom's tenure at Bryan Park provided opportunities for personal and professional growth. He learned what schools with high levels of engagement looked like and how to recognize faculty buy-in. Working in this school gave him the opportunity to collaborate with others and work through shared professional problems. Additionally, he had the opportunity to develop relationships and work with many educators who later have assumed leadership positions in the district. In fact, he noted that:

> Half of the principals, assistant principals, assistant superintendent, and a couple of superintendents over the time came from those two schools. Both of those principals had a sense of developing leaders. I got them both. I had a lot of opportunities that were given to me. (interview 1, 7125,7335)

After five years at this school, Tom Smith felt a "need for a change of scenery." Having helped develop a small middle school gifted program for Bryan Park, he took a position as gifted supervisor for the district. Initially his supervisor job entailed giving the gifted program some definition and focus in the district. The program had evolved into a range of "different, disconnected things happening in different schools." As part of this job, he outlined "goals and objectives for the program that would be a common thread" for developing school-based gifted programs. After he completed defining the role and function of school-based gifted programs, his primary job function shifted to staffing specialist.

Shortly thereafter, the assistant superintendent for curriculum reorganized the gifted program and simultaneously increased the academic emphasis of the program. This added responsibility to Tom's role as gifted supervisor. He was instrumental in establishing the district's gifted and talented screening criteria and helped many schools develop their own gifted programs. However, Tom believed the IQ test score provided insufficient

evidence and that other characteristics of giftedness should be included in the screening

criteria. He believed the criteria should include input from classroom teachers and other

measures of academic achievement rather than solely rely on the outcome of a single IQ

test. Thus, he "became the gatekeeper" of the gifted program and over time that made

him unpopular with some influential people including many teachers, parents, local

psychologists, and a newspaper reporter.

Shortly after the district reorganization, Tom was removed from the position and

reassigned to be Supervisor of Parent Services for ESE. This job was a one-year grant

funded position and as a result Tom was "essentially fired at the end of that year." Tom

views himself as the "sacrificial lamb":

> I was pretty disenchanted with the school system then, the politics. I felt that I kind
> of got caught up in the undertow of politics in the school district and had not been
> dealt with very fairly. (interview1, 14115,14340)

Similar to his experiences in elementary school, Tom's negative experience as gifted

supervisor resonated. As a result of this personal struggle, Tom began to doubt his

abilities. This experience in part resulted from Tom's failure to develop solid

relationships with his peers and supervisors around a common goal for the gifted

program.

Following this personal and professional struggle, Tom accepted a teaching

position at Presley High School, an alternative high school for students who were at-risk

for academic failure and dropping out of school. He thought that would be a good place

to work because the principal was known for "developing leadership." However, Tom

had to deal with the scars from being let go as gifted coordinator:

> The start of that school year was very humbling for me, personally and
> emotionally. Having to deal with being fired and being a failure. Being pissed off
> and mad at the system and at a whole lot of people. It was real important to me that

somebody believed in me and cared about me and was determined to make me successful. That made a very big impact on how I saw my job. I had worked for a couple of principals who were good at other things but that personal sense of commitment wasn't there. (interview 1, 22143,22606)

Once again Tom thought about the importance of developing a relationship with a mentor as well as his colleagues and students. Without that connection and personal commitment to collegial relationships, Tom felt disconnected.

The principal at Presley had the reputation of "hiring people and turning them loose and getting them excited about things." With Presley's student population consisting of "the kids that nobody wanted, the principal's philosophy was whatever most schools do doesn't work (for these students), so do something else." She lubricated the human machinery by trusting Tom's abilities as a teacher. It was important to Tom that she had faith in him because his "confidence had taken a blow." He had even explored other paths in the education field including attending graduate school to pursue "some kind of college teaching position." In reflection, Tom acknowledge the importance of this opportunity to return to the classroom:

> That was a real critical year for me in a lot of ways. For one, I learned how to be a teacher that year. I learned how to be a different kind of a teacher. I did that for a year and really enjoyed it and it felt good to be appreciated again. Felt good to be successful. I thought, well I am doing a pretty good job with some of the toughest kids in the district. (interview 1, 15453, 15608)

Tom's time at Presley proved to be a fulfilling experience and allowed him to regain his confidence. For example, Tom quickly realized that working with these students was different and that "the authoritative stuff didn't work." His role became that of a counselor or facilitator. He had 15-18 students and was responsible for all of their academic subjects. He tried to "get them going, get them to school, do some work, work in small groups" and what he found really worked for those kids was developing personal

relationships. Indeed, most of them "didn't have good relationships with the school in general and with teachers in particular." He felt he "made a difference and was pretty successful with some kids that by definition were pretty tough kids." Once again building relationships, or *"lubricate the human machinery"*, became critical to his success and further cemented his leadership beliefs.

Leadership Experience

During the school year when Tom began teaching at Presley High, the school system went through some political upheaval and significant changes occurred district wide. An interim superintendent who was an old colleague of Tom's from his days at Jekyll approached Tom about an appointment as a principal intern. Tom did not know if that was what he wanted. After some convincing, Tom reluctantly took this intern position. In fact, Tom was caught off guard by the district leader's confidence in his ability to lead a school. Once again, it was evident that having developed a collegial relationship with the superintendent was key to his decision to take on this leadership role. In the fall of 1992, Tom assumed the position of principal intern at Hawk's Nest Elementary. This assignment was for a half year with a second semester assignment at another local school. However, near the conclusion of the semester, the principal of Hawk's Nest had to have emergency surgery, and Tom Smith was assigned interim principal during her recovery.

Once the principal returned to work, another event transpired that set the course for Tom's future. The community was growing and another school had been built to accommodate the overflow of students. This presented a dilemma in this tight knit rural community. They did not want their town divided in half and they successfully petitioned the school board to designate one school as a primary school (Grades K-2) and

the other as an intermediate school (Grades 3-5). After a lengthy and heated debate, the school board approved this school arrangement with the new school being designated the primary facility and the older building becoming the intermediate school. In the end, the former K-4 school was split into two schools and the local middle school that accommodated grades 5-8, lost grade 5 to the intermediate school. This change required a restructuring of the school's resources including students, teachers, and administrators.

Since Tom's supervising principal had expertise in early childhood education, she was chosen to lead the new primary school and soon left her position as principal of Hawk's Nest to set up the new building. Tom was subsequently appointed principal of Hawk's Nest Elementary School after a group of influential teachers, parents, and community members advocated on his behalf to the board. This support taught Tom that it was necessary to nurture and build relationships with many different stakeholders if he was to be a successful principal. His assignment to the principalship as a result of support from influential stakeholders indicates that in the short time since Tom had assumed the helm of the school, he had built relationships with many different stakeholders that trusted him. In fact, Tom never completed his principal internship, and simply remained at Hawk's Nest and assumed the role of principal.

In spite of the confidence displayed by stakeholders during Tom's quick entry to the principalship, "lubricate the human machinery" was challenging from the onset of his new position. The opening of the new community primary school complicated Tom's initial experience as principal at Hawk's Nest. The "faculty was immediately split", as many teachers left to work with the former principal at the new primary school. In addition, he had to incorporate several fifth grade teachers from the middle school that

were being relocated and fill vacant positions. This created a unique opportunity for

Tom, as he tried to "put his stamp" on this school.

First and foremost, he tried to stock his school with people who had the capacity

and desire to develop good relationships, because he believed "nothing else important is

going to happen in the school unless there are strong relationships." At the same time, he

realized he had some teachers who did not share his vision of working as a team. For

many of these teachers Tom believed it was "not an incompetence issue but rather a

neglect of duty." These teachers believed that teaching was an isolated activity, and that

as long as they "closed their doors and taught", all was fine. This was different from the

culture Tom wanted to create at Hawk's Nest. Thus, Tom sought to bring in educators

that considered themselves team players and who valued collegial relationships.

During this turbulent time, Tom's values and beliefs guided him through the rocky

waters as he sought to develop the culture he wanted at Hawk's Nest. He realized he

would have to take some risks and remove the teachers who were not committed to

developing relationships and working as a team. The culture did not support the quality

of collaboration Tom sought:

> You can't talk about reading and math, you can't deal with schedules, you can't get
> the kids on the bus if there's friction or hostility. Which there was when I got here.
> (interview 2, 34699, 35350)

So Tom's goal was two fold, to find people who could "maintain and develop good

working relationships" with others, and at the same time find ways to "remove some

deadwood" by beginning the termination process for a veteran teacher.

This particular incident, related to dismissing a veteran teacher, highlights not only

the tension that he experienced during the first few years of his principalship but also

Tom's deep moral conviction related to his beliefs. Tom's recent experience of "being

treated unfairly had left a sour taste" in his mouth. This was the impetus for his careful

and ethical treatment of the teacher as Tom began the process to dismiss him. Tom

began documenting his efforts to improve this teacher's practice while also starting the

termination process. Even in the face of this dilemma, Tom felt "an ethical responsibility

to help the teacher do a better job because people had helped him."

In this situation, Tom believed he gave this at-risk teacher "a fair shot and spent a

lot of time and money without much result." To support this teacher he provided a mentor

teacher. In fact, his mentor as well as the teacher panel that oversaw the review process

agreed regarding the teacher's ultimate termination. Interestingly, the union grieved the

result and during the arbitration process found evidence that the teacher was not properly

informed that this process could result in termination. So, the teacher was awarded

another year and once again Tom began the process.

> I didn't hang him out to dry—there was a bigger moral issue at hand. He needed to be fired because he was a bad teacher not because he's a child molester. This incident caused a lot of trouble with parents and community but ethically we had to follow protocol and allow the decision making process to take place. (Field Notes, 2-26, 4327,4479)

In the end the process became "a real emotional drain on the teacher and he was on

the verge of a psychological breakdown." Eventually the teacher was dismissed with the

support of fellow teachers and the union leadership. Tom believed he spent more time

with him than all of his other teachers over the two-year period and gave him every

chance to succeed. From a moral standpoint, Tom knew he had to act in an ethical way

by giving the teacher every possible chance to improve his practice. He poured his time

and energy into mentoring him. That is why in the end Tom believes that "people

supported doing the right thing (firing) for the right reason (he was a bad teacher)."

However, this incident and others involving staff changes created much teacher resistance and dissension because "when you start messing with careers, they will put up a fight." Staffing changes led to fear, gossip, and distrust in Tom's leadership. During this time, there was "sheer meanness, ugliness and character assassination" at the school. Tom was accused of sexual harassment, as well as being an alcoholic. Although most of the faculty and staff did not believe the accusations regarding Tom and remained "solidly behind" him, a select few teachers were "actively spreading gossip in the lounge."

Fortunately, some people spoke in support of Tom and were very loyal. Tom understands that they did not need to do this and that "they took some grief from the union and all that for doing it." Over time, Tom began to notice a change in more of the faculty as the school community began to develop.

> Getting rid of toxic personalities who didn't value the relationships made the first couple years here very difficult for me . . . However, when groups of people develop relationships, then that makes the group stronger and after about the third year, it's kind of funny, when the last one dropped which was the meanest, nastiest one, all of the sudden when school started it was just different. You could feel the energy. (interview 2, 33768,34179)

However, regardless of the staffing changes that had finally taken place Tom recognized he still had a long way to go to build the trust with his faculty.

> That was tough and there's still some blood spots on the carpets around here from those battles, but one of the things that having come through the last and the nastiest of those battles was that there were still a group of people I think here who were uncertain whether I was treating people fairly. Most of the people had gotten to know me and they didn't actively support me in the campaign, but they didn't buy into the whole character assassination thing either. But I felt that there was really a sense of distrust and some people wondered if they could trust me or not, he's firing people, am I going to be next? (interview 2, 39495,40202)

To combat this lingering feeling of distrust, Tom sought ways to build trust with his staff. He remembered that a former colleague once shared with him that "if you want to get trust, you have got to give trust." He decided to implement a vote of confidence. At a

building concerns committee meeting, he informed the members that he was going to ask

for a vote of confidence at the end of the year. Basically, Tom was asking the committee

of five teachers whether they wanted him to continue as principal. He gave this

committee, made up entirely of union members, the authority over his job. Tom recalls

this time:

> If they said yes, then I'll stay and if you say no, then I'll either transfer, resign or do
> something else. So that gives you (the committee) the power to fire me. When I
> talked to the attorney and the boss downtown about that, you know they were
> actually very supportive, but the superintendent said, well if they decide they don't
> want you, don't come whining to me and I responded that well I didn't intend to.
> Then he said if 'you're comfortable with that I think that's a gutsy move and a
> good idea, but all you need is three of those five people to do it.' (interview 2,
> 43233, 43791)

Tom thought the vote of confidence was going "to make or break him" and he decided to

give the same choice to the school advisory committee, which consisted of teachers,

parents, and community members. He shares, "I caught them by surprise but ever since

both committees have annually unanimously given me the vote of confidence to continue

as principal."

Tom emphasized one other significant event that occurred during his first few

years as principal. As mentioned previously, Tom struggled with the principalship

initially and the deteriorating relationships began to take a toll on him. As a result of the

continuous conflict that resulted in taking one-step forward and two steps backward, he

began to question, "why am I here?"

Interestingly, as Tom began asking these questions about his worklife, he recalled a

similar loss of interest or questioning of the Catholic Church. He remembered how his

attendance at church was casual at best as he started to "go through the motions and had

fundamental theological questions about all the obligations and rules." At the same time,

his son was reaching school age and felt obligated to attend by his internalized "Catholic guilt." Plus, he wondered "Is my son's experience going to be any different than what I went through?" During this questioning period, a new priest, Father Pat, was assigned to Tom's church and Tom watched him breathe a new life into the church community.

> He brought passion to the priesthood. Seemed like the high point of his day was saying mass. He was friendly and said hello to everyone, shook hands as he entered the service, high-fived kids. He had energy and enthusiasm for the job. He ad-libbed. Stood, talked and communicated to everyone that there is no place I'd rather be than doing this right now…He took this minimal parish and transformed it. It was contagious and excitement grew. Everyone became involved and I watched from the outside the impact he had. He communicated passion, enthusiasm and fun. (Field notes, 4-21, 4541,5391)

In fact when discussing this experience, Tom brings up a famous scene from the movie "*When Harry Met Sally.*" This is the scene when Meg Ryan fakes an orgasm while eating in a diner. Immediately after this, an elderly woman who witnessed Meg Ryan's antics states, "I'll have what she's having" to her waitress. Tom believes this is similar to the role Father Pat played for him during this turbulent time. Tom realized he had to get away from "the role of the overworked, underpaid, full of self pity principal…Part of leadership is people seeing the leader's enthusiasm, hope, and passion so that people want to get involved." In fact, before this experience he doubted his abilities and thought it might be time to do something else. As a result of this experience, it became important to him for others "to perceive he enjoyed his work."

Today, Tom describes passion, hope, and enthusiasm as central to his leadership role. This is "the candy shell around the M&M. Without that, individual teachers stay in individual classrooms and use the dominant paradigm of closing their doors and teaching." However, by showing he enjoyed his work, he sought to ignite and develop the collective energy of his staff. This passion "makes teaching easier and adds

knowledge and expertise. It's fun, and doesn't drain teachers emotionally." This allowed

for a more collegial relationship to develop between Tom and his faculty. This collegial

energy and enthusiasm is a critical aspect of Tom's leadership metaphor of "lubricate the

human machinery".

The thread of developing personal relationships with the purpose of improving the

lives of teachers and students is evident throughout Tom's life history. Central to his

leadership is relationship building and the development of an energized, trusting,

collegial work place for all his faculty and staff that was modeled for him by his father,

the staff at his Catholic high school, and key mentors in his education career. In fact,

Tom's *Who I Am* story has laid the foundation for his key leadership beliefs and practices

of "lubricate the human machinery" as he navigates his school through the current wave

of accountability and mandated school reform. Thus, Tom's *Who I Am* story highlights

the reasons why "lubricate the human machinery" is such a powerful and central concept

of Tom's leadership beliefs and practices.

CHAPTER 5
WHAT TOM SMITH DOES

In Chapter 4, I presented Tom's life history to better understand the *Who I Am* frame for Tom as an educational leader. The chapter laid the foundation for understanding the underpinnings of his leadership beliefs and actions embedded in the "lubricating the human machinery" metaphor that guides his practice. In telling his life story, Tom recognized why and articulated how he came to embrace "lubricating the human machinery."

Now we turn to the second story, *What Tom Does,* to enact his role as principal. Referring back to the purpose of this research, I investigated how one principal's beliefs, actions, and commitment allow him to navigate the current educational landscape. Thus, the purpose of this chapter is to explore how Tom enacts his role as a leader, and balances the many demands for his time in an era wrought with issues of accountability, high stakes testing, and mandated school reforms.

Spillane, Halverson and Diamond (2001) discuss why this type of research is essential:

> While there is an expansive literature about *what* school structures, programs, and processes are necessary for instructional change, we know less about *how* these changes are undertaken or enacted by school leaders in their daily work. To study school leadership we must attend to leadership practice rather than chiefly or exclusively to school structures, programs, and designs. An in-depth analysis of the practice of school leaders is necessary to render an account of *how* school leadership works. Knowing what leaders do is one thing, but without a rich understanding of *how* and *why* they do it, our understanding of leadership is incomplete. (p. 23)

The authors assert future research must be grounded in the work of the principal and seek

to uncover the motives and underlying reasons for providing leadership:

> To gain insight on leadership practice, we need to understand a task *as it unfolds* from the perspective and through the "theories in use" of the practitioner. And we need to understand the knowledge, expertise, and skills that the leaders bring to the execution of the task. (p. 23)

> Thus, I construct a portrait of Tom's lived experience focusing on the central tenet

of how "lubricating the human machinery" played out in his practice. Furthermore, this

story not only seeks to illustrate what Tom does to enact his role as principal, but also

focuses on how and why he does what he does while leading a school in an era of high

stakes accountability.

Caring For and Personally Investing in the Human Machinery

We learned in the past chapter that "lubricating the human machinery" is pivotal to

Tom's leadership practice. The central element of Tom's commitment to "lubricating the

human machinery" is caring for and personally investing in his teachers. This is evident

as Tom views "taking care" of his teachers as his primary role at Hawk's Nest

Elementary.

> I think not only do I need to take care of the people work, but it needs to be obvious that that's a priority around here, and I think that's got to be a priority in the classroom, too. (interview 5, 29968,30160)

> Tom's ethic of care (Noddings, 1992) emerges from his priority to build

relationships with his teachers and students. This element of Tom's leadership style has

evolved over the years as he shifted from a more traditional management-oriented

leadership perspective.

> I think a big part of it that might be different than what I thought about it years ago or didn't anticipate is trying to help and invest in people, trying to help them be all they can be. You know, helping to grow the big people, helping them to achieve

their goals, especially professional development…when they reach their goals then the kids will reach their goals. (interview 5, 2522,2990)

As indicated, Tom's belief about caring for and investing in people evolved over time as

he realized that adults require the same kind of investment as children need from

teachers. The power of investing in teachers, according to Tom, will eventually show up

in children's growth.

The idea of "lubricating the human machinery" also rests on his father's belief that

people are the most vital part of any organization. Tom asserts, "My dad used to say, hire

the people and then take care of them."   Caring for people includes reaching out to them

on a very fundamental level.

I think you need to take care of people at that real basic psychological level and just so they're healthy, they're happy and they are physically and emotionally and psychologically able to contribute something. (interview 3, 3237,3447)

Tom believes his responsibility extends beyond the professional lives of his

teachers to include supporting them in their personal lives as well.

And I think that one of the nice things about being in this business as opposed to other organizations, all of whom have the same type of leadership issues, is that by helping people grow professionally and personally, there is a direct correlation between them doing that [growing] and the success of this organization. (interview 5, 3714,4696)

Although an ethic of care (Noddings, 1992) and developing relationships work

hand in hand and contribute significantly to Tom's leadership, he also recognizes the

tensions that may arise from caring for his staff on a more personal level.

The fact that I'm the boss creates an artificial relationship that will cause some people to either be more distant from me than they ordinarily would or try to become closer and suck up more than they ordinarily would. (interview 3, 11340,11649)

Additionally, Tom recognizes that even though he believes the personal and professional often blur, tension can be created when you personally care about people in a work environment.

> I have to be kind of careful because while I'm concerned about what's going on in their personal life, it's really none of my business if they don't want to share that. And I know two people who have gone through divorces this year, and one I was actively involved with to the point of arranging for lawyers because that person wanted and needed that. They would tell me what's going on and felt they needed to confide in me. And the other one, officially hasn't even said a word and this has been going on for a year. (interview 3, 12734,13388)

The tension of blurring the professional and personal was evident as he discussed the recent death of a teacher's spouse:

> When S.T. was coming back, I'd come in, in the morning and give her a hug and she needed that. And I'd ask her how she was doing and she could tell me and she was comfortable with that. We've known each other for 20 years and that's how she is. For other people, I wouldn't do that. I'd make myself available or ask them how they're doing, offer to help but then some people don't want that or need that from me or the workplace environment. And then again some people just don't like to talk about their personal business. (interview 3, 14061-14786)

In these examples, Tom notes the tensions associated with blurring the personal and professional within the workplace. Though these tensions do exist, Tom's caring for his staff remains his top priority as he seeks to "lubricate the human machinery" in his school. By exhibiting care in explicit and meaningful ways, Tom seeks to build and sustain relationships as well as create a community that embraces these values as well.

> We take care of people here and that's part of a belief system that exists in some places and doesn't exist in others, and I think that is something that I tried to create here. You can get a sense of the personal investment when you're working closely with teachers. That personal investment is that we're taking care of people. And I think that it is my job to take care of people, and it probably is the most important thing I do. (interview 2, 21379, 21535)

According to Tom, caring for and personally investing in teachers is a leadership role that encourages teachers to grow both professionally and personally in a way that will benefit the lives of not only their students, but also the teachers themselves.

Therefore, Tom's leadership beliefs and practices related to caring for and personally investing in his staff are analogous with the Coalition of Essential Schools' principle of decency and trust (Cushman, 1991). The principle of decency highlights "how people in a school behave to each other—in classrooms, halls, central office and the faculty lounge" (Cushman, 1991, p. 1). Cushman elaborates further:

> The tone of the school should explicitly and self-consciously stress values of unanxious expectation (I won't threaten you but I expect much of you), of trust (until abused), and of decency (the values of fairness, generosity, and tolerance). (p. 10)

Tom exhibits these qualities as he seeks to "lubricate the human machinery" by caring for and personally investing in his teachers. However, when looking back at the previous quote, Tom also includes the "we" and references a "belief system" in the excerpt indicating his commitment to cultivating care as a shared value and norm within the school community.

Given this commitment, how does Tom take care of and personally invest in his teachers and simultaneously influence the development of the belief system that helps to define the "we"? To answer this question I paint a picture that illustrates three separate but overlapping characteristics of how Tom personally invests in his teachers. These include: (1) buffering teachers and staff from external pressure, (2) nurturing his teachers and staff, and (3) promoting teacher growth. The goal and underlying moral purpose of these actions are directly related to improving the lives of teachers and students. Each of these dimensions or practices is not mutually exclusive of each other as they share the

central purpose of "growing teachers" and are highlighted in the specific actions and events described below that transpired as he led a school during the current wave of high stakes accountability.

Buffering Teachers and Staff from External Pressure

A first characteristic of Tom personal investment in teachers is buffering his faculty and staff from outside criticism and anxiety associated with high stakes accountability. For the purpose of this research study, buffering is defined as protecting or shielding teachers from undue criticism, harm, or pressure that could adversely impact their teaching. Thus, Tom "lubricates the human machinery" by protecting his staff from the pressures associated with high stakes accountability. In this section, I first offer a snapshot of Tom's key beliefs about high stakes testing that highlight his leadership philosophy of buffering his teachers and staff from the anxiety related to increased accountability. Next, I share two specific ways Tom combats the pressures of high stakes accountability: (1) using data to define our goals and standards, and (2) building partnerships within the surrounding community.

Tom shared with me his deep moral convictions about the unethical, widespread use of standardized test results to measure student achievement. The state of Florida uses the Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test (FCAT) to annually measure student progress toward mastering the Sunshine State Standards (SSS). The FCAT is given to all third through tenth grade students in the areas of reading and math. Writing is also assessed in fourth, eighth, and tenth grades. For the first time this year science exams were given to fifth, eighth, and tenth graders. Since this was the first year of testing science, the tests have yet to be normed. Therefore, the science exams are not included in

the formula that grades all schools and awards high performing schools with bonus money.

Further complicating the issue of standards based reform is a new state statute that raised the bar higher and significantly increased the pressures associated with standardized testing performance. This law mandates that third grade students who do not perform at a proficient level on the reading portion of the FCAT must be retained. Similarly, high school students must pass both the math and reading sections to graduate from high school.

All told, Tom's frustration with the current "obsession" over standardized test scores conflicted with his leadership beliefs of "lubricating the human machinery." Tom's long-term goal is to "grow good teachers" and the increased pressure "directly impacts the lives of his teaching staff" as they are held increasingly accountable for their students' academic growth. In fact, over the past few years since the stakes were raised Tom has seen many excellent educators leave the teaching ranks because of the pressure to raise test scores. The constant public scrutiny of teachers brought on by the heightened accountability associated with NCLB (2001) and Florida A+ plan (1999) has created a "sense of urgency" in schools.

From Tom's perspective focusing only on FCAT test results to measure success is "short sighted and compromises long term growth for short term payoffs." Tom compares the current accountability movement to the many fad diets that appear regularly. These diets are typical unhealthy because they focus on short-term weight loss and do not take into consideration unintended consequences and long-term implications.

> I think that what happens at some schools in the district is that they overreact to things when they get a lousy grade one year and then they'll react to that problem

and then the grade will go up and you've seen these kind of things. And whether or not the school is actually improving, who knows? But, we know that one fad diet after another is not particularly healthy so we just kind of stay the course and do not worry about the other stuff. (interview 3, 44550, 45034)

However, one unintended outcome of the increased focus on teaching standards

that Tom and his faculty cannot ignore is the extra paperwork and documentation

required by teachers. Tom views these activities simply as "exercises in compliance."

> I mean I don't have a problem with documenting that we have taught these standards in these areas, that's kind of what we're supposed to be doing, but when they become so cumbersome, so detailed that it becomes all about filling out the form and not teaching the standard, it loses value (interview 5, 45553, 45824)

He contends that the current trend to focus on student achievement based on

arbitrary standards is just "chicken little stuff" that does not attend to the needs of

students and teachers. Further complicating the current reform movement is that the state

standards and criteria for passing the FCAT have changed every year since

implementation in the late 1990s. This creates even more frustration as teachers "try to

hit a moving target." Therefore, Tom tends to just "ignore most of this stuff" because

"the sky hasn't fallen yet."

Nevertheless, Tom believes it is his role to buffer his staff from much of the

pressure associated with improving student achievement:

> I try and protect the teachers from all of the threats and all of the boogiemen and all of the other stuff that's going on whether it comes from Paige (Secretary of Education), the Governor or the superintendent. (interview 3, 45165,45505)

To combat the increased public scrutiny, Tom buffers his faculty by attempting to

downplay the high stakes of the times to his faculty.

> I guess what I try and tell folks is, I'll let you know when you need to worry about something and that this stuff kind of comes and goes. In fact most of the time I just say, this is nothing to worry about, even if I think it is because usually it does blow over, but if it looks like I'm worried, then they are really going to worry. So I better save that for something really important. However, I also know they want to

perform well on the tests and are looking at how we performed compared to last year and other schools. (interview 3, 46491, 46876)

Similarly, Tom tries to buffer his faculty from the intense media scrutiny and negative public debate regarding the current state of education. Tom believes the "nature of the media is to try and create controversy" whether related to local issues such as rezoning or more global issues like test scores and private school vouchers. Tom is troubled by the constant attention and political maneuvering associated with grading schools and retaining students based on test scores. Therefore, he chooses carefully how and when he discusses Hawk's Nest tests scores. For example, when test scores became public late in the school year, Tom addressed the faculty and first downplayed the school's scores and the stakes associated with the results with his faculty.

> I did discuss our results, No Child Left Behind and the AYP, just because it was in the paper. I just said, I'm sorry if I left you out in the cold and if I haven't been sharing information I am sorry, but this stuff is really pretty silly and I just didn't want to bother you with it . . . I mean it's a tempest in a teapot. (interview 3, 42794, 43172)

This excerpt illustrates Tom's belief about the inadequacy of the current high stakes accountability movement. Tom believes that the present trend centering on high stakes accountability is "unethical and unnecessary." In fact, the phrase "tempest in a teapot" suggests that Tom's underlying moral purpose of "lubricating the human machinery" to improve the lives of teachers and students is in conflict with the current focus on high stakes testing. However, though Tom downplays the importance of the accountability efforts, he and his staff also recognize that they must comply with the new reforms and mandates that focus on improving student performance. One way this is done is through the use of data to develop school goals for improving student achievement.

Using data to develop our own goals and standards

Though Tom understands his current role is "to fend off all the politics" and protect

his staff from much of the pressure associated with high stakes reform, he also recognizes

that the school must focus on reaching the goals associated with NCLB, AYP, and

Florida A+. Therefore, to avoid much of the scrutiny, Hawk's Nest must be somewhat

accountable to the "powers that be."

> But I think that what we need to do to be successful and ultimately change the
> system is first be successful on somebody else's terms…it needs to be obvious that
> our kids are good readers or good writers or good arithmeticers, and that's not
> really a subject for discussion. (interview 5, 16104,16440)

It is noteworthy that, to some degree Tom blames the educational community for

the evolution of standards based reform. Tom believes the underlying cause of the state

and federal government shift towards standards based education is that schools have

historically developed "feel good standards." Tom has experienced this cycle of increased

accountability three or four times in his career as various groups, including the federal

government, the state department of education, and the local district office, have

mandated new standards and reforms over the past three decades. Tom foresees that the

current trend to focus on test results will eventually fall out of favor similar to what he

has experienced numerous times in the past.

> One of the reasons we have all of this arbitrary, artificial achievement standards
> imposed on us is because we've never really developed very meaningful ones for
> ourselves and people aren't buying that today…so we did that to ourselves…until
> we begin to define and describe some other meaningful kinds of results, you know,
> then I see nothing wrong with having the test data. So I think when we've
> developed our own standards or criteria that are real and meaningful and have
> substance to them, then we can say that we are a good school. If we had done that
> 10, 20, or 30 years ago, we wouldn't have all this stuff (high stakes accountability
> and testing) now. What I predict will happen is in 5 to 6 years is this whole
> movement, Florida A+, and NCLB, will go just because the politicians who put it
> in place will go and the problems that are created will bubble up to the top and so
> the standards will be tossed out or replaced with some other kind school reform out

there that will create its own set of issues … I've seen that cycle three times in my career now and I think that's pretty predictable (interview 6, 17157, 17487)

However, Tom "struggles" with the idea that he communicates to his faculty that "test scores aren't important" because he sees some value in using the test data to make educated decisions about teaching and learning. While on the one hand he does see some benefits, he is bothered by the political implications of misusing the FCAT results.

> I like the FCAT, I think it's a good instrument. I think the things it measures are things the kids need to know about life. But that's the educational end of it. Then there's the political misuse of it. (interview 3, 83434, 83639)

All told, Tom does not see a problem with using student data to improve teaching. Instead, he has a problem with using student achievement data to publicly reward some schools and teachers while simultaneously publicly reprimanding other schools for their poor performance.

> I don't have a problem with all of the data and everything it tells us, but I think it's a misuse of data using that information, essentially to embarrass the school and redirect funding . . . that's not an educational issue, that is a political issue. The Florida A+ plan and the school recognition program are political responses to political issues. It really had nothing to do with education. It has to do with bumper stickers. (interview 3, 83962, 84415)

To address this dilemma and avoid fixation on FCAT scores, Tom seeks to use a variety of student data measures to make informed decisions and develop with his faculty their own goals and standards for student achievement. Therefore, Tom buffers his staff from undue criticism related to high stakes testing by leading the Hawk's Nest faculty to "describe and define what is important to us so we know we are doing a good job."

> But for this school to achieve long-term growth, we have to create some kind of meaningful goals that transcend all that stuff, though our goals could include the Sunshine State Standards. (interview 6, 18067,18333)

Tom discusses how he and his staff can collectively protect and buffer themselves from outside critique while simultaneously assessing the current state of affairs at Hawk's Nest.

> We have to look at continual renewal and improvement, though that's not the buzz word now that it was 10-12 years ago, but if we're doing that, we should be making incremental growth all the time…I don't think the wheels are falling off the school. I think we've got a lot of things we can improve at, but compared to other schools, I think we're doing a pretty good job. So something is working, so we don't need any radical approach, I don't think. I think we just kind of evolve and grow and, you know, kind of keep looking at what you're doing. (interview 3, 85105, 85788)

Tom seeks to improve his school and buffer his staff from criticism by simultaneously using FCAT test results as well as other student achievement data to make informed decisions regarding what is important for Hawk's Nest teachers and students. Once again, he contrasts the high stakes accountability reforms to fad diets as he attempts to buffer his faculty and develop a collective vision with his faculty that is focused on improving student achievement. Furthermore, Tom's deep moral purpose of "educating all students to reach their potential" is evident in the school's collective work.

> Rather than freaking out about individual test scores, I try and think long term. You've got to skip the fad diets and look for the long term healthy diet and invest in your reading program, math program, writing and social studies, science, citizenship, the other things that are important and just take a long term view of the building and defining what good programs are and not overreact to try to fix some subgroups test scores unless something really needs to be fixed. (interview 5, 30627,31390)

Therefore, Tom does not overreact to the high stakes associated with standardized testing, and instead protects his faculty by helping them collectively use data to "define our own standards."

For example, over Tom's tenure Hawk's Nest Elementary has made steady progress toward meeting Florida Sunshine State Standards. However, at the end of last school year many schools, including Hawk's Nest, were "cited for not making adequate

yearly progress." To address this achievement disparity, his faculty uses FCAT results,

curriculum based assessments, DIBELS test results (Good & Kaminski, 2002) and STAR

reading and math (2003) data to "decide where our gaps are and what to do about it."

Tom continues:

> The information [test results] has always been there, but we have just chosen not to
> fret over it because we didn't go looking for that information. Well, for this year
> since we have tried to define our own standards we have to deal with it and we're
> going to continue to have to deal with it. Plus we want to get NCLB off our back
> because of AYP. But more importantly we've got 5th graders working on a 2nd or
> 3rd grade level, and we need to fix it because they need to know math. Not
> because somebody's going to fuss at us. That's just a failure on our part to look for
> things that we didn't really want to see. That was no new data or test created, that's
> just all the FCAT stuff that we already had and failed to look at before. (interview
> 6, 48892, 49662)

Tom recounts how the staff has had some experience in the past in making data

driven curriculum decisions:

> I think that we already have fairly well defined where we want to go, what we need
> to do, and we already have some systems in place or at least some habits in place
> about looking at data. (interview 3, 82981,83196)

Tom introduced these habits the year he arrived at Hawk's Nest twelve years ago. At the

time, the school had some of the lowest reading scores in the district, as well as serious

discipline issues. Tom enlisted his staff to look at the "ugly stuff" and critically reflect

on their practices. First, this collaborative endeavor resulted in the creation of a school-

wide character education program. The program, AIM High, is still in existence today

and the monthly citizenship themes have been adopted district-wide.

Second, through this collective experience of examining student reading data and

designing interventions based on student needs, the faculty began transforming their

teaching practice.

> We spent a lot of time looking and talking about reading. I think we have a much
> better view of what a good reading program ought to look like now . . . but it was

hard at first because we had to look at fluency, and phonological awareness, and that was different for intermediate teachers because many of them hadn't heard about that since college because they never taught first grade and they've never dealt with it. Mostly they were focused on kids' vocabulary and comprehension issues and what they needed to focus on was decoding issues (interview 6, 21656, 22148)

More importantly, over time, this activity of using data to make instructional decisions has become "ingrained in the culture." However, the school had never looked at FCAT scores by sub groups (e.g., by ethnicity, disability, English proficiency, and socioeconomic disadvantaged status) required by NCLB before being cited for not making AYP. This proved to be problematic when test results were released and Hawk's Nest did not perform as well as expected.

Tom used the metaphor of "getting on the scale and being unhappy with the results" to describe this process of examining data to identify school-wide student achievement goals after FCAT results were released late last school year. A "shared sense of dissatisfaction" emerged from the dialogue of how to proceed.

We have a significant number of students in a certain population who were not making progress and maybe actually regressing. That was a problem that needed to be fixed because it needs to be fixed not just because it comes out on the sheet that they haven't made progress on FCAT but because we've been able to gloss over and ignore it. (interview 6, 48539, 48889)

Once again, a sense of moral purpose resonates in Tom's beliefs and practices. Due to not achieving annual yearly progress (AYP) goals, Tom and his staff recognize that they must focus more specifically on student achievement. For that reason, the staff and administration at Hawk's Nest collectively targeted the lowest quartile of students for improvement this year. Moreover, they defined progress differently than making growth on the FCAT. For instance, the faculty wanted to see the gains not only on the FCAT, but also on other school based measures such as DIBELS and STAR reading and math.

Additionally, the staff came to consensus and agreed to implement some school-wide

strategies and interventions that focused on direct instruction in reading and providing co-

teaching support for targeted students in general education classrooms.

Over the course of the year, Tom continued to protect and buffer his faculty by

focusing on student progress on school-wide common assessments. The school measured

student progress every nine weeks in reading and math. The results of the school-based

assessment indicated that students made some growth in certain areas, while also

identifying other areas in need of remediation. Teachers used this data to adapt their

instruction accordingly and collectively developed alternative ideas to address student

needs. Near the end of the school year, the state released more detailed results. While

Hawk's Nest once again did not make AYP, they did show growth in the key areas they

had targeted.

At a faculty meeting in May, Tom shared the recently released test data with his

faculty. What stands out as important was Tom's style of sharing recently released FCAT

scores, and his focus on what he and others in the school community viewed as important

(student gain scores), rather than what the department of education and the media chose

to report across the state (the levels of student achievement).

Tom began the dialogue with his faculty by "maintaining that there are other things

more important than test scores, but test scores provide us with some valuable

information." Tom then shared the most recent data gathered from the DOE website

focusing on the goals the school set at the beginning of the year related to improving the

performance of the lowest quartile students. Before he shared the results, he stated that

they would have to spend some more time to disaggregate the results and see if they

reached their goal, since the results were "hot off the press." He hoped that they would

have these results soon to share with the faculty before they left for summer break.

Next, Tom reminded everyone that the state started "tracking individual kid gains

this year by using the FCAT developmental scale score." This score provided Hawk's

Nest with a measure of student growth for all fourth and fifth graders. At the faculty

meeting, Tom shared the composite fourth and fifth-grade test scores and compared them

to the state average. The results were promising, as fourth graders gained 180 points in

math compared with state average of 132. In fourth grade, reading results were equally

positive as the state average gain score was 218, while Hawk's Nest improved on average

by 242 points. In fifth grade the state's average gain in math was 167 points while

Hawk's Nest student gains averaged 199 points. The fifth grade reading scores revealed

that Hawk's Nest students minimally out performed the state, improving by 172 points,

while the state average gain was 166 points. Tom also shared with his faculty how the

fifth grade science score (302) "though not yet normed, compared favorably with the

state average", which was 286.

Even more impressive, in Tom's opinion, was that Hawk's Nest outperformed all

"westside schools in gain scores." Tom chooses to compare Hawk's Nest Elementary to

these particular elementary schools because they are "viewed by the public as good

schools." Each of these schools is located in the more affluent suburbs of the county. In

total, when compared to other schools in the district Hawk's Nest ranked in the top three

schools in all areas of growth except for fifth grade reading.

Had Tom chosen to look at the data differently, he could have presented to his

faculty the average student scores similar to the data reported in the media across the

state. In that case the results, though better than last year, did not compare as favorably

to other schools. For instance, depending on what grade or subject is examined, Hawk's

Nest students performed on average "a few points above or below the state and county

average in reading and math." Additionally, some of the "west side scores were 30-50

points higher", on average, according to Tom. Therefore, though the school showed

tremendous growth when using student gain scores, and had preliminary test data that

indicates they achieved their goal of improving gain scores for at-risk students, they

performed closer to the state and district average and were, on average, outperformed by

many local schools on this measure.

In the end, Tom buffered or protected his staff from undue criticism by helping the

faculty collectively define their own goals focused on improving the reading and math

scores of the lowest quartile students. Once disaggregated, the data suggest that students

made significant progress this year. In general:

> The FCAT results showed that the middle and upper level kids did about the same
> as they had done the year before with our old collection of programs and then the
> lower kids, you know, a lot more of them went into that middle range. So it
> confirmed my suspicions that there wasn't enough explicit instruction in there for
> those kids. (interview 3, 23666,23996)

Ironically, at the end of May when school grades were released, Hawk's Nest

received an A grade from the state Department of Education for their performance on the

FCAT exam. Tom reiterates that by concentrating their efforts on effective teaching, and

not teaching to the test, our "goals were reached."

> We didn't even talk about that much (FCAT testing) because I don't want them
> worried thinking about that kind of nonsense because it just distracts them. It's one
> more thing to worry about. Many schools teach to the test, we don't. Instead we
> need to be thinking about teaching and how we can reach these kids. (interview 3,
> 44029, 44246)

In sum, Tom buffers his faculty from the pressure associated with high stakes accountability by defining what is important to the school collectively with his faculty and successfully implementing interventions that meet the needs of targeted students. Therefore, the success of Hawk's Nest rested on not only defining what's important for the faculty based on the available data, but more importantly, on how teachers design and implement effective instructional techniques that meet the needs of all students.

In the next section, I describe how Tom seeks to extend his community building outside the schoolhouse as he builds collaborative partnerships with key members of the local community to help buffer his faculty from the public scrutiny associated with high stakes accountability and mandated school reform. Through building partnerships, Tom cultivates support to assist Hawk's Nest Elementary on their school improvement journey.

Building partnerships within the surrounding community.

Tom personally invests in his school and simultaneously buffers faculty from some of the pressure of teaching in an era of high stakes accountability by building good relationships within the local community. Central to buffering is his idea of seeing "public relations as part of the job." Therefore, Tom realizes the value of positive public relations with the surrounding community, and envisions part of his role as the public relations director for Hawk's Nest Elementary. This is as an essential part of Tom's leadership responsibility, as over the past decade Tom has "lubricated the human machinery" and built professional and personal relationships with many key community members and organizations.

Tom enacts this role by regularly sharing the school's collective vision of building good classroom communities, developing solid citizens, and making steady academic

progress each year with local community leaders. For example, Tom has been actively

involved with the mayor's office and city council on developing the community's master

plan. He also served a term as president of the local Chamber of Commerce. He has

collaborated with the local police and the "city fathers and burgermeisters" on

community events like "Trick or Treat on Main Street." Additionally, Tom has held

many highly visible leadership roles and been actively involved in local community

philanthropic events such as the annual STOP Children's Cancer fundraising event, the

American Heart Association, and his local church. All of these activities help to create a

natural buffer for Hawk's Nest Elementary from many of the high stakes accountability

pressures. The community recognizes and values the efforts of the local school and sees

the many intangible benefits that come with attending Hawk's Nest Elementary.

Tom also focuses his attention on the local newspaper. For example, Tom views

being pro-active with the local media as essential to keeping a positive public relations

image in the community. This is especially critical in the era of grading schools based on

student performance.

> Regardless of what letter grade we happen to be assigned, we need to keep our
> name out there. You know, you don't need to sell Coke-a-cola one time, you need
> to sell it every day. (interview 3, 76443, 76650)

As indicated in this quote, Tom markets the virtues and benefits of Hawk's Nest regularly

within the local community. In particular, he encourages his staff to contact the local

newspaper to share many of the wonderful activities and events that occur at Hawk's

Nest. Tom asserts that there is "hardly a week goes by that the school isn't mentioned in

the local paper", and the majority of these stories are positive and mention "our hard

working students and teachers."

Tom realizes that not only the media but also key community leaders must recognize the benefits of attending the local school, especially since schools receive so much "negative exposure" related to FCAT testing.

> There are certain people that you don't want to have as your enemies. You don't want to have the newspaper as your enemy, you don't want to have the preachers as enemies, and the other key influential people who can form or shape public opinion. It's better to have them as friends than as enemies. (interview 3, 77175, 77502)

Therefore, developing the public confidence in Hawk's Nest is critical to the long-term success of the school, and also shields the school from much of the undue criticism associated with the current era of high stakes reform.

> If you develop trust in the schools, then you help develop a sense of confidence in the schools, particularly from the community. Then they are not as likely to be worried about the No Child Left Behind. Even a couple people have said, What is this No Child Left Behind stuff, is that a new big deal? I say not really and just blow it off. (interview 3, 80730, 81038)

One approach Tom uses to build relationships with the local community is having key community leaders serve on his school advisory council (SAC). The purpose of the SAC is to assist the principal in preparing and evaluating the school improvement plan and to assist the principal with the annual school budget. The SAC is a team composed of various stakeholders of the community including parents, teachers, administrators, support staff, business partners and other interested community members. Tom uses this forum to inform the community about the overarching goals of the school, and to get their input and assistance in helping the school achieve their goals.

One outgrowth of the SAC work is developing business partnerships with local merchants. However, Tom recognizes that traditionally these partnerships have been "pretty one-sided."

> Schools are always looking to be adopted by some business. I mean we as public schools in general are always there with our hand out wanting the community to give us stuff, give us money, give us free pizza, give us whatever. But I don't always see that being a reciprocal relationship, and that's not a partnership. That's just somebody looking for a handout…it's nice that they'll give stuff to us, but we need to participate more in their events. The school system has a terrible record of participating and coming to their things. (interview 4, 31769, 32493)

Tom tries to change this perception by regularly attending community events like the Chamber and Rotary meetings. He supports the local shops and restaurants and encourages his staff, students, and parents to all support these local businesses as well. He does this to ensure that Hawk's Nest business partnerships are mutually beneficial. Tom attempts to get the school's business partners "cheap advertising, positive public relations for being associated with the school, and hopefully more customers" by praising their services at school events and getting their name out in the community. On the other hand, the school benefits as the business partners assist teachers and students in acquiring necessary materials, providing mentors for local children, and providing food for school events. Thus, by developing business partnerships Tom buffers his school against the pressures of the current era of accountability by building relationships within the local community.

> So we get an awful lot of value in terms of community support and occasionally financial resources, but mostly just good will in the community because in an era where a lot of people don't like public schools and don't think their schools are doing well, I think people in the community generally feel that our school is doing a pretty good job. (interview 3, 75752, 76436)

Additionally, Tom recognizes that developing positive parent relationships is critical to his success as principal. Tom builds relationship with parents by being physically present in the building everyday and strengthening bonds with parent organizations by being available to meet with them. More importantly, Tom believes in involving parents in the education of their children. Tom encourages parents to

communicate with teachers, and become actively involved in the school by volunteering their time. He also believes that parents' voices should be heard especially when educational decisions are being made about their children.

Although parent involvement is mostly beneficial at Hawk's Nest, at times Tom must buffer teachers from specific parent complaints. In these cases, Tom chooses between a facilitative or directive leadership style, based on a "sense of urgency" for the situation. But what is evident in his leadership style is his unwavering dedication and support for his teachers. In one particular case, a parent was unhappy with the consequences her child received from a teacher for inappropriate behavior. This parent was emotional and hot-tempered when she confronted the teacher on the phone. Therefore, Tom was asked to intervene on the teacher's behalf. Tom called the parent and again he shared his philosophy of treating people decently and with respect. He also scheduled a meeting with the parent for the following morning under the condition that her behavior would deescalate. At the meeting the next day, Tom listened to both the teacher and the parent sides of the story. After considering both accounts, Tom helped the teacher and the parent reach a compromise, but also was clear with the parent that the child must "face the natural consequences" of disrupting and misbehaving in class. In total, this example indicates that Tom's leadership not only supports, but also buffers or protects his staff from parent criticism.

All in all, Tom sees developing partnerships as an "evolving concept" that adds value to the school and creates positive energy in the school culture.

> The more we develop partnerships that work, the more powerful they become. Not just with the university but also with the city, and local businesses. Good neighbors help each other out. (Field notes 2–18, 3204, 3459)

For example, the impetus for a school-university partnership began when Tom participated with a core group of his faculty in a graduate level course. In this course the faculty closely examined their current teaching practices and developed an action plan related to school change for the following year. During the course, Tom and his staff had developed a solid relationship with the professors leading the course. When another faculty member inquired to her university colleagues about finding a school to participate in a partnership, Hawk's Nest was mentioned as a site holding potential. Shortly thereafter, Tom invited a university faculty member to present the idea of developing a deeper relationship with the school to the entire school community. As a result of this dialogue, the roots of a professional development school (PDS) were planted that focused not only on student learning but also on teacher learning. More specifically, the partnership effort centered on simultaneously developing pre-service and veteran teachers' skills in collaboration while meeting the diverse needs of all students in elementary classrooms.

Tom acknowledges that his efforts to develop a relationship with the university were "opportunistic and not totally altruistic." He recognized that the school needed to be proactive to divert the attention that focused on solely improving student test scores. Though Hawk's Nest had been making progress on FCAT, Tom was concerned that the focus on test scores could impact the school culture. Tom views his role on the alumni board of directors for the College of Education as a networking opportunity to "help move this mission forward." Thus, Tom again attempted to protect his staff from the many anxieties related to high stakes reform by cultivating a relationship with the local university to not only improve student achievement, but also teacher learning.

In sum, developing relationships with people in the local community including parents, community leaders, and university faculty helps Tom buffer his faculty by diverting attention away from the school's performance on the FCAT, and instead focusing on the many activities that help the community recognize that Hawk's Nest is an excellent school.

In the next section, I explain and provide examples from Tom's practice of another characteristic of caring for and personally investing in his faculty, nurturing his staff. Following a brief description of nurturing, I review three ways Tom nurtures and builds relationships with his teachers and staff: displaying trust, listening to their ideas and concerns, and treating them fairly.

Nurturing Teachers and Staff

In this section I describe, how Tom "lubricates the human machinery" by nurturing his teachers. Nurturing for the purpose of this study is defined as encouraging teachers to grow, develop, thrive, and be successful. To these ends, Tom nurtures his staff, by living out three core beliefs: (1) displaying trust in their abilities, (2) listening to their ideas, concerns, and problems, and (3) treating staff fairly. These behaviors are characteristics of Tom's leadership and help Tom demonstrate an ethic of care (Noddings, 1992) that is the keystone of "lubricating the human machinery."

Displaying trust in teachers' abilities

One tool that helps Tom "lubricate the human machinery" and develop personal relationships with his staff is his desire and ability to trust people. A part of personally investing in people is respecting and trusting their ability to be successful.

> I think my teachers or my big people need to believe that I believe in them and I'm invested in their success and not just because I want them to be happy because if

they are happy then there is a better chance that they will be professionally successful. And then the pay-off is the kids. (interview 5, 5563,6013)

In this excerpt Tom uses the word "believe"(i.e., "believe in them"), but the undertones of the excerpt suggest more. Tom is sharing the importance of believing in faculty by acknowledging, respecting, and trusting educators' ability to be successful.

Furthermore, possessing this trust requires a type of faith in teachers that they are not only motivated to do what is right for the people around them, but also that they are able to problem solve solutions to the myriad of issues that arise daily in classrooms. Tom continues:

> You've got to believe in the passion of teachers and just trust that. If they're motivated by the right thing and driven by the right ideas, something good is going to come out of it. (interview 5, 19118,19316)

As indicated, a part of Tom's willingness to trust is that he acknowledges the passion and the ability of the teachers within Hawk's Nest Elementary. For example, Tom tapped into his teachers' passion and trusted a group of teachers that wanted to explore Renaissance Learning, a new computer based assessment system that assists teachers in making data based decisions to differentiate instruction for students of all abilities.

> This little pilgrimage started a couple weeks ago because we (the faculty) had talked a little bit about our math data and how we could meet the needs of our students including our accelerated math students. So a group of teachers approached me about wanting to go to this conference in Orlando to learn more about the program. After they looked into going, it was going to be more expensive than we thought…so I had to decide… how do I spend the money that I have, which is not very much, to get as much learning as possible. So you can either spend it on things or you can invest in the people. Well, here we've got three people who wanted to go and learn something, and this is something that we know we need to do so you kind of have to believe that this is money well spent… And it wasn't so much about the program, it was about their level of understanding of what the problem is we're trying to solve and they worked hard on it and they have done some real thoughtful analysis, but when it comes right down to it, if they believe in it, it's going to work…So, it's pretty hard for me not to invest money in

them, but I've also got to invest personally and communicate I believe in you. They know that there's a lot at stake and I want to see some payoff. But I also am convinced that I will get much more value out of what we do here. Not because of the books and procedures and all this stuff we'll learn, but because of what they have invested in it and learned. They will recruit a couple people in other grade levels and then I predict we will have a very successful pilot next year. Because they're committed….so I have to trust them and believe it's going to be successful. And it might not be the answer to all of our problems, but it's going to help answer some of our problems. (interview 5, 17198, 21279)

Tom also recognizes the reciprocal nature of trust. The type of trust that Tom believes is necessary to make change in schools goes beyond trusting teachers. Tom highlights the importance of teachers trusting the leader in many ways. For example, he shares, "If you want to get trust, you've got to give trust." This is evident in the vote of confidence Tom institutes annually with his faculty that was discussed previously in his *Who I Am* story. Underlying the annual vote of confidence is Tom's belief that unless a school leader has the trust of those he leads, he will not be effective. Thus, the impact of the vote of confidence is symbolic. By asking for a vote of confidence, Tom encourages the teachers and other school leaders to assess their confidence in him. This type of leadership activity helps Tom to "lubricate the human machinery" and build a school culture that values trust.

According to Tom, mutual trust is what allows an organization to collaboratively work through dilemmas and solve problems:

I've got to trust in them to a certain extent and they've got to trust me to a certain extent and the degree to which we trust each other determines the degree to which we can actually get together and solve problems and figure things out. (interview 2, 53741,53997)

By being open-minded and honest people develop a level of trust with each other, and issues can be resolved. In order for this to occur Tom must "trust people to do their job and believe that it's going to happen."

This commitment to trust is the first of the tools Tom uses for "lubricating the human machinery" with the goal of creating strong personal relationships within schools. Tom does this by having faith in the passion and motivation of those he works with, extending trust when problems need to be solved, and asking for annual votes of confidence from his faculty.

Listening to faculty ideas, concerns, and problems

Another tool that helps Tom "lubricate the human machinery" and develop personal relationships with his staff is his desire and ability to listen to people. Tom accomplishes this in a variety of ways. First, "his door is always open so people can come in." This open door policy sets the stage for being viewed as available to help at any time. Tom believes this is part of the foundation for forming a good relationship with people.

> I'd like to think and would want people to think that if they needed to talk to me about something or needed to tell me about something, that they could come in and do it. (interview 3, 13687,13858)

Foremost, Tom does not over schedule his calendar so that he is available to meet with his teachers and staff informally for the majority of his workday. He normally arrives at school around 7:00 AM, checks his e-mail briefly for any important news or pending issues, grabs a cup of coffee, and makes himself available for brief informal conversations about professional or personal issues.

> If somebody needs to talk, that happened a couple of times this morning, you know, career decisions and life decisions and I'm mad about this, that stuff is hard to put off until this afternoon. I need to be available so my teachers can bounce ideas off of me and feel supported (interview5, 29402,29619)

Furthermore, listening to his faculty in both formal and informal ways allows Tom to gather information about what his staff feels is important to their lives and success as a teacher.

> If you want to know what's important in an organization, just walk around and listen to what people talk about and that's what's important…And I've found that to be very true. If people are always bitching about things, then, you know, then that's important…when people are talking about important educational issues, even reading or how we're doing this in the lounge or the hallway or something then I think that says that's important. If people are never talking about school, then that says something. If people are talking about kids that says a whole lot about the school. (interview 3, 57188,57916)

Often these informal conversations center on the professional lives of his teachers and Tom uses the opportunity to seek more specific information.

Tom also uses these informal opportunities to not only listen, but to share his thoughts, ideas, and beliefs about the issue at hand and come to some type of decision. This was evident one spring morning during an impromptu visit that took place next to the copy machine with the speech and language therapist. This particular exchange of ideas lasted approximately ten minutes and began with Tom's question, " So, how's the job going?" Over the next few minutes Tom listened to her concerns about the isolated nature of her role in the school and the many overlapping responsibilities she has that makes her job very challenging. During this time, the speech and language therapist mentioned, "Higher caseloads are not serving anyone well, herself, the kids, the school." The additional demands put on her by having a Head Start classroom on campus led to more initial screenings, paperwork, and ultimately more eligibility meetings. She pointed out that she had "tested 24 kids this year and they are not figured into the workload formula." In order to complete an initial screening, she must cancel therapy sessions that cannot be rescheduled very easily due to her very tight schedule. Thus, the impact is felt

throughout the school. After listening, Tom shares his idea that he is going to lobby the

district for more speech and language services and see what happens. He reasons with

the speech and language therapist that he wants to be proactive and not wait and see what

happens next year. To do this he needs her to give him a brief synopsis of her workload

so they can collectively develop a plan that will advocate for more services.

Another example of Tom's use of listening to build relationships with his teachers

occurred at a mentor meeting for teachers involved in the school-university partnership.

At the onset of this meeting, Tom chose a seat to the side of the group and listened for the

majority of the meeting. In fact, he didn't say a word for at least 30 minutes as people

discussed issues related to their interns and ideas for improving the partnership effort.

When questioned after the meeting about removing himself from the center of the

meeting Tom states:

> I consciously remove myself from the center of leading meetings as much as
> possible because it would become my meeting if I didn't. In most situations, even
> if the leader is there they will expect he or she to do things and answer questions
> about the issue at hand. (Field Notes, 2-26, 8538, 8673)

What Tom does is listen to the group and "let them try and hash it out so it becomes their

solution even if he had the answer before the meeting started."

Nevertheless, Tom chooses carefully when to participate in the discussion and

often participates by raising a question. For example, near the end of the mentor meeting,

Tom asked, "Seems like things are going better [this semester than last], any ideas why?"

This question publicly elicits teacher reflection to assess the current status of their work

as well as asks them to focus on the progress that has been made. Over the next several

minutes, teachers share their thoughts about how communication between the university

and the mentors has improved. As indicated, Tom's listening is not a passive task.

Rather, his listening is purposeful and intentional. He uses listening to understand the pulse of the school and the needs of his teachers.

However, the task of listening is not just one sided. Tom often shares his own thoughts, ideas, and beliefs so that teachers are able to listen to what he understands about their needs and where he positions himself on the topic at hand.

> It just becomes easier and if they need something they come and ask for it. Or I can say things to them, I can make suggestions to them and they don't get upset about them if it's something they don't want to hear because there's enough trust there and in general, they know how I feel about them. (interview 3, 38125, 38466)

In most cases, teachers "understood my issues and accept that they are legitimate." In addition, Tom reaches some sense of compromise as he makes decisions collectively with his faculty. One example of this occurred as the fifth grade teachers approached Tom about departmentalizing for the next school year. In confidence, Tom shared his reluctance to move towards departmentalization because of some past negative experiences. He believes that departmentalizing in elementary school is a "matter of teacher convenience, fragments curriculum, and destroys the ability to create a good classroom community."

> Historically I don't think there's a whole lot of data that showed that kids learn any more and just because it's more convenient for adults, there is a presumed efficiency, which presumes higher performance… I think that the more departmentalized the grade levels become, the more other problems are created. Communication with parents breaks down, communication with kids breaks down, developing individual relationships with kids breaks down and overall academic performance suffers because of that. And I think the adults convince themselves that it's better because I'm teaching three classes of science and I'm doing a bang-up job but there's a whole lot more to what kids are learning than what content I'm delivering. (interview 6, 52309, 53303)

In addition, Tom is skeptical about departmentalizing with the adoption of a new math series looming on the horizon next year:

Well, if you departmentalize in math, then some people will not learn the new math textbook and when somebody teaches something other than math for two years then all of the sudden they're not a math teacher anymore. I think there are some problems with that. (interview 6.doc, 46567,47058)

Later in the day, Tom met with the fifth grade team and listened intently to their plan to departmentalize. After they were done sharing their plan, Tom shared frankly with them his reluctance to move towards departmentalization. He also asked them to revisit their plan because he did not feel they could implement the plan next year because it affected the entire school master schedule. However, he also stated he "would be willing to entertain solutions that addressed meeting the needs of all students" but using "ability groups except for reading" was not an option.

Tom recognizes he could have said no to his fifth grade team about departmentalizing, but he wanted the team to take ownership and seek ways to solve their own issues (i.e., "discipline, community building, exclusionary practices"). Instead, by setting boundaries on the group and sending them back to work collectively on developing solutions, Tom sent the message that he values their ideas and was willing to consider at least some of the changes. If he did not implement at least part of their plan, he recognized that he ran the risk of the team "losing trust in his leadership." In the end, the team "came up with a plan that addressed his concerns and provided some different curriculum and ways of instruction including a collaborative group idea that they thought would work."

Overall, Tom uses listening as a tool, by being easily accessible to his faculty, regularly engaging in both formal and informal interactions, and sharing his own thoughts and opinions. In doing so Tom "lubricates the human machinery" and subsequently builds stronger ties with his faculty.

Treating staff fairly

A third tool, evident in trusting in his staff and listening to their concerns, is his commitment to treating people fairly. By treating staff fairly, Tom "lubricates the human machinery" to build and strengthen relationships. He acknowledges "there are right ways and wrong ways to treat people." Reflecting back, Tom recollects how he was treated unfairly in the past, highlighting the "sour taste" he experienced when he was dismissed as gifted program supervisor. Because of this incident as well as others from his past, Tom regularly reflects about his practice and uncovers his motives by examining his leadership "from a moral or ethical standpoint to consider whether he is treating somebody fairly." Thus, Tom's leadership has an underlying moral obligation to be fair while he "lubricates the human machinery."

> As soon as we stop expecting life and organizations to be fair, then we've just contributed to injustice or unfairness. So I think it's our obligation to create fairness…I'll go out of my way to try to make someone successful. (interview 3, 34034, 34282)

Tom views how people are treated in the school culture as critical to the school's long-term success. He believes that the underlying issue is to try and find a way to "maintain a sense of personal interest and humanity." For example, Tom views providing opportunities for teachers to grow and develop skills as his responsibility.

> I think its just a matter of fairness that somebody who's not doing well needs to be given every opportunity to succeed and the barriers to not being successful need to be removed. (interview 3, 33016, 33205)

However, his commitment to fairness is not only for his own personal interactions with others, but also includes cultivating a collective sense of fairness within the school community.

I just think we have an obligation to create working environments where there is fairness and there is a sense of justice and decency and there's a right way and a wrong way of treating people. (interview 3, 10439,10631)

Tom is committed to creating a work environment that treats all people with respect. This notion of respecting people is intricately woven with the notion of trust. Tom seeks to develop the staff's collective and individual abilities and shares key decisions with the goal of "lubricating the human machinery", especially in the current era of mandated reforms and heightened accountability.

By showing them that I trusted them, then we could deal with professional development plan issues, assessment, evaluation and other things that were coming from the district and that just wasn't much of an issue here because I think there was more of an underlying sense that I was going to treat them fairly. (interview 2, 45855,46156)

This attitude of treating people fairly and listening to their input was evident not only in the discussion of departmentalizing discussed previously but also when the district began adopting a new reading series a few years ago. First, Tom convinced his staff that this was an excellent opportunity to look at the school's reading program. Tom reported that over the past few years, the school had moved away from the district reading program and their reading program had become fragmented. Depending on their teaching preference, teachers were using nine different reading programs at different levels of implementation. Tom saw the district adoption as an avenue to get some consistency across his entire staff by "getting everyone on the same page." To accomplish this task, he enlisted his staff to closely examine the new programs and listened to their input.

The whole reading thing we kind of embraced because that was a good time for us to look at a new reading program. Although the one that the district chose wasn't the one that I wanted, it happened to be the one that the teachers liked and they thought was going to be the solution. So I thought, OK if everybody wants this, then it's going to be very easy to get everybody doing it. And the fact is that any

program, reading program, well implemented is going to work better than either no reading program or a hodge-podge of things. So the adoption at least got us all back on the same page, talking about the same thing and what program we were using was no longer an issue. (interview 3, 47916, 48835)

All told, Tom recognizes the importance of treating people fairly, trusting in their professional judgment, and listening to teachers' ideas for school improvement. These actions are critical to developing a cohesive school culture that values "lubricating the human machinery" by personally investing in teachers.

In the following section, I describe the third way Tom personally invests in teachers by promoting teacher growth. Promoting teacher growth is an essential component of Tom's leadership practice and is explicitly linked to his notion of "lubricating the human machinery" to improve the lives of teachers and students.

Promoting Teacher Growth

Tom views taking care of his teachers as his most important leadership responsibility as he "lubricates the human machinery." Central to this belief is promoting teacher professional growth. In his own words, he seeks to "take care of the big people so they can take care of the little people."

> I think that on the proactive side of that, if you can help people become better people, this personal development stuff and help them to develop their personal relations skills, their communications skills, their knowledge base, all of that is just like building a better athlete and I think that's pretty important. (interview3, 4393,4710)

At the same time, Tom recognizes the complexity, tensions and challenges associated with promoting teacher growth. It is a "simple, but not easy" process, and promoting teacher growth requires Tom to be flexible in his leadership as he seeks to support all his teachers in a variety of ways. Depending on the situation or context, Tom's roles cover the spectrum from coaching to evaluation. Thus, Tom seeks to

cultivate relationships with his faculty and create multiple opportunities for teacher

learning and growth to occur. In fact, Tom's leadership emphasizes two distinct but

overlapping ways of promoting teacher growth: (1) coaching and mentoring faculty, and

(2) creating multiple opportunities for professional development. The outcome of his

focus on promoting teacher growth is to develop teacher leadership qualities in his staff.

Below, I describe in detail these essential elements of Tom's leadership beliefs and

practices that seek to promote teacher growth.

Coaching and mentoring

Coaching and mentoring teachers is the first way Tom promotes teacher growth.

Based on his past experiences in schools, Tom believes that "most of his faculty can

teach circles around me." Tom recognizes how his role has evolved from the early years

when he was primarily a supervisor who evaluated his teachers. In the past, Tom spent

much of his time doing "clinical things like completing teacher competency checklists

and that is not a good use of my or their time." Over time, Tom redefined his role "to be

more of a coach and mentor" that "spends the majority of time growing people." In fact,

Tom uses the metaphor of a "football strength and conditioning coach" to describe his

current role. Therefore, Tom focuses his energy on building collegial relationships with

his teachers, encouraging teacher reflection, and providing school based professional

development to improve teacher learning and student achievement (Blase & Blase, 1998;

Byrk et al., 1998; Sheppard, 1996). By reconfiguring his role, Tom cultivates an

"enhanced level of trust" in the school culture. As a result, Tom recognizes that building

a collegial school culture that values and trusts his leadership was essential for him to

successfully transform his role to coach and mentor.

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Tom acknowledges that in the current high stakes era principals do not spend sufficient time mentoring teachers. The inevitable role conflict created by increased paperwork and the implementation of standards based curriculum related to high stakes accountability, coupled with the daily demands of the principal's job make it difficult to provide the necessary mentoring to beginning and veteran teachers. For example, most of the professional development provided for teachers is mandated by the district or state, and focuses almost entirely on compliance instead of being driven by individual teacher needs. As a result, good mentoring programs have been "lost in the shuffle" as budgets targeting teacher induction and ongoing mentoring of teachers have been dramatically slashed. In response to this dilemma, Tom has assumed the lead in developing and implementing a school-based mentoring program to supplement the required district induction program.

For example, Tom supplements the district's required induction program for new teachers by providing each beginning teacher with a school-based mentor. This action illustrates Tom's belief that mentoring is not only an integral part of his job, but also is the responsibility of the entire school community.

> Schools as institutions are not very good at bringing in new teachers. We bring them in, chew them up and spit them out. They are often given undoable jobs. I want them to be in an optimal situation. Thus, we provide them with veteran teachers to mentor them…mentors are a big brother or big sister who is invested in them. The mentor helps them to make sure they are set up for success. (Field notes, 2-26, 10616, 10978)

Specifically, Hawk's Nest has a "rookie camp" for beginning teachers and veteran transfers to "indoctrinate the new people" into the school culture. Held before pre-planning, mentor teachers, team leaders, and school administrators share their insights on the Hawk's Nest school culture, and discuss many things including school policies,

curriculum, facilities, and classroom management. Additionally, the group takes a "field trip" through the neighborhoods zoned for the school to get acclimated to the community.

Tom mentors and coaches new teachers using a variety of strategies. First, Tom uses the traditional evaluation instrument, the Florida Professional Measurement System (FPMS), as a tool to assess his beginning educators. He believes this is a "necessary, but not sufficient tool" to assess a beginning teacher's competence particularly in the area of classroom management. In addition to this required tool, Tom mentors his beginning teachers by doing classroom walk throughs, stopping teachers in the hall or lunch room to briefly check in, having conversations with their respective mentor teachers, and conferencing with both the beginning teacher and his or her mentor to check on their concerns.

Over time Tom sees the "rookies" reach a comfort zone with the mentoring process. He believes this has to do with developing an atmosphere based on respect and trust that seeks to cultivate relationships across the school community.

> If they know somebody cares about them, if they get some constructive criticism, then it's a lot easier to say, well he likes me and he respects me so he's not picking on me, so maybe this is something I need to look at. (interview 3, 38467, 38944)

This feeling of trust and respect is evident during regularly scheduled conferences with the beginning teachers and their mentors. Tom begins these meeting by sharing his feedback using the FPMS form. Tom also shares areas of strength he has observed. For example, with one beginning teacher, Trish, he shared that he appreciated her hard work and that it had started to pay off: "Your students have really made some growth since you began teaching in August."   He also asked for her mentor teacher's input. When Beth shared that Trish had openly asked for assistance and had accepted constructive criticism, Tom stated "This is an asset, as many teachers see asking for help as a sign of weakness."

Later he shifted the dialogue to issues of interest to the beginning teacher by asking simple questions like "How can we help you with your teaching?", or "Share with us some of your concerns about your classroom." In general, Tom expects his teachers to be open and reflective during the mentoring process. More importantly, he sets the stage for teacher growth by effectively modeling a simple but flexible method of reflective coaching for his faculty.

On the other hand, Tom struggles with how to effectively mentor and coach his veteran teachers on staff: "Good teachers don't always demand my attention." Couple this with the added responsibilities Tom has associated with leading a school in an era of high stakes accountability, and a "dilemma of leadership" occurs.

> Spending an awful lot of time doing classroom observations with veterans for the sake of doing them is not an efficient use of time. And the other thing is there is some trust and credibility issues with that. You know, if I go in with essentially a minimal competency checklist for somebody who had been a superior teacher for 30 years, you know, that communicates something that I don't want to. (interview 5, 40697, 41113)

Tom believes it is critical to the overall success of the school to invest in his "best athletes."

> I think that to be proactive, you help people become better people by developing personal relations skills, their communications skills, their knowledge base, all of that is just like building a better athlete and I think that's pretty important. (interview 3, 4393, 4710)

Additionally, though Tom informally talks with his faculty about the many issues related to teaching in the current era of high stakes, he believes it is important to regularly schedule faculty meetings to "have structured conversations about how things are going." This type of coaching was particularly relevant immediately after the school implemented the newly adopted reading series.

I guide them through the process and get through the initial enthusiasm and then we have to deal with the implementation gulch. It's like the end of September and people begin asking why did we do this. I like the other [program] better and our kids aren't getting it. But that's just part of any new implementation and you just encourage them through that. (interview 5, 22214, 22794)

One example of how Tom mentors his veteran faculty is adapting the traditional district professional development plans (PDP). In his opinion, teachers' PDPs are "contractual paperwork exercises", and one of his goals is to find innovative ways to make the PDP process more meaningful for his faculty.

I really need to spend more time discussing professional development plans. We fill out the papers and we do what we're supposed to do, to kind of comply with the letter of the law but I really need to find a way to make the plans more than a compliance exercise. (interview 3, 39715,39936)

Tom's experience has taught him that his teachers must take an active role in redefining the PDP process, for this change to occur and be sustained over time. Over the past few years, Tom has encouraged a group of faculty to explore integrating a reflective teacher inquiry process within the current PDP framework to make the teachers' PDPs more useful and authentic.

It's trying to get people to look at professional development plans in terms of what they want to do and what they want to learn and not in terms of well I've got these forms to fill out. (interview 5, 26882,27074)

This process has the potential to move all his teachers' professional development plans away from the traditional compliance format towards effecting change in their teaching.

In addition, Tom believes part of the solution to his mentoring dilemma was participating in Hawk's Nest school-university partnership. This partnership allows teachers to become mentors for pre-service teachers, as well as provides ongoing professional development activities based on targeted need areas of the faculty.

Part of the solution (to provide meaningful mentoring and feedback) is the infusion of the idea of Teacher as Teacher Educator…this seemed to help solve some of the

problems. It was something to help engage the mentor teachers in thinking about their own teaching. (Field notes, 2-26, 8244,8458)

Tom describes the positive difference the school-university collaboration has provided, not only for his faculty, but also for the pre-service teachers. For instance, teachers and school leadership participating in the partnership have multiple coaching and mentoring responsibilities. These responsibilities include providing ongoing feedback to prospective teachers about their teaching practice. Mentors also meet with the university team monthly to problem solve and further their own development as mentor teachers. Additionally, school based and university teacher educators collaborate weekly to continually assess and revise coursework lessons for the prospective teachers. This affords the opportunity for the integration of theory and practice to become embedded and carried out in the field placement.

In sum, Tom attempts to develop a community of learners that values collaboration, reflection, and professional development tailored to their needs. These community values are guided by Tom's moral conviction to promote teacher growth by coaching and mentoring his faculty. He accomplishes this by not only coaching and mentoring his staff, but also by shifting the teachers' focus to become mentors themselves for prospective teachers.

In the section, I describe how Tom personally invests in his teachers and promotes teacher growth by providing them with multiple professional development opportunities. In particular, I explore how Tom attempts to cultivate professional development opportunities that are collaborative and tailored to the interests and needs of his faculty to improve student achievement.

Creating opportunities for professional development

Within the current environment that emphasizes high stakes accountability, Tom

views himself as an instructional leader (Blase & Blase, 1998) who is responsible for

ensuring the professional growth and development of his teachers. Although Tom

recognizes the importance of providing teachers with professional development

opportunities, he also recognizes the tensions and struggles associated with this type of

work. For instance, Tom has many ideas and beliefs regarding professional development,

but there is only so much that teachers can do with the limited time available.

> Not much time to do professional development now because of the new mandated
> reading program and next year's math adoption. In the past, we had a lot of
> demands for workshops and staff development to go through things together like
> specialized instruction, technology, CRISS, Saxon, co-operative learning, Project
> Include, accommodations, etc. But now most of the staff development is dictated
> from the district office. This makes for some hard choices when I want to focus on
> school-based work. (Field Notes, 3-4, 8473,8786)

Tom's focus on providing meaningful professional development activities based on

the needs of his school differs from many principals who often focus professional

development on compliance with state and district mandates. At the same time, Tom

describes how he views his role and what he must do to improve the professional

development process for his faculty.

> I need to find a better way to be more systematic about professional development
> by trying to get away from the high stakes and focus on the goals we have. (Field
> Notes, 3-4, 6245,6508)

To combat this dilemma, Tom believes in collectively defining what's important

with his faculty and finding ways to provide professional development based on these

broad school-based goals. As mentioned previously, collectively establishing their own

goals and objectives through data based decision-making is a means of buffering his staff

from the pressures inherent in schools in the current era of high stakes accountability.

Furthermore, Tom envisions professional development as a vehicle for promoting teacher

individual and collective growth around topics important to his staff. He realizes it is

"important to get everybody going through things together:"

> Now in order for that to happen, the school has to be successful in very obvious
> ways, not because of what reading books we have, or curriculum or all these other
> procedural things. I think all of that's going to happen because we've got a lot of
> people thinking about good teaching and learning about good teaching and
> mastering the craft and that whole professional development thing…If you've got
> people talking about the right things, then the solutions will work themselves out.
> (interview 5, 14347, 14946)

The purpose of providing this type of professional development is essentially two-

fold: to focus on developing individual teacher's professional growth while

simultaneously seeking to establish community norms. Thus, Tom's underlining purpose,

(i.e., lubricating the human machinery), bubbles to the surface and is the thread that

connects his ideas of promoting teacher growth to the larger issues of school culture and

community.

One example of Tom's vision to enhance the professional development process for

his teachers is by participating in professional development activities with the local

university. This began a few years ago when he and a core group of his staff participated

in a university-based professional development seminar targeting teacher professional

development around the issue of meeting the needs of all students, including students

with disabilities.

> I think a good example of this is to look at what happened in Project Include a
> couple years ago. It wasn't about answers. It was about the questions and about
> inquiry, about reflection and about being honest with ourselves. We need to get that
> kind of thing happening all the time. Not on a situational basis. But that level of
> inquiry needs to be what we always do around here. (Interview5, 14948,15368)

Project Include provides support for teams of teachers and administrators from

local schools to develop and implement plans for improving inclusive programs in their

schools. Specifically, the project provides professional development activities to better

prepare teachers and administrators to meet the needs of students with disabilities (and

other students who need support) in inclusive settings (McLeskey & Waldron, 2000).

During this professional development seminar, teachers worked together to closely

examine their current practice, interview a variety of stakeholders about their beliefs

regarding inclusion, visit exemplary inclusive sites, and develop a school wide inclusive

school improvement plan. Moreover, Tom strongly encouraged teachers participating to

tie their own individual professional development plans (PDP) to the larger, over arching

school plan.

A related outcome of the Project Include experience was Tom and his faculty

becoming involved in developing a school-university partnership with the local

university. Over the last three years, Hawk's Nest Elementary and a group of university

instructors joined together to address the challenges presented by NCLB and the re-

authorization of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (U.S. Department of

Education, 2004) and the goals of the Holmes Partnership (The Holmes Group, 1986;

1990). The Holmes Partnership encourages Colleges of Education and public schools to

create high quality professional development and significant school renewal that

improves teaching and learning for all children. As a result, the Democracy, Diversity

and Literacy (DDL) partnership specifically targeted high quality professional

preparation, simultaneous renewal, scholarly inquiry, and school and university-based

faculty development.

During the DDL partnership, prospective teachers take language arts and social

studies methods courses, as well as a three-credit field component entitled Integrated

Teaching. Integrated Teaching consists of an intensive four mornings per week in the

classroom, complemented by a Friday seminar. The placement and seminar provide a

forum and support for prospective and in-service teachers' reflection.   This support is

essential as teachers strive to integrate their fieldwork with their methods coursework as

they teach diverse learners. As a result of this partnership, coursework has been re-

conceptualized for DDL to fit, complement, and at times provoke instructional and

curricular change within Hawk's Nest Elementary School as well as within the university

program.

By capitalizing on the structure of the partnership, DDL seeks to develop a

professional learning community within the school where relationships are strong and

pre-service teachers as well as cooperating teachers feel comfortable making their

professional thoughts public.

> Part of what has evolved is a very different role for the classroom teacher who no longer serves the traditional role of hostess or host but it structures the internship and changes the teachers' role from hostess to partner…DDL is different because they meet and talk regularly about good teaching practice. The teachers are doing a whole lot of reflecting on their own teaching as a result. It is a lot of work to take two pre-service teachers and the fact that they still want to do it says something. The school and the university have worked together and its become much more of a partnership, sharing ideas, communication is easier and they [the teachers] can't just go through the motions. It requires a higher level of engagement and different activities than the teachers were accustomed to in the past. (field notes, 2-26, 8682,9273)

However, Tom also recognizes that participating in school-based professional

development, even with the university's assistance is not easy work.

> I don't think it would be easy and it's inviting to assume that just because we do all these things that good things are going to happen and kids will read, write and do arithmetic better. But you know, one of the problems we were having a couple of years ago was that I don't think I provided enough focus to instructional improvement kind of issues. I've just kind of assumed or allowed them to kind of happen. I think that my role now in the DDL partnership is going to be to provide a structure for examining these issues and dealing with them that will be congruent

with the reflective process and use some of this new information that people are getting. (interview 6, 20285,20954)

To address the need for a more concrete structure, Tom is currently encouraging his teachers to engage in two separate but overlapping professional development activities. First, he encourages his teachers to seek National Board Certification. National Board Certification has various benefits including a yearly financial bonus and the possibility of becoming a mentor to fellow teachers. Second, Tom has collaboratively designed an innovative specialist/masters program for his teachers with the professor in residence from the local university.

Tom's justification for promoting these professional development activities is to create a cadre of teacher leaders (Barth, 1990; Little, 1988) and embed the reflective teaching cycle (Zeichner & Liston, 1996) into his faculty's practice.

> We begin by talking about National Board Certification and the future of the advanced degree program being developed collectively with the local university. National Board Certification has a similar justification as the degree program. Developing a reflective cycle is at the core of the program. The bulk of the National Board activities involve a similar reflective approach. By reflecting on what and how you teach, what were the results, everyone can improve their teaching practice. Additionally, by collectively developing the program with the university, teachers can easily target areas of interest for them and simultaneously complete national board certification at the same time (Interview 4, 3244,3549)

An outcome of participating in this job embedded professional development is the creation of energy, enthusiasm and passion in the school culture.

> It's about creating the buzz. Like yesterday, I mean look at all these people who are just really intense about these professional development opportunities (discussion about developing the Masters program). They want to learn more, they want to go back to school. That's worth more than all kinds of awards and degrees because I think that I have created an environment where some people view their own learning as important. (Interview 5, 9523,9942)

In fact, Tom recognizes how the energy of his teachers has become contagious and positively impacted everyone on the staff, including himself. Over the past few years,

Tom found himself searching for new ideas. He admits he "used up" most of his good

ideas in the first five years of his principalship. Developing a working relationship with

the university has "added in new variables to the mix", and allowed Tom to step out of

the traditional role of a principal who "winds down his career quietly." Before the

partnership with the university, there was not much opportunity to reflect during his daily

work. In fact, Tom credits the partnership efforts with the local university as a catalyst

that led to him personally reflecting, not only about his job and roles, but also about the

legacy he will leave when he retires in a few years.

> This has been an energizing week for me because of the discussion between
> teachers about teaching and developing the craft. I think a key belief is to maintain
> a school that is alive and growing. We need to have something in place to structure
> it. Individual teachers will do things but a critical mass creates inertia and
> individuals can't stop the inertia. They kind of follow it even if they are not
> involved. I no longer see opposition or saboteurs. I see people getting excited
> about professional development and talking about good teaching, reflecting on their
> practice. This time of year, it's easy to get run down, worn out, and to see interest
> in that kind of thing is fun and energizing for me. (interview 6, 4544,5286)

In sum, Tom consistently promotes teacher growth by lubricating relationships with

his teachers and partnerships while simultaneously seeking input on ways to provide

meaningful professional development for his faculty. By embedding professional

development in the daily work of his teachers, Tom "sees the payoff as creating a lot of

institutional learning" and creating future school leaders.

Teacher leadership

Tom's goal is promoting teacher leadership that leads to professional growth.

Tom views teacher leadership as an explicit outcome of the school community's ongoing

efforts to provide professional development, coaching and mentoring opportunities.

Teacher leadership has also become embedded in the collective vision and culture of the

school. For example, Tom considers developing a new group of teacher leaders as his

responsibility. In fact, he "expects everyone on the faculty to be a leader as all have

talents or something to offer to the school."

> So I think that one of the implications of leadership is like Ralph Nader says the leader's job is not to develop followers but more leaders. So how can you create, not just a culture valuing change and growth and improvement, but actually a structure or a process that promotes teachers to lead that becomes kind of what you do. (interview 6, 3533,3858)

To promote teacher growth, Tom seeks to embed teacher leadership in his school

culture by coaching and mentoring his staff, and providing professional development that

creates natural opportunities for his teachers to lead one another. More often than not, this

leadership capacity is fueled by their passion.

> I believe strongly in teacher passion and why we should try to change or improve the way we do business, so personal passion matters. I see the fundamental elements of leadership as what's good for kids. And at times, I can see leadership ability when they can't because of their passion. It's not about ego. Strength lies in building relationships and supporting teachers in their growth and that is my first priority. (Field Notes, 4-21, 3556,3996)

To tap into this energy and passion, Tom provides options for his staff to become

leaders. For example, the pursuit of National Board Certification and the emergence of

Hawk's Nest as a Professional Development School have been key to developing teacher

leaders, while concurrently infusing new ideas into the school. He views these projects as

helping build capacity for teacher leadership by "structuring the information infusion into

the organization", and by providing space for his staff to "look outside themselves for

new knowledge creation."

Furthermore, Tom recognizes that in the current era of high stakes reform and

teacher shortages in Florida, he must offer something that attracts teachers to his small

rural elementary school:

> The fact is that like every other business or commercial enterprise, I've got to be able to attract high quality employees and people with leadership potential. I'm

competing with a lot of affluent schools and other places that have a lot of other things to offer people. So I've got to be able to offer something to people that I hope is not just status and easy kids to teach and new buildings and things like that, which appeals to some people. But, you know I think that a lot of people will say, well this is a pretty cool place to work because I give my teachers the chance to develop their leadership abilities. (interview 6, 5909,6508)

However, Tom recognizes that developing teacher leaders is a difficult task. It is his responsibility to assist his teachers by "building relationships and supporting teachers in their growth." For example, though many of his staff are interested in piloting the Renaissance Learning Software or becoming mentors for other teachers during the National Board Certification process, they have "never been pioneers before" and he realizes they will need his ongoing support.

They're going to experience personal frustration of doing something new and not understanding the skepticism of others when they try to help other people move forward with the model. Also seeing them as agents of change and leaders will be difficult as people naturally resist the change. (Interview 5, 23300, 23586)

In the process of supporting teachers as they struggle to become teacher leaders, Tom models many key characteristics of effective leaders. He not only trusts in their abilities and listens to their concerns, but he mentors and coaches them during the process to help them generate solutions to their problems. In particular, Tom shared a recent experience he had with a teacher leader who was struggling with the direction of a district-based National Board mentoring project. Once the group began meeting, the group leader struggled initially with how "to help review each others' portfolio stuff, and create a mentor support network." Tom supported this teacher by letting him "bend his ear" and helping him organize the bi-weekly sessions to meet the needs of the participants. Not only did Tom encouraged this person, but he gave him the space and time necessary "to figure it out by themselves as they stumbled along together." In the long run, people from other schools joined the group, and the district is currently using

this model as they set up other networks to support teachers on their journey toward

National Board Certification.

Concluding Thoughts

In sum, personally investing in teachers is the core belief of this story of *What Tom Does* to enact his role as principal in an era of high stakes accountability. Tom does this in multiple ways as he nurtures and cares for his staff by trusting in their abilities, listening to their concerns, and treating them fairly. Additionally, Tom buffers his faculty from the multitude of pressures associated with high stakes accountability by helping the school faculty define their own goals based on what is important to them, and by building partnerships with key external stakeholders such as business leaders, the media, and parents. Lastly, Tom personally invests in teachers by providing coaching, mentoring, and professional development opportunities that allow teachers to develop the necessary skills to ultimately become teacher leaders. All told, the concept of building relationships by personally investing in his staff is evident throughout Tom's *What He Does* story. By and large, this story paints a picture of how and why Tom enacts his leadership beliefs and practices of "lubricating the human machinery" as he leads during the current wave of high stakes accountability.

In the final chapter of this study, I share Tom's *Where We Are Going* story that highlights his vision for the school community. Specifically, this chapter serves as the concluding discussion of this research and centers on what Tom perceives to be the current and future direction of the Hawk's Nest Elementary School.

CHAPTER 6
WHERE ARE WE GOING?

By focusing on the larger explanation of why the organization exists and where we are trying to head – leaders add an additional dimension of meaning. (Senge, 1990, p. 354)

In Chapter 5, I shared Tom's *What He Does* story to provide a better understanding of how he enacts his role and provides leadership in an era of high stakes accountability. The story uncovered key values and beliefs related to Tom's actions associated with the metaphor of "lubricating the human machinery". "Lubricating the human machinery" occurs as Tom demonstrates an ethic of care (Noddings, 1992) by personally investing in his teaching staff. Specifically, Tom's actions portray how he buffers his faculty from external pressures, nurtures teachers and staff, and promotes teacher growth. Now that I have laid the foundation for understanding the underpinnings of his leadership beliefs and actions embedded in the "lubricating the human machinery" metaphor, and illustrated Tom's perceptions of how and why he enacts his role in an era of high stakes accountability, I begin the third and final story.

In this chapter, I return to Gardner's framework (1996) to answer the question, *Where are we going?* To answer this essential question, I draw on Senge's (1990) notion of a purpose story. Senge identified, in each effective leader, a story guided by a deep sense of purpose. In each case, "a pattern of belonging" (p. 345) emerged that gave meaning to the leader's vision and hope for the organization. More importantly, Senge (1990) asserts:

A purpose story is central to his (a leader's) *ability* to lead. It places the organization's purpose, its reason for being, within a context of where we've come from and where we're headed…This, is the power of the purpose story—it provides a single integrated set of ideas that gives meaning to all aspects of the leaders work" (p. 346, italics in original).

Furthermore, Tichy (2002) asserts that:

These stories weave together the values of an organization into a dynamic vision that serves as both a guide and an inspiration. By grounding people emotionally as members of a special team, they create the bonds that make them want to keep improving the organization and make them eager to open up and participate in interactive teaching and learning. (p.124)

In sum, the *Where Are We Going* story helps define a leader's work and provides a perspective on the core of Tom's practice as bringing "learning and change into society" (Senge, 1990). The best way to understand these stories is "to see the way individuals committed to such work describe their own sense of purpose" (Senge, 1990, p. 346). Therefore, in this chapter, I attempt to describe how Tom enacted his vision for Hawk's Nest Elementary as he lubricated the human machinery to improve the lives of teachers and students.

Theoretical Framework

Leading a school in the present era of high stakes accountability has become increasingly complex and difficult.

The dilemma is becoming increasingly difficult to manage as the public's expectations rise, as school-specific student achievement results are reported in local newspapers, as school administrators and teachers are evaluated in light of student performance, and as schools are expected to engage a broader civic and social audience. (Goldring & Greenfield, 2002, pp. 12-13)

Not only must principals organize, manage, and budget, today's leaders must also coach, teach, and develop teachers' knowledge in their schools (Elmore, 2000). Therefore, the school principal's role has become more challenging because he is

expected to simultaneously juggle these key leadership responsibilities. Furthermore,

Fullan (2001b) asserts that in order to succeed in the current era of change:

> Businesses and schools must become learning organizations. Thus, leaders in
> business and education face similar challenges—how to cultivate and sustain
> learning under conditions of complex, rapid change. (p. xi)

To assist leaders in addressing the complexity of leading in a culture of change,

Fullan (2001b) proposes a model for change that serves as the theoretical framework for

the discussion of this study. Fullan (2001b) argues that he currently sees a "remarkable

convergence of theories, knowledge bases, ideas and strategies that help us confront

complex problems that do not have easy answers" (p. 3). His framework of leading in a

culture of change includes five interrelated components: 1) moral purpose, 2)

understanding change, 3) relationship building, 4) knowledge creation, and 5) coherence

making. Therefore, I explore how these characteristics are evident in Tom's *Where Are*

We Going story, as he sought to "lubricate the human machinery" to improve the lives of

teachers and students.

Moral Purpose: Improving the Lives of Teachers and Students

> *A leader's dynamic does not come from special powers. It comes from a strong*
> *belief in a purpose and a willingness to express that conviction. (Kouzes & Posner,*
> *1997, p 276)*

Fullan (2001b) defines moral purpose as making a positive difference in the lives of

people school leaders touch—faculty, students, parents, and the community at large.

Therefore, "moral purpose must be accompanied by strategies for realizing it, and those

strategies are the leadership actions that energize people to pursue a desired goal" (p. 19).

The foundation of the first component, moral purpose, is evident in Tom's leadership

beliefs and practice as he "lubricates the human machinery" to improve the lives of

teachers and students.

Tom demonstrates his underlying moral purpose to improve the lives of teachers and students in three ways: (1) by buffering his teachers from external pressure associated with high stakes accountability, (2) nurturing his teachers and staff, and (3) promoting teacher growth. Just as other scholars (Bolman & Deal, 2000; Senge, 1990; Sergiovanni, 1992; Tichy, 2002) have argued that effective leaders have a deep moral conviction that guides their beliefs, vision, and leadership practices, Tom believes these actions, motivated by a moral purpose, will translate into improved experiences for the students in his teachers' classrooms.

Furthermore, before retiring Tom's desired goal is to build a school culture based on common goals and values. This is similar to Fullan's (2001b) belief that moral purpose is" about creating goals and a sense of direction. It's about getting alignment and inspiring people to achieve" (p. 19). In his experience, he has seen many principals and teachers "ride the wave on in" during their last years before retirement. However, Tom has specific hopes and dreams for Hawk's Nest as he heads toward retirement:

> Riding the wave in is easy but somehow not very satisfying. So the big question seems to be what am I going to accomplish… And what kind of a school is this going to be in three years when I retire? My dad used to say, don't think about what you are going to become, think about what you're going to accomplish . . . It would be very sad to me if when I left everything kind of changed and went down the tubes. That all the things I valued did not continue to be. So I hope I can create a culture and value system that says we're going to continue to grow and learn and we're going to do it by changing when we have to and people are going to be important. One of the goals I hope would be accomplished by the time I leave, is for the culture of this school and the values and the beliefs of the people here will be so well defined and so obvious that they would not think of putting somebody in here who wouldn't be a good fit. I hope it's going to be so obvious what kind of a person needs to be in this school, that they'll put somebody here who can kind of take it to the next level. Otherwise they're going to be hung in effigy, they couldn't survive. (interview 5, 13647,14345)

Tom seeks to "create meaningful goals that transcend time", in the hope of developing a school culture that will be sustained after he retires in three years. These leadership

beliefs are similar to Hargreaves and Fink's (2003) sustainability of leadership concept. The authors assert that leadership lies in "the hearts and minds of the many and does not rest on the shoulders of a heroic few" (p. 699).

However, Tom realizes that leading with moral purpose during this era of increased accountability is also "problematic" (Fullan, 2001b). The additive nature of new reforms to administrators and teachers' workloads has added to the tremendous pressure educators currently feel in these times and can distract leaders from the fundamental moral purpose they are seeking:

> I'm thinking well, I absolutely cannot do everything that everybody wants me to do and even pretend to run the school. So since something isn't going to be done, it might as well be me deciding what is important and what is not because of the value of the impact of it. (interview 5, 47181,47451)

In response to this pressure and to combat what he views as "the predictable failure" of NCLB and high stakes, Tom's goal is to collectively define with his faculty "what's important to the school":

> But for this school to achieve long-term growth, we have to create some kind of meaningful goals that transcend all that stuff, though our goals could include the Sunshine State Standards. (interview 6, 18067,18333)

He sees this shared commitment to moral purpose through shared goals as the vehicle that can drive school improvement and "long-term growth".

Educational leadership theory supports the importance of the role moral purpose plays in improving the lives of teachers and students. For instance, the theory of servant leadership centers on providing "a sense of direction to establish an overarching purpose that gives certainty and purpose to others who may have difficulty in achieving it for themselves" (Sergiovanni, 1992, p. 125). However being a successful servant leader requires that principals not only make decisions based on their values, but also develop

the trust of others. Tom gains this necessary trust from his faculty as he develops a

culture based on common goals and values while caring for and personally investing in

his teachers. These are each key elements of "lubricating the human machinery".

**Understanding the Change Process: The Paradox of Leading in an Era of High
    Stakes Accountability**

> *The best managers and leaders create and sustain a tension filled balance between
> two extremes. They combine core values with elastic strategies. They get things
> done without being done in. They know what they stand for and what they want,
> and they communicate their vision with clarity and power. But they also know they
> must understand and respond to the complex array of forces that push and pull
> organizations in so many conflicting directions. They think creatively about how to
> make things happen. They develop strategies with enough give to respond to the
> twists, turns, and potholes that they are sure to encounter on the way to the future.
> (Bolman & Deal, 1994, p. 378)*

The second component of Fullan's (2001b) framework on leading in a culture of

change is understanding the change process. Principals who merge a "commitment to

moral purpose with a healthy respect for the complexities of the change process, not only

will be more successful, but also will unearth deep moral purpose" (Fullan, 2001, p.5).

Researchers have struggled to find concrete examples, simple guidelines, or practical

suggestions that provide clear direction for principals to lead during the change process

(DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Fullan, 1995; 2001a; 2001b; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003).

Instead, research suggests that leaders are confronted with many unpredictable

complexities and nonlinear changes as they lead schools (Bolman and Deal, 1994;

Wheatley & Kellner-Rogers, 1996). These complexities often mean that "principals must

live with paradox—two competing demands that pull them in seemingly opposite

directions" (DuFour & Eaker, 1998, p. 195). DuFour and Eaker (1998) elaborate further:

> They must have a sense of urgency about improving schools that is balanced by the
> patience that will sustain them over the long haul. They must focus on the future
> but also remain grounded in the reality of the present. They must have both a long-
> term view and a keen, up close focus on the present. They must be both "loose" and

"tight" in their leadership style, encouraging autonomy while at the same perpetuating discontent with the status quo. They must be strong leaders that empower others. (pp. 195-196)

Given these competing demands, "change cannot be managed, but it can be understood and perhaps led, but it can't be controlled" (Fullan, 2001b). As a result of these complexities and the paradox of leadership, a school principal leads and lives in the realm of ambiguity (Bolman & Deal, 2000). Fullan (2001b) identified six guidelines that help leaders more fully understand the change process. These guidelines include: (1) the goal is not to innovate the most, (2) it is not enough to have the best ideas, (3) appreciate the implementation dip, (4) redefine resistance, (5) reculturing is the name of the game, and (6) never a checklist, always complexity. Tom exhibits many of these qualities of understanding change in his leadership practices. For example, in his *What Tom Does* story, I described how Tom used his knowledge of change to coach and mentor his teachers through what he called the "implementation gulch" by providing them with opportunities to talk about their fears and concerns individually as well as collectively.

Second, Tom addresses resistance to change regularly with his faculty. For instance, he recognized that many teachers are comfortable with the status quo:

> You know, any kind of change in the school, no matter how poorly something's working, it's working for somebody. I mean there is a reason for why things are the way they are. It might not be a good reason, but then again, it's working for somebody. So there's always going to be resistance to change, it's just the inertia of habit. (interview 4, 10815, 11161)

Tom redefines resistance as the inertia of habit and recognizes the importance of teasing out what is working for teachers and what is not when leading a change effort. Additionally, Tom knows that how he responds to teacher resistance is critical in developing a cohesive school culture prepared to respond to change. For example, Tom

believes that he needs to enlist and develop a "critical mass" of teachers to assist him in

carrying out the vision of school change:

> When you're looking at effective long-term change, you start with the true believers first and work with them to make it successful and figure the thing out and then let us sell the other people. And the things that we have done successfully long term have been those kinds of changes. And it might take a couple years for everybody to get on board and buy into it, but once they do, then it's theirs. You stuff things down people's throat and it will go down for a while, but sooner or later, they are just going to gag it up. (interview 5, 25556, 26125)

As a result of Tom's understanding of the change process, Tom purposely develops a

cadre of reflective teacher leaders prepared to join him in carrying out the vision (Barth,

1988; Little, 1988; Zeichner & Liston, 1996).

Tom's story not only illustrates his knowledge of change but also provides a lived

account of the paradox of leading change within an era of high stakes accountability.

Tom is cognizant of the paradox leaders face as they attend to the complexity and

messiness of change itself while simultaneously responding to the urgency of high stakes

accountability. This paradox affects Tom's *Where Are We Going* story as he leads his

school within a context of increased public scrutiny and resultant pressure toward

improved academic and social outcomes for all students.

Tom realizes that the main issue with most school change is the ever-changing and

disjointed landscape of the current reform agenda that has resulted in "projectitis"

(Fullan, 2001b, p. 109). Reforms regularly come and go and every year there are new

mandates and goals. More importantly, Tom acknowledges that the current paradox

facing school leaders in this era of high stakes accountability is to balance the quick fix

mentality inherent in current policy (i.e., NCLB, Florida A+) with the reality that lasting

change is complex and takes years to become sustained change in teaching practice

(Fullan, 2001a; Peterson, McCarthey, & Elmore, 1996). Tom perceives this trend as

problematic:

> But you can't go from problem to solution too quickly when they mandate it, before people are ready to implement that solution. The other thing that I'm concerned about next year, we've got a lot of stuff going on and are we going to have too many things going on…when we are talking about objectives and say we have one goal that's the goal. However, two goals is half a goal and three goals is no goal at all. (interview 6, 44479,44910)

Therefore, Tom negotiates the tensions associated with the paradox by throwing some

things out and working with his faculty to set the school's own pace of change and

number of changes.

For instance, during the reculturing process, Tom addresses the paradox by

resisting many of "the fad diets", including district-mandated paperwork that documents

that the standards have been "covered." Reiterating from earlier, Tom sees no correlation

between filling out teacher checklists and academic instruction to improve student

learning:

> I think that what happens at some schools in the district is that they overreact to things when they get a lousy grade one year and then they'll react to that problem and then the grade will go up . . . And whether or not the school is actually improving, who knows? But, we know that one fad diet after another is not particularly healthy so we just kind of stay the course and do not worry about the other stuff. (interview 3, 44550, 45034)

He continues:

> Rather than freaking out about individual test scores, I try and think long term. You've got to skip the fad diets and look for the long term healthy diet and invest in your reading program, math program, writing and social studies, science, citizenship, the other things that are important and just take a long term view of the building, and defining what good programs are and not overreact to try to fix some subgroup's test scores unless something really needs to be fixed. (interview 5, 30627,31390)

To these ends, Tom negotiates the paradox of leadership within the current context of

high stakes accountability. His understanding of these change guidelines (Fullan, 2001b)

paired with his ability to attend to the paradox of change informs and enhances the way

he "lubricates the human machinery" within Hawk's Nest Elementary School.

Building Relationships: Caring for the Human Machinery

> *The new science, we found in our work, leads to a new theory that places people and relationships – how people interact with each other, the kinds of relationships they form, into dramatic relief… In a nonlinear dynamic world everything exists only in relationship to everything else, and the interactions among agents in the system lead to complex, unpredictable outcomes. In this world, interactions, or relationships, among its agents are the organizing principle. (Lewin & Regine, 2000, pp.18-19)*

Building relationships is the third component of Fullan's (2001b) model for leading

in a culture of change. Fullan articulates that if moral purpose is "job one, relationships

are job two" (p. 51). Research indicates that a critical common factor in every successful

change effort is improving relationships (Barth, 1988; 1990; DuFour & Eaker, 1998;

Elmore, 2000; Fullan, 2001a; 2001b; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; McLaughlin, & Talbert,

2001; Muncey, & McQuillan, 1996; McLeskey & Waldron, 2000; Newman, King, and

Youngs, 2000; Newmann, & Wehlage, 1995; Peterson, McCarthey, and Elmore, 1996).

Principals must seek to build relationships with a variety of stakeholders-teachers,

parents, students, district, and community leaders. Lewin and Regine (2000) clearly

articulate that the success of any organization lies in how effective leaders build

relationships with stakeholders within the organization. Furthermore, Lewin and Regine

(2000) recommend that leaders must "pay as much attention to how we treat people—co-

workers, subordinates, customers—as we now typically pay attention to structures,

strategies, and statistics" (p. 27). Thus, successful leadership entails moving beyond

congenial interactions to encompass more "genuine relationships based on authenticity

and care" (p. 27). Focusing on people and relationships is important to getting sustained

results and becomes increasingly important today as school leaders navigate the

treacherous waters of high stakes accountability.

In this phenomenological case study, Tom's lived experience is filled with

relationship building based on care and personally investing in his faculty. For example,

the core of Tom's leadership practice evolved from his father's beliefs that people were

critical to the success of any organization.

> One of the things that I heard my dad say many times about manufacturing, but I
> think it's true of any organization, he said if you really want to learn how an
> organization or how a company operates, he said you've got to get down on the
> floor and really look at the jobs that need to be done. Then you've got to understand
> the job that needs to be done, but he said you've also got to understand the man
> who does it everyday. I found that to be very insightful. (interview 1, 27971,
> 29083)

As a result, Tom views taking care of and personally investing in his teachers as his most

important leadership responsibility. As mentioned previously, he seeks to "take care of

the big people so they can take care of the little people".

> We take care of people here and that's part of a belief system that exists in some
> places and doesn't exist in others and I think that is something that I tried to create
> here. You can get a sense of the personal investment when you're working closely
> with teachers. That personal investment is that we're taking care of people. And I
> think that it is my job to take care of people, and it probably is the most important
> thing I do. (interview 2, 21379, 21535)

> Tom recognizes the foundation of developing a thriving school rests on the ability

of the leader to help teachers value collegiality and build relationships with each other:

> I think that the key to relationship building is stocking the school with people with
> the capacity for developing good relationships because nothing else important is
> going to happen I think in the school unless there are relationships. (interview 2,
> 33768, 34179)

According to Barth (1990), at its core collegiality attempts to build strong ties among all

community members. He asserts that collegiality:

Depends on respect of teachers and principals for themselves and for each other. People work hard in a place where colleagues listen well and take one another seriously (while not necessarily always agreeing) and where the expectation—even a demand—is that everyone on the faculty can and must make a difference in the overall life of the school. Collegiality arises from the trust within a group; and trust is required when an institution of consequence—a school—depends on the honest expression of trust. (p. xi)

Little (1981, as cited in Barth, 1990) suggests that principals can build relationships with teachers and support collegiality among faculty to cultivate a shared moral purpose. To achieve this collegiality, principals should engage in four specific behaviors: 1) stating expectations explicitly for cooperation among teachers, 2) modeling collegiality, 3) rewarding collegiality, and 4) protecting teachers who initially engage in collegial behavior. This professional activity and dialogue provides opportunities for stakeholders to build relationships, gain a sense of self-worth and achieve a feeling of success. Tom promotes relationships by creating conditions for collegial relationships to develop within Hawk's Nest. For example, Tom models collegiality as he collaborates with faculty within the school as well as collaborates with university faculty who partner with his school. Additionally, Tom recognizes and rewards collegiality by highlighting teachers' collegial work at faculty meetings, providing teachers opportunities to work together around shared interests, creating structures to support collaboration, and making changes to the school based on the collaborative decision making of his faculty. Each of these conditions supports relationship building.

As indicated in Tom's *Who He Is* and *What He Does* stories, Tom's belief in building collegial relationships extends to the entire school community. He believes it is the entire school's responsibility to establish good working relationships with each other.

Organizations like to think they're well-oiled machines with gears that run precisely, but I think actually most organizations including schools are just rather elaborate crude kind of contraptions that somehow are put together and work in a

> rather clumsy way. But whether they do work or not I think depends on the
> willingness of all of the people to make it work and a lot of that just comes down to
> their ability to maintain and develop good working relationships with all of the
> people in the building. (interview 2, 25260, 258220

In this excerpt, Tom returns to the lubricating the human machinery metaphor and alludes

to the school machine as being less than a "well-oiled machine with gears that run

precisely." In fact, Tom acknowledges the clumsiness of human machinery and suggests

that relationships generated from care make the "school as a crude kind of contraption"

work better. Given the challenges that schools face, particularly in this era of high stakes

accountability, Tom believes that relationships provide the "lubrication" for improving

the lives of teachers and students.

Knowledge Creation and Sharing: Building Capacity for Learning Together

> *The development of collective meaning is an essential characteristic of a learning
> organization. (Senge, 1990, p. 241)*

The fourth component of Fullan's framework (2001b), knowledge creation and

sharing, indicates that successful principals commit themselves to producing and

improving the knowledge base of teaching and learning both within and outside their

schools. Knowledge creation is also intricately meshed with the previous themes of moral

purpose, understanding the change process, and building relationships. For example,

Fullan (2001b) articulates how these characteristics are intertwined.

> What has been discovered is that first, people will not voluntarily share knowledge
> unless they feel some sort of moral commitment to do so; second, people will not
> share unless the dynamics favor exchange; and third, that data without relationships
> merely cause more information glut. (p. 6)

Thus, creating knowledge is a social process that thrives on relationships. For example,

Lambert et al. (1995) coined the term constructivist leadership as a "reciprocal process

that enables participants in an educational community to construct meanings that lead

toward a common purpose about school" (p. 29). Furthermore, Fullan (2001b) asserts that effective leaders in a culture of change must "make knowledge building a core value and create specific opportunities to engage in this process" (p. 90). Therefore, this section summarizes how Tom's leadership helps generate new knowledge by building capacity for learning together around a common purpose.

Tom recognizes that capacity building is not easy. Research contends that "the biggest stumbling block to true school reform is the lack of involvement of teachers in the reform discourse, which is ironically accompanied by pressure on these same teachers to work longer and harder to implement reforms that they had little part of adopting" (Laboratory for Student Success, 2002, p. 36). To combat this recurring dilemma Tom involves his staff in a collegial problem solving process that seeks to generate new knowledge related to "issues they see as really important" (Fullan, 2001b, p. 84). This challenging but necessary work allows teachers within a learning community to generate potential solutions to difficult dilemmas they face as they try and teach an increasingly diverse student population in an era of high stakes accountability (Hallinger, 1992; Leiberman, 1996; Mitchell & Sackney, 2001).

In order for this to occur, Tom seeks to develop school norms and values with his faculty to guide their practice. By encouraging a "culture on inquiry" (Leiberman, 1996; Mitchell & Sackney, 2001), Tom builds capacity by providing opportunities for on-going dialogue and knowledge building around important issues:

> I think that we already have fairly well defined where we want to go, what we need to do, and we already have some systems in place or at least some habits in place about looking at data. (interview 3, 82981,83196)

Tom's understanding of building capacity to create and share knowledge is evident as he recognizes that schools need to fundamentally change structures and processes related to how they "did business" or reculture in a few key areas.

During the past decade at Hawk's Nest, capacity building included adopting a comprehensive reading series to provide consistency across the school, participating in Project Include to redesign the service delivery for students with disabilities, and, most recently, using student data to inform instructional decisions for Hawk's Nest lowest quartile students. Tom's knowledge building efforts also led him to work with his faculty to design innovative school-based professional development activities (e.g., transformed the traditional professional development plans, school-university partnership, job embedded masters program). These knowledge building activities acknowledged and tackled the difficult task of changing teachers' practice and beliefs related to the core of instruction (Leithwood, & Riehl, 2003; Peterson, McCarthey, and Elmore, 1996).

Knowledge creation emerges out of a spirit of community based on trust, mutual sharing, and collaboration which energizes and motivates participants (Little, 1988; Sergiovanni, 1996; Wenger,1998). Consequently, commitment toward creating and sharing knowledge results in a shared vision, resources and information to support the vision, and teacher growth and development (Blase & Blase, 1998; Evans, 1996; Lambert et al., 1995; Newmann & Wehlage, 1995). Tom's leadership expresses each of these characteristics. For example, he cultivates a shared vision explicitly by sharing his goal of "defining what's important" with the school community. By using his moral compass to resist short-term fixes, Tom uses student performance data to collectively determine the focus of school improvement with his faculty. Additionally, Tom develops a collegial

culture by "providing positive energy to recharge the troops", promoting teacher growth

and development, and demonstrating care for his faculty. His care is evidenced by

trusting in their abilities to teach and lead, listening to their concerns and ideas, treating

them fairly, providing for multiple professional development opportunities, and sharing

leadership opportunities. In this process, he strives to create a "family like atmosphere"

rooted in trust and collegiality that looks at the school honestly while seeking to generate

and share knowledge continuously.

Tom's dedication to providing the right conditions for knowledge creation is

illustrated in his "lubricating the human machinery" metaphor. These conditions allow

Tom to cultivate a shared vision that collectively defines what is important with his

faculty, design professional development tailored to these goals, and build capacity and

commitment for generating and sharing knowledge that enables teacher and student

learning to occur.

Coherence Making: Synergy to Make A Difference

> *Life is not neat, parsimonious, logical, nor elegant. Life seeks order in a disorderly*
> *way. Life uses processes we find hard to tolerate and difficult to believe in – mess*
> *upon mess until something workable emerges…it takes a lot of repeated messes to*
> *get it right. (Wheatley & Kellner-Rogers, 1996, p. 17)*

The last component of Fullan's (2001b) framework, coherence making, describes

the ongoing search to find themes and patterns in the school's collective work. This

coherence serves to generate the energy needed to change and allow creative solutions

and strategies to answer persistent questions and solve recurring dilemmas. Coherence

making is difficult at best, since the complexity of the change process, coupled with

disrupting the status quo keeps people on the "edge of chaos." However, school leaders

must learn to trust in the dynamic complexity of the change process (Fullan, 1993) while

simultaneously "tolerating the ambiguity" (Fullan, 2001b, p. 6) in order for coherence to

emerge. This is particularly relevant in the current era of mandated educational reforms

and high stakes accountability focused on students' standardized test scores.

Tom's leadership indicates that leading a school in the current era of high stakes

accountability requires coherence and this leadership is a passionate, nonlinear, and

persistent activity (DuFour & Eaker, 1998). Energy, enthusiasm, and hope are critical to

building commitment and coherence. For example, Tom builds individual commitment

and coherence around a set of school improvement ideas by "tapping into the wellsprings

of emotions that lie within" his faculty and staff (DuFour & Eaker, 1998, p. 280).

> The greatest gift that leaders can give is hope. Part of leadership is people seeing
> the leader's commitment, enthusiasm, hope, and passion so that people want to get
> involved. I try to communicate these ideas and create energy because what the
> leader says and does sets the tone for the building (field notes, 4-21, 5191, 5391)

As a result, coherence becomes evident to others through Tom's passion for improving

outcomes for teachers and students. The coherence making sets the direction of the

school and creates energy by "mobilizing people to tackle the tough problems" (Heifitz,

1994, as cited in Fullan, 2001b, p. 3).

According to Tom, even though any change is inherently "messy, complex and

challenging", if addressed collectively, leaders create passion, coherence and synergy

within a school. Synergy is "a movement not a condition, a journey not a destination, a

voyage not a harbor" that requires a "willingness to accept challenges, commitment,

constancy and persistence"(DuFour & Eaker, 1998, pp. 284-285).

> This has been an energizing week for me because of the discussion between
> teachers about teaching and developing the craft. I think a key belief is to maintain
> a school that is alive and growing. We need to have something in place to structure
> it. Individual teachers will do things but a critical mass creates inertia and
> individuals can't stop the inertia. They kind of follow it even if they are not
> involved. I no longer see opposition or saboteurs. I see people getting excited

about professional development and talking about good teaching, reflecting on their practice. This time of year, it's easy to get run down, worn out, and to see interest in that kind of thing is fun and energizing for me. (interview 6, 4544,5286)

Thus, Tom creates coherence and synergy by cultivating a vital school culture.

Tom demonstrates his commitment to coherence by developing common goals and norms while simultaneously distributing and sharing leadership with his faculty:

This leads to a confidence boost and increased morale around the school. This process then becomes part of the ingrained culture. In order for this to work I had to give up control and be comfortable with it. If we were going to figure this out it needed to become part of the teachers' daily work. My role changed. I need to guide the process, not just allocate resources. I asked people to invest time so I had to listen and do what they asked me to do. In order for this to become effective, I eliminated many committees that traditional schools have and moved towards an ad hoc committee format that met around issues the school faced. Over time we now have committees for math, literacy, discipline, partnership with the university, etc. (field notes 4-21, 9018, 9743)

As a result, Tom's leadership fosters coherence that can lead to teacher leadership focused on improving teacher learning and student achievement.

At Hawk's Nest Elementary, entrusting and empowering teachers to work together to generate knowledge and teaching expertise creates coherence and synergy. Thus, Tom creates coherence, and at the same time builds future educational leaders who can continue to carry his critical message that nothing else matters unless you are first "lubricating the human machinery" to improve the lives of teachers and students. As Tom enacts his role through "lubricating the human machinery", he provides "hope for the future."

Limitations of the Study

There are two main limitations of this study that should be taken into consideration. First, the scope of my case study was limited to one principal. Case study research is time intensive work that involves participant observations, interviews, and

debriefing with participants. The case study methodology used in this research design necessitates a rich, thick description of the phenomenon being studied related to the single participant represented in the case. In this case, the reader is limited to the story of how Tom conceptualizes, enacts, and experiences his leadership role in an era of high stakes accountability. The onus of the responsibility is on the reader to determine the extent to which the case is applicable to others serving in a leadership role similar to Tom.

Second, the findings of this study are contextually bound and particular to one principal working in a rural elementary school in north Florida at a certain point in time at a particular stage in his career. This study provides insight into the lived experience of a principal as he leads his school during an era of high stakes accountability. Specific descriptions of how Tom enacted his role could prove valuable to other school administrators and teachers as they attempt to traverse the current landscape of increased accountability and mandated school reform. Though Tom does display the characteristics of an effective leader, these traits may not be applicable to other principals who have a different leadership philosophy, or who face different challenges associated with working in different school settings. Therefore, the reader must judge for himself the transferability (Patton, 2002) of the findings.

Directions for Future Research

Although this investigation provides a detailed description illustrating how one principal leads, further research is needed to present a more complete understanding of how effective principals conceptualize and enact their role as school leaders in an era of high stakes accountability. Future research should include other individual cases as well as cross case analyses to search for recurring themes, patterns, and nuances across

settings (i.e., urban, suburban, rural) and school levels (i.e., elementary, middle, and high school). For example, how do principals in high poverty schools conceptualize and enact their roles? How do leadership experiences differ across settings or levels?

A second area for future research should investigate the policies and practices used to prepare principals to lead in the current era of high stakes accountability. Since school leaders must become more than managers, principal preparation programs must prepare future leaders for the complexities of change, the intricacies of teacher learning, and the politics associated with leading in the current era of high stakes accountability. Given that effective leadership requires leaders to also become communicators of a vision amongst a myriad of other skills, how do principal preparation programs and the accompanying internships prepare future leaders to "lubricate the human machinery"?

A third area of needed research focuses attention on the politics of leadership. We need to understand how effective leaders cross borders and navigate the politics of leading a school in the current era of high stakes reform. For example, the literature would benefit from a detailed understanding of how principals negotiate politics while simultaneously buffering their faculties from much of the public scrutiny and policy pressures associated with high stakes reform.

Fourth, more research is needed to understand how principals conceptualize and enact effective school-based professional development that results in improved outcomes for students. Although preliminary evidence exists that students performance on state mandated tests is improving, research is needed to understand what happens when principals use school-based measures to monitor and sustain reform. Under what conditions do teachers and students benefit from school-based professional development

targeting school driven improvement goals? How do principals create job-embedded

professional development opportunities that target school improvement goals?

Fifth, given the important influence of Tom's beliefs and experiences in defining

his moral purpose and leadership metaphor of "lubricating the human machinery", more

research is needed to fully understand how to cultivate belief systems consistent with a

moral purpose. School leaders come to their work with diverse personal and professional

experiences that shape their "Who am I" story. Given today's context of high stakes and

the challenges that many schools face, particularly those of poverty, we need to

understand what leadership beliefs are needed to be successful in particular contexts. For

example, what beliefs do principals in high poverty schools need to be successful?

Finally, research is also needed to identify the benefits and challenges of

distributing leadership within a school community. Only then will we begin to understand

the underlying complexities and difficulties associated with this necessary, but messy,

work. Distributing leadership has tremendous, and largely untapped, potential for

developing collaborative and transformational administrators. How do principals create

time and space for teacher leaders (Spillane, et al., 2001)? And if the goal is to create

collaborative and transformational teacher leaders, then how do principals create

professional learning communities (Lieberman, 1996) that improve the lives of teachers

and students?

Conclusion

The purpose of this phenomenological case study was to return to Wolcott's (1973)

study of the principalship and address a void in the literature by seeking to understand

how an elementary school principal conceptualizes and enacts his role in an era of high

stakes accountability. In this study, I looked at the big picture and sought to identify the

underlying meaning associated with Tom's leadership philosophy and answer the key questions of *Who He Is, What He Does*, and *Where Are We Going* through Tom's eyes.

Tom's *Who I Am* story emerged from his life experiences and led to the development of his core leadership beliefs, values, and attitudes that are reflected in his practices. Much of Tom's leadership attitudes and beliefs emerged from his father's influence and his own lived experience of building relationships with his colleagues. In particular, his core beliefs center on his metaphor of "lubricating the human machinery" to improve the lives of teachers and students.

Second, this investigation shares Tom's *What He Does* story. Specifically, this story revealed how Tom enacted the metaphor of "lubricating the human machinery" in his practice by investing in his teachers personally and professionally in three overlapping ways: (1) buffering his staff from anxiety associated with teaching in an era of high stakes accountability; (2) nurturing his staff; and (3) promoting teacher professional growth.

In the third story, I used Fullan's (2001b) model for leading in a culture of change as a theoretical framework to share Tom's *Where Are We Going* story and connect this study to the research literature. This story illustrates how Tom sets the direction of the school and builds capacity. Initially, he creates a culture based on common goals and values with the purpose of creating a family-like atmosphere. This story then highlights how Tom distributes leadership opportunities throughout his staff, works on enhancing group dynamics by developing norms for using student data and problem solving, and develops useful and relevant professional development opportunities for his staff.

In total, "lubricating the human machinery" to improve the lives of teachers and students is the central metaphor that guides Tom's leadership thoughts and actions. Within this metaphor, relationships generate the necessary emotion and energy for building capacity and commitment that enables teacher and student learning to occur. By "lubricating the human machinery", Tom seeks to build capacity by driving his school towards a collective commitment to education. However, it is his underlying moral purpose of improving the lives of teachers and students that steers Tom's thinking, decision-making, and actions. Therefore, Tom's leadership focuses on creating and cultivating relationships that are fueled not only by making personal connections with people, both internal and external to the school, but he also embraces a deeper moral conviction to improving his school by helping his teachers and students to reach their fullest potential.

APPENDIX A
PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

January 2003

Dear Principal:

I am a doctoral candidate in the Department of Special Education in the College of Education at the University of Florida. The purpose of this letter is to secure your consent for participation in an investigation of principal leadership specifically focused on how a principal leads in an era of high stakes accountability. I will be conducting a case study of one principal and I am asking you to participate in this study because you have been identified as a successful principal. Your participation in this project will help the educational community to understand the complexities of the principal's role in an era of high stakes accountability. I am asking your consent for the following:

1. Interviews. Three initial interviews that focus on your perceptions of the principalship. This set of interviews is designed to capture your experience as a school leader. Additionally, weekly follow-up interviews will be conducted after observations over the next five months to explore to the events of the day, discuss what transpired and generate meanings from your point of view.

2. Participant Observations. Observations will be conducted weekly over the course of the research. These observations will focus on your leadership role. The purpose of observing the principal is to observe his/her actions and see how he/she puts his/her beliefs and attitudes about leading a school into practice. These observations will be scheduled in advance. Field notes will be taken to document all observations and used to develop questions for follow-up interviews.

I do not perceive that there are any risks for your participation in the study. In fact, many people generally enjoy the opportunity to talk about their educational and work experiences. There will be no compensation for participation in this study. With your permission I would like to audiotape interviews. Also, be assured that you do not have to answer any question that makes you uncomfortable during the interviews. Only I will have access to the tapes, which I will personally transcribe, removing any identifiers during transcription. The tapes will then be erased. Your identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law and your identity will not be revealed in the final

manuscript. Additionally, all informal observation notes will be coded to ensure anonymity. You are free to withdraw your consent to participate and to discontinue participation in the study at any time without consequence.

If you agree to participate, please sign below and return this letter to me. A second copy of this letter is provided for your records. If you have any questions about the study or the procedures for data collection, please contact me (392-0701, ext. 262 or dhop35@aol.com) or my advisor, Dr. James McLeskey (392-0701 ext 278 or mcleskey@coe.ufl.edu). If you have any questions about the rights of research participants, you can contact the University of Florida Institutional Review Board, P.O. Box 112250, UF, Gainesville, FL 32611, phone (352) 392-0433.

Sincerely,

David Hoppey,
Principal Investigator

I have read the procedure described above for the study of principal leadership. I agree to participate in the study, and I have received a copy of this description.

_____   _____
     Signature of Principal   Date

APPENDIX B
PHENOMENOLOGICAL INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

Interview 1 Questions

1) How did you come to be a career principal? Share with me the various roles you have played in the education field throughout your career.

2) Tell me about your family. Share your family background and their beliefs about education.

3) Tell me about your experience in school (elementary, middle, high school). How about your teacher education experience while attending college?

4) Think back and share a few (2-3) influential educational experiences that stick out in your mind as important. Explain why these are important.

5) Do a brief timeline of your work history from the time you entered the profession to the current time.

Interview 2 Questions

1) Talk about your relationships with others in the school building. Let's
   start with your administrative staff, the BRT, CRT, and your school
   secretary. How about your relationship with your teachers? Parents?
   Students? District staff?

2) Reconstruct a recent day from the moment you arrive at school until you
   left for the day. What did you do before and after school that day?

3) Share a few stories about the past few weeks to shed some light on your
   experiences leading the school.

4) What are some of your foundational beliefs about teaching and learning
   that inform your leadership practice? How did they come to be part of the
   "core" of your leadership style?

5) Talk about the current wave of reform and accountability. Specifically,
   how has the heightened accountability changed your daily work life? In
   what was is this different from the past?

Interview 3 Questions

1) Given what you have said about your life before you became a principal, as well as what you shared about your work over the past ten years as a school principal, how do you understand your leadership role today?

2) What sense does leading your school make to you?

3) What is your current understanding of your role as a school principal?

4) How do you balance the daily demands of your job with the external demands of accountability from the district, state and national levels?

5) How does your understanding about the factors influencing the school affect your vision for the school? Explain.

6) How do you enact this role?

7) Given what you have reconstructed in earlier interviews, what goals do you foresee for yourself as well as your school in the future? Specifically, what do you see yourself doing in the future to accomplish these goals?

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

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David began his doctoral program in August 2000 at the University of Florida. His research interests include inclusive teacher education, leadership for school change, and professional development of in-service and pre-service teachers. While attending the University of Florida, David taught undergraduate and graduate courses, supervised prospective teachers, and participated in many research projects. He is currently the Coordinator, Educational Training Programs for the Department of Special Education at the University of Florida as well as an Inclusion Specialist for the Alachua County Public School District.