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Marie Simone

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ESTABLISHING A COMMUNITY OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNERS:  
LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES THAT PROMOTE TEACHER EFFICACY

by

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Dissertation

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in

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## ABSTRACT

Marie M. Simone

### ESTABLISHING A COMMUNITY OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNERS: LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES THAT PROMOTE TEACHER EFFICACY

Rowan University: 2008

During my tenure in several school districts as an educational administrator, I was dismayed to learn that a common theme among bright, energetic, caring, and creative teachers was that morale was low and that teachers rarely felt recognized for their efforts or accomplishments. I was curious to see if recognition and respect offered by educational leaders would help to improve a sense of personal and professional efficacy among teachers, thereby improving school morale and retention of teachers in the profession.

Morale is defined by Mendel (1987) as a feeling, state of mind, mental and emotional attitude. Washington, et al (1981) define morale as the feeling a worker has about his job based upon how the worker perceives himself in the organization and the extent to which the organization is viewed as meeting the worker's own needs and expectations. Bentley and Rempel (1980) describe morale as the professional interest and enthusiasm that a person displays toward the achievement of individual and group goals in a given job situation. When a healthy school environment exists and teacher morale is high, teachers feel good about each other and feel a sense of accomplishment from their jobs (Hoy & Miskel, 1987).

Through personal and professional stories, this study examined two journeys. The first focused on a change project within a school district that examined the effects of recognition and

appreciation upon the personal and professional efficacy of special services staff. The second journey reflected the path of my leadership from my espoused theories to my theories-in-use as I led staff through this change process. The leadership story examined my personal and professional journey as well as the journeys of teachers toward self-actualization.

Findings from this study will inspire teachers to reflect upon their own stories and experiences in a collegial atmosphere in order to develop personal and professional efficacy. The study shows that respect is the key ingredient to the establishment of effective educational organizations where teachers are recognized, supported, and engaged in learning communities. When teachers feel empowered, then morale and self-esteem are enhanced and the entire organization benefits.

**Establishing a Community of Professional Learners:  
Leadership Strategies That Promote Teacher Efficacy**

**Marie M. Simone  
Dissertation Symposium  
May 8, 2008**

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## DEDICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This manuscript is dedicated to my Rowan University Cohort 2002 who supported me through periods of discouragement and reminded me to recall who I am (thanks, Pete!). The deconstruction is done...or is it??? It is for my husband, Al, and children, Regina, Dante, and Albert, who have made me a part of their personal journeys and who have taught me the rewards of tenacity, efficacy, and unconditional love.

To those people who I hope to meet again in Heaven for sharing their values and passions and providing sustenance for my belief in people: my parents, Minnie and Frank Rusciano, my brother, Dr. Frank Rusciano, Aunt Theresa Stolte, my brother-in-law, John Simone, and my cousins, Rich Martin and Ed Martucci.

As a practitioner, I cannot forget the many educators I have encountered along the way; those of you dedicated to the belief that with hard work, all students can be successful. You have given me the opportunity to be a lifelong learner, and have helped me to define my own professional efficacy. (Teachers, you know who you are.)

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Marie M. Rusciano Simone

Our belief has got to affect our behavior.  
Alan Peskin, *God's Choice*

### *Introduction*

“Morale is very low in this district...teachers are never recognized for their efforts or their accomplishments. They only tell us when we’ve done something wrong or that test scores are not quite up to par.” This was a statement that was reported to me at my very first department meeting as a new educational administrator in September 1990. I was hired as a Supervisor of Special Education in an upper middle class K-8 district of 6 schools in central New Jersey. The parent population was educated and the Board of Education members reflected this status. I found the teachers to be bright, energetic, caring, and creative in their attempts to help students with special needs reach their potential. Yet, they did not feel a sense of efficacy in their work. Board Members were known to tell them that they should feel “honored to work in this district; they should not even expect a salary for this privilege.” One would think that an educated community whose constituents were professional people or worked in the financial world of New York City would appreciate and support the educators who were teaching their children. Even if the assumption was that their children were budding geniuses, having taught gifted youngsters, I can say that these students still require both direct and facilitated learning by creative, certified teachers.

During my tenure in this district, the Director of Special Services and I consciously tried to recognize teacher achievements and create a strong learning community of professionals. As far as we were concerned, the students progressed as a result of teacher efforts and teachers grew in professional efficacy. They worked through philosophical transitions in the education of special education students from self-contained environments to inclusion with enthusiasm. Data collected during our first and third years using the in-class support model of intervention was

overwhelmingly positive. When I left this district, the department boasted of successful inclusionary practices at every grade level, in every discipline, and in every school.

My professional journey took me to other districts thereafter. The next was a large middle class K-12 suburban district of 17 schools. Interestingly enough, the same low morale and lack of recognition was reported among teaching staff. More recently, I served in an urban K-12 district of 8 schools. Again, the same tone existed. These observations were disturbing to me. It is so important for educators teaching our most challenging populations of students to feel a sense of professional efficacy and be renewed through recognition and job satisfaction. I assumed if these feelings were expressed in the districts where I was employed; the situation likely existed in other districts as well. This discovery informed my research.

I was curious to see if recognition and respect of teachers helped to improve their sense of personal and professional efficacy, thereby improving school morale and retention in the profession. Morale is defined by Mendel (1987) as a feeling, state of mind, mental and emotional attitude. Washington, et al (1981) define morale as the feeling a worker has about his job based upon how the worker perceives himself in the organization and the extent to which the organization is viewed as meeting the worker's own needs and expectations. Bentley and Rempel (1980) define morale as the professional interest and enthusiasm that a person displays toward the achievement of individual and group goals in a given job situation.

When a healthy school environment exists and teacher morale is high, teachers feel good about each other and feel a sense of accomplishment from their jobs (Hoy and Miskel, 1987). People who feel empowered tend to have higher morale (Mendel, 1987). When educational administrators provide reinforcement for effective teaching behavior, then morale and self esteem of teachers seem to be enhanced.

In this study, I examined the following research questions:

- How do districts support teachers?
- How will effective dialoguing help to meet teacher needs?
- How important is recognition to efficacy and purposing?
- How can teachers transform their own learning?
- What is the role of respect in my leadership?

The further backward you can look the farther forward you are likely to see.  
Winston Churchill

### *Background*

My professional story is not unusual. Like many other educators, I knew I wanted to teach since I was a young child. My brother, four years my junior, filled in as the compliant student in my make-believe classroom. I recall writing my first lesson plans in 7<sup>th</sup> grade while on a road trip to visit my uncle in Rochester, New York. Hours and hours were spent as a fictitious classroom leader. If nothing else, this dedication showed my early passion for the profession. From that time on, my path became very clear, and my middle school, high school, and college years were spent preparing for the day I would stand before a group of youngsters to share my expertise...or so I thought.

I grew up in the tumultuous 1960's amid a whirlwind of change---changing values, changing cultures, changing opportunities. I was caught on the winds of creating a better society. The 60's empowered me as a female in a way that the 40's and 50's did not empower my mother and my aunts. Combined with my ethical and religious background, I developed faith in people and myself, which helped me to initiate and sustain change in my life. As thoughts of a career began to take shape, I believed the vehicle for changing the future would be through the institution of public education. I thought the path would be linear.

If I were to fast forward this career 35 years to the present, what evolved instead was a cyclical career defined by reciprocal learning; learning from students, colleagues, family, and a whole host of other constituents in the school community. My classroom arena changed from time-to-time, from teaching third grade, gifted and talented, and special education, to becoming a Learning Consultant and Learning Strategist, to my years as a Supervisor, Assistant Director, Vice Principal, Director, and recently as a Professor in higher education. I incorporated what I

learned from my years of formal schooling to what I had learned from my many students, their parents, my fellow teachers, and administrative colleagues.

This leadership story, then, is about my personal and professional journey toward self-actualization, the experiences and the people that have made the journey rich and meaningful and have added to the building of my personal and professional efficacy. Along the way, challenges have molded my being. Those who touched me and those whom I have touched create the fabric of this journey. The imprints have been meaningful and have helped me to determine my leadership capabilities. The tenets of my beliefs are held strong by the supports of wisdom, knowledge, courage, and heart. I am a leader of **TEAMS**; that is, **T**ransformational, **E**thical, **A**uthentic, **M**oral, and **S**piritual theories. I profess to be a servant leader.

Through personal and professional stories, this study will examine two journeys. The first will focus on a change project within a school district that will examine the effects of recognition and appreciation upon the personal and professional efficacy of special services staff. The second journey will reflect the path of my leadership from my espoused theories to my theories-in-use as I lead staff through the change process. As these two paths become entwined, I will learn much more about myself as an educator and a leader, I will learn about the effects others have upon my educational beliefs and philosophies, and I will uncover the “aha’s” that will make the study worthwhile.

We cannot hold a torch to light another's path without brightening our own.  
Ben Sweetland

## TEAMS

In the *Wizard of Oz*, Dorothy, the Tin Man, the Scarecrow, the Lion, and the Wizard comprise a team of learners searching for Truth. This Truth is defined in terms of smaller truths, such as identifying one's strengths and weaknesses, knowing what we can achieve, and sensing how we can affect others in their searches. Each character uses wisdom, knowledge, courage, and heart in their quest for personal and professional meaning. Steven Covey, in *The Eighth Habit* (2004,) claims that the mind, body, heart, and spirit define the soul of persons and organizations. This soul yearns for greatness and these qualities frame the paradigm describing how the whole person connects. When we serve others, we gain hope; we gain energy (Wheatley, 2002). We experience each other in new ways because the only thing we all have in common are our differences (Bernie Glassman, co-founder Zen Peacemaker Order). We do not have to worry about different status or traditional power relationships. We worry instead about whether we will succeed in accomplishing what needs to be done. We focus on the work and learn about trust (Wheatley, 2002). We rely on the necessity of reciprocal conversation.

**Heart** represents your passion. It is what gets your body running and what you love doing. It carries your fond childhood dreams as a source of inner strength and comfort (Hesse, 1998). When your body works in unison, honesty exists. It is the caring and the serving that helps us move toward personal fulfillment. **Mind** is the talent or gift we have that combines and complements the learning. **Body** represents the physical and economic needs; the need to serve and appreciate the persons, traits, strengths, goods, and services that help to meet these needs. The body provides the wisdom or the framework for that which we know to be right and sound. **Spirit** is the conscience, trust, integrity, principles, meaning, value, and worth of the



commitment; it is the courage we derive from our morals, values, passions, and faith (Covey, 2004). Collectively, mind, heart, body, and spirit provide the energy for an organization or an individual to be successful.

I see each of these qualities imbedded in my leadership theory. I travel a journey of wisdom, knowledge, courage, and heart. **Wisdom** defines what we know to be right and sound. It is the body that propels who we become personally and professionally. With **Knowledge**, we learn, relearn, and learn anew. It is through knowledge that our minds are enriched and given purpose. **Courage** gives passion to our spirit. It incorporates our morals and values, helping us along the path of good will. We develop courage for those things that speak to our heart. Our courage grows for things that affect us deeply, things that open our hearts. Once our heart is engaged, it is easy to be brave. We do not have to start with power, only with passion (Wheatley, 2002). **Heart** lends purpose to the way in which we care for and serve others. It provides the means in which we interact with people. Peterson and Deal (1998) define culture as the underground stream of norms, values, beliefs, traditions, and rituals, that have built up over time as people work together, solve problems, and confront challenges in a caring environment.

I hope to discover who I am through what I know, through the courage I have to confront those challenges and disappointments, and through my heart as I network and interact with others. My journey to self-actualization aligns with Dorothy's journey. We have both looked outside of ourselves to recognize what is really in our hearts; that which defines who we are personally and professionally. Like Dorothy and her comrades, I will become wiser on this journey and richer for having experienced the reflection and the relationships.

I describe my leadership platform in terms of servant leadership theory. I was quite surprised to realize that in defining servant leadership as I see it, the theories emerged as the

acronym **TEAMS**: **T**ransformational, **E**thical, **A**uthentic, **M**oral, and **S**piritual. Team spirit and the creation of learning communities occurs with collaboration and sharing of a vision that is supported by the achievement of personal and professional efficacy on the part of the leaders and the learners. **Transformational** leadership theory requires courage. Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the mastery of it (Palmer, 1998). I will show how this is linked to my currere and my ability to adapt to new work environments. **Ethical** leadership requires heart. It is closely linked to the tenets of caring and serving. I will show how my passion for the profession is spurred by my ethical beliefs and how difficult it has been for me to sustain in some positions where my integrity was challenged. **Authentic** leadership theory is linked to knowledge. An intellectual base or vision is necessary for one to lead authentically. I will show how my knowledge of the rules and regulations that provides the framework for special education policies are incorporated into my leadership skills. **Moral** and **Spiritual** leadership theory are related to wisdom. Kohlberg (1980) defines moral reasoning as a mixture of fear and respect, but encourages us to move past the fear and enjoy the adventure, the journey, while respecting the fear that can keep us out of danger. I am wise in my ways because of the support I receive from the traditions and values that have been instilled in me since childhood. Integrity, respect, and faith shape my value system. Faith is a construct that provides organization for people and their lives (Lee, 1991). These qualities provide a basis for conscience. When conscience rules, we think and act in terms of people and humility, like Gandhi or Mother Theresa. Dr. Martin Luther King encourages us to take the first step in faith, noting that it is not necessary to see the whole staircase at once. When the self rules, we think in terms of ego, like Hitler (Covey, 2004). As we commence our personal and professional journey of self-actualization, we undertake something that may seem impossible, like traveling in the dark not knowing our direction, and

not having the slightest prospects at junctures. Yet we have within us something stronger than reality or probability and that is faith in the meaning and necessity of our action (Hesse, 1998).

I see that **TEAMS** qualities are woven much like a Venn diagram with the smaller “truths” evolving into one big “Truth.” I will show how these qualities influence my leadership and define me as a servant leader, but that Truth remains to be seen. Hermann Hesse (1998) says that he who travels far will often see things far removed from what he believed was Truth. The outcomes and discoveries will give shape to my leadership.

### **Servant Leadership**

Transformational  
truth

Ethical  
truth

Authentic  
truth

### **TRUTH**

Moral  
truth

Spiritual  
truth

The heart of leadership has to do with what a person believes, values, dreams about, and is committed to...It is the person's interior world which becomes the foundation of his or her reality.

*Moral Leadership*, Thomas J. Sergiovanni, 1992

## CHAPTER I

### My Leadership Theory

#### *Beginning My Leadership Journey*

Leadership is a complex phenomenon, involving constant interaction of three essential elements: the leader, the followers, and the surrounding situation or context. An effective leader must know something about each and how they interact (Hughes, Ginnett, & Curphy, 1993). Good leaders become great leaders through their willingness to face and be changed by the greatest challenges of their lives. Great leadership requires a journey of both professional and personal growth (Jennings & Stahl-Wert, 2003). Acting as a leader through my own voice, life, and experience is the beginning of my leadership study. I intend to become a collaborator in the making of meaning (Dunlap & Schmuck, 1995) by listening to others' stories and telling of my own hope for transformation of our schools. My leadership questions explore the following:

- Can personal and professional recognition promote motivation and job satisfaction and link to teacher retention as second order change?
- How can change occur in a status quo district?
- How can I transform the department to a culture of positive recognition?
- How do caring and the tenets of my leadership platform affect this change?
- How can I connect dialogue, support, and respect?
- How does my value system influence my leadership?

The mastery of the art of leadership is the mastery of the self. Leadership development is self-development; it is a journey of self-improvement and self-discovery (Kouzes & Posner, 2003). In Maslow's (1943) hierarchy, self-actualization is the final realization of who we are and how we fit into the scheme of things. We spend our lives deeply reflecting and examining these issues of self in relation to our personal and professional efficacy. According to Wheatley (2002) and Jaworski (1998), before

we can serve others we must know ourselves. To teach is to create a space where a community of truth is practiced (Palmer, 1998). Good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher. Each of us has come to this noble calling of teaching in a different way. There is a calling to share what we have learned to ease the way for those who are just beginning (Hicks, Glasgow, & McNary, 2005).

Every life experience is a journey, either professional or personal. Change and growth in my professional life cannot be separated from change and growth in my personal life. In my leadership study, I travel the journey toward self-actualization through storytelling and narrative analysis. The stories of that journey are made rich by the people and passion evoked from the stories. Jaworski (1998) reminds us that the best thing we can do is to get very good at being who we are, therefore theory will give our stories the backbone and validity so that we become the stories we tell. I retrace my own stories and experiences that lead to my professional and personal efficacy and weave in teacher stories to demonstrate my leadership theory. I encourage teachers to seek their own personal and professional efficacy on their paths to self-actualization. It is my search for Truth in this profession and my influence as a leader in helping teachers to discover their truths that will encourage teachers to remain in the profession and offer best practices to their students.

The journey toward one's self actualization is in a sense a search for truth; the truth about oneself. The experiences and people encountered on this journey affect the outcome and help to form the person we become. The further we travel, the more we will experience truths of a new nature and from a new perspective (Hesse, 1998). Each person's journey is bound by his/her goals, personality, and interests. However, as we take steps, our lives become complexly intertwined with the lives of others. We struggle to maintain our own identity, which is ever changing from encounters with others. The final destination, then, is not a place, but the home of

one's soul (Hesse, 1998).

The roads of our journey are often unclear, scary, doubtful, and unreliable. Sometimes our comradeship and our meaning seem compromised, but our commitment must remain firm. What we learn is that the luggage we so carefully carried, if lost, did not prove to be so indispensable. Priorities change. On our expedition, we sometimes travel in the dark and encounter the impassable, yet there is something strong within us that reminds us of the meaning and necessity of our actions (Hesse, 1998).

Faith is a constant companion on my journey. It has sustained me during times of discouragement, frustration, and fatigue. It raises my spirit and lifts me up at the darkest moments, when defeat and loss of will are strong. But because that faith is represented by a belief in nature's balance (yin/yang) and a Supreme Being who bears kindness, forgiveness, and unconditional love, I never let myself fall too far from my intended path, for I am a survivor in my faith. From this, I derive strength---the strength to pick up the pieces from defeat, the strength to regroup, and the strength to build. What becomes sacred, then, is my passion; my strong desire to live and learn and love as I seek my potential and self-fulfillment.

My drive toward this human-centered satisfaction leads me to a theory of human motivation that is based on the works of James, Dewey, Adler, Freud, Maslow, and Goldstein. In the physiological and psychological development of needs, when one need is satisfied, then another emerges (Maslow, 1943). Within this hierarchy I hope to progress from body homeostasis through stages of spirituality, belonging, achievement, and helping to reach the pinnacle of self-actualization. Healthy humans have a need for continued self-development; for continuous movement forward toward increased learning and living. This transformation occurs best in an organization where trust is revered.

In districts where hierarchies impose fear and control from the top, constituents cannot be empowered or self-directed because there is little trust. Constituents become unmotivated to initiate new ideas and change because change is viewed with wary eyes. As a result, they just want to be told the “right thing to do,” and they will comply. Creativity and a sense of community are lost because hope is lost. Constituents give up; seeing change as difficult and thereby remaining uninspired in an atmosphere of status quo or a “culture of no.”

Teacher efficacy and capacity are compromised in school organizations where hierarchies rule as described by McGregor’s Theory X paradigm (McGregor, 1957). In contrast, decentralization, delegation, participatory collaboration, and self-evaluation are embraced by the Theory Y paradigm. Only leaders who have confidence in human capacities and are directed toward organizational objectives rather than toward the preservation of personal power can understand the implications of Theory Y (McGregor, 1957). Argyris (1993) challenges leaders to integrate individuals in organizations into communities of equals who cooperate with each other to reach common goals. I believe I am one of those leaders.

While hierarchies in organizations seem to inhibit initiative and crush creativity, research shows it is still the most efficient, hardest, and most natural structure for the success of large organizations (Jacques, 1990). I struggle with the understanding of how to appreciate organizational hierarchy as a means of releasing energy and creativity, rationalizing productivity, and actually improving morale. I have seen, however, how the structure of hierarchy stifles leadership among the constituents. In human resource organizations where success is measured in learning, not in the quantity or quality of widgets produced, hierarchy imposes a caste system. Top-down management misses the importance of constituents’ input to problem solving. Physicians collaborate regularly to discuss cases because no one person is capable of

understanding the human body. Similarly, educators must collaborate as we attempt to understand human development and potential with regard to learning. Hierarchical power, in my mind, inhibits growth and learning.

Heifetz and Linsky (2002) advise those of us who are not adept at negotiating the political frame to surround ourselves with those individuals who are themselves successfully political, which even as I write this, lends itself to a contradiction of terms. It is necessary for me to define power so I can at least comfortably interact with political beings.

Rosabeth Moss Kanter (1979) states that power can mean efficacy and capacity instead of connoting dominance, control, and oppression, because it can be the drive that moves organizations toward the realization of goals. Power enables leaders to mobilize human and material resources in order to get things done. In its truest sense, power is an accomplishment, not projection of fear, terror, or tyranny.

Within my leadership style, I can use positional power to establish learning communities within my department by bringing together veteran and novice teachers for collaboration, and by encouraging conversations between teachers and parents. In this way, teachers can begin to feel more confident, empowered in the process, trusted in collegial circles, recognized for their contributions, and important in their positions.

Organizational power can be used in a positive sense when a leader intercedes favorably on behalf of a constituent, when a talented subordinate is given a desirable placement, when budget expenditures are approved, to get items onto policy meeting agendas, to gain access to top decision makers, or to obtain early information concerning decisions or policy shifts (Kanter, 1979). My contention still is that in a collaborative, learning community setting where all constituents are both leaders and learners, all of this information or capability would be known



by all and equally shared. Power benefits those who are in power and those who are in power support organizations of power and political structure. In learning communities, power would be generated by the numbers of people who have had equal access in sharing the decision-making.

A large part of the problem of power vs. powerlessness lies in the leadership position itself. Women managers often experience special power failures (Kanter, 1979). As a supervisor, I am caught in the middle between upper management and teachers, and I lack the influence and support from those above me in the hierarchical chain. I am forced to administer programs or explain policies that I have no hand in shaping, and often have no access to the details. Credibility and risk-taking come from doing the extraordinary in organizations that invite all participants to have voice and who behave in a caring and thoughtful manner, not in one where lauding over constituents is expressed by those who have intimidated, harassed, or bullied subordinates.

If power can be transformed into passion for a cause, the energy exerted would move an organization forward. Hirschman (1970) says that constituents confronted by situations can react in one of three ways. They can be loyal and contribute as expected; exit the organization; or find their voice and stay in order to try to change the system. In my experience, choosing the latter usually ends up as an exit. Organizations in which hierarchies exist are often resistant to new ideas because ideas require change and change requires work. As a leader, I see how one must be able to use the bases of power effectively by using one's resources, information, and technical skills to present change, knowing where to concentrate one's energies, sense what is possible, and organize necessary alliances. Internal voice and external power influence organizations (Mintzberg, 1983).

I know that I arrive in educational organizations with cultural baggage from past positions. However, we are hired because of our experiences in other districts. These experiences allow us to meet the challenges in new districts. But cultural change involves incorporating the past with the present. Leaders who want to change existing cultures need to find ways to incorporate new elements into prevalent ideologies and cultural forms (Trice & Beyer, 1993). Real changes in people's behaviors within organizations takes place when new heroes are identified, new stories are told, different questions are asked, and different work rituals are carried out (Deal & Kennedy, 1982). Resistance to change can be the result of individual or organizational fears, insecurities, self-interest and power, lack of trust, resource limitations, or skewed perceptions in the goals. Cultural change comes about when leaders introduce symbols, rituals, language, and stories to modify meanings.

Cultural change can be the result of revolutionary and comprehensive school reforms. Change can be the result of efforts confined to change specific subcultures or subunits within the organization. Efforts that are gradual and incremental, but eventually result in reshaping of organizations is most effective when all constituents have a vested interest and share the vision.

As I embark on this journey toward self-actualization in the spirit of Maslow (1943), I must establish who I am both personally and professionally through qualities that would make me an agent of social change; a cultural worker (Giroux, 1992). I want to remain enthusiastic and motivated, maintain integrity, rely on my intuition, and be knowledgeable enough to understand issues and adept at managing them. The educated person will have to be prepared to live and work simultaneously in two cultures---that of the intellectual, who focuses on words and ideas, and that of the manager, who focuses on people and work (Drucker, 2001).

My desire is to build school communities that can provide students with meaningful school experiences, and to create public schools where all children can successfully learn and feel appreciated. We must teach students a new language that focuses on social practices so they can attend to the needs of cultural others. We must help students connect rather than separate education from everyday life. I believe that by developing trusting communities that collaborative learning, shared decision-making, and creative planning can result. I believe our moral responsibility is to teach students to have a social conscience; to care about themselves, “others” (in their lives), or “Others” (in the world).

Collegiality among workers must be established before they can effectively collaborate for change. Palmer (1998) says we should view the world with soft eyes. If we introduce a sudden stimulus to an unprepared person, the eyes narrow and the fight or flight syndrome kicks in. But if we train a person to practice soft eyes, and then introduce that same stimulus, the reflex is often transcended. This person will turn toward the stimulus, take it in, and then make a more authentic response---such as thinking a new thought. Changes in routine and familiarity can create unstable, broken attachments. Values are questioned and anxiety results from feelings of helplessness (Marris, 1974). Disequilibrium caused by change can be devastating or can produce worthwhile outcomes (Fullan, 2001). Nevertheless, change causes us to question the balance of nature. Challenges force us to view the world through many different lenses in order to make sense of it all.

As leaders, too, we must be open to these challenges as we help children, professionals, parents, and staff to grow in their journeys. As leaders, we are called upon to share our strengths and our wounded selves (Abalos, 1996). As I continue on my journey toward self-actualization, I will continue to incorporate the research and theories. In analyzing and synthesizing the

information, I will continue to define who I am as a leader.

I believe we evolve as leaders. Goleman (2002) suggests that leaders are made; they are not born. David Abalos says that leaders are not like other people (Abalos, 1996). What makes me a leader? What traits do I possess that endow me with the potential for leadership? How will I know what will make my teachers effective change agents? What will be my opus or final tribute in this profession? These will be questions that I will explore as I define my leadership.

Developing a code of theoretical, professional, and personal ethics provides structure and reason to who we are and who we will be as leaders. In this process, I have had to dig deep into my soul to see just what it is that makes me the moral being I am. Theory allows me to align with particular ethical structures as a base. My personal and professional codes are interwoven, because for me, I am basically the same being in both my personal and professional lives. A separation of the two would be a breach of moral standards and therefore untrue to my value system. At times however, the mission in my district may be contrary to my personal and professional codes. It is assumed then that there will likely be times, then, when I as a leader will be asked to morally compromise. Aligning the two becomes an integral part of the establishment of leadership. My experience with ethical dilemmas and decisions frame who I am as a leader. Because human motivations are complex, ethical determinations move beyond a simple difference between good and evil, thereby making codes of ethics similarly complex (Elstain, 1990).

Havel (1992) says as a leader, you are what you are. You make decisions based upon experience, intellect, and emotion, or head, heart, and gut, and offer congruency between purported values, stated goals, and observable actions. Educational leaders serve students, teachers, parents, and fellow administrators in the educational community.

### *My Espoused Leadership Theory*

In creating my “web of relations” (Sernak, 1998) or wheel of leadership traits and beliefs, I tried to determine what gives this person, **Marie Madeline Rusciano Simone**, the right to lead. Giroux (1992) asks us not to reinvent the wheel, but to focus on the individual spokes that contribute to the whole, and in my mind, make the wheel turn. The spokes in my wheel are many and are interrelated in an attempt to balance the belief in what can be accomplished by people who collaborate, trust, care, support, communicate, envision, and own the mission.

I can begin by saying that I see myself as a servant leader; one who opens the spaces, not occupies them, so people in my charge can find their own potential (Jaworski, 1998; Maslow, 1943; Palmer, 1998). Greenleaf (1977) defines servant leadership as those actions that develop or enrich human potential. He believes that a great leader is a servant first. While servant leadership recognizes the talents of the constituents and encourages responsibility, ownership of the process, and outcomes, I see servant leadership as transformational. As I develop relationships with others based upon my ethical, moral, and spiritual background, as well as authentic training, I hope to transform the organization into learning communities.

My personal servant leadership theory embraces the components of the acronym **TEAMS**: transforming, ethical, authentic, moral, and spiritual leadership. Servant leaders help constituents to build personal and professional capacity within communities so each may journey to their own level of self-actualization. I will show how servant leadership embraces the practices of purposing, empowerment, and outrage. I will examine the layers of change in my leadership and discuss my leadership challenges and flaws as they emerge. I will show my growth as I study my leadership in the context of change. A three-prong approach will define how I relate to the staff, how the staff relates to each other, and how the teachers relate to

change. Through my espoused theory of servant leadership, I will inspire my teachers to reflect upon their own stories and experiences in a collegial atmosphere in order to develop personal and professional efficacy. Serving others will become a journey of self-reflection and discovery for all of us.

### *Servant Leadership*

A servant leader creates collegial relationships instead of dependency relationships, and gives constituents a chance to grow in confidence in leadership capacities (Browder, 1994; Russell, 2001). A servant leader possesses qualities of empathy, acceptance, stewardship, foresight, healing, persuasion, awareness, and perception. A servant leader can conceptualize, communicate, listen, build community, and encourage growth. Servant leaders affect constituents and influence organizational performance. In order to establish sound leadership practices, servant leaders must first examine their own belief systems (Wilson, 1998; Bennett, 2001). Servant leaders measure their success by the growth of their colleagues and enhance their skills by engaging in a higher level of listening based on dialogue and discussion (Senge, 1990).

Robert Greenleaf's theory (1977) of servant leadership is based upon eastern beliefs. A servant leader is a person of presence who is involved in the same duties as followers. A servant is a learner and a teacher who empowers others to be learners and teachers. Leadership becomes the vehicle by which one serves. A servant leader practices those actions that develop or enrich human potential. I believe that through humility and reciprocity, servant leaders claim dignity, while preserving the dignity of their followers (Burns, 1978).

As a servant leader, I aspire to serve others through empowerment and caring. I am both a follower and a leader; a teacher and a learner. I am confident that as we empower others as leaders, we can all be committed to the healing of our world. Ken Blanchard believes servant

leaders were born to make a difference (Jennings & Stahl-Wert, 2003). That statement is validating and encouraging. As a servant leader, I strive to recognize the talents of my constituents and encourage responsibility and ownership of processes and outcomes. I will share the teaching and the learning, while developing a caring department. Servant leaders listen empathetically and embrace the dignity of each colleague. Servant leaders establish working conditions and processes that allow employees to pursue their own personal goals and objectives of being empowered and direct these individual contributions toward overall organizational goals and objectives, in the spirit of McGregor's Theory Y paradigm. Trust is the key element that links the leader and the led. Servant leaders who wish to transform learning organizations into learning communities where team sharing is revered must demonstrate consistency, authenticity, and integrity and must allow each person voice (Senge, 1990). Providing a solid work ethic by example is important to the servant leader. We must have a solid vision and optimism that change can be achieved. Jaworski (1998) says, "We do not describe the world we see, but we see the world we describe." As a servant leader, I would hope that others are empowered to lead and work hard to build up the capacities of everyone in the school community.

As a transformational leader, I collaborate with my constituents to define the purpose of teaching and learning, and then empower the school community to become energized and focused on outcomes. I believe I am a strong catalyst for educational change. I embrace this challenge. I have been appointed to positions in school districts because district managers respect my knowledge and expertise in the field and have faith in my ability to create positive change. For example, in one district I was hired to create a viable program for exiting preschoolers, increase inclusionary practices in the district, and institute a software technology program to develop individual educational plans for students. These philosophical, curricular,

and technical changes were achieved in a two-year period of time by engaging staff in decision-making, offering training, and providing opportunities for discussions with all constituents. In another, I was instrumental in bringing students back to in-district and other public school programs, saving the district hundreds of thousands of dollars in tuition and transportation costs. Child study team members and teachers who were reluctant to accept this change, eventually embraced the returning students and took ownership of their school success because they were an integral part of the process.

### *Personal Empowerment*

I personally experienced the importance of a sense of empowerment and ownership as I worked through a serious medical issue. I tell this story to emphasize the sense of hope associated with empowerment. As a cancer survivor, I am not only grateful to my physicians for their medical expertise, but also for their encouragement as they empowered me to take charge of my body and fight for survival. On Friday, March 13, 1998, my physician called to inform me of the diagnosis. He spoke calmly and clearly, which surprisingly made me respond in kind. I remember he said that the clarity of my mind would positively affect the healing of my body. His suggestions were three: 1) inform your support system, 2) acquire knowledge about this disease, and 3) remain positive. We talked about resources that could help. Through a friend in the field, I connected with a top surgeon and within a week was scheduled for surgery.

I remember walking into the Cancer Center of New Jersey for the first time. What could have been a dark and gloomy reception, was quite the opposite. Beautiful yellow daffodils lined the reception counter. I was given a warm welcome by a smiling staff and led to a very bright and cheery room. I immediately felt hope from this life-giving atmosphere and I wasn't afraid. I couldn't help but think that if we could create atmospheres like this in our schools, our students,



too, might feel a sense of hope.

Decisions regarding treatment did not end after my surgery. I learned there is much controversy with regard to follow-up treatment, and so began our research and consultation at medical schools and research hospitals throughout the country via the Internet and personal visits. It was the empowerment and involvement in my own treatment that gave me courage and a focus toward positive ends while distracting me from wallowing in the why's and wherefores. I believe it did much to provide harmony in my body, which could have been drained from worry and anxiety. With the knowledge I sought, came self-respect. My involvement in my healing did not make me feel small and stupid, but won me dignity and respect from the medical specialists I encountered. I also learned to respect myself, because I came to know my body, its strengths and limitations. If we continuously defer to others, then we never fully value ourselves (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2000). It was a way in which I could give me back myself and not let the disease take charge. That I am able to tell my story ten years later is proof of my survival. This experience resonates in much of what I do.

Similarly, when I connect with students and teachers, I must allow them the space and the dignity to take charge of themselves and build their own sense of efficacy. It is important not so much that they be "allowed" or "permitted" to be empowered, but that they realize the ownership and the credibility they will realize from the power they exude over themselves. The change is then transformed from the organization to the constituents. Thus, the acronym TEAMS frames my definition of servant leadership.

### *Transformational*

Transformational leadership takes constituents on a journey. Transformational theory is woven into the drama of life, death, and the resurrection of sacred sources in us and in the stories of our lives (Abalos, 1996). Personal transformation helps us to make sense of our lives, and shared transformation helps us to make sense of the lives of “others” in our organizations. James McGregor Burns (1978) first developed this theory, which was later expanded by Bernard Bass. The theory is more than simply deciding who makes which decisions. Rather, it is finding a way to be successful in collaboratively defining the purpose of teaching and learning, and then empowering the entire school community to become energized and focused.

Leithwood in 1993 defined transformational leaders as those whose main function is to serve as a catalyst of change, but never a controller of change. As a transformational leader, I am accessible, create learning opportunities for others, juggle all aspects of day-to-day leadership, energize others, and develop teachable moments that can be shared. I have created learning opportunities for others in my present district. Daily, I strategize with teachers and child study team members to program appropriately for students. I draft program and policy proposals with teams. I develop teachable moments with teachers. I review student IEP’s and problem-solve with case managers to make student programs, modifications, goals and objectives better. I encourage child study team members to review student profiles and use the information to identify holes in programming. By doing this, we can revise policy to align with that which makes sound educational sense.

## *Ethical*

Ethical leadership is based on a core set of values and experiences that shape these values, such as family and childhood experiences, conflicts that evoke self-discovery, major life changes, and personal relationships with others. Honesty, vision, inspiration, and competence are admitted characteristics of ethical leaders (Kidder, 2000). Ethical leaders instill values as much or more through deeds as words. They serve others, are humble, possess integrity, tell the truth, support promises, are fair, and work hard. Tolerance, character building, and stewardship provide the backdrop for ethical leadership. Feminist scholars have given impetus to the need to create organizational structures and leadership style based on ethics of care (Sernak, 1998). Parker Palmer, (1998) in *The Courage to Teach*, believes teachers choose their vocations for reasons of the heart; because they care deeply about their students and about their subject. I believe I have chosen this vocation for those reasons. Business leaders are beginning to borrow theory from education and feminists to transform business organizations to companies with soul. By restoring a stronger spirit of community, purpose, pride, and performance are enhanced. If everyone cares, then everyone will build a community of virtue (Ryan & Bohlin, 2000).

Providing a solid work ethic by experience is important to me. Issues of professionalism, as I see it, include integrity, respect, and dignity and are as important in the profession as knowing content and practicing appropriate pedagogy. I base decisions on sound ethical codes that respect individual rights, differences, and opinions. I do not determine fairness by constancy, but by providing students and staff with what they need, when they need it, and how they need it based upon individual determination. Through continuous reflection, I assess my accountability and encourage constituents to assess theirs, so that we can all grow in our knowledge and experiences. I am committed to life-long learning in an attempt to acquire new

knowledge in the field of education and to acting with integrity as I make decisions in educational administration. I try to comply with the district's mission statement and philosophy, and fulfill legal and contractual obligations, while encouraging constituents to do the same.

Honesty, vision, inspiration, and competence are admitted characteristics of ethical leaders (Kidder, 2000). As an ethical leader, I instill values as much or more through deeds as words. I serve others, am humble, possess integrity, tell the truth, keep promises, am fair, and work hard. My staff is rewarded for a job well done through formal observations, letters, and verbal accolades. As I energize teachers to improve their practice, we each become learners and teachers in this reciprocal process. Since trust and respect provide the framework for my value system and define my leadership, I am personally and professionally offended when trust and respect are challenged or do not exist in my organization.

### *Authentic*

Authentic leaders are introspective. They reflect and inquire deeply about themselves in order to understand their place in the scheme of things. Once an authentic leader understands and knows himself, then he can contribute individual talents and motivation to the team within an organization (Evans, 1987). Authentic servant leadership is based on fairness and morality. It provides rich opportunities and the freedom to explore, while nurturing constituents. Authentic leaders revere the qualities of personal ethics, vision, and belief in others and embody character in action. They are savvy, practical problem-solvers who do not just "talk the talk," but "walk the walk." It is not until we become practical problem-solvers who are not afraid to take risks and problem-solve as authentic leaders that we succeed.

Authentic curiosity must be conducted in an atmosphere that is already deeply relational (Sergiovanni, 1992). We need to be in touch with our basic values and with our connections to

others. In other words, we must become more authentic with ourselves and others. If we are to be successful, we must transform schools from ordinary organizations into learning communities. But success will mean seeking new bases of authority for leadership. Bureaucratic and psychological leadership are not enough. Our goal should be to develop a leadership practice based on professional and moral authority (Sergiovanni, 1992; Kohlberg, 1980).

Authentic leaders build their practice outward from core commitments and must determine what they stand for. I have explored my own philosophy of schooling and school leadership. I have built my practice from core commitments to students, to the profession, and to the educational process. Daniel Goleman (2002) looks at four broad personality traits that contribute to authentic leadership: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. Cashman (1998) adds that authenticity is the life force of relationships and suggests five touchstones of authentic leadership: know yourself authentically, listen authentically, express authentically, appreciate authentically, and serve authentically.

### *Moral*

Effective leadership includes moral purpose and genuine collaboration. Leadership is successful when relationships of trust, mutual respect, knowledge, courage, and heart are forged. Servant leadership brings with it the strength of moral authority. It embraces our moral obligations to others. Moral authority relies heavily on persuasion that has roots in ideas, values, substance, and content. Core values are upheld as moral leaders set standards of conduct and care that members of school communities can abide in order to function (Sergiovanni, 1999). Moral development is determined to a great extent by the cultural standards from which organizational members come. Previous experiences dictate right and wrong for constituents. These individual moral standards are then conditioned by group and organizational factors.

Moral development (Kohlberg, 1980; Sergiovanni, 1999) is determined by my cultural standards and my moral voice, which provides direction and compels constituents to become self-managing. Sergiovanni (1999) says that commitments among school personnel and parents must be based in moral authority. Moral voice defines leadership as the cultivation of a shared followership, instead of a political management system. Community members share commitments in a covenantal relationship. Moral leadership is values-driven and seeks to establish socially responsible leaders who will change schooling and society. Moral authority as a basis for leadership gives more credence to experience and intuition, accepts sacred authority, and legitimizes emotions as a way of knowing. It draws on reflection and mindscapes as a leadership lens (Giroux, 1992).

Professionally, we teach who we are. Aristotle says we cannot separate who we are personally from the leaders we are professionally. To do otherwise would be a breach of our moral standard and therefore untrue to our code of ethics (Ciulla, 2003). There will likely be times, however, when we as leaders will be asked to morally compromise; when we will be expected to make decisions in our organizations that may violate our personal code of ethics. We will learn more about who we are as we make these decisions.

All humans bring to the process of learning personal schema that have been formed by prior experiences, beliefs, values, socio-cultural histories, and perceptions (Lambert, et al, 1995). Duty is connected to some conception of what is good. Schools seek to operate on the basis of both what is good and what is effective (Dillon, 1995; Sergiovanni, 1992). Educators choose this vocation in an attempt to affect social change. I attempt to build and maintain relationships that help others realize their potential, so they can also become agents of change within the organization. I am looking to build school communities that can assist students and parents on

the path of successful school experiences. From sacred authority comes the building of a covenant of shared values, one that bonds people in a common cause and transforms a school from an organization into a community. The heart of leadership has to do with what a person believes, values, dreams about, and is committed to...It is the person's interior world, which becomes the foundation of reality. Reflection combined with personal vision and an internal system of values, becomes the basis of leadership strategies and actions (Sergiovanni, 1994).

### *Spiritual*

Our spiritual beliefs also guide us as leaders. These beliefs provide us with inspiration and motivation in an ethical and moral context. Spirituality provides us with values, dignity, credibility, and integrity. My spiritual faith reminds me my life does not belong to me. I am a disciple with a mission. My living needs to serve something bigger than myself (Bible, Matthew 20:25-28). Mistakes are not the issue. What you do with them and how you learn from them are the issue. Ask to be forgiven for the past and then seize the future with all you've got (Jennings & Stahl-Wert, 2003).

A spiritual leader creates collegial relationships instead of dependency relationships, and gives constituents a chance to grow in confidence in leadership capacities (Browder, 1994; Russell, 2001). I encourage teachers to become turnkey presenters for each other. I reward them tangibly and verbally for their efforts at improving instruction and school experiences for students. What drives me to drive others is my passion for this profession. The challenge is to save one student at a time from falling through the proverbial educational cracks by providing energy for teachers to continue to inspire students and improve their self-esteem. This success is my realization of self-actualization.

A spiritual leader possesses qualities of empathy, acceptance, stewardship, foresight, healing, persuasion, awareness, and perception. As a servant leader, I can conceptualize, communicate, listen, build community, and encourage growth. I affect constituents and influence organizational performance. In order to establish sound leadership practices, servant leaders must first examine their own belief systems (Wilson, 1998; Bennett, 2001). I measure success by the growth of their colleagues. I will enhance my own skills by engaging in a higher level of listening based on dialogue and discussion (Senge, 1990). I will listen empathetically and embrace the dignity of each colleague to serve as a catalyst for change. I will recognize achievements among constituents, energize teachers, and develop teachable moments that can be shared. Together we can become learners and teachers in this reciprocal process. Trust and respect will be the key elements that link this moral leader and the led. Core values will be upheld and moral development embraced.

Spirituality provides me with values, dignity, credibility, and integrity. I am a teacher; I will always be a teacher for that is my identity. As a leader I embrace the practices of purposing, empowerment, and outrage. It is not until we become practical problem-solvers who are not afraid to take risks and problem-solve as authentic leaders.

Spiritual leaders recognize achievement among constituents. My staff is rewarded for a job well done through formal observations, letters, and verbal accolades. As I energize teachers to improve their practice, we each become learners and teachers in this reciprocal process. Since trust and respect provide the framework for my value system and define my leadership, I am personally and professionally offended when trust and respect are challenged or do not exist in my organization.



Spiritual leaders measure their success by the growth of their colleagues. I will enhance my skills by engaging in a higher level of listening based upon dialogue and discussion (Senge, 1990). Dialoging is an important prerequisite to the development of relationships. Listening to others' stories, analyzing and interpreting them offers insight into peoples' lives and help to understand how they relate to others. The leader then becomes a collaborator in the making of meaning (Dunlap & Schuck, 1995). I will listen empathetically and embrace the dignity of each colleague to serve as a catalyst for change. I will recognize achievements among constituents, energize teachers, and develop teachable moments that can be shared. We will each become learners and teachers in this reciprocal process. Trust and respect will be the key elements that link this moral leader and the led. Core values will be upheld and moral development embraced. My code of ethics, theoretically, personally, and professionally, provides the framework for my value system and defines my leadership.

An old adage states, "Before they care about what you know, they need to care about what you care" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2000). Courage, passion, and a strong sense of self lead us to self-efficacy. Kohlberg (1980) believes that a person grows step by step in consciousness and in conscience. We grow from without and within on our journey to self-actualization. Although faith may not be proven empirically, it exists for me and is the impetus and energy that moves me through life's journey with courage, hope, and comfort. It is an important piece to me as an educator and servant leader because I believe in people. I agree with Maslow (1943) who assumes that people prefer to feel important, needed, useful, successful, proud, and respected.

### *Continuing the Leadership Journey*

My leadership is defined in terms of my journey to self-actualization along a path, which is not always smooth or straight. The securities of home and family have provided respite for me on this trip. Conflict and hard work are combined with teaming and collaboration. I see how a strong cohort can move people forward. I discover my own truths through experiences, dialogue, and the establishment of relationships. In an organization of diverse people, it is important to recognize the inner strengths that each possesses. The differences that are discovered reveal the strengths and the weaknesses of the organizational team. They are essential parts to the whole and must be embraced. No one person has all of the answers, nor does the journey end with answers. The route is cyclical, not linear, as I had once thought. It is the processes of self-discovery and self-actualization that are more important than the outcome.

I cannot start a journey without letting go of habits holding me back. Like Dorothy, I must leave home physically, psychologically, and spiritually in order to experience the quest of peaks and valleys in the journey. When I return home, I will hopefully be a different person with new capabilities and a deeper understanding of myself as a leader (Green, 1998). The process of reclaiming my soul requires uncommon courage and persistence (Bolman & Deal, 2001).

My dedication to this profession must go beyond job preparation. It must reach down to my very being in a passionate vision of our world as it should be. It should recognize tension, suffering, conflict, and fear not as obstacles to success, but as stepping-stones to success. My spirit and soul must recognize educational leadership as a vocation. As I follow the yellow brick road, I must be a risk-taker on my journey who is grounded in the ability to retreat to the securities of home, but who uses knowledge, courage, and heart to develop wisdom of leadership.

Respect comes full circle, from the life-giving screams of birth,  
to the terror and peaceful transition, to the silence of death.  
Sarah Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2000

## CHAPTER II

### Linking Leadership to Change through Respect

#### *Respect*

In linking my leadership to my change project, I realized that respect is the integral bridge necessary to connect the concepts of serving as a leader and enabling teachers to recognize their worth so they, too, can serve. Respect is the connection that enables me as a leader and learner, and the teachers as leaders and learners, to develop personal and professional efficacy on our journeys. Respect is the key ingredient to the establishment of effective educational organizations where teachers are recognized, supported, and engaged in learning communities. People respond favorably to change within an atmosphere of respect for their achievements, efforts, and endurance.

Like Dorothy, I respect those I meet along the way, sharing encouragement, support, and collegiality. However, it is not until Dorothy is respected by those around her that she feels empowered to create the change necessary to safely return home, thus feeling self-actualized, whole, and safe. Without respect, given and received, the tenets of this theory are flat and without affect. With respect, the tenets define servant leadership as I see it.

Respect is the soil from which TEAMS, the characteristics of my leadership, will grow. I will use the issue of respect as bookends to this publication. Respect will serve as my anchor and my goal. I will show how respect and recognition are the basis for the development of relationships with constituents in a trusting and caring environment so they can be empowered to develop sound personal and professional efficacy standards on their paths to self-actualization.

Our duty to respect ourselves requires that we not engage in activities that would dull our ability to treat persons decently (Dillon, 1995). As ideal moral legislators, we must seek our own personal and professional efficacy so that we can recognize and encourage the same in others. Respect for persons is a key concept in the precepts of Immanuel Kant, an 18<sup>th</sup> century German philosopher. Kant was the first Westerner to put respect for persons, including oneself as a person, at the very center of moral theory. His insistence that persons are ends in themselves with an absolute dignity who must always be respected has become a core ideal of modern humanism and political liberalism (Dillon, 1995). In his categorical imperative theory, Kant expresses a framework for moral deliberation and respectful dialogue through which more substantive issues can be appropriately addressed. The principles affirm the freedom and equality of all persons (Hill, 2003) and provide the basis for who we are personally and professionally. Respect is most commonly thought of as a mode of valuing (Dillon, 1995). What connects respect, honor, esteem, and regard is their common concern with worth. The Latin word for “worth” gives us another conceptual meaning: dignity, and thereby a sense of pride. Hume describes respect as an inward satisfaction that becomes a motivation to be moral; that all persons must be respected. One’s sense of worth enables one to interact with the social environment. The social institutions in which we live have a profound effect upon the way in which we view ourselves. It is of the utmost importance that social institutions like schools are conducive to persons having self-respect (Dillon, 1995).

Theoretically, I believe we must develop a sense of respect from the inside. In order to experience birth and celebrate labor, we must understand the importance of our own arrival into the world (Lawrence-Lighthouse, 2000). In other words, in order to celebrate others, we must first celebrate ourselves. This may help us to determine what will make us happy and how we

may use our many talents to act with purpose, according to Ayn Rand (Ciulla, 2003). However, perspective is lost if this theory begins with the development of self-efficacy and fulfillment of function, as Aristotle suggests, and then proceeds to psychological or ethical egoism, selfishness, disregard for others, or false idolation and charisma described by Machiavelli, Hobbes, Rand, and Weber. The attempt to self-actualize, as suggested by Maslow, or self-master, as suggested by Buddha, must be done in an atmosphere of wisdom and compassion for others (Ciulla, 2003). Harmony must exist between the moral person and his environment.

George W. Harris says it is not simply enough to respect others, but that respect demands something more: sympathetic emotional engagement (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2000). Jonathan Jacobs says that respect for persons binds us in a common moral world. To respect people is to acknowledge that they are equal participants in a common ethical world, and objective considerations of good are to direct our attitude and actions. Self-respect, for example, is a recognition that it is important that one's choices, purposes, and policies of action answer to the sound conception of what is good (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2000).

Sarah Lawrence-Lightfoot (2000) describes six messengers of respect: empowerment, healing, dialogue, curiosity, self-respect, and attention. Dillon (1995) clarifies this further to include deference, valuing, and appropriate conduct (which I will interpret as recognition.) These messengers show how respect is gained by giving it, and how by authentically talking and listening that genuine interest can lead to security and relational respect both in the professional workplace and in personal lives. I will show how my focus on these tenets help to achieve the sought after end, which is job satisfaction, increased morale, and teacher retention.

I start with the assumption that a sense of self-esteem is due everyone, thus making every individual special. The act of giving respect creates the cycle in which one gains an opportunity

to grow in the worthiness of respect. People who respect one another are more likely to be more civil to one another. This results in less acrimony, unnecessary conflict, and ill will. Gaining and giving respect in the workplace can reinforce the efficacy of all persons. According to Gilligan (1982), respect is linked to intrinsic worth. Respectful people treat others with consideration. Respectful people tolerate other people's beliefs and accept individual differences without prejudice. Respectful people treat others the way they want to be treated. They value others and help others value themselves (Sennett, 1998). When we respect something, we heed its call, accord it its due, and acknowledge its claim to our attention (Dillon, 1995). Sennett (1998) seeks a society that nurtures the best in all of its members, regardless of talents, in order to connect them strongly to one another.

### *Trust*

Trust is a human virtue cultivated through speech, commitments, and action conscientiously created. It is an essential aspect of ethics, a matter of morality, a choice, a responsibility, a decision, and a human interaction. Trust builds and deepens relationships and creates new possibilities. Trust involves risk-taking. It is built by sharing information, telling the truth, admitting mistakes, giving and receiving constructive feedback, maintaining confidentiality, and speaking with good purpose (Reina & Reina, 1999). Actor, writer, and director, Alan Alda, describes his transformation from being a performer to becoming an actor. "Trust lets you come out of the wings and go onto the stage."

Trust between people is indispensable as a means of acquiring other things of value. If we never trusted anyone, we could never learn anything useful from anyone else, nor could we cooperate with people in joint ventures. When trust breaks down, not only do we miss out on the benefits of cooperation, but we also lose something less tangible, which is respect for one

another (Sennett, 1998).

Trust has a crucial role, too, in expressing our respect for others and ourselves. We treat people with respect when we refuse to lie to them, and when we refuse to make promises that we do not intend to keep. We treat them with respect when we place our trust in them, and expect them to deal honestly with us. Trust is fundamental to the relationships of respect between the members of the ideal moral community. The act of giving respect creates the cycle in which one gains an opportunity to grow in his own worthiness of respect (Sennett, 1998).

Building deep trust and respect among the staff and helping each person to get beyond the devaluing prejudices that we all hold is important in developing capacity and establishing learning communities. Building true teamwork among the group and having them experience what deep alignment in a group feels like strengthens ties. A group of leaders from many community sectors can collaborate on issues of shared concerns and move to successful resolution when trust is achieved. All constituents can learn from the entire experience about how to be flexible and how to adapt quickly to change and new environments (Senge, 1990).

All of my experiences and interest with respect, professionalism, and recognition have shaped the way I interpret their meanings personally and professionally. Globally, we are trying to create a multi-able, multi-cultural society amid the tumultuous interference of gangs, drugs, war, harassment, unsafe environments, and unloved, unclothed, and unsheltered children. We can look to a lack of respect for humanity, the earth, and each other as reasons for the breakdown of society as we know it can and should be. Since schools and schooling are directly linked to the shaping of society, it is imperative that we incorporate a sense of respect within the school walls, among administrators, teachers, parents, support staff, and students. When respect is absent, the consequences are catastrophic.

Trust is critical to the establishment of community among constituents. Palmer (1998) comments, “I suffer my sense of self when others refuse to relate.” The marks of community take time to develop; time to trust each other and us in the leadership role and time to identify personal and professional strengths and weaknesses. We all know how we would like to be treated when we are treated with respect. We also know how we treat those whom we respect. Transferring those practices to all who work with us and for us is important (Sennett, 1998).

### *Respect and My Leadership*

In his *Journey to the East*, Hermann Hesse (1998) emphasizes the importance of every single participant having his/her own private goals. While those of us on a professional journey may appear to share common ideals and goals, in reality we each carry our own childhood dreams within our hearts. How do I know how to do it? How do I have the will and skill to succeed? How do I have the resilience when things get rocky? (Bandura & Dembo, 1979).

As I listen to teachers’ stories, I try to recognize and respond to respect and reciprocity, skepticism and appreciation, trust and alliance. As an educational leader on the journey to personal and professional efficacy for myself and my constituents, I align with Sarah Lawrence-Lightfoot’s (2000) definition of the many roles of a leader as I analyze my leadership abilities within the context of a respectful school environment.

- How do I interpret pain, fears, victories?
- How do I search for evidence and patterns?
- Am I a companion on the journey to self-actualization? An interpreter?
- Am I a listener, one who laughs, weeps, and applauds?
- Do I offer catharsis, support, challenge?
- Do I help others search for authentic representation in this vocation?



Respect grows best in an environment where teachers feel supported and nourished in their work. High levels of efficacy result in high levels of implementation only when there is substantial collaboration among educators (Bandura & Dembo 1979). In a school culture where risk and faith are revered, teachers can focus on the reciprocal teaching and learning process without fear of retribution. We must also find a way to be respectful to those who might challenge, annoy, or hurt us (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2000).

As a leader, I must become vulnerable in understanding teachers' stories for the respectful reciprocity to have meaning. Attention must be given to a teacher's character, both inside and outside of the classroom. Boundaries must be established in an environment of similarities and differences. The engagement of constituents must be deeply rooted in respect. This is central to the effective development of relationships among all constituents. To this end, I share my story that centers on moving from one school district to another.

#### *Leadership Connection to the Past*

My experiences in moving from an urban environment to a suburban one at age thirteen made me abruptly sensitive to what I learned were marginalized populations. I was very disoriented in a neighborhood where skin color was important and academic achievement questioned. As a student, I had always done well in school. I attribute this success to a number of factors. First, I had parents who encouraged my academic endeavors and supported school processes. Secondly, I had teachers who loved teaching and whose skills were well honed. Additionally, I grew up in a culturally diverse neighborhood where children of all races, ethnicities, and religions played and grew together. Neither at home nor in school were differences pronounced or prioritized. We were all accepted the same in our differences.

I moved to a suburban town about fifteen miles from the place where I was born during the summer between grades seven and eight, a developmentally difficult time for anyone. I started school in September with no friends, other than my brother, four years my junior, and an array of cousins, as my mother and her sisters all moved to the same block. The community was relatively new, with housing developments built on what was once farmland. Little did my parents know that the townsfolk would be wary of our kind of people. A white community had little tolerance for olive-skinned Italians. While name-calling is prevalent during adolescent years and is sometimes associated with a rite of passage, I was not prepared for slurs associated with discrimination. This was foreign to me.

My new classmates would make comments such as, “Can you imagine Marie Rusciano white as a ghost?” One can accept that while kids will be kids, it is hard to believe that a school district, too, was prone to discriminatory processes. Although I received mostly A grades in all of my previous studies, I suppose that coming from an urban district was considered substandard. As a result, I was placed by the new school district in a track of eighth graders who were academically and behaviorally challenged. While in my previous district I participated in an accelerated and experimental mathematics program out of the University of Chicago and based on post-Sputnik physics, in my new district, the most challenging math problems in my class involved column addition. Needless to say, I cried for about two weeks during this transition. My parents were distraught because they thought they were moving to a better place for their children. Also, in the early 1960’s, parents really did not interfere with school business. My dad told me to wait a bit and he was sure the school would figure out where I needed to be. I did trust my dad, and soon learned that it was my math teacher who determined that I actually was as bright as my grades indicated, and petitioned to move me to more challenging classes.

The interesting part of this story in retrospect and as an educator is that the urban district had offered so much more, not only culturally, but also instructionally. I had been exposed to foreign languages from fourth through seventh grades, including French, German, and even Latin. The new district did not offer foreign language at all. In my previous district, which was in close proximity to New York City, administrators invited Broadway troupes to perform on our school stage from the casts of *Damn Yankees* and *South Pacific*. Some of my fondest memories included our socialization and sharing time in kindergarten, where we had a wood and rope jungle gym, playground slide, and seesaw. We also rode tricycles, played in large rectangular sandboxes, sang to the piano, and napped on rugs, all in a half-day class. Entering first grade basically illiterate, we all came out reading, as we learned from the dated Scott-Foresman sight word basal readers. I had young teachers who loved to teach. We worked in pairs and in groups, painting murals in Social Studies and caring for classroom pets in science. I can say that I never felt I was unprepared for the next grade. I loved learning and could not get enough of it. I devoured books on a variety of topics because we were given choices, not all made to read the same thing. There was always a sense of nurturance, safety, and constancy. I was happy in this environment and I thrived. I felt empowered and important as a learner.

I do clearly remember an incident that occurred when I was in second grade. We had a fire drill and it seems that as I exited the school, I decided to keep walking all the way home. After all, my brother, four years younger, was home and I thought it would be a good idea to play with him. Upon arriving home at about 2:00 PM, my mother asked me why I was home. I was surprised that she did not believe my story that school had dismissed early that day. She marched me right back to school. I do remember a very tight hug from my principal, who apparently noticed my absence. She did not scold me, though. She respected me enough to

accept my explanation. I remember getting a pencil and a quarter from her upon my safe return, promising that I would never behave that way again, and I never did. I guess this was an early lesson in mutual respect.

Examining other differences, the urban school I attended retained the same administrators, teachers, and board members for thirty years or so. Parents were welcomed into the school community, yet never interfered with established school protocol. There were no security guards, no metal detectors, no sign-in security tables, and no cameras. There was trust and respect and faith between the schools and the larger community as a result of this connection. The retention of staff contributed positively to the school environment and the success of the students.

Politically, we did live with the fears of the Cold War, the Bay of Pigs scare, and the assassination of John F. Kennedy. Every baby boomer remembers the practice air raid drills where we huddled under our desks with coats over our faces. Terrorism was alive and well. So what has changed? Why are schools less successful now? Why is there so much animosity between school personnel and the community at large? Why do students lack responsibility and ownership of their learning? Why have we lost respect for institutions and each other?

We must teach students and teachers to not only be aware of their desires and their abilities, but also to reach outside of themselves to embrace conscience, voice, and responsibility. Instead of asking them what they want to do, we must ask them what they can do and what they feel they should do. Spiritually, these questions came to me in Bible stories. We can ask why Jesus went to Bethany at the time of His crucifixion when He knew what would happen. But, as the Son of God, Jesus knew that he should fulfill the will of His Father. He embraced conscience, responsibility, and sense of duty. The message of reconciliation is simple:

Let go, let God. In the spirit of Palmer's (1998) paradoxes, we must let go of what is wrong, unhealthy, and unsafe and embrace God who represents nourishment and positive change. We let go of death to experience rebirth, fear to embrace courage, and cruelty to adore.

### *Leadership Connection to the Present*

I believe we have lost the trust, the respect, and the faith in each other. Through empowerment, healing, dialogue, curiosity about each other, self-respect, attention to differences, and curiosity about ourselves, we should be able to regain those qualities that worked, only this time in a more sophisticated, technologically enhanced world. We can change good schools to great schools (Collins, 2001) through visionary practices, developing respectful personal and professional relationships, and by embracing differences in thought and action.

We must continually nourish others and ourselves in order to sustain us in our work (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2000). Creating opportunities for teacher empowerment heightens a teacher's self-esteem, boosts confidence and knowledge of subject matter and pedagogy, and fosters increased collegiality (Browder, 1994). Susan Moore Johnson (1990) conducted a study of teachers in the workplace. The teachers reported few rewards beyond those gained by working with students. They were dissatisfied with many aspects of the bureaucratic system, such as working conditions, but lack of voice and lack of respect emerged as two important factors.

In a transient world, we cannot count on the fact that teachers, administrators, and Board of Education members will remain constant like they once were. But, I believe that through support, recognition, and respect teachers and the learning community can be sustained and successful. A supervisor as supporter can create opportunities for self-empowerment. Empowerment is not given by a superior, but rather it is gained by each teacher at a definite time

within their personal and professional establishment of efficacy. It is achieved when they feel comfortable self-esteem-wise and when the environment is conducive for them to have voice in order to raise their own level of achievement. Kouzes and Posner (2002) define this as enabling others to act in their five practices of exemplary leadership.

Everyday discourse and practices insist that respect and self-respect are personally, socially, politically, and morally important as supported in philosophical discussions. People living in complex relations with other people shed light on the nature and significance of the various forms of respect and self-respect (Dillon, 1995). Positive relationships evolve based upon mutual respect and development of trust. We do not simply seek individual happiness at the expense of others, as the Utilitarianists profess. This hints of hedonism and hierarchy. It presupposes that man has the right to judge his peers and subjectively categorize his behaviors. Rather, the greater good is not quantity, but individual quality; efficacy to being, as professed by the Eastern philosopher, Lao Tzu.

An authentic learning community can help constituents see both the barriers and the openings to truths. Connectedness is dependent upon a nurturing network of relationships. As members of the learning community, all constituents must be patient with the unresolved, love the contradictions, and embrace the tensions. Palmer (1998) promises that this path will lead to reflection and ultimately an uncovering of self-truths.

#### *Connecting Respect to the Change Project*

One of the most important qualities of a serving leader is the ability to encourage members of the organization to follow new visions that result in positive change for the organization. It is important to show why the change is important and how it can be done. Through my change project, I demonstrate respect for teachers through the following:

1. Giving verbal praise
2. Providing verbal and written comments during informal and formal observations
3. Providing opportunities for peer-sharing; peer-observations
4. Encouraging professional development experiences
5. Holding collegial department meetings
6. Being visible and positive---looking for what is right, not what is wrong
7. Holding new teacher orientation sessions to discuss content philosophy and department expectations
8. Providing surveys to see how to better serve constituents
9. Encouraging open communication and open door policy---all constituents have access to my work phone and email as well as home phone, email, and cell
10. Meeting informally with staff in each building for open discussions in addition to monthly department meetings

I try to be persistent in pointing out individual contributions and giving direct credit for the efforts of constituents, while practicing caution for those who might be embarrassed or those who might be jealous. Just as we practice with students, leaders must effectively use positive reinforcement techniques. Building self-esteem is important because it sets up a powerful cycle of personal growth, willingness to take risks, and persistence with task commitment.

Taking each constituent and highlighting their assets can help to promote individual efficacy thereby positively affecting the organization. When observing a veteran teacher in a district, I noticed that she rewarded the primary self-contained special education students in her class for what they needed, which was not the same for each individual. Some were rewarded for participating in class discussions while others were rewarded for sitting quietly in their seats. She was always acutely aware of the needs of each student. I have tried to model this technique in my interactions with teachers.

It is important to set high, yet realistic, standards and constantly raise the bar. In meeting with parents, I stress the importance of raising the bar of expectation because students will rise to that level. As a leader, I work hard to remove obstacles so teachers can progress. I try to support budget requests, provide opportunities to attend professional development conferences, and purchase research-based materials that teachers believe will help students to be successful. I have written grants to obtain money for substitutes so teachers could participate in quarterly meetings with their inclusion partners on school time, given teachers funding allotted to me for professional development in order to attend special workshops, and have appealed to local businesses in the district area for materials and donations for teachers.

My purpose as a leader is to enable teachers to believe in what they do so that the satisfaction spills over to each other in the community and teachers are able to see the fruits of their labor in the eyes of the students. This purpose can set the stage for improved morale and courage. Teachers must believe in themselves and their talents so that they can make lasting, effective changes in students. As a leader, my intent is to recognize the capabilities and potential of teachers through respect as professionals and human beings, and by creating trust within our own circle.



Change is a process, not an event.                      Unknown  
You must be the change you want to see in your world.      Mahatma Gandhi

## CHAPTER III

### Literature Review

#### *Theory of Change*

Hertzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman (1993) re-defined a motivation theory that was originally developed by Frederick Hertzberg in 1959. This theory identifies recognition and achievement as motivating factors in job satisfaction. It is my supposition that through respect and recognition, teachers will be sufficiently motivated to not only feel satisfied with their jobs, but will view their jobs with passion and as vocations, resulting in feelings of pride, increased self-worth, and greater reward to the profession. Over a period of time, second order change may be realized by districts in the outcome of teacher retention. Ultimately, research supports a practical goal of student efficacy as a result of teacher constancy. While this change may be realized through professional development, support, mentoring, and identification of strengths and weaknesses, in a sense, it is an attempt at school reform.

In the spirit of this motivation theory, I attempted to develop a supportive environment and improve teacher relationships that focus on improving job satisfaction through recognition and achievement. I began to establish a community of potential learners and leaders among the staff in my department. I have tried to give the staff more responsibility in recognizing their own strengths and weaknesses as an attempt to professionally self-assess. I have created opportunities for teachers to be both learners and leaders, and to develop professional collaborative relationships that allow them to achieve and be recognized in their own community as well as our departmental community. I started this movement with those who were in agreement with

the change. They were asked to model and lead for others. Some accepted the responsibility enthusiastically and others were not yet ready for leadership responsibility; each in his own time.

### *Need for Teacher Renewal*

My motivation for this change project was two-fold. First, I have been working with the Rowan community to establish a teacher renewal center. The need was determined by teacher interviews in several central and south Jersey school districts. The purpose of this center is to renew teachers in mind, body, and spirit in order to help them remember what inspired them to become teachers initially. Secondly, as a newly hired special education supervisor to a school district in December 2003, I observed that many speech/language therapists and elementary special education teachers in my department were non-tenured; that is, they had only been teaching in the district for one, two, or three years. I became interested in investigating why I had almost one-quarter of my teaching staff turning over each year. This curiosity was compounded by statistics that showed the problem of teacher retention as pervasive in our area.

### *Herzberg's Motivation Hygiene Theory*

Historically, the period of the Industrial Revolution initiated a change in the way people looked at themselves and others in the workplace; where the worker emerged as a force in society. Labor has always been the lot of man, but his labor prior to the Industrial Revolution was dictated by the physical world and by other people. After the Industrial Revolution, change occurred in the purpose of work. It became more capitalistic and shifted the worker from his focus on the value of work. Rather than being motivated by values or fear, man was now defined by a set of secular counterparts. Feelings of satisfaction began to affect work performance, personal relationships, and well-being (Hertzberg, 1966).

For Maslow (1996), each person's task is to become the best "himself." This is true of

the leader and the lead. Maslow defines personal and professional efficacy in terms of self-actualization. Herzberg (1966) goes on to say that self-actualized people represent the ideal attitude toward work under the most favorable circumstances. These highly evolved individuals assimilate their work into the identity of “self;” work actually becomes the “self” part of the individual’s definition of himself. Teachers must believe in themselves and that they can make change that is lasting and effective. Purpose sets the stage for morale and courage (Jennings & Stahl-Wert, 2003).

Herzberg (1966) compares relationships in the world of work with the nature of man. The purpose of his study, is to achieve a fundamental understanding of the attitudes of workers to their jobs. He developed a Motivation-Hygiene Theory in which five factors stand out as strong determiners of job satisfaction: Achievement, Recognition, Work Itself; Responsibility, Advances. In Hertzberg’s studies, these factors presented as high frequency determiners of job satisfaction, as compared to issues of salary, interpersonal relations, supervisors, working condition, technology components, and the amount of work. Much earlier, Frederick Taylor (1916) said the achievement of job “ownership” is the only true meaning of job satisfaction.

### *Teachers at Work*

What is important to teachers at work? What motivates them? What inspires them? What keeps them going even when the going gets tough? (Sergiovanni, 1992). What is the importance of achievement, recognition, respect and morale, work responsibility, and advances among teachers? The realities of the workplace are closely linked to teacher commitment in the profession, and job satisfaction and personal/professional investment are determinants of commitment (Shin & Reyes, 1991; Marlow, 1996; Louis, 1997; Woods & Weasmer, 2002). Teachers are most dissatisfied with lack of recognition, low pay, and lack of advancement

(Lester, 1985). In addition, teacher autonomy and efficacy, participation, collaboration, and opportunities for feedback, learning, and sharing of resources also affect commitment (Graham, 1996). A school culture that stresses accomplishment, recognition, and on-going support is likely to lead to job satisfaction and subsequently commitment (Schaiper & Del Forge, 1982; Maehr, 1990; Shin & Reyes, 1991; Whaley, 1994). Conversely, lack of support from administration, colleagues, and parents, particularly in urban districts, increases attrition rates (Woods & Weasmer, 2002).

Opinion polls conducted by teacher unions reveal that job satisfaction and indications of a preference to leave the profession have risen dramatically. In addition, some argue that the problem of teacher job satisfaction cannot be easily separated from other schooling issues, such as student socio-economic status, policy, and freedom to perform duties (Louis, 1997).

Teachers, like other individuals, have a need for achievement. Educational managers often focus on student achievement and recognition, but not teacher achievement and recognition. Efficacy refers to a teacher's perceptions that his/her teaching is worth the effort and can lead to success for students. Teachers with a high sense of efficacy are more likely to feel committed to their schools because they are more likely to invest in their profession and in their students. Teachers who feel a sense of collegiality and are given opportunities to learn are the most committed (Hausman & Goldring, 2001). All change involves a shift in paradigm. Adaptive work requires a participatory model of working. The leader must identify who is silenced and who is marginalized in an organization.

In order to mobilize all of the stakeholders, keep them motivated, give each voice, embrace diversity, develop a shared vision, and show patience with the change process, the basic principles of collaboration, trust, honesty, communication, and inclusion must be employed in

order to embrace all stories and ideals (Senge, 1990). Kant states that covenants must be built from the bottom up. For schools, that means each school striving to complete the transformation from organization to community (Ciulla, 2003). As I get to know the personal efficacy of each teacher, I can begin to develop a general efficacy as a group. This evolves after much time, deep listening, and sharing of souls and passions. In many ways, respect is a form of empowerment. It invites people to accept higher levels of responsibility for their own behavior and for the school itself. An empowered school community, bonded together by shared commitments and values, is a prerequisite for kindling outrage in others.

Tuckman (1965) calls this transformation to community forming, storming, norming, and performing. By forming, teachers test the waters to see what will be acceptable change within the organization. They examine the nature of the task and are dependent upon the leader. By storming, teachers complain, whine, and receive bolts of ideas. By norming, teachers introduce rational and workable priorities. By performing, teachers identify and discuss solutions. The process converts the leader to the learner and the learners to the leaders as each idea is validated. Groups then assess the clarity of roles, satisfaction with the quality of the work, and the level of enjoyment for the constituents. Learning teams learn how to learn together. They require practice fields for dialogue and clinical exchange (Block, 1996).

As I listen to teacher stories, do I recognize and respond to respect and reciprocity, skepticism and appreciation, trust and alliance? What role do I play as an educational leader on the journey to personal and professional efficacy for my constituents and myself? Under the umbrella of servant leadership, I will try to connect efficacy, purposing, empowerment, and community through this change process.

### *Building Efficacy*

A sense of efficacy is viewed as a psychological disposition in which the individual believes that he or she is able to achieve goals and have a sense of personal mastery (Senge, 1990; Louis, 1997). The concept of self-efficacy for teachers is defined as a set of beliefs about the influence of teachers on student learning. Rosenholz and Simpson (1990) use teacher efficacy as a predictor of teacher commitment. Hackman and Oldham's model (1980) correlates an increase in sense of efficacy with more effectively designed work environments and as a predictor of job satisfaction and commitment.

Bandura and Dembo (1979) define efficacy as the belief that one can achieve valued outcomes. I would add that efficacy also includes an understanding of what we value. The teachers and I travel a journey where recognition, support, and community are revered as together we try to become what we are capable of becoming, or self-actualized (Maslow, 1943). By creating a department, a community, or a culture where trust, risk-taking, professional development, caring, positive relationships, reciprocity, and guidance exist, I believe we can renew teachers in mind, body, and spirit for the challenges in our public schools. This kind of support and recognition will motivate teachers to sustain not only in their districts, but also in the profession at large because it is critical to teacher efficacy.

Teachers, like other individuals, have a need for achievement. Efficacy refers to a teacher's perceptions that his/her teaching is worth the effort and can lead to success for students. Teachers with a high sense of efficacy are more likely to feel committed to their schools because they are more likely to invest in their profession and in their students. Teachers who feel a sense of collegiality and are given opportunities to learn are the most committed (Hausman & Goldring, 2001). Teachers must be able to see the connection between what they do and some

larger purpose. If they cannot see that connection, their leaders may be doing the wrong thing (Sergiovanni, 1992).

Because teacher's professional efficacy is related to the environment in which they practice, communal interaction and effective leadership are essential to teacher satisfaction and commitment (Lee, 1991; Graham, 1996). When individuals are connected to the organization, people become connected to something deeper; the desire to contribute to a larger purpose (Lewin & Regine, 2000). Findings of another study showed that reassurance of worth among teachers is strongly related to self-efficacy (Kruger, 1997). When teachers feel professionally challenged, in control of their professional lives, and have a sense of belonging and making a difference, they have attained professional efficacy and have progressed toward self-actualization (Hill, 1995).

#### *Listening to Teachers: A Story*

I found out firsthand the importance of teacher dialogue. I was hired to conduct workshops in a public school district. The purpose was to improve inclusive teaching practices at the middle school level. I generally begin with the discussion of inclusion as a philosophical issue, intending constituents to understand that acceptance of this model really involves the civil entitlement of students to access general education curriculum. As I continued with the presentation, I noticed that teachers were only passively involved. They seemed to be listening, but trying to elicit information or comments from them was extremely difficult. After a short period of time, during which I continued to encourage them to share their comments about inclusionary practices, teachers began to scream and shout about poor teaching conditions, lack of voice in the department, isolation from the elementary and high school sectors, and general unhappiness about teaching. It was as if an explosion occurred.

Needless to say, I discontinued my prepared presentation and began to help the teachers deconstruct their discontent. What I found out was these middle school teachers from two schools in the district never had an opportunity to meet to discuss pedagogy, methods, materials, strategies, successes, failures. The only time they had an opportunity to see each other professionally was on designated professional development days. They felt isolated, caught in that very difficult middle school place where developmentally, students are often difficult and uncooperative. They felt unimportant and underappreciated by the district's administrators. Professional efficacy and morale among this group was very low. They would not have been able to even begin to participate in an inclusion model, which is so dependent upon team teaching and collegiality. These teachers never had an opportunity to be recognized for their strengths or to even give voice to their ideas. They never had regular department meetings or peer interactions, even to just vent about daily frustrations. Their professionalism was not respected.

#### *Respecting Teachers' Self-Understanding*

Every constituent in an organization has assets, strengths, knowledge, and experiences that can be mobilized to make the community stronger (Kruger, 1997). Without investigation and realization of these assets, a leader would not know the capacity of the constituents. As we get to know the personal efficacy of each cohort member, we begin to develop a general efficacy as a group. This evolves after much time, deep listening, and sharing of souls. As a leader, it is my job to assess teacher contributions and provide direction. In order to provide inspiration, it is my duty to recognize the positive by focusing on that which people do right. Catching someone doing right is easy if trust and respect exist (Blanchard & Bowles, 2001). Encouraging feelings of competence and control will enhance feelings of efficacy (Sergiovanni, 1992).



From the first survey I conducted with teachers in my district, I discovered not only areas where teachers had been professionally trained, but also areas of interest with regard to subject matter and methods or materials. Teachers had an opportunity to comment on areas they felt were strong in their professional environment and areas in which they felt they needed or wanted additional training. Further, they were able to indicate to me ideas that were creative and had as of yet been unexplored, such as opportunities for collaborative teaching or grouping of students to increase success. One young teacher had sound ideas for reestablishing a program for students with significant emotional difficulties, that when the suggestions were later implemented, proved not only to tremendously improve that program, but brought increased self-esteem and decreased aberrant behaviors among the students.

#### *Self-Efficacy Summarized*

Teachers who feel good about themselves and their abilities will most likely experience success. Educational leaders are encouraged to build teachers' self-esteem through recognition, imagery, social reinforcers, and trust (Adams & Bailey, 1989). Extensive literature supports the claim that job satisfaction is positively related to transformational leadership. It is also linked to teacher retention. Teacher empowerment reflects another facet of teachers' perceptions of their vocation. Empowerment and participation help professionals to grow in autonomy, self-efficacy, professional respect, and involvement in decision-making (Bogler, 2001). Purpose sets the stage for increased morale and courage. Teachers must believe in themselves and that they can make a contribution to the organization that is lasting and effective.

Senge (1990) tells us that we, as educational leaders, cannot control someone else's personal mastery, however, we can set up conditions which encourage and support people who want to increase their own. Learning organizations set up environments where constituents can

continue to expand their capacity to create the results intended. It is a learning process that is cyclical. Leaders and learners grow individually and as a group. Organizations can interact via three core concepts; information, relationships, and identity or vision. Conversation becomes the lifeblood for engaging people (Wheatley, 2002). People's religions, cultures, and ethnicity often are not just facts about them, but are central to their self understanding, to who they are, and to their own self-definitions. One reason that can be given for respecting diversity is that to fail to do so is to reject who people are. It is to deny their worth (Strike, Haller, et al, 2005).

### *Creating Opportunity for Collegial Dialogue*

Human conversation is the most ancient and easiest way to cultivate the conditions for change. We are fragmented and isolated without communication. The way to begin finding each other is to start talking about what we care about. When we listen to each other and talk about things that matter, the world begins to change (Wheatley, 2002). Conversations give us the courage to think together and decide what actions to take to make bold and wise decisions. We learn from each other's experiences and interpretations; language gives us the means to know each other better (Trice & Beyer, 1993).

People inquire in order to expand clarity of thought. Views can be defended or suspended; hard and fast conclusions are dismissed. Views become more global and objective; visions are seen through a different lens. The disequilibrium caused is an important structure within the process. It creates energy, yet encourages the constituents to reflect more as ideas are generated. Individuals must take ideas inside in order to process meaning based upon individual experiences. With discipline and collective trust, a new awareness opens. Assumptions are not made so quickly. Openness replaces criticism and cynicism (Block, 1996). Breaking down the barriers leads to the development of trust, respect, and recognition over time.

Language must be structured not only to effectively engage constituents, but also to help them understand the purpose of the learning community. Inquiry leads to discovery, but language must be brought to a universal level. Meaning is first constructed using tacit knowledge. Potential information must be communicated and interpreted via mutual relationship (Maturana & Varela, 1987). I must determine if I have given teachers ample opportunity to speak as a means of gaining efficacy. In trying to encourage them to plan department meeting agendas, I found that they were not all ready for this step. Some saw it as extra work or as my work, as the supervisor. Teachers who were less apt to express their opinions in the large group, were very articulate about their wants and needs in one-to-one conversations. Others felt comfortable speaking in the small group of familiar teachers within their schools. Still others were vocal in the large group. I realized it was important to give teachers voice in the environment in which they felt most comfortable.

Dialogue specific to techniques and practices will expand the general sharing that occurs in school. As the group gains confidence in their work, they come to realize that what they learn is important and begin to share it outside the group (Herner, 2000). As leaders, we want to make constituents feel comfortable in their own skin and engage them in conversations that will lead to the development of both personal and professional relationships (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2000).

Leadership and sense of community are important characteristics that define a teacher's sense of efficacy. Additionally, professional responsibility and positive collegial relationships contribute to professional efficacy (Louis, 1997). When districts provide supporting conditions, such as a sense of trust, encourage risk-taking, provide opportunities for professional development, display a sense of caring, encourage positive relationships and reciprocity, provide guidance, and simply go to bat for teachers, then teachers can work together collaboratively to

reach their professional growth. Teachers who meet regularly to dialogue about pedagogy and factors related to job satisfaction, appreciate the opportunity to reflect about their practice. Peer supervision and peer coaching help to improve teachers' skills, but professional dialogue enhances cognitive development (Glatthorn, 1987).

### *Importance of Purposing*

Vocation gives a sense of purpose to our lives. It is the work we are meant to do beyond our narrow sense of self (Wheatley, 2002). Capacity building is achieving a unity of purpose through confluency, inquiry, resolution, appreciation, and the empowerment of all participants. In developing capacity, it is necessary to strengthen the staff's power of self-belief, their feelings of self-efficacy, and the belief that they can accomplish what they set forth to do. Most people use only a small portion of their capacity and need to know they have much more. The staff must be encouraged to rely on their inner resources that are so seldom tapped, to use their intuition and the ability to extemporize and innovate in the face of uncertainty and ambiguity. They must be put in situations that will cause them to reach deeply into themselves in order to evoke their higher nature and have them experience that we are all connected (Senge, 1990). The speech/language pathologists in this district were involved in a professional challenge that changed the way they viewed their vocations and helped them to make decisions regarding efficacy.

### *Purposing: A Story*

A new director was hired to head the special services department. Additionally, three things prevailed. First, a few speech pathologists left the district for other positions. Secondly, student services resulted in the need for an increase in speech services throughout the district. Thirdly, the pool of speech pathologists in the state of New Jersey is slim; this is a very difficult

position to fill. Given these challenges, it was up to the leadership to determine how best to use the resources available to satisfy the needs of students in the most reasonable way according to state policy.

This particular director, following the directive of the chief school administrator in the district, chose to impose a solution upon the teachers. The teachers were told they had to increase their already overloaded schedule in order to accommodate the loss of teachers and the increase in needed services. The director actively pursued advertising for additional staff, but finding certified teachers was very difficult, if not impossible. The teachers in this district were very committed to their vocation and would not sacrifice the services of children because of district mandates, however, they saw that dividing their time only resulted in diluted services for all students. Instead of some students receiving the services determined by law in their IEP's, all of the students received diminished services, some only ten minutes instead of thirty minute sessions, as required. The teachers began to question the legality, morality, and ethics of this change. They felt they were compromising their professional certificates, mandates of state policy, and services to children.

As the assistant administrator, I viewed this scenario at the point of reaction. Involved at the time with other issues in six buildings with special education teachers, I was not privy to the problem nor this conflict until the teachers were already assigned increased schedules. Clearly, the communication between the new director and myself had to be better developed. Once the speech pathologists responded to the director, I was assigned the job of meeting with them to "smooth things over."

My style of meeting professional challenges is different. As a respectful gesture, I would rather meet with the constituents to brainstorm solutions to whatever current problem exists.

Unless resolution is immediate, such as a safety issue with students or staff, it makes more sense to hear all of the suggestions for resolution of a challenge. No one has the knowledge or experience to solve all educational problems. Working collaboratively enables the leader to avail district resources. I have found that dialogue helps to diffuse the anger and frustration, gives constituents a forum to vent as well as share ideas, and enables them to take ownership of the solution so they will feel comfortable with the decisions and be more apt to support them.

Together, the teachers and I discussed what had to be done. We made a chart of students who needed services and enlarged current teacher schedules to see where an additional workload might fit. We looked at schools that were in close proximity to each other, so when the teachers traveled to provide services, they would not waste time on the road. Often, teachers in a particular discipline know others in that discipline from professional organizations and networking. I capitalized on that by asking teachers if they knew of other speech pathologists who were interested in working part time or who were at home raising families, but might like to provide services on a Saturday or an evening when their spouses could help with childcare. We met with the students' case managers on the child study teams to discuss the needs of specific students and the possibility of decreasing services or providing changes in services, such as receiving language services in the inclusive classroom setting, enabling us to reach more children at the same time. We held an evening parent meeting to share with them the need for the changes and to obtain their input of solutions, and then met with them individually in annual review meetings to discuss their particular child's educational needs and services.

This endeavor resulted in several positive outcomes. First, the teachers verbally appreciated the recognition and respect they were given as professionals to participate in the process. Secondly, the teachers became more aware of the resources available in the district.

Thirdly, speech pathologists, teachers, and child study team members learned to work collaboratively to solve a problem that was really a department problem, not just a speech problem. Fourthly, teachers recognized the importance of obtaining positive support from parents instead of using energy to react to parent anger, or worse, confront them in court. The constituents learned that the group is more important than each individual. They were proud that they could help each other to problem-solve and felt a sense of purpose in their work.

It is important for teachers to feel a sense of purpose to their organization. Purposing refers to that continuous stream of actions by an organization's formal leadership which has the effect of inducing clarity, consensus, and commitment regarding the organization's basic purposes. Purposing involves both the vision of leaders and the covenant that the school or department shares (Sergiovanni, 1992). The speech pathologists in this district reaffirmed their commitment to the department and the students as a result of this challenge. They also verbally appreciated the support that I gave them as their supervisor.

### *Forging Community*

Human beings need a sense of belonging to a community. Community happens when everyone rolls up their sleeves and gets to work (Jennings & Stahl-Wert, 2003). In an educational environment, it is essential to create learning communities where constituents can be leaders and learners (Senge, 1990). By celebrating the values and victories of constituents, a spirit of community is established (Kouzes and Posner, 1993). Connelly (2000) urges schools to build a sense of community among teachers and administrators to help increase teacher retention and improve student learning. She identifies problems with teacher satisfaction, the lack of autonomy, and decision-making power as systemic in school districts. The learning community model is a way to support and inspire teachers and enhance teacher efficacy (Slick, 2002).

I believe that recognizing self-worth and knowledge can make a difference in the overall outcomes of teachers' efforts. It is important to build collaborative relationships for school staff to learn from one another, whereby exemplary teachers or teacher efforts are recognized and rewarded (Lewis, Baker, Jepson, et al 2000). We must do whatever it takes to help the team perform well (Blanchard & Bowles, 2001). Teachers need to sense their own roles in the culture of the school. To become stakeholders, they need to know that their contributions to the school culture are honored (Woods & Weasmer, 2002). Individuals will not engage in sharing unless they find it motivating or satisfying to do so (Fullan, 2001). In other words, their contributions have to be acknowledged and worth something if they are to invest the time and energy to develop the changes necessary for improvement in the organization.

### *Collegiality*

A primary dimension of a school's culture is collegiality. Cultures with characteristics expressed in terms of collegiality and collaboration are generally those types that promote satisfaction and feelings of professional involvement and growth among teachers. Enabling teachers to move into leadership roles establishes them as active participants in school culture. Collegiality in the workplace is a strong contributor to job satisfaction. Supportive meetings join veterans and novices on common ground (Woods & Weasmer, 2002). This was the problem I identified in the district where the teachers never had an opportunity to meet with each other. In a subsequent district, I met with teachers individually in their classrooms on their turf, which in a sense is empowering to teachers. I met with them prior to and after formal observations to individually discuss intentions and then deconstruct outcomes. I met with them before and after school as a subgroup of special educators from one building, and I gathered them together as a whole group for monthly department meetings. Our meetings always concluded with discussion



of what was “good for the order.” In addition, I provided orientation sessions for new teaching staff so they could form a cohort of their own and lend support to one another. Peer sharing was encouraged at department meetings and on professional development days. Teachers were encouraged to observe one another from class to class and building to building, enabling new perspectives for them as professionals as well as giving them an opportunity to know their colleagues individually.

Understanding my own personal and professional efficacy is important prior to becoming a catalyst to make this happen for teachers in my charge. Understanding inner community or connectedness to self and outward collegiality, connectedness to others will mark the establishment of community in a spiritual or philosophical way. The marks of community take time to develop; time to trust each other and myself in the learning and leadership role and time to identify strengths and weaknesses, both professionally and personally. In District M, as a first year administrator, I saw how the teachers in this K-8 district collaborated and connected, thereby sustaining over a period of time. Despite low district morale, they supported each other’s attempts, collaborated on best practices, and worked together to provide successful environments for special needs students. In this same way, by developing relationships, building on strengths, and recognizing accomplishments, I can help constituents begin to achieve efficacy in other settings.

#### *Building Collegiality During Transition*

In my study, I had to understand what teachers typically experience during a transition period and how they each cope with change (Louis, 1980). In order for relationships to be reciprocal and mutually empowering, all parties must be active participants in the process, provided with clarity and knowledge of the process, enhance the self-worth of each other, and

create connections which spur the desire for more connections (Miller, 1981.) I recall a meeting mutually arranged with a principal during a school holiday to discuss the pros and cons of increasing inclusive classrooms in his building. We specifically chose that day to work so we would not be interrupted by the daily rituals experienced during busy school days. Believing that one must be part of the solution, otherwise one is part of the problem; I came equipped with charts and suggestions for changing teacher schedules so that this school reform model would impact the building in the least possible way. I shared my enthusiasm for the project as well as the philosophical, ethical, legal, political, and social reasons in favor of the project. In addition, I shared my positive experiences with the development of such a program in previous districts. The principal listened, asked questions, and discussed possibilities. At that meeting, we did not come to any conclusions, but I felt that we had begun a dialogue about the issue.

The next day, when I met with the superintendent to deconstruct the meeting, she presented me with a written proposal from the principal outlining nineteen reasons why this would not work in his building. My instincts told me that this principal, who prided himself on a smooth running school and a status quo philosophy, was simply humoring me during our encounter. The superintendent commended me for my preparation, efforts, and attempt at collaboration. Her comment was, "It would be nice when one is collaborating to have the other party collaborate back!" From that experience, I learned to quell my enthusiasm for projects until I hear input from others in the group. I try instead to use my enthusiasm and experience to direct rather than impose change.

### *Personal Efficacy*

Mutually empowering relationships, then, mark the journey toward personal efficacy. The mutuality is serendipitous and discovered, not sought after and expected (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2000). In another district, a veteran teacher commented to me as her supervisor, “You and the director recognized and encouraged our strengths. You made us feel important; gave us worth as professionals. You also cared about us personally, asking about ill parents and sharing in the accomplishments of our children. We have not had that kind of a relationship with our administration since the two of you left the district almost ten years ago.”

Goethe wrote that if you want to understand the world, you must reflect within, and if you want to understand yourself, you must experience the world (Senge, 2000). I must determine whether or not teachers have the opportunity to integrate the internal and the external world. When we look within, we analyze our assumptions and values. When we explore the world, we analyze our relationships with others and our experiences. This helps us to realize who we are in the scheme of things and what we can offer to the learning community. We must look for patterns and wholes, not just single events, in systems thinking. Growth in the organization is an extension of personal growth, but the whole is always more complete and complex than the sum of its parts (Senge, 2000).

Peter Senge (1990) suggests that in applying improvement leverage, the best results tend to come from smaller more focused efforts, rather than from large scale efforts. The points that seem to have the highest leverage are often the least obvious. I say those points are respecting and recognizing teachers’ efforts in small ways and then building upon the successful interaction. This building process should lead to feelings of efficacy. For example, in my district, I encouraged teachers to try new reading or math strategies, by providing the funds necessary for

them to attend workshops outside of the district and volunteering to provide feedback to companies as a pilot project if they would provide us with free materials. I commended systems of positive reinforcement devised by teachers to improve student behaviors. In one instance, a primary special education teacher in a self-contained language impaired class initiated a self-monitoring program for her students. Despite their young ages of six and seven, the students assessed their ability to pay attention and participate in circle time group language activities by assigning their behaviors points for achievement. The points were totaled and later rewarded by the teacher. The students were actually much harder on themselves than the teacher would have been, giving themselves less points for each behavior. The outcome was amazing. Because the students were well-aware of their behaviors, aggressive and acting out behaviors diminished. Students were intent upon achieving extrinsic rewards from the teacher as well as intrinsic rewards from themselves (for a job well done) and their peers (who were more apt to include them in social activities). In addition, language skills improved because the students were asked to rationalize their point assignment by behavior. This classroom strategy was shared with others who implemented something similar or with their own creative twist. This changed an opinion that young students might not be able to take charge of and eventually change their own behaviors. The teacher who initiated the strategy felt empowered, as did other teachers who were able to use the strategy in their own classrooms.

My personal enthusiasm and commitment are hopefully transferred to my constituents so they can define their own level of efficacy. In a learning community, all members share the burden of servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977). Practicing servant leadership involves purposing and empowerment on behalf of the goals of the organization (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2000). Commitment to the organizational community is integral. If the leader is transformational,

ethical, authentic, moral, and spiritual, a level of trust can be established based upon communal efficacy and then stewardship becomes the journey of the constituents.

### *Development of Leadership Efficacy*

In establishing community as an educational leader, I had to recognize that I was the newcomer among a group of mostly established teachers and paraprofessionals. It was necessary for the constituents to get to know me by sharing my background, my training, and my experiences. We exchanged many stories of successes and failures. I encouraged them to quest and probe as they got to know me both as a professional and as a person. I interacted with them one-to-one in their classrooms or offices, and in small groups in their buildings. I recognized their personal and professional accomplishments in my written and verbal communication with them. We discussed the history of the district and what the vision had been for the department. They shared what had previously worked and what had not. Together, we deconstructed the department needs and the teacher needs. This helped me to make sense of the direction I had to go in my leadership. Heifetz, (2002) says to connect with an insider in order to understand the history of the organization and to help determine or interpret actions in the new setting. That “go to” person is important and knowledgeable. In this district, certain committed, veteran teachers emerged as those people. Additionally, the secondary special education supervisor and I developed a collaborative and reciprocal relationship of our own. She was new to an administrative position, but had been in the district as a teacher, child study team member, and now supervisor. I came with much experience in the position, but was new to the district. She shared history, while I shared knowledge. As a leader, I not only had to understand and accept the history, but I had to blend what I had learned from similar experiences in other districts with the new community of constituents. I had to adapt to the new setting myself by understanding

the local culture and begin to structure a social community of mutual respect and collegiality from my new perspective in order to win the trust of the constituents (Louis, 1997).

As time went on, I encouraged peer-sharing and peer observations, while recognizing teacher strengths and acknowledging student growth. Trust grew slowly, but solidly. Teachers observed my reactions and responses to situations that arose and how I supported my staff. For example, I supported a teacher through the tenure process by pointing out her professional strengths, such as effectiveness with students, while working with her on her professional weaknesses, such as setting up a calendar so as not to miss faculty meetings or arrive late to class. Similarly, I supported the dismissal of a teacher who was educationally detrimental to the welfare of the students by setting low expectations. In addition, this teacher derailed morale among teachers in this learning community. Although the teachers would not overtly support the dismissal of a colleague, they recognized her as a weak link in the system and felt strongly that the students deserved a better teacher. This act increased my credibility with teachers. We eventually created a professional camaraderie, a wholeness, faith in each other, and a kind of spirituality in education, evidenced by increased risk-taking on the part of teachers to try new projects and strategies with students. The enthusiasm level rose in group meetings and teachers began to believe they would be supported if they tried new and creative ideas. I used the clinical observation model as a tool to familiarize myself with constituents through communication about long term personal and professional goals as well as short term lesson objectives. This model provided me with time with each teacher, making our relationship more personal and connected. It is important for us to validate others if we want to coexist in a learning community. Only then can both parties bring together a common world (Maturana & Varela, 1987).

During my second year in the district, I decided to transition from more leader-centered department meetings to more teacher-centered meetings. To that end, I suggested that since we had six schools and there were eight scheduled meetings in the school year that I would start and end the year, but would ask for teachers in each building to volunteer to organize the six meetings in-between. I left the structure and topics open-ended. In fact, together we discussed possible speakers as a means of professional development, peer presentations of methods or materials being used, or sharing of information from workshops attended. I had hoped that the teachers as a small group would collaborate, take ownership, and structure the meeting to their liking. At my first meeting, I asked for volunteers from any school to plan for the next month's meeting. Teachers from one particular elementary school quickly offered to plan for the October meeting. I offered help, should they want it. Without any additional conversation, my meeting ended and the teachers dispersed. About a week before the next meeting was scheduled, one teacher called me clearly in a state of panic. She said she had no idea what I wanted her to do in planning this meeting. I assured her that whatever she and her colleagues had planned to share with their peers would be fine. That response did not help, but rather increased her anxiety level. I was rather surprised, as this was a veteran teacher who was well respected in the district from what I had learned. Having observed her formally and informally in her classroom, I knew that she was professional; very knowledgeable about the content she taught; and concerned about the success of her students. After several attempts at trying to reassure her, she said something that was surprising to me. She admitted that she had been schooled in a parochial setting from Kindergarten through twelfth grade. "I have always been compliant. I was taught to do whatever my superiors told me. I am not used to taking charge and I am not comfortable doing this. I don't want to do anything wrong. You tell me what you want me to do and I will do it."

At first, I admit I was a bit skeptical. I thought perhaps this comment had come from the teachers' union, and they felt it was my job to run department meetings and I was asking teachers to do my job without additional compensation. But as I thought about it and talked with this teacher, I realized that what she said was a very personal reaction. She did not want to do "the wrong thing" in front of her peers. This teacher just wanted to come to work, do her job, and have a clear understanding of what was expected of her. She was stuck in a generation who put women "in their place." She did not know she was supposed to try to find meaning in her work.

From this experience, I realized I had a great deal to learn about understanding resistance to cultural change. Constituents may fear the unknown, instead of embracing it. They may have a need to function according to habit, be somewhat dependent, and look for security, much like the students we teach. Not only was I creating cultural change, but I was changing the language and the staid rituals of the culture. This experience emphasized the importance of developing a trusting environment so constituents will not be afraid to take risks. Wheatley (2002) reminds me about the importance of reflecting on how my actions affect other people's hearts.

Subsequently, I learned that the teachers who were confident and vocal jumped on board ready to see where the ship would take them. The more reluctant "pleasers" came along so as not to rock the boat. The young teachers were more apt to embrace the ride as a learning experience, riding with the swells. Interestingly enough, this teacher who was most resistant to change was one of the oldest and yet the least confident in the group. This leap in going from work to complete a job, to passionate involvement in a vocation that requires commitment and energy, bridges a wide gap; a disconnect. In an educational organization, there will be those individuals who will be ready, willing, and able to make the leap. There will also be others who are reluctant or who took the initial steps, but now want to progress at a slower pace or even



retreat some. There are others who are comfortable in their status quo routines, and do not want to cross that chasm. I also experienced these responses with teachers in another district.

With the initiation of inclusionary practices, the director and I wanted our pilot program to be successful, so for the first year, we started the program with teachers who were really interested and believed philosophically in the model of instruction. We empowered the special education teachers to approach the general education teachers with whom they thought they could work; those who were also in agreement philosophically and had a similar teaching style. The program was a resounding success during the first year, with extensive data to back this conclusion. During the second year, in an attempt to expand the program, we had to tap into the resources of teachers whose initial reaction was a “wait and see” response; those teachers who wanted to see how it would work before they tried it. Again, the second year was successful because we provided opportunities for constant feedback and adjusted situations to improve collegial relationships. A panel of peers presented to each other on the benefits and pitfalls of the program. By the third year, we had to tap the resources of those teachers who initially responded “no way, no how.” By this time, however, teachers became curious about the program and had had an opportunity for two years of professional development. They, too, became part of the change. The leaders must respect each of these levels of motivation. Senge (1990) favors a discipline of systems thinking that results in a shift of mind. Interrelationships are cyclical rather than cause-effect chains of discussion. Complex processes develop instead of single, multiple incidents. The interactions produce changes of quality rather than quantity. I think that in my first district as an administrator, we were able to achieve both.

Employee-centered supervision is said to be successful to the degree to which the supervisor focuses on the needs of the constituents as individuals rather than on the goals of

production (Hertzberg, Mausner, et al, 1993). In my experience, when leaders recognize or acknowledge individuals and meet their personal and professional needs, increased production is a by-product. Perhaps this is because we find ourselves in a human services business. Rather than concentrating on the group, focusing on the individuals seems more important in establishing community. Each person's contribution is a vigorous defense of his or her integrity, the need of the person to maintain his or her self-esteem, and the right to grow in the face of the demands of the organization in the name of teamwork and community (Argyris, 1993).

Although a supervisor is required to assign duties and resolve conflicts, the supervisor must relate to the constituents and the environment in order to guide the resources necessary for task completion (Mintzberg, 1979). Everybody has a story and everybody wants to tell their story in order to connect (Wheatley, 2002). It is the analyses of the stories that comprise this study and make the process applicable.

If we treat people as they are, we make them worse.  
If we treat people as they ought to be, we help them become what they are capable of becoming.  
Goethe

## CHAPTER IV

### Methodology

#### *Theoretical Framework for Data Analysis*

The inspiration for my change project comes from my passion and respect for this vocation. I am worried that our pool of effective teachers will dry up and there will be no one to educate our youth. I also believe that by leading teachers with respect and recognition for their efforts that their efficacy will build and students will benefit from this renewed sense of motivation and confidence.

Research reports that nearly 22% of all teachers leave the teaching profession within the first 3 years of teaching, citing lack of respect from the community, parents, and administrators as some of the factors (Ruchland, 2001; Marlow, 1996). Another study reports that 50% of new teachers drop out of the profession in the first 5 years (Woods & Weasmer, 2002). Teacher retention in a time of teacher shortages is crucial. Organizational cultures may not be providing adequate support for educator resiliency (Bernshausen & Cunningham, 2001). Districts and even states have recently conducted nationwide searches to fill the shortage of qualified teachers, in some case initiating major recruitment and incentive efforts. But, Gersten, Keating, Yovanoff, and Harniss (2001) believe that enhanced teacher recruitment does not solve the problem.

“We’re misdiagnosing the problem as recruitment when it is really a retention problem...We train teachers poorly and then treat them badly, and so they leave in droves...Poor teacher working conditions contribute to the high rate of special educators leaving the field, teacher burnout, and substandard quality of education for students with special needs.” (p. 549)

The assumption for this project is that morale is low in many school districts. If this is true, then we must change the way teachers look at their work. The goal is for leaders to improve morale. I believe we can do this through recognition and initial extrinsic reward (verbal, written, symbolic). This will convert to intrinsic reward in the form of motivation for the work itself when teachers realize efficacy, both personal and professional. Teachers like to know how they are doing in their jobs. When extrinsic rewards are not longer needed, they will be weaned. Morale has to be initiated from outside sources. Once teachers feel good about what they do, they will realize intrinsic satisfaction and can then build their own morale, which will come from within. This, then, is the process or the path of professional self-actualization.

In the special education department of one New Jersey district, 90% of the speech and special education teachers during the 2003-2004 and the 2004-2005 school years were non-tenured. In fact, 80% of the teachers in the district were 35 years old or younger, as reported by the superintendent at a new teacher orientation meeting in September 2004. Most teachers did not retire, so the obvious question to ask is why teachers are not staying in this district.

Districts in New Jersey are experiencing chronic problems with attracting qualified teachers and districts all over are plagued with massively high teacher turnover (Mezzacappa, 2003). I have been a concerned practitioner in the preK-12 sector for the past several decades. From my experience in a variety of New Jersey school districts and from the research, it is evident that the retention of qualified, enthusiastic professionals in the teaching field is essential to the quality of our schools and the success of our students. Given that research clearly links student achievement with consistency of teaching staff, it is clear that districts must begin to address the problem of teacher retention.

Teachers must view their jobs as vocations and must dedicate themselves to this process

with passion, motivation, creativity, and enormous amounts of time and energy. Vocation becomes an act of will, a grim determination that one's life will go this way or that, regardless of intent. Vocation has as its Latin root the concept of voice. It is not a goal to pursue, but a calling that is heard. Teachers must listen to who they are. They must listen for the truths and values at the heart of their own identity, and live by the standards that are dictated by those values (Palmer, 2000). As a leader, I must chart the course for those who are willing; recognize the strengths, align change with those strengths, support and encourage the movement toward the realization of the change. Each constituent must take ownership of change eventually in order for it to be effective. A leader can only provide the guidance and the direction (Spencer, 2002).

I hypothesize that by recognizing and appreciating teachers and establishing a collegial community of trust, teachers will develop positive personal and professional efficacy and therefore choose to stay in the profession of teaching. Additionally, teachers receiving this kind of mentoring will also be motivated to initiate changes in schools and districts that will favorably affect student achievement. It is critical for teachers to identify the passion and ethical code by which they perform their duties if they are to accept the challenges imposed by today's youth in the public schools.

#### *Action Research Rationale*

In my study, I have chosen to use the iterative cycles of action research and the natural settings of teachers in schools to provide the framework for my data collection. Action research is a collaborative effort by teams of teachers to identify an important problem and to develop a workable solution. My goal is to understand what is happening in the department of Special Education in a New Jersey school district and to lend suggestions for improvement, rather than to generalize my data in order to define ultimate truths. I will neither exhaust the variety of

strategies nor the range of topics on this issue (Bogdan & Biklin, 2003). As a qualitative researcher, I will be more concerned with process than outcomes, descriptions rather than numerical results, actual specific settings, as opposed to general adaptations, inductive analysis of data rather than deductive, and meaning for groups of people within a social science profession (Bogdan & Biklin, 2003). As a qualitative researcher, I hope to accurately capture perspectives through teacher stories, learn through discovery, and experience and dialogue in order to make sense of structures and to ultimately improve practice.

In 1933, John Dewey outlined the scientific process of research consisting of problem identification, developing a hypothesis, collecting and analyzing data, and drawing conclusions (Tomal, 2003). Action research provides the basis for formulating effective solutions to significant problems faced by the practitioner (Stringer, 2004). The cyclical process of looking, thinking, acting, and then analyzing and reflecting provide the design for this iterative process.

Action research has a long history often associated with the work of Kurt Lewin who defined this type of research as a dynamic and collaborative way in which people can address social issues affecting their lives (Stringer, 2004). Action research is collaborative in nature and is conducted by a change agent who collects data and then works within a community to develop actions to address the issues uncovered (Tomal, 2003).

Epistemology is the process of seeking truth through any research. Two methods of research are used in this process, namely quantitative and qualitative (Tomal, 2003).

Quantitative researchers rely on scientific inquiry that is very objective. Results are derived from numbers and percents. Qualitative researchers instead rely upon subjective interaction with the subjects of the study. The researcher becomes involved in the study and conclusions are described in narrative stories. Qualitative researchers reflect about the meaning of what is

happening in the field of human action. The search is for understanding rather than explanation (Jaeger, 1988). It relies on naturalistic inquiry and storytelling.

People are storytellers by nature. Stories provide coherence and continuity to one's experience, and have a central role in our communication with others, enabling access to people's identity and personality. We discover ourselves and reveal ourselves to others through the stories we share. The data is influenced by the interaction of the interviewer and the interviewee. The listener or reader enters into an interactive process with the narrative and becomes sensitive to the narrator's voice and suggested meanings (Lieblich, et al, 1998).

Naturalistic inquiry studies people's subjective experiences and explores perspectives on an issue or problem in this way. It allows events to unfold naturally and uses interpretive methods to analyze the data (Stringer, 2004). As a result of this qualitative study, I sought to understand events and behaviors experienced by the teachers. Although the findings cannot be generalized, they are setting and person specific.

Texts about lives reveal insight to the social, cultural, personal, and political views of teachers (Riesmann, 1993). Listening to teacher stories and dialoguing over issues will be important to the establishment of an effective learning community. There must be an open forum where my experiences and the experiences of others can be discussed and clarified through language. The establishment of trust and mutual respect will be important in order to create opportunities and spaces for teachers to take risks and become viable learners. It will be important for me to recognize the needs of the teachers and establish a connectedness in an attempt to build reciprocal relationships and partnerships, as described by Heifetz (2002) and Wheatley (2002). Through my leadership lens, I have to look at where the teachers are and how best to help them determine where they want to be.

Participants in this study were twenty-two elementary special education teachers and eight speech/language teachers in a suburban preK-12 public school district in northern New Jersey. Eight special education teachers and two speech/language pathologists were tenured. Eighty percent of the teachers were first, second, or third year teachers. The socio-economic status of the community ranges from unskilled laborers of working class status to college-educated and professional workers who commute daily to New York City for jobs. The teachers were 98% female and 2% male in this convenience sample of participants.

### *Narrative Analysis*

Action research offers a viable approach for conducting research linked to school improvement practices (Tomal, 2003). Narrative analysis presents research as a series of transformations involving telling, listening, transcribing, analyzing, and reading (Riessman, 1993). It is a way of making sense of human interaction (Bruner, 2002). Narrative analysis provides the means to assess the action research in my change project. It gave me the opportunity to interact socially and professionally with my staff so I could tell their professional stories. Narrative inquiry provides the conceptual framework for defining narrative practices and subsequently knowing about what teachers do in their practice. Storying is a way for teachers to construct meaning and preserve what they know about their craft, how they think and rethink their practice. Storying a person contextualizes him or her, making that person present and prominent.

Narration is more than simply telling a story. It is a way of knowing (Lyons & LaBuskey, 2002). Stories explain why people in organizations do what they do, how they do it, which players are important, and the evolution of the action. They can also relate information



about the organization's history. Senge (1990) calls these purpose stories because they reveal an organization's purpose and engages constituents in listening to each other. Boyer (1990), Mishler (1990), Brunner (1986), Schon (1995), Maxine Greene (Anyon,1998), Nel Noddings (Hoagland, 1990), and Carol Gilligan (1982) have all used narrative reflection and self study to inquire about teachers and their practice.

I am most comfortable with learning through storying. By analyzing teachers' stories through narrative, I can deconstruct issues of effective practice and interpret how to improve schooling. Teachers' conversations about teaching or learning are recognized as narratives that capture discourses of meaning and interpretations when solving problems in educational settings (Lyons & LaBuskey, 2002). Narrative discourse is not just a manner of speaking, as determined by McEwan and Egan in 1995, but also the foundation to learning as a whole. Narrative practices are intentional attempts to reflect upon human actions, in which teachers, students, and educational researchers interrogate their teaching or research practices in order to construct meaning, interpretation, and knowledge of some aspect of teaching or learning (Lyons & LaBuskey, 2002). In other words, narrative analysis enables educators to rigorously examine their practice.

Dr. Sacks, a neurologist, underscores the power of storytelling as an essential dimension of building respectful relationships between doctors and patients, and offering healing care (Sacks, 1985). Similarly, the stories help bind me to my teachers as we develop a reciprocal sense of respect. Likewise, the stories bind teachers to their students. When we become impersonal, we forgo the information so central to healing and to learning. Respect and trust help to open the doors to this reciprocity. As I reflect, I think about what it takes to help the teachers to grow professionally and personally, how I can empower them to transform their own

learning, and how I can encourage them to become invested in change that would positively affect students and teacher retention. I look to Herzberg's (1966) model as a means to assess my effectiveness as a leader.

### *Maslow on Management*

My data and methodology have been aligned with Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of human needs (1943, 1998), Frederick Taylor's principles of scientific management (1916), and Frederick Herzberg's study on work and the nature of man (1966). Maslow's hierarchy of basic human needs provides a useful vehicle for educational administration to use in order to meet teacher's essential needs (Weller, 1982). The apex of Maslow's hierarchy of human needs culminates in self-actualization, which he defines as the freedom to effectuate one's own ideas, try things out, make decisions, and make mistakes (Maslow, 1943, 1998). The synergy that benefits the individual, benefits everyone. Individual successes should not occur at the expense of others, but in concert with others. Organizational goals and personal/professional goals must be aligned in a community of learners. High synergy cultures are secure, benevolent, and high in morale. Low synergy cultures are insecure, in conflict, and low in morale.

Maslow was one of the first psychologists to realize that the workplace could serve as an effective laboratory for the study of human development. To this end, he was admired by Drucker (2001) and Senge (1990). Although his studies occurred decades ago, the problems organizations are facing today with regard to competition, globalization, and technology can be understood and deconstructed through Maslow's theories. According to Maslow, each man's task is to become the best "himself." He viewed business with a social conscience, much like Giroux (1992) and Apple (2000), as well as other social scientists.

Maslow's hierarchy of human needs lays out the plan for reaching self-actualization via

personal and professional motivation. He says that in order to realize psychological good health, humans must first satisfy physiological, safety, and social needs. Then by building personal needs through the development of healthy self-esteem, humans can reach self-actualization. This pinnacle represents Nirvana, the ideal attitude toward personal and professional fulfillment under the most favorable circumstances. The message from Maslow is that none of us can actually reach ultimate efficacy, however, we follow an active, on-going path that has us reaching in and reaching out. Putnam (2000) says that people and their potential are our most important organizational assets.

We build ourselves from the inside and outside by becoming part of an important cause. In order to be successful along this path, we must believe that people are trustworthy, seek respect and accountability, seek meaning in their work, want to learn, prefer work to being idle, don't resist change, but resist being changed, and that everyone prefers to feel important, needed, useful, successful, proud, and respected. Self-actualized people are healthier and the best leaders work to improve the health of their workers (Maslow, 1943, 1998; Herzberg, 1963). The biggest challenge for the leader is to keep constituent's personal and professional interests and their need for growth aligned with the needs of the organization. This may be the key to retention and result in effective practice.

#### *Herzberg's Work and the Nature of Man*

Frederick Herzberg (1966) through the use of his Theory of Motivation in the workforce examined workers in business and observed that those who received positive recognition for their efforts and subsequently achieved, were not only more motivated to produce, but also experienced improved job satisfaction and efficacy. Work output increased, and people took pride in their work. Workers became more committed to a strong work ethic. I believe

Hertzberg's theory can be applied to any organization. I will relate the variables in Hertzberg's study to the development of educational learning communities in a school district and use his Theory of Motivation as the theoretical basis for analysis of my data.

Hertzberg parallels Maslow's work as he compares relationships between the world of work and the nature of man. He takes Maslow's premise further by determining factors necessary for the effective and healthy utilization of man in the workplace. Recognizing that the 1960's brought dramatic change in business and economics, such as salary increases, decrease in social capital and increase in time at work, Hertzberg encouraged employers to reassess the notions of human nature in order to capitalize on motivation to serve organizational needs.

Historically, the period of the Industrial Revolution initiated a change in the way people looked at themselves and others in the workplace where the worker emerged as a force in society. New technology and economics defined a different role for producers of goods and a different conception of the value of what they produced. Prior to the Industrial Revolution, man's labor was dictated by the physical world and other people. With the Industrial Revolution came a change in the purpose of work. In the centuries following, the shift was made to the value of work. Feelings of satisfaction, such as performance, personal relationships, and well-being began to invade the workplace. Hertzberg designed a Motivation-Hygiene Theory based upon five factors that seemed to stand out as strong determiners of job satisfaction. These factors are achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility, and advancement. His studies showed that achievement and recognition were high frequency satisfiers in the workplace, particularly over the short duration of time. While the work itself, responsibility, and advancement were not high frequency satisfiers initially, over time they had a greater impact on job satisfaction.

Hertzberg tested his theory with various professional, skilled, and unskilled laborers. He was able to identify two fairly independent sets of job factors that seemed to be important to workers. One set of factors affects whether people are dissatisfied with their jobs. These so-called hygiene factors seem related to poor performance. His research suggested that if administrators take care of these factors, so that they are not longer sources of dissatisfaction, workers' performance will improve to the level of "a fair day's work for a fair day's pay." Rarely, however, will workers be motivated to go beyond this minimum contract. For this reason, Hertzberg coined the term "hygiene factors" to describe this set, suggesting that they can cause trouble if neglected, but are not sources of motivation. Workers are more concerned with the conditions of the work, not with the work itself. I tried to parallel Hertzberg's study in the educational workplace, particularly examining the importance of recognition and achievement as "satisfiers" or as a means to provide personal and professional efficacy to a waning profession.

Traditional Motivation Rule states "what gets rewarded, gets done." Motivational experts, however, dispute just how true this rule is. Deci and Ryan (1985) found that the capacity to be motivated lessened over time in light of extrinsic rewards, and that people working for rewards tended to feel controlled by them. This feeling in turn affected subsequent performance and creativity. It was found that workers became increasingly dependent on rewards and on their leaders to motivate them. Therefore, the "what gets rewarded gets done" philosophy discouraged people from becoming self-managed and self-motivated. Teachers who were once involved in their jobs for intrinsic and moral reasons, now seem to be involved for calculated reasons. Instead of "what is rewarded, gets done" the philosophy should be "what is rewarding, gets done" (Sergiovanni, 1992). Hertzberg (1966) has pointed out that jobs offering opportunities for achievement, responsibility, and advancement and jobs offering interesting and

challenging work have the greatest capacity to motivate. His research and that of others builds a case for the idea that “what is rewarding, gets done.” Sergiovanni, (1992) contends that people are born with intrinsic motivation, dignity, and curiosity to learn. Whether or not this is true, is debatable. However, if this statement is true, it does not speak to what happens to people whose efforts are not encouraged or recognized. Do motivation, dignity, curiosity, and joy wither and possibly die? When morale is low among teachers, this intrinsic motivation wanes. Teachers begin to question whether or not they are experiencing joy in learning.

Like Hertzberg (1966) and Maslow (1943, 1998), I do believe that workers realize efficacy in relationship to the work they do. I hypothesize that recognition for a job well done not only motivates educators, but helps them to work through the challenges of a task and come out victors. Perhaps because education is a human services business, I believe that recognition for work keeps an educator moving forward on the path of professional achievement and self-actualization. Positive recognition grants teachers a reward for their efforts, improving both their level of responsibility and the work output. Then the work itself can count as the motivator for work commitment, persistence, and performance, as Hertzberg’s theory concludes.

Hertzberg found that women in high level positions valued achievement work itself, and responsibility before recognition. This is not surprising, since women in the workplace were newly respected at the time of his study. I think women in upper management positions today continue to work harder than men to prove their worth and to gain respect, but that is a study for another day. Through experiences and by observations, I find that teachers regardless of gender, look for positive recognition in order to understand the importance of the work they do and to feel successful. Recognition motivates educators by giving them a boost of energy, whether it be emotionally or physically, so they can enjoy the work and achieve success with students; in other

words, to feel valued. As human services leaders/providers, personal and professional efficacy are intertwined.

Implications of Herzberg's theory (1966) relate motivators to levels of psychological growth or efficacy. He concludes that in order to find continuous satisfaction in doing their job, workers need achievement and recognition for achievement, responsibility, possibility of growth or advancement, and interest as motivators. Efficacy and growth result from these motivators because workers are given the opportunity to increase their knowledge and understanding, create, make decisions, and seek personal growth. Without the motivators, the efficacy factors would not exist. Teachers would remain flat and stale in old habits. In status quo districts, efficacy and morale levels are weak. There is not impetus to drive change. Maslow (1943, 1998) and Herzberg (1966) both concur that recognition for achievement is the reinforcement necessary for all learning, particularly at the early stages. It is hoped that eventually the worker will develop his/her own generator and will rely less on outside recognition and more on his/her own assessment. At this point, extrinsic recognition becomes intrinsic. Personally and professionally, the educator recognizes his/her own self-worth and efficacy/self-actualization are achieved.

Herzberg (1966) specifically defines recognition as an act of notice or praise from a supervisor. It is interesting to note that Herzberg included "negative recognition," such as blame or criticism in this category. He also differentiated between situations in which physical rewards were given along with acts of recognition in which no concrete rewards were offered. Some recognition was verbal and some was defined as interpersonal, depending upon whether the act of recognition or the characteristics of interaction were offered.

In 1993, Herzberg, Mausner, and Block-Snyderman joined to give clarity to Herzberg's

earlier study. They determined that people are made dissatisfied by a bad environment, the extrinsic nature of the job, but they are seldom made satisfied by a good environment (which Hertzberg refers to as “the hygienes”). Workers are made satisfied by the intrinsic nature of what they do (which Hertzberg calls “the motivators”). Motivators are concerned with the work itself, rather than with the conditions of the work. The work itself is the source of instructional motivation (Hertzberg, Mausner, Block-Snyderman, 1993). When the Motivation-Hygiene Theory has been tested in school settings, (Sergiovanni, 1992) what has emerged as the motivators are a sense of achievement, recognition for good work, challenging and interesting work, and a sense of responsibility for one’s work. By contrast, pleasant interpersonal relationships on the job, non-stressful and fair supervision, reasonable policies, and an administrative climate that does not hinder are what have tended to emerge as the hygiene factors. This research has led to the idea that if one can arrange jobs so as to accent opportunities for the motivation factors to be experienced, people will become self-motivated.

The Motivation-Hygiene Theory is not without controversy. Many of its critics feel that the specific findings may well have been artifacts of the methods used by the researchers, portraying an oversimplified version of reality. Nevertheless, few dispute the overall conclusion derived from this research tradition; that for most people, the work itself counts as an important motivator of work commitment, persistence, and performance (Sergiovanni, 1992).

Hackman and Oldham (1980) reflected upon Hertzberg’s study by identifying three psychological states they believed to be critical in determining whether a person will be motivated at work. First, they identified “experience meaningfulness” or the extent to which a person perceives the work as being worthwhile. I see this as responsibility and morale. Secondly, they identified “experienced responsibility” or the extent to which a person believes



that s/he is personally responsible or accountable for the outcomes or efforts. And thirdly, “knowledge of results” or the extent to which a person is able to determine that the outcomes of efforts are satisfied. I see the latter two as recognition.

In spite of cultural differences, follow up studies showed that workers demonstrated a tendency toward “satisfiers” with job intrinsics and dissatisfaction with job extrinsics. Results showed a tendency to work hard when motivators were present. These theorists observed that man and his work were becoming distant and alienated. This supports my opening statement regarding morale.

The accomplishments of employees should be valued and recognized in order to improve the quality of instruction and related services of the district. They include: 1) promoting peer recognition of quality instruction and related services; 2) increasing awareness and pride; 3) designing a creative recognition program; 4) recognizing employees for excellence as a way to thank those employees and to encourage others to unlock or renew their potential for creativity, motivation, and involvement; and 5) climate where intrinsic rewards help employees feel a sense of accomplishment (Sergiovanni, 1992).

Recognition and achievement that result from support and mentoring are significant factors affecting satisfaction (Engelking, 1986; Woods & Weasmer, 2002; Maehr, 1990; Shin & Reyes, 1991). Further, an educational leader’s supervision of classroom pedagogy and student progress is not as important a factor in job satisfaction as is attention to teacher recognition and achievement. Here, supervision has a profound impact on teacher commitment and efficacy levels (Maehr, 1990; Ebmeier, 2003). Commitment by teachers is lost along with a sense of purpose. Teachers must regain an understanding of their purpose in the profession and acquire a sense of hope (Boy & Pine, 1987).

Louis's study (1997) examines seven variables related to teacher commitment and sense of efficacy. The most statistically significant variable that positively promoted achievement of professional efficacy is the variable of respect, with a .41 correlation (.01 level or better indicating a statistically significant impact). Professional development, goal congruence, and personal efficacy were also statistically significant at lesser levels in this study. Respect is overwhelmingly the most important variable, which strongly supports the argument that people must feel valued in order to believe that they are able to have an impact. Realization of personal and professional efficacy, then, sustains the journey toward self-actualization within the vocation (Louis, 1997). With this, I concur. To further support this point, respect for teachers' professional integrity and administrative support were factors identified as important to successful school commitment, as found in a study conducted by Ridley and Farrar (1982).

I have indicated the ways in which I motivate my employees through recognition and encouragement. Additionally, in surveys, interviews, clinical observations, and during focus group discussions, I asked the staff to express their sense of job satisfaction. I evaluated staff feelings about the many aspects of work and observed their behaviors in and out of class. From these behaviors and data, I inferred attitudes, feelings, and motives. I equated job satisfaction to morale. Through inventories and questionnaires, I determined what workers wanted from their job and then analyzed how the worker's attitudes toward his/her job made a difference in the way s/he works or his/her willingness to stick with it.

Similarly in follow up studies, Herzberg, Mausner, Block, and Snyderman (1993) found that there were specific references to the way in which job performance was affected by the workers' feelings. Several people in their study told about situations in which they considered leaving their jobs. There were clear indicators that the workers' personal and professional

adjustment and mental health were directly affected by what was going on in the workplace. From my exit interviews, I found similar results. I also interviewed teachers in the district where the data was collected for this study and more recently, in a subsequent district. I asked them to think of a time in the past when they felt especially good or bad about their jobs. It could be their current job or a previous job. They were asked to describe the high and low points in their feelings about the experience. In most cases, the low points were related to insecurity. Teachers who were not acknowledged or rewarded in some way were unsure about their job performance. Teachers who were recognized verbally or in written form had a better sense of where they stood in job performance. Conversations and observations with the supervisor then enabled them to continue with what was viewed as working, and change what was viewed as not working for themselves and the department.

The factors that lead to positive job attitudes do so because they satisfy the individual's need for self-actualization in his/her work. The concept of self-actualization, or self-realization, as a worker's ultimate goal has been a focal point to the thought of many personality theorists (Hertzberg, et al, 1993). Supervisors were frequently the source for the recognition of successful work. Successful supervisors were responsible for structuring the work so subordinates could realize their ability for creative achievement. Hertzberg (1966) concurs that human relations is essential to the maintenance of good hygiene at work. The greater fulfillment of man is in activities that are meaningfully related to his own needs as well as the needs of society. The task of the supervisor, then, is to recognize good work, reward good work appropriately and consistently, maintain optimal personal relationships between himself and the constituents, and organize or distribute work to allow for the achievement and efficacy of the workers.

In Herzberg's research, he builds a case for the idea that what is rewarding gets done, rather than what is rewarded. Herzberg (1966) and Sergiovanni (1994) claim educational leaders can enhance intrinsic motivation on the job.

1. They allow for discovery, exploration, variety, and challenge.
2. They encourage high involvement and identity with the task, enabling work to be considered important and significant.
3. They allow for ownership and active participation.
4. They emphasize agreement with respect to broad purposes and values that bond people together at work.
5. They permit outcomes within broad purposes to be determined by the worker.
6. They encourage autonomy and self-determination.
7. They allow persons to feel like they are in charge of their own behavior rather than manipulated from the environment.
8. They encourage feelings of competence or control and enhance feelings of efficacy.

To me, this increase in teacher efficacy is attributed to recognition rather than extrinsic reward. Although, Deci and Ryan (1985) found that the capacity to be motivated lessened in light of extrinsic rewards, that people working for rewards tended to feel controlled by them, and that this feeling in turn affected subsequent performance and creativity, I did not find this to be true in the educational community. According to my data, teachers feel they rarely receive any reward or recognition in the workplace, thus resulting in low morale. Instead, teachers are used to creating their own sense of accomplishment and value. Their performance and creativity are aligned with student achievement, resulting in professional satisfaction. But, when morale is low in an organization, it is important for supervisors and leaders to recognize and respect teachers in overt ways. I have found this to result in higher job performance, more effort in creating school reform endeavors, and increased retention in the profession as a vocation rather than teachers

viewing their work as merely a job. Teachers are not “falsely fooled” by recognition and respect; they need it to sustain.

Establishing learning communities, commitment to the professional ideal, responsiveness to the work itself, and collegiality can provide teachers and others who work in schools with the kind of inspiration, meaning, and motivation that come from within. Needs should be met because that is the right thing to do (Sergiovanni, 1992). These are the links that bind servant leadership with respect, recognition, and satisfaction in changing educational organizations and enable both leaders and constituents to self-actualize in an environment of personal and professional efficacy.

Murphy (1991) describes organizational collaboration and problem-solving as the single biggest determinant of capacity building; while passivity and denial are the enemies of change. He correlates changing the workplace of schools to changing the workplace of schooling. Unless collaboration occurs at the district level and is visible to school leaders, school leaders may become discouraged. Furthermore, restructuring involves a transformation of the roles of all personnel and a reorientation of the norms of the workplace. A sense of efficacy is at the core of teacher empowerment; it becomes a gratifying side effect of a school improvement program. To build faith, trust, and respect, educational leaders must often recognize teachers’ successes. Kouzes and Posner (2003) concur that recognizing contributions and showing appreciation for individual excellence is critical to encouraging the hearts of teachers.

My hope is that by engaging teachers in a linear sequence that moves along the continuum from improving efficacy to improving motivation, job satisfaction, vocation satisfaction, and retention that we can ultimately retain teachers, thereby creating constancy of instruction, and resulting in improvement in student outcomes.

### *Description of Change Cycles*

Each cycle in the research, comprised of thinking, acting, and reflecting, is intended to improve practice. During Cycle 1, I surveyed the teachers in order to obtain the history of the department, such as description of classes, curriculum, and training. It was an attempt to identify teachers' interests, expertise, and aspirations. This survey was conducted soon after I was hired as the supervisor in December 2003.

During Cycle 2, from winter through spring 2004, I narrowed the focus to areas of support, opportunity, mentoring, coaching. These areas were defined in terms of professional vocation. As I formally observed teachers and came to know them personally and informally, I learned more about their strengths and weaknesses as professionals. As a mentor and supporter, I hoped to help teachers improve their practice and learn from their own experiences, as well as the experiences of others. I gave teachers validation to try, possibly fail, but ultimately experience the learning (Hicks. et al, 2005). During professional development days, I reviewed evaluation forms to see what teachers had learned, what was important and what was not with regard to their learning. I created opportunities for teachers to attend workshops and conferences outside of the district, and then encouraged them to provide turnkey training to peers. I also encouraged teachers to observe each other in the classroom and specifically matched pairs of teachers both intra- and inter-school buildings to foster learning. This was an attempt to make teachers learners. At our final department meeting in June 2004, I created an opportunity for a peer sharing session where teachers presented methods, materials, and research to one another. This served as a means of professional development that allowed for sharing and communicating, which, according to Hicks, et al (2005), enables teachers to learn from each other as a means of support. Finally, I asked the teachers to complete a survey which focused on

critical professional questions regarding employment choices, supervisory support this year, and comments on my leadership style. Reflection and analysis of this survey lead to the next iterative cycle of the research project.

At the end of the school year in 2004, I conducted a teacher survey about my leadership. In addition, I asked teachers to comment on their perspectives of recruitment, job satisfaction, and the importance of recognition. This provided Cycle 3 data. My intent was to seek preliminary information from teachers regarding the purpose of leadership, specifically as they saw the need in this school district.

During Cycle 4 of the action research project, summer 2004 through fall 2004, I conducted exit interviews with the six teachers who sought employment elsewhere for the new school year. I tape recorded their responses and transcribed the notes, analyzing the factors related to job dissatisfaction or reason for resignation.

During Cycle 5, fall 2004, I conducted clinical observations on non-tenured teachers using a model established by Rowan University for pre-service teachers. During these observations, teachers identified their own professional strengths and weaknesses in a pre-observation conference. Teachers selected topics of choice for the observations and then participated in post-observation conferences to discuss their assessment of the lesson. During the pre and post observation conferences, I took field notes. Further, in order to initiate dialogue, I asked teachers in a focus group to write a metaphor about teaching. We examined our values system by aligning with open-ended questions (Kouzes & Posner, 2002; Senge, 2000) where values were reflected in a fictitious organizational culture.

During Cycle 6, I conducted a small study group of four teachers. We met on three consecutive Wednesdays at lunchtime in December of 2004 to discuss the following reflective

questions. The sessions were tape recorded and transcribed.

- What is professional commitment?
- Do I respect myself as a teacher? As a learner? As a leader?
- Do I respect my students as learners? As teachers?
- Am I comfortable in taking professional risks?
- What is the link between teacher satisfaction and retention?
- What are the motivators to remain in the profession?
- Is this a “job” or a “vocation?”
- Define recognition. Discuss the parameters for recognition.

From January to June 2005, a situation occurred with the 8 speech/language pathologists in the district that forced us to face an ethical issue and challenged us to examine our morals and values within the parameters of district policy. Analysis of this data will speak to my leadership in times of turmoil and challenge.

For Cycle 7, I administered the Leadership Practices Inventory (Kouzes & Posner, 2002) self-assessment in June 2005 to determine my role as both a learner and teacher and to reflect upon my own effectiveness as a leader. The best leaders seek constructive criticism and positive feedback about how they are doing in their relationships with constituents. This type of feedback used to come from supervisors, vice principals, principals, and directors when they sat down with their constituents following a formal classroom observation. Research shows, however, that the manager’s view of the outcome is less predictive of leadership effectiveness than the views of peers and self-assessment (Kouzes and Posner, 2002).

During Cycle 8, I conducted a county survey to determine if the retention of staff and difficulty with recruitment was unique to our district or if the same needs were cited in the other nineteen districts in the county.

During the 2006-07 school year I was employed in another public school district as an Assistant Director. Since my job description was similar, I gathered further data from a survey I initiated with the teachers in this district on the importance of teacher recognition and job



satisfaction. Teachers in this district were secondary teachers, in contrast to the elementary teachers in my former district. In addition, I began teaching in higher education, gathering data from graduate students who were also special education teachers.

Activities conducted have been documented in the data collection, such as agendas from department meetings, memos, emails, formal written observations, and evaluation of professional development opportunities. This documentation, journal entries, and teacher stories will provide triangulation of data. Narrative analysis will provide the vehicle for the unraveling of these stories.

To take the role of the other,  
impels us to look at how the other constructs his world.  
Charles Bosk

## CHAPTER V

### Data and Analysis

#### *Introduction*

The rate that teachers leave their profession far exceeds the attrition rate in private industry (Minarik, Thornton, Perreault, 2003). Although corporations expect a 6 percent loss of staff per year, Norton (1999) reports that 25 percent of teachers have left the profession by the end of the first year, and only 50 percent of the teachers remain on the job after five years. Karge (1993) found that up to 40 percent of new teachers leave the profession by the end of two years. In addition, the National Commission on Teaching (1996) reports that U.S. schools will have to hire two million more teachers during the next decade due to increasing enrollments.

Reasons related to premature voluntary departure of teachers from education include factors related to lack of preparation and professional development, but most prevalent are feelings of isolation, lack of community, low level rewards for competency, and lack of recognition (Minarik, et al, 2003). In the districts I have been employed, lack of morale seems to center around similar factors.

As a species, we reach out to one another and want to get to know each other better. Minarik, et al, (2003) believe that many teachers hunger to discover who they might be together. Feelings of isolation and lack of community occur when teachers are not given the opportunity to meet, discuss, brainstorm, disagree, and come to consensus as a group. Like the group of middle school teachers I encountered during the in-service workshop I presented, the opportunity to vent and know what each other is thinking is paramount to building trust. Instinctively, we also

know that the more closely an employer weaves relationships among employees, the harder it is for them to imagine working elsewhere (Ahlrichs, 2000). Allotting specific times for teachers to come together affords professional sharing that may not otherwise occur. For example, support meetings bringing together traditional and late-entry novices with veteran teachers invite a rich exchange (Woods & Weasmer, 2002). These meetings provide opportunities for veteran teachers to share their expertise, and for the new teachers to help renew the spirit and enthusiasm of the veterans.

The interconnectedness that occurs in a web allows for creation, new wisdom, and the feeling of being a part of a whole that is greater than the sum of the parts (Collins, 2007; Luft, 1992, 1993). If improved connectedness, relationships, and collaborative professional interaction create meaning and improve intrinsic rewards, a school that provides these will increase its employee retention rate. To become stakeholders, they need to know that their contributions to the school culture are honored (Woods & Weasmer, 2002). Teachers receive energy from each other and are more than just a collection of people. They share values and goals and develop a sense of purpose. They blend areas of interest and expertise to show that together the whole is greater than the individual parts, because none of us is as smart as all of us (Blanchard & Bowles, 2001).

The presence of a sense of community among teachers, students, and families has long been held by educational researchers to be one of the most important indicators and aspects of successful schools. Individuals have needs along the six dimensions of wellness: emotional, intellectual, environmental/occupational, spiritual, physical, and social; each of these needs can be met wholly or in part through community relationships. Educational leaders must look beyond pay raises, occasional donuts in the teachers' lounge, and reserved parking for the

teacher of the week as a means of recognition (Minarik, et al, 2003). Promoting connectedness with the larger community will affect retention.

One teacher shared a story about her experience with recognition.

“My principal called me to his office to commend me for helping with the progress of a particular student. In a subsequent faculty meeting, I received accolades in front of my peers. A few days later, I noticed an article in the local newspaper commending me for my efforts with the same student. Although my name was not specifically mentioned, the article was written and submitted by the parent of the same child. I will remember this recognition forever. Although this is not the reason that I work so hard with my students, the recognition for my efforts is appreciated and gives me the motivation to continue teaching in a difficult, urban district.”

Improving teachers’ job satisfaction is paramount in an era when 50 percent of new teachers drop out of the profession in the first five years (Colbert and Wolff, 1992). Eager new teachers enter their first classrooms confident they will touch their students’ lives and inspire them to learn. However, lack of administrative and collegial support, budget constraints, a diminished sense of personal teaching efficacy, and a controlled curriculum often squelch their enthusiasm (Woods & Weasmer, 2002). Shann (1998) maintains that teacher job satisfaction is a predictor of teacher retention, a determinant of teacher commitment, and, in turn, a contributor to school effectiveness and that teacher satisfaction reduces attrition, enhances collegiality, improves job performance, and has an impact on student outcomes.

### Purpose

My formal data for this change project was collected in one district. However, pertinent teacher stories from prior and subsequent districts in which I have been employed have been added for clarity and emphasis. My purpose in analyzing the data I have collected is to

determine how I have measured job satisfaction by listening to the stories the teachers tell me. The purpose of the analysis of this data is to learn something about the speaker that might not have been apparent from examination of content alone; demonstrating how cognitive skills may be reflected in oral narrative and how emotions are reflected in the telling of significant events in a speaker's life. The purpose of narrative research is to provide viability and justification for qualitative research. The processes of analysis, evaluation, and interpretation are not terminal nor mechanical, but instead emergent, unpredictable, and unfinished (Lieblich, et al, 1998).

Woods and Weasmer (2002) tell the story of a middle school mathematics teacher in Oklahoma who found little satisfaction in her first two years of teaching. She seriously considered leaving the profession, but was encouraged to change districts when she was pursued by another principal. When she moved, she realized what little support she had received in the first district. In her new district, she felt much more positive about teaching in general because of the encouragement and acknowledgement she received.

This story relates two lessons. First, building culture is affected by the leadership in that building. Secondly, teachers may need to actively pursue employment in districts that match their professional vision, allows them to participate in the change of school reform, and provides support through recognition and professional development. This has been my suggestion to unhappy or misplaced teachers.

A teacher shared her story with me about beginning her career in a school where I served as a supervisor. She was older coming into the profession, as she had raised her children first. She stated,

“I was scared coming into the profession and shared my fear with my husband. He encouraged me to give it a try and told me that I didn't have to stay if I didn't want to. Had I not

met with a director and supervisor who embraced me, mentored me, and appreciated my efforts, I would not have continued. Further, had I started today in the same district, I would not have stayed because this administration not only is not visible nor overtly supportive, but there is no attempt by them to know who I am in the natural environment of my classroom.”

Another teacher in the same district shared the importance of addressing the whole teacher by getting to the root of the teacher’s soul to see how s/he feels and what will help them to feel actualized or purposeful. She shares,

“You always cared about us, both personally and professionally. I remember your commenting on how I build students’ self-esteem through my classroom star chart. But, at the same time, you always asked about my mother, who was ill at the time, and my children. Those conversations made me have a great deal of respect for you as my supervisor, my colleague, and my friend.”

In districts with low teacher moral, it was imperative, albeit difficult, to change a culture of “gotcha” to a culture of recognition. In order for this shift to occur, I had to take the time to know each teacher’s strengths, fears, accomplishments, and comfort levels, both personal and professional. In other words, I had to tap into their feelings of efficacy, not as an intruder, but rather as a comrade, side-by-side as a teacher and a leader, in the profession. The building blocks of this process evolved from an inanimate path to something living and growing and changing. Together we weathered the bumps in the road. The teachers held me up when I faltered or became discouraged by bureaucratic edicts, and I in turn supported them through the trips and stumbles of daily encounters. Together, we built a learning community based upon repeated reward, recognition, realization, and respect.

As a leader, I provided support to constituents through a process that is a journey, not a

destination (Hicks, et al, 2005). My role was to help teachers discover their own strengths as they journeyed through lesson plans, classroom organization and structure, parent interaction, and diversity in student learning styles. I provided resources to improve pedagogy, student behavior, classroom organization, and professional well-being. By sharing personal experiences, I modeled the stories of teaching, such as effective communication with parents, interpretation of mandated special education policies, and content knowledge. I recognized loss of hope and exhilaration over success among the staff. Isolation varies among teachers, but tends to be affected by the different leadership styles displayed in each building. This reinforces the need, then, for one-to-one meetings with staff, building level meetings, and group department meetings so teachers can experience a collegial exchange of ideas (Lortie, 1975).

Through the following stories, teachers have shared their experiences, thoughts, feelings, “prouds,” and “sorries” in an attempt to grow in the profession. Along the road, my leadership became more defined based upon my interaction with these professionals, and for that, I am grateful. As teachers experienced conflicts and tension in teaching, I tried to step in to help. Often conflicts occurred between planned instruction and actual events in curriculum, between colleagues, administrators, and parents in the establishment of relationships, within personal efficacy and definition of self, and in relation to the expectations of the district in which teachers work. Some teachers can draw on experiences to anticipate situations and responses, but some rely on the use of intuition (Hicks, et al, 2005).

The themes or perspectives cut across the selected subtext and provided a means of classifying its units. For the selection of categories, I have read the subtext as openly as possible and defined the major content categories that emerged from the reading. As a result of this process, I learned about teachers’ thoughts and feelings.

*Cycle 1 Classroom Inventory – December 2003*  
*“Getting to Know the Staff”*

Introduction

I realized that in order to analyze how people are recognized, how they treat each other in the department, and how they develop connections and build relationships, I would have to watch and listen. Having been hired by the district mid-school year in December of 2003, I decided to distribute an initial inventory (Appendix A) to the teachers for the purpose of obtaining information in the following areas:

- Description of classes by teacher (student classifications, district demography)
- Status of approved curriculum (texts currently being used, supplemental materials used in specific programs)
- Prior training and experience with different curricular programs
- Suggestions for professional development ideas

I believe this survey showed my interest in learning about the instructional history of the teachers in the special education department, my acknowledgement of teacher interests and expertise in curricular areas, information about their strengths and aspirations, and their interests in taking risks using new pedagogy and strategies.

Themes I discovered included:

- How teachers are supported with materials, training, professional development
- Identification of their requests to improve their skills in pedagogy
- Recognition of their strengths and passions

As a result of the information acquired, we had a starting point for conversations about teaching students with special needs in this district.



## Purpose

Teachers learned about my experience with different curricular programs and my interests in their ability to include technology and augmentative communication devices in their lessons. On this survey, I gave teachers the option to indicate additional reading and math programs of which they were familiar, but as of yet, untrained. This placed me in the role of learner, because some of the teachers had used programs with which I was unfamiliar. The information obtained helped me to gather teachers throughout the district with similar training to act as turn-key presenters for peers. Additionally, it enabled me to encourage teachers with specific areas of expertise to network with teachers who did not in order to assist students of particular disabilities.

In a managerial way, the survey gave me a quick district overview of the location and inventory of specific texts and materials. It also alerted me to materials that perhaps were outdated or not research-based, as required by special education code, and to teachers who were not aligned with the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards in their instruction. For example, the use of old basal readers discarded by general education teachers were being used in special education, like the Silver-Burdett/Ginn *Language!* Series, and the Scott Forsman Focus Series. Teachers also described how they purchased their own instructional materials. One teacher told me, “I purchased my own social skills materials. In order to teach study skills, I created learning centers for my students with materials I bought.”

Sound suggestions were offered for professional development ideas, such as inclusionary practices, specific methods and materials, IEP writing and recordkeeping, how to motivate disaffected students, scoring and writing of instructional rubrics, classroom management, and differentiating instruction. One teacher emphatically stated, “I have heard spectacular things

about Project Read and Saxon Math (circled and starred three times on the survey). I would be very interested in attending full training for these programs.” Another suggested, “I would like to learn more about inclusion practices.” A third teacher said, “I have the *Language!* Program, but I wish one of my colleagues who is formally trained in its use could come over to give me a quick overview.”

Young teachers were enthusiastic about listing programs on the survey in which they might learn more information. They gave in-depth descriptions of supplemental materials and methods that worked for them. One teacher, when asked if she had been trained in any of the programs listed, responded, “No,” (with a sad face drawn inside of the ‘o’ in the word ‘no’). “But,” she said,

“I would love to learn more about any of them.” Another teacher asked, “May I receive a copy of the current annual review template with a step-by-step explanation of what information should be included in each section? The information is always changing, and not everyone is consistent across town with the process.”

Veteran teachers, too, were surprisingly responsive on paper. They had greater knowledge of a variety of methods and materials, as expected. One resource center teacher shared, “I make graphic organizers to help students in mainstreamed classes study for tests in the content areas.” Their requests for additional professional development reflected their areas of professional weakness as they saw it, such as additional math programs or the development of effective student assessments and programs that were imposed upon them with little or no training. They also inquired about the use of an IEP software system, which I learned the district had been investigating. A teacher used upper case letters and highlighted his request in yellow for emphasis, stating, “Touch Math training would be VERY HELPFUL!” Other veteran

teachers asked to explore more sophisticated programs. A preschool teacher stated, “Augmentative language programs and assistive technology devices would be helpful for the little ones. I’ve heard *Handwriting Without Tears* and the Miller Method for teaching autistic children are worthy to explore.”

At our first group special education department meeting, I presented some of the survey concerns and suggested preliminary plans for sharing of materials, expertise, and professional development sessions. I asked teachers to share their reactions. Although responses on paper were plentiful, few vented orally about disgruntled issues. This did not surprise me, as they did not yet know enough about me as a supervisor, and perhaps felt uncomfortable sharing their wants, needs, and complaints in person. Additionally, there were many new to district staff members who had to be introduced to the group. Looking back, I could have done more to improve their comfort level and create more of a community perhaps by initiating a simple scavenger hunt, which would have gotten teachers moving and interacting with one another, possibly relieving the initial tension. One teacher even expressed skepticism regarding the snacks I had set up for the meeting. She stated, “I wondered what we were celebrating. No supervisor has ever brought food or beverages to a meeting.”

I wanted the teachers to tell me how I could best recognize their efforts, because I felt that recognition of their past, present, and future achievements would increase their self-confidence and work satisfaction. I hoped that by embracing the opposites of talking and listening, I could develop connections with staff. Although I did not achieve this level as a result of the survey, nor as a result of my first department meeting, I did feel that some teachers were beginning to open up on a one-on-one basis and in smaller groups. As I circulated around the district to visit classrooms, teachers commented, “We welcome you into our rooms” and “I

like the way that you are visible.” Similarly, teachers began to dialogue about their individual issues when I was on their turf in their classrooms. One teacher stated, “I know that when you write down my request or concern on the pad that you always carry, that there will be follow-up.”

This prompted three changes in my leadership. First, I became very visible in their environments; their classrooms, buildings, assemblies, and at social functions. Without intruding, I conducted frequent “walk-through” visits, getting to know the students and the paraprofessionals as well as the teachers in their natural environments. Secondly, I initiated small group meetings in six individual buildings, once a month, to discuss issues specific to the buildings or individual teachers. Thirdly, I attended IEP meetings where I was able to verbally support teachers’ efforts and get to know parents.

I learned that special education teachers in some of the buildings felt isolated. A young intermediate self-contained teacher wanted to accompany her fourth grade children into the mainstreamed class while her paraprofessional accompanied the fifth graders into their mainstreamed environment. She lamented, “I have asked the principal for permission to include my students with their nondisabled peers for science and social studies, but I am told to keep my students in their own classroom. The general education teachers won’t even talk to me about trying this.” At another school, teachers had difficulty meeting the demands of the parents. One said, “When I ask for suggestions in dealing with the parents, I am told to do what the parent wants. This is not always in the best interest of the child.” A third teacher, new to the district and the profession, enthusiastically supported services for her student. She said, “I agreed with his grandparent that another session of occupational therapy would be beneficial. I nearly had my head taken off by the case manager at the IEP meeting.”

By virtue of their chosen discipline, these elementary resource and self-contained special education teachers work with students who have complex academic, emotional, social, and behavioral needs, so their talents are constantly challenged. Further, general education teachers often align with other general education teachers to the exclusion of special education teachers, perhaps because they fear special needs' students or have not had sufficient training to understand the education of students with special needs. Regardless, special education teachers feel as if their only alignment is with their special education colleagues who understand the challenges they experience daily.

It is estimated that only 2% of chief school administrators in New Jersey have any special education background. As a result, teachers additionally feel isolated from administrators who inadvertently shun them and their students in many cases because they simply do not know enough about educating this population. One teacher reported, "I was told to take care of my own students and to do what was needed to keep them in my classroom."

Recently, with the mandates of the No Child Left Behind legislation, special education teachers reported that they are even more scrutinized and viewed with disdain because their students are not achieving to expected levels of competence, despite their efforts and hard work. One teacher commented, "We are asked to make our students function on grade level; that is what is important. If they could do that, they wouldn't need to be classified. They make progress and we see it, but sometimes it is hard to measure because in numbers the growth is small." This is all the more reason for a supervisor to support and recognize the work of these constituents, helping them to monitor and document student progress.

Educational leaders create distinct working environments within schools. These environments are highly predictive of teacher satisfaction and commitment when school cultures

foster a sense of affiliation, recognition, and accomplishments among teachers (Anderman, 1991). As I see it, this is where my leadership becomes important. It is my job to get people motivated so they can transform their own learning in an atmosphere of respect. Blanchard and Bowles (2001) tout effective leaders as those who cross-train teachers and let them recognize the learning, claiming that winning teams are continually learning as they PERFORM. The acronym refers to:

- **P:** Purpose and values (knowledge, understanding of common language)
- **E:** Empowerment (ownership of the process)
- **R:** Relationships and Communication (forging community)
- **F:** Flexibility (change/transformation)
- **O:** Optimal performance (use of strengths)
- **R:** Recognition and Appreciation (my premise)
- **M:** Morale (where this study began; keeping spirits high and engaged)

Through purpose and values, I initiated effective dialogue through clinical observations. Teacher autonomy was realized as teachers identified what would specifically be taught and what outcomes they hoped to reach through empowerment and ownership of the process. I have built trust and shown support during pre- and post-observation conferences, department meetings, and building meetings in an attempt to improve relationships and communication among staff. I have encouraged staff to be in the right seats and have followed processes to get the wrong people off of the bus. I have encouraged optimal performance of staff by recognizing strengths and establishing opportunities for peer sharing and peer networking. I have shown appreciation to staff by sending cards, tokens, emails, and verbal recognition for a job well done or in celebration of a personal or professional event. I have positively influenced morale as

evidenced by teacher comments during conferences, interviews, and surveys.

Although some researchers endorse teacher burnout as a reason for lack of commitment to the profession and poor job satisfaction (Cunningham, 1982; Bernshausen & Cunningham, 2001), other data reveals that teacher burnout does not lead to teacher turnover, but rather that burnout is more likely to lead to teacher entrapment. Educational leaders who support teachers are able to break that link between stress and burnout.

My purpose, then, as a leader, is to develop and encourage positive relationships based upon respect. One teacher suggested,

“Teaching respect and self-confidence is equal in importance to teaching academics; knowledge is useless without the ability to share it. In this age of co-teaching, teachers must mutually respect one another. It is our job to empower students to move beyond their current comfort levels. That’s what good leaders do for us. We try to ensure that students seize the opportunity to work and play with each other. To that end we constantly change partners and groups in order to promote teamwork in addition to independence.”

Another teacher, a professed constructivist, states, “Great teachers combine gentleness with justice. Both teachers and students must be treated with dignity and respect.”

If our core mission states that every child can and will learn, which is the premise for NCLB legislation, then I believe this can only happen when teachers are trained, motivated, empowered to take risks, and given ownership of the vision. Morale among teachers is raised when they are respected, recognized, and appreciated for the work they do. A resource center teacher confidently stated, “Curriculum administrators push one program on us this year and another next year. That’s not what’s important. I could teach out of a paper bag. The greatness of a district is not measured by which program you use, but by the quality and commitment of

your teaching staff.”

### Conclusion

From this cycle of data collection, I learned that for the most part teachers do the best job they can with the materials, supplies, and training they have been offered. Often, this rationale for using specific instructional materials was, as one teacher stated, quite simple. She told me, “These were the materials that were in my room when I started here.” I learned that most teachers were interested in improving their practice and transforming their own learning by initiating new instructional programs and exploring additional curricular concepts. The teacher who stated, “I have heard such great things about Project Read and Saxon Math” showed an interest and excitement in learning new strategies to improve her practice.

I learned that trust among educators takes time to develop, but that recognition of strengths and efforts leads to the development of that trust, and that teachers will engage in effective dialogue when a level of trust is reached. This opportunity for continuous dialoguing helps me to better meet the needs of teachers. By providing in-house professional development sessions or opportunities to attend workshops outside of the district, the teachers felt I was recognizing their needs and validating the importance of the work they do. In addition, the training helped teachers to increase their levels of professional efficacy as they gained more knowledge in their field.

*Cycle 2 Formal Teacher Observations January-June, 2004*  
*“Observing Teachers in Their Natural Environments”*

### Introduction

As I became more familiar with the staff, teacher strengths began to emerge. Teachers with natural talents and genuine interest in student happiness and achievement were identified. For example, whenever I visited the classroom of one young tenured teacher, her self-contained



language impaired students were always on task. At any time, I could observe at least a dozen strategies that she implemented that were effective with this population of youngsters. This teacher's proximity to the students while teaching, visual reinforcement of verbal learning, token system specific to individual students' needs, and uncanny nonverbal communication with her paraprofessional all contributed to her success. I once asked her to tell me what she thought I had observed. She said, "I really don't know. I suppose I am doing something right since I see progress with my students, but I don't really think about what it is I am doing every minute." I call these teachers the "pay it forward" teachers; the ones who are humble, have respect for the profession, love children, and are creative and motivated, while inspiring others.

Some teachers appeared to be outstanding in their particular discipline; whether it was in working with preschool handicapped youngsters, or those who implemented the research-based Miller Method program endorsed by the district to meet the challenges of autistic children. These two populations of teachers worked diligently during the instructional day. However, it was difficult for them to obtain support from the greater department community because most of the other resource and self-contained teachers did not know what occurred in these highly specific programs. This prompted two changes. First, the teachers in the preschool and autistic populations were given an opportunity to present the tenets of their programs to their peers during department meetings and on professional development days. Secondly, the teachers not familiar with these specialized programs were encouraged to apply for half-day administrative and professional days in order to observe these programs. This connection was important as it helped teachers to transform their own learning.

## Purpose

During Cycle 2, I conducted an initial round of formal teacher observations using the district and board approved observation form (Appendix B). As I reviewed what I had observed, I identified the following themes:

- Lesson structure (teacher or student-directed, flow, realization of objectives)
- Interaction of students (behavior management, pacing)
- Adaptation for individual student needs (as per IEP/classification)
- Alignment to NJCCCS (knowledge of content and pedagogy)
- Effective use of materials, questioning techniques, evaluation of outcomes.

I noted and reinforced strengths observed, while offering suggestions for professional growth. This procedure is one example of how the district supports its teachers. Dialoguing with teachers about their lessons provided valuable feedback to meet their needs. Further, it helped me to become more acquainted with their teaching styles. I encouraged teachers to stretch their lessons by reaching “outside of the box” based upon their own reflection. One teacher became frustrated teaching geometric concepts to her resource class. She commented, “Rather than become discouraged, I decided to use Geoboards, visuals, protractors, and memory cards to reinforce the concepts and the correct math vocabulary. The students seemed more engaged and the learning happened.” What this teacher discovered was the importance of presenting multiple experiences in various modalities to insure student success.

I recognized teachers for their tenacity, sense of humor, and persistence, particularly those using specific methods to address the complex needs of certain students. They were encouraged for trying and implementing new programs and strategies, as well as for setting higher, yet realistic, expectations for their students. One teacher in particular was a certified

speech/language pathologist and special education teacher. She taught a primary self-contained, communication impaired class. She was able to use her expertise in both areas to reinforce the development of receptive and expressive language skills in her K, 1, and 2 students.

Additionally, in an effort to foster independence and self-monitoring of behaviors, she developed a system whereby her students would assign themselves points for appropriate behaviors during Circle Time activities. She explained, “When the students return to their seats following my Circle Time lesson, they are responsible for evaluating their behaviors during the lesson. They can receive either 1, 3, or 5 points depending upon how they assess their participation, ability to sit still and keep their hands quiet, and their listening skills. I keep a chart for each student, tallying the points they received. At the end of the week, students are rewarded for their accomplishments.” I probed with the teacher to have her determine the purpose of this activity. She said, “I believe that a student can take ownership of their own behavior, even at this young age, and when they do, their behaviors improve. Believe it or not, they are much harder on themselves in assessment than I would be. Sometimes I have to ask them to reconsider the points they have assigned themselves because the number is too low.”

When teachers reflect on their practice, they can self-assess their own behaviors. During the observation process, I asked them to determine how they might have conducted the lesson differently, how they believed the students responded, whether the learning was relevant, and what they learned from the lesson. A speech/language pathologist who worked with the preschool and primary autistic population learned as much from her students as she did from the tenets of the research-based Miller Method program she used to teach her students. She offered,

“Daily my students surprise me. For example, a student who has never spoken, said ‘pour’ and ‘sit down’ for the first time during therapy on the square. I try to encourage problem

solving by pairing verbal commands with the demonstration of desired behaviors. I use the gestures, verbal commands, and signs to elicit responses from students as recommended by Dr. Miller. I sign and demonstrate ‘come, come, stop’ while giving the verbal command. By changing commands, we expect that students will break the routinized behaviors typical of autistic children.”

Teachers were commended for their energy, efforts, and expertise on behalf of the students and for their collaborative efforts with peers. These commendations were documented on teacher evaluation forms. Encouraging a reading teacher to incorporate decoding skills with comprehension skills, I suggested she meet with a colleague to expand her program. She commented, “I thought Project Read and Wilson were programs in and of themselves. In working with (colleague) I saw how I could incorporate authentic literature to enhance the learning of comprehension skills and at the same time, motivate the students more.” An intermediate resource center teacher supported content area learning in the mainstream. He explained, “I use pink and blue flashcards and a memory game to help students match the names of the explorers with their accomplishments. This has given them confidence in their mainstreamed social studies classes. Their teachers have noticed a difference in their ability to participate in large group lessons.”

Teachers also were recognized for their ability to effectively use the talents of the paraprofessionals assigned to their classroom. This was a task that many new teachers had little experience addressing. In one instance, a new teacher had a great deal of difficulty connecting to her veteran paraprofessional who was used to the ways of the former teacher. This new teacher became quite intimidated by the paraprofessional. She lamented, “I have spoken to her, but she thinks everything I do is wrong for the students. The last teacher was here for a very long time

and the students were used to her ways. My ways are somewhat different, but I think they could be effective.” She asked me to intervene, but in dialoguing, I tried to elicit strategies from her that she could use to win the respect of her helper. Unfortunately, despite her positive attempts, the paraprofessional initially changed little. It was only over time, as the new teacher modeled effective teaching strategies, that the paraprofessional acquiesced. The teacher learned that sometimes patience and fortitude are rewarded. Gathering experience in the classroom herself, gave her self-confidence as a classroom leader. She saw that she was able to improve outcomes and this experience gave her a sense of empowerment over her own classroom. Over time, she was able to transform her own learning.

I offered on-going extrinsic rewards and forms of recognition with the intent of making the teachers feel appreciated and recognized, hoping these gestures would improve overall morale. For example, I always brought snacks to department meetings, often decorating the table to align with a particular holiday. During Special Education Week designated by the New Jersey Department of Education in May, I stuffed staff mailboxes in each of six buildings with a bag of candies, a poem of appreciation for their hard work, and a token key chain or pad that reinforced our commitment to each other as a learning community. Throughout the year, I continued to verbally commend teachers for specific endeavors, such as positive interaction with parents or demonstrated progress with a student through emails and written cards. I wrote letters, copying their principals and personnel files, for work above and beyond what was required. For example, a group of teachers prepared a parent presentation, sharing with them the tenets of the Miller Method which was used as the method of choice for teaching their autistic children. The teachers met with the parents on several evenings throughout the year. Other groups of elementary special education teachers prepared creative programs to share with their

general colleagues during Special Education Week in order to sensitize them to the needs of classified students. These activities ranged from preparing a luncheon and showing Richard Lavoie's *F.A.T. City* video, to inviting general education teachers and students into the special education classrooms for collaborative lessons. Despite the fact that teachers were hired and paid for teaching in the summer extension program, I sent them letters at the end of the summer acknowledging their efforts, as their participation in this program was not required and greatly helped the students to maintain skills that otherwise would have diminished over the summer. One of the resource teachers was Spanish-speaking, as were many of the students and parents in her building. I recognized her at the end of the school year in a letter that said,

“Just a note to thank you very much for your help throughout the year with students and parents who are Spanish-speaking. You take time from your daily duties in order to translate important information both in special education and regular education matters. Your assistance helps parents to feel comfortable and confident with school processes, and helps students to assimilate to the (school) climate.”

Staff members always received birthday cards from me for their special day and thank you cards for specific reasons. These tokens of appreciation never went unnoticed. Staff members would tell me that no other supervisor ever made them feel quite so special. They often responded with words of gratitude. For example, a paraprofessional who required surgery wrote, “Thank you very much for your get well card. It meant so much to me that you took the time to do that and to write such a comforting message. Everyone's prayers have definitely helped me. I am happy to be home and on the road to recovery. Bless you. You are a lovely person.” A young teacher sent me a lighthouse calendar as a follow up to my discussion with the teachers about a renewal project I was working on during the summer at Rowan. She added this

note, “We all need a beacon of hope! Every time I see a lighthouse, I think of you. Thanks for all of your support and positive energy.” A school nurse who assisted in our summer program wrote,

“Youth are our future. They depend on us to guide and direct them as they develop into healthy, ambitious adults. They must hear, ‘You can do it!’ They need opportunities to hope, serve, and succeed. They need to trust and be trusted. They need mentors to have high expectations of them. These supports will serve as the foundations for learning skills that last a lifetime. I would like to thank you for being a mentor. I will miss you after this summer, but sometimes God works in mysterious ways. A door may close, but the window remains open. Remember me when you are running the Department of Education!” To me as a leader, these comments represent examples of reciprocal professional and personal respect.

In addition, building secretaries came to me to thank me for acknowledging them by name whenever I entered a building. I made it a point of checking into the main office when I visited the buildings in my charge, and never thought to be anything but friendly to the staff behind the desks. I was told that I was one of the few administrators who ever recognized them as an integral part of the school community. One school secretary said, “You are the only person that acknowledges us when you come in the building. Those other people from downtown walk right into the principal’s office and never bother to say hello.” Another noted, “Sometimes we sit here behind the desk and wonder about our purpose. By chatting with me when you come into the building makes me feel that I am somewhat important to the running of the school.” These comments taught me that inadvertently I was creating a sense of efficacy for these employees through recognition.

As the teachers and I became more familiar with one another during this data collection

cycle, I tried to guide them to think in different directions than their original comfort zone. For example, I recognized one veteran resource teacher as structured; confident, but not cocky; nurturing, yet firm; always prepared; knowledgeable of pedagogy and curriculum; able to make effective use of small classroom space; trained her students to transition during unexpected interruptions; and promoted independent learning. However, she was not a risk-taker. She was comfortable in her zone of status quo, which was for the most part effective with her students. During a period of reflection, we chatted about becoming less teacher directed and to integrate well-known tenets of familiar programs with new program information. She eventually felt confident and empowered to step out of her comfort zone and become a little more confluent. I observed changes in her after two years. Her professional efficacy level improved. She seemed to get more enjoyment out of teaching as evidenced by her smiles, a bit less structure in the classroom, and constant hugs from her students. During building meetings, she offered suggestions for change, stating, “Maybe it would be a good idea for us in the department to collaborate and co-teach. We could share our expertise in the programs we know and at the same time learn the strategies used by other teachers. The students could really benefit from this.”

In another instance, a teacher, who was adequate in teaching intermediate learning/language disabled students, was switched to a primary class of the same category. Prior to the switch, she was frequently absent and lacked creativity. The switch, which was initiated by her and supported by me, produced a new, vibrant teacher. She embraced the little ones, explored a new early literacy program, and initiated cooking lessons in math. Her attendance improved considerably. She commented, “Thank you for encouraging this switch in positions. At first, I wasn’t sure about how it would work out. But, I must admit that I love my students. It



is so refreshing to see them respond with so much enthusiasm to the Land of the Letter People program.” This teacher had invited me into her classroom to informally observe how the students responded to the program. I brought the students treats when I arrived. The teacher later sent me a note signed by her and the paraprofessionals in the class. It read, “Thank you for your thoughtful gifts. We love being part of the special education team that strives for excellence!” Sometimes, a leader must make sure that teachers are in the right places; that is, where their talents, skills, and interests can be most effective. By encouraging this teacher to be in the right place for her, professional efficacy grew because she was simply happier and more productive.

Sometimes teachers are motivated in unusual ways. A veteran teacher, one of the few male teachers in the department, taught intermediate resource classes. He academically supported the science and social studies curricula in general education programs, however, he was generally a rote teacher. There was little creativity in his lessons and less enthusiasm by my observation. Although he knew what was needed in order to be an effective teacher, he put forth little effort. His remarks in department meetings were often cynical and thwarted the vision of the department. For example, he once commented, “It doesn’t matter what we do. The administration here doesn’t recognize our efforts and neither do the parents.”

Soon after, a student teacher from a local college was assigned to this teacher for the spring semester. This young male proved to be a great model for the veteran teacher. He was innovative and excited the students with creative and relevant lessons. The veteran teacher was positively influenced by his protégé to the point of suggesting they co-teach in the resource center. Together, they planned lessons that caused the principal, other teachers, and parents to notice. We all wondered whether this enthusiasm would continue when the student teacher left.

What followed was a rather unfortunate incident. After the young teacher graduated from his college in May of that year, he continued to substitute in different districts until the end of the school year. He was standing in front of a high school class one morning in June when he fell over and died. There was suspicion that a student had put something toxic in his water bottle on the desk, but this was never proven. The greater community mourned his passing. I believe that the veteran teacher in our district with whom he taught was determined to keep the spirit of this young man alive by becoming the best teacher he could, because his complaints diminished and his productivity increased. After this incident, I sent the teacher a card with my condolences, acknowledging the rapport developed between the two and commending him for sharing his expertise with this pre-service teacher. Through various subsequent conversations with this teacher, he expressed how he and the students celebrated the memory of his protégé. He said, “I always noticed the enthusiasm of the students whenever (name) taught. I have tried some of his strategies and activities. I appreciate your card and sentiments.”

### Conclusion

By the end of Cycle 2, I was able to recognize the staff for their professional strengths and areas of expertise. I received a lovely note from a paraprofessional. It read, “Just a short note to thank you very much for such a good report on my job performance as an instructional assistant. I love being a part of your program.” Further, I conducted on-going meetings with twelve teachers new to the district and the profession. We met to discuss questions about teaching methods, parent interactions, student needs. I purchased Palmer’s book (1998), *The Courage to Teach*, for each. The book provided information for discussion. While I did not gather field notes on our meetings, a note provided feedback from one teacher who wrote, “I really appreciate the time you took going over the Special Services Department procedures and

various instructional programs. Thank you also for the wonderful book and special keychain. It is nice to know the (district) has such a supportive department and staff. I look forward to joining the staff.”

As I visited each of the classrooms or observed their initiatives and interactions, I made a notation about methods, strategies, materials, and techniques they used that would be helpful to others. Subsequently, during our last department meeting of the year, each teacher participated either individually or collectively in presenting a method, materials, program, or workshop information to their peers. This peer-sharing session recognized the yearly achievements of each teacher and gave them an opportunity to connect with teachers in other buildings who might have similar interests. As a result of this exercise, new and veteran teachers began to effectively and enthusiastically collaborate. For example, teachers from two schools paired up to pilot a new math program. Two other teachers who were interested in improving reading skills attended a workshop together and implemented corrective reading strategies they had learned.

During this cycle, I demonstrated how the district supports its teachers through the observation process. Further, as indicated by teacher comments and cards, I supported staff efforts through recognition and respect. I observed their own transformation of learning through changes they made in their job roles as well as in the methods and strategies that they used. I believe that through dialoguing we were able as a learning community to continue to understand one another and work toward a common vision for our students and families.

*Cycle 3 Teacher Survey of Recruitment and Recognition June 2004*  
*“Analyzing Teacher Opinions on Leadership”*

Purpose

After seven months in the district, I distributed a survey to teachers asking them to assess my leadership, as well as comment on factors related to teacher recruitment and retention (Appendix C). A self-addressed, stamped envelope was provided with the survey. Teachers responded by mailing completed surveys to my home. Thirteen surveys were received for analysis. Demographic information obtained indicated that respondents ranged from beginning teachers to teachers with 15 plus years of service. Six teachers had not been employed previously in other districts. Seven teachers had taught in previous districts, but left for personal/relocation/child-rearing reasons, poor salary, or what they thought would be better professional opportunities. One cited non-renewal in a previous district as a reason for leaving.

Twelve teachers indicated that they did feel supported by me as a supervisor. A teacher stated, “You provided positive comments and constructive criticism about our work. You are someone who goes to bat for her staff, likes things to be in order, and looks ahead, but is patient as (change) happens.”

One teacher felt that I was somewhat supportive, qualifying the response by adding, “You helped me to understand special education laws.”

Eleven teachers indicated that my leadership style was emphatically helpful to their practice. One teacher said, “You are approachable, resourceful, and knowledgeable.” Another commented, “You are directly involved in student case studies.” A third stated, “I am pleased with your leadership qualities, but a little frustrated with decisions that leave you powerless (to make) changes, such as budget constraints or the size of our class rosters.” Further, a teacher added, “I think the most important quality is when presented with a problem, it is resolved in a

timely manner. At our meetings, not only do you have a voice, but also ears. You are always there to hear us out and guide us.”

One teacher responded that my leadership was only somewhat helpful, stating,

“You seem deeply concerned about the department and wanting to unify the teachers you supervise. Our meetings, however, are generally too structured and organized, perhaps too long with the focus not always on urgent issues. For example, one meeting was supposed to clarify IEP writing. This topic wasn’t touched until the end of the meeting.”

Additionally, a teacher commented, “As a leader, you tried to take on too much at once. I am not interested in hearing about your experiences in prior districts. I feel you should focus on the current district alone.” These comments helped me to redirect my focus at meetings, stick to the agenda, and listen to the needs of the teachers.

Two comments that particularly touched me were offered by two different teachers. One said, “You see the good in my classroom without my having to say a word.” Without being specific, the other teacher said, “You have done a lot for a very disorganized department.” These comments define my support of teachers and the importance I place on recognition and respect toward constituents in organizations.

Respondents to this survey noted how I could help them in the future with the following written comments:

- in-service training in inclusive practices
- providing strategies to negotiate with parents in IEP meetings
- encouraging the use of behavior modification techniques
- creating opportunities for movement within the district
- helping with scheduling in the buildings

- providing specific curricular training for mathematics programs
- clarification of IEP procedures and special education law

One teacher felt that initially I was not very visible, but visited the classroom more frequently toward the end of the first year of my employment. Others asked that I continue to intervene with building principals on their behalf and provide necessary research-based materials for instruction.

The speech/language pathologists asked, “Would we have an opportunity to hold more regular meetings among ourselves in order to collaborate on services and strategies?” This request was difficult to arrange, since the therapists traveled among eight buildings that were on very different time schedules. As a compromise, they were able to meet in smaller groups occasionally. Teachers asked for individual building meetings monthly. I complied with this request at the beginning of the new school year, by scheduling individual meetings at the six buildings. They also suggested that I attend building faculty meetings as a central office administrator and representative of special education. This suggestion was revered by some principals and dismissed by others. I attended where I was welcomed.

Most of the teachers who responded were non-tenured employees that had worked from 1-3 years in the district. It was interesting to note that professional reasons ranked highest as reasons for leaving prior districts, and location was important in coming to this district.

Demographic results of the respondents were as follows:

Number of years teaching in the district

- 1-3 years                      8
- 4-5 years                      0
- 6-10 years                    2

- 10-15 years 2
- 15+ years 1

Reasons for leaving other districts, if applicable

- Personal 2
- Relocation 1
- Reduction in force 0
- Administration 0
- Professional 4
- Non-renewal 1
- Poor salary/benefits 3
- Colleagues 0
- Other 1 (child-rearing)

Reasons for coming to this district

- Interview 3
- Job description 2
- Salary 2
- District reputation 1
- Job offer 3
- Location 6
- Benefits 1
- Other 2 (familiarity with district, recommendation)

For the final question of the survey, I asked the teachers to comment on factors that would influence their decision to stay in the district. Although asked to rank their responses,

some teachers checked answers. Where ranked, I looked at the first three or four choices. The following represents the numerical responses offered by the teachers:

- 12 - benefits/salary/tuition reimbursement
- 10 - administrative /collegial support
- 7 - job flexibility/advancement
- 7 - location
- 2 - professional development

### Conclusion

From the surveys received, support, recognition, and respect seemed to be acknowledged by the respondents. I learned that perhaps I tried to tackle too many things in the first sixth months in an attempt to connect with the teachers on a professional level and meet their needs. I recognized my impatience with change. It was rewarding to see that administrative and collegial support were ranked as important as salary/benefits/tuition reimbursement, although these are very real economic factors, particularly for teachers starting in the profession who have college loans, young families, or want to go on to graduate school. The comments regarding my leadership align with my intent and with my interpretation of a servant leader.

During the next cycle, I interviewed six teachers who resigned from their positions in this district. I was curious to see what motivated their decisions. Did they feel unsupported, unrecognized, or disrespected for their efforts? Did they feel they were provided opportunities for dialogue in order to discuss issues and frustrations?



### Introduction

According to Ruben (1986), good teachers leave teaching not because the pay is too low, but because of poor job satisfaction and too little recognition. In one year, six teachers resigned from special services in this district, five to pursue employment elsewhere and one to work in the same district, but in general education. All six teachers participated in exit interviews (Appendices D1, D2). They signed completed consent forms for participation and answered nine narrative interview questions. Responses were tape recorded and transcribed. The questions focused on the following issues:

- Length of time in the profession and in this district
- Reason for coming to this district
- Amount of support received
- Suggestions for improving conditions
- New district demographics and responsibilities
- Expectation of new position and attraction to the new district
- Additional comments

Themes from my research questions that emerged were 1) evidence of support; 2) examples of professional recognition; 3) guidance; and 4) feelings of respect. Through dialoguing with these teachers, I learned about the factors that affected their decision to leave so that in the future I might address these needs more specifically with other teachers.

Teacher LC

This teacher taught for 19 years in prior districts and 5 years in this district. She was originally recommended by a friend for the position. She commented, “I felt supported in this district by my principal and supervisor, as well as satisfied with the department. I was not unhappy in (district). But, I bought a house and the extra money I will be getting in my new district will come in handy. I am moving closer to home. I worked in this new district before, so I am familiar with it.” She added, “I feel that some of the children that I serviced in this district need more services than they are receiving.”

Teacher BB

Teacher BB taught in a previous district for 15 years and only 4 months in this district. She was hired mid-year to replace a well-respected teacher who left. She stated,

“You don’t often find jobs in the middle of the year. I didn’t know much about (district), but I knew I wanted to work in a public school. I felt I could bring a lot to the program and the position seemed to match what I was looking for.” She continued, “While I felt supported by the special education department, I didn’t feel a whole lot of support from the district in general. I felt that you, as a supervisor, shared a vision for the district that was similar to my philosophy. I didn’t feel the rest of the district and administrators shared that same vision. I did not feel supported at all by the people in my building. I could talk about anything to the resource teachers; however, it was hard to share my frustrations because they were very positive about the school.”

She reported that special education teachers in the building as well as their students were segregated from the mainstream of the building. As a self-contained teacher, she felt disconnected. Philosophically, she was an inclusionist and the building in which she taught had

previously employed a principal who made it a point of segregating special education students. She said,

“I thought it was bad enough that my classroom was isolated in the basement of the building, but that wasn’t the worst of it. I know that the teacher before me was very conservative and she was loved by the principal, other teachers, and aides because she kept the children contained in her classroom. I don’t want to have to fight all the time to integrate my kids. I did not feel all of my students needed to be self-contained. I often wondered where the child study team members received their professional training because they very often favored keeping the students segregated.”

She related that the message she received from the building was not to ask for assistance and not to rock the boat. No planning time was scheduled for teachers and due to contract limitations; she could not meet to plan with her paraprofessionals before or after school hours. She stated, “You can’t throw people into a room with all ages, all disabilities, and different personalities, in a basement, no less, and expect all to run smoothly without any planning time. We needed to be able to gel as a team.”

Teacher BB felt that support and professional development training were the keys to success for teachers. On professional days, she felt locked into sessions with general education teachers in her building and would have preferred spending the time exploring early literacy and writing programs. She stated, “There seems to be a lack of trust and lack of respect for teachers in this district. Young teachers want positive experiences, but they are afraid to ask for help. They don’t actually know how to value the classroom. They want to move out instead of learning to become a better teacher.” She added, “I appreciated the opportunity you gave me to go outside to a professional development workshop.”

This teacher was subsequently hired by a demonstration school at Bank Street College in New York to work with low SES preschoolers. She felt the collaborative structure and the innovative curriculum would align with her philosophy of teaching and be a better overall fit for her as a professional. The opportunity to take graduate courses free of charge at the college provided an additional monetary incentive. As a final comment, she said, “It is important to develop respect and valuing of teachers in a district.”

Teacher CH

This teacher taught one year prior to coming to this district, and this was her first year teaching here. She was attracted to the job by the proximity to her home and she knew one teacher in the district. She stated,

“When I came to the district, I quickly became disillusioned because I had not been assigned a formal mentor. My principal is not one to help teachers, especially special education teachers. He tells us to take care of our students ourselves. We rarely had faculty meetings, so often I had no idea what was going on in the building. Other teachers helped me when they could, but all of the special education teachers in the building are non-tenured, too. No one was available to help us set up the classroom, interpret IEP’s, help with the texts or curriculum, or help with how to solve problems in certain situations. You didn’t dare go to the principal.”

Overall, this teacher was very dissatisfied with the level of support from her building. Further, as a young teacher, she had a very difficult time connecting with a veteran paraprofessional assigned to her room. By the time I arrived in the district, the two had been clashing, sometimes to the point of tears. The effectiveness of instruction was significantly diminished. There was a pervasive uneasiness among the adolescent students. I arranged the time so the two could meet to dialogue face-to-face on several occasions. I suggested to the

teacher that she begin by listening to the assistant's rendition of the structure of the class previously to give her validation. Gently, the teacher could describe her plan for the students given their special needs. I had hoped that together they could plan week by week until they were thinking and acting together. I had even suggested that the two meet for coffee socially to talk in a more casual, informal manner and get to know each other from that perspective. Unfortunately, the teacher's patience decreased before the needed changes took place. She did not feel she was very successful and the forceful manner of the paraprofessional did much to crush what little self-esteem this young professional could muster.

During the exit interview, she shared her excitement about the challenge of teaching an autistic class in a special education school where she hoped all teachers would be collaborative with regard to student needs. She said, "I see all of the teachers as on the same page. I won't have to hear 'keep it in your classroom' because all of the teachers will help one another to solve problems. The district also seems much more organized. They hold workshops for all teachers and the in-service is free. There seems to be a lot more support. I need the energy these teachers can provide."

Despite her dismay over her experiences in the district, she commended my leadership attempts. She reported, "The teachers in my building were so grateful when you arrived because you really cared about them and the students, answering questions and working together to determine best practices for students." She indicated that unfortunately, there had been much damage and ill feelings prior to my employment. She felt that the direction of my leadership was worthwhile and that peer-sharing and support were important to teacher success. As a final comment, she added,

"Support is most important to a new teacher. I think the ideas you have as a supervisor

will help, but it will take time to get to where you have a majority of tenured teachers. Your ideas and route are good, but it will take time for teachers to feel comfortable enough to stretch their legs and feel free. You will need time to build this kind of a department.”

### Teacher JS

Teacher JS had been hired in the district four years prior to my employment through a random application process. Before working as a teacher in the preschool handicapped program, she worked as a paraprofessional in a preschool program elsewhere while attending college to become a certified teacher. During her nine year tenure working with this population, she acquired effective observable skills, becoming in my mind, a master teacher. She shared, “Initially, colleagues in my building were helpful. Despite the fact that I was not assigned a formal mentor, I connected with a neighboring teacher for support. I really had no idea if she was considered a reputable teacher. I just needed a friend; someone with whom I could talk. I basically designed my own preschool program.”

Since she found few supplies in her classroom, this teacher bought most of her instructional materials herself. She assumed that the teacher before her probably did the same and took personal materials with her when she left the district. She noted, “I didn’t even have basic materials, not even toys for a preschool class. That was a little discouraging, but as a teacher you kind of know you’re going to search garage sales on Thursdays and Fridays.”

Several preschool and autistic self-contained classes were assigned to this building. Because the students in these two populations required many related services, such as speech/language services, occupational and physical therapy services, nursing services, and paraprofessional support, there were many staff members available with whom to collaborate. This teacher said, “When I came to the district mid-year, this group of professionals was

cohesively formed. We often spent lunch time and time before and after school collaborating on behalf of the students.”

JS was saddened to leave the district and the program she had built, but due to financial reasons, she accepted a position closer to home that paid more money and reimbursed tuition for graduate programs. This single teacher carried loans from undergraduate school and was the sole support of an infirmed parent, so her motive was understandable. She was kind enough to add, “I appreciated the help you provided in the development of early childhood curriculum, monitoring of student progress, and effective recordkeeping. One of my paraprofessionals told me that you always identified her and the others by name. They thought this was special and felt so valued by the gesture. Other than the principal, no other administrator took the time to learn their names or acknowledge them for their contribution to the classroom community.”

#### Teacher SD

The fifth interview was conducted with teacher SD who applied to the district online and was hired in late August for the position of self-contained teacher in an intermediate learning disabled class. She had taught one year prior to coming to this district, and completed one year in this district before moving again. She was assigned to the same building as CH, and concurred that the building principal offered little support or mentorship to struggling first year teachers.

She stated, “There were three new teachers in special education in our building this year. The only tenured person was a speech teacher. She acted as our mentor, but even she didn’t come (from another school in the district) until November. I had absolutely no idea what was expected of me in my classroom, the department, or my building.” She further stated, “There was no supervisor. We had a child study team with three members, but soon two members left

and there was only one person with someone new. That was tough. They weren't really available to us either. We were pretty much on our own."

She shared her enthusiasm for her new district. "When I first got there, after I accepted the position, the principal was very excited to have me on board and I was told to come in before school starts to set up, become familiar with the materials I would be using, and to meet other teachers in the building. I was given the telephone number of the teacher I'd be working with. I just thought they wanted me to come and learn as much as I could before I started and that was a big difference, I think."

When I was hired in December, this teacher immediately enlisted my help in scheduling her students into inclusive settings and establishing clear expectations of her job. With help and recognition, she developed into a very effective teacher who took instructional risks and developed a very organized, manageable classroom of students. But, her initial reactions and lack of support and respect as a professional prompted her to begin applying to other districts for employment. In April of her first year, she accepted a position much closer to her home in a district that welcomed her.

She shared her final thoughts. "I just think, in the beginning, if it's a teacher who doesn't have any prior experience, then just giving them some support in the beginning is so important. You have to let them know exactly what you want and expect from them, and give them things that they might need, like materials, support, and meetings where teachers can talk and obtain information. That's pretty much a good place to start."



Teacher DH

The last teacher interviewed was DH who had two years prior experience as a teacher and was in her second year in the district. She did not exit the district, but instead was recognized by the principal as a strong special educator and primary teacher. Subsequently, she was recruited to teach second grade as the in-class support teacher for that building.

Her experience in the district as a resource center teacher her first year was very positive, having worked with a very capable resource partner. Together, they developed innovative curricular materials and used technology to enhance lessons. They grouped and regrouped students in their charge in order to address particular skills.

A new principal promoted inclusionary practices and these two resource teachers established criteria for a Down Syndrome youngster with a 58 IQ to be successfully integrated with his same age peers in a sixth grade classroom. This was a very risky attempt in such a conservative district. But, DH felt supported by her peers and her building leader. That seemed to make a great deal of difference in her reaction to the job. She commented, “The school was not without issues. Some veteran teachers did not respect us young teachers. Prior to the new principal coming, special education students were not even allowed to attend assemblies in the building. Also, we did not always feel supported by the child study team in our building. I guess I got there at the right time, though, because our new principal and you worked together to make in-roads with regard to our children. When my principal asked me to teach a grade 2 class for next year, I was flattered. She and I both thought that we could make more progress with the integration of special education students if I were ‘one of them’ (general education teachers).”

## Conclusion

As a result of my participation in the exit interviews with these teachers, I could sense the frustration of enthusiastic teachers who were given little direction and support when they were hired in the district. Without support from principals or a special education supervisor prior to December, the teachers became overwhelmed and unsure of expectations for themselves in their jobs. Lack of support from building leaders in some cases only added to the confusion. Not only was morale low, but general teacher efficacy was low. Professionally, teachers could not even define their efficacy.

In 2000, Easley conducted a study in which teachers listed a number of reasons for leaving the profession. Among these was a sense of frustration and isolation. He suggested that in order to combat this challenge, school systems must find creative and strategic ways to support teachers as a deterrent to attrition. According to the information obtained in the exit interviews, my teachers' comments supported Easley's study (2000). In addition, the teachers' comments clearly indicated that district support was sorely lacking. Opportunities for conversation and discussion of issues were minimal. Teachers could not transform their own learning because the expectations for their jobs were unclear. Job satisfaction was negatively affected by feelings of isolation, lack of recognition, and lack of respect. These teachers felt that no one cared enough about them to insure their success.

I saw that my job as an educational leader in this district was to help teachers to clarify job expectations by providing structure and guidelines. Professional support, recognition of expertise, and respect for their efforts was paramount if teachers were to thrive in this district. In the spirit of Palmer (1998), teachers teach who they are, therefore it is imperative that they are able to define themselves in this profession. Through clinical observations, I hoped to have

conversations with teachers on an individual basis to help them address classroom issues, determine an educational philosophy or code, and develop an understanding of efficacy in the profession.

*Cycle 5 Clinical Supervision Model Fall 2004*  
*Personal Values Assessment October 2004*  
*“One-to-one Conversations about Philosophy, Pedagogy, and Experience”*

### Introduction

Assessment of established growth and reinforcement objectives occurs during formal teacher observations. Observations are a key source of support and guidance, playing particular roles in subverting teachers’ feelings of isolation and loneliness. The observation process is one of building relationships between the individual supervisor and the individual teacher.

Humanness, self-respect, relaxation, communication, contracts, agreements, collaboration, and helpfulness are components of the teacher/supervisor relationship (Lin & Yan, 2002).

Given the opportunity for feedback, practice, and reflection, teachers who want to continue to learn about themselves and their place in the profession will be able to improve their abilities to do so through the clinical supervision model. Through clinical observations, or cognitive coaching (Garnston, 1993), teachers were encouraged to try new methods and materials in their classrooms in order to stimulate themselves as well as to motivate the students. This was an opportunity for the supervisor to observe particular areas of difficulty or strength as identified by the teacher and to take risks involving new procedures or practices. The pre-conferences, observations, and post-conferences helped teachers to improve their practice through reflective teaching (Garnston, 1993; Cramer & Kashela, 1992). When teachers feel caught in daily routine and are not encouraged to grow in efficacy, they stagnate and eventually either leave the profession, or worse, unhappily remain in the job until retirement.

Clinical observations enable teachers to become aware of the events of their own practice and to fine tune their plans and outcomes (Russell & Johnston, 1988). Exploring how people create meaning from their personal experience is central to clinical practice, and is equally important in examining the development of the teachers' clinical skills. Interrelationships are developed and conversations are examined. The storying process through which professional understanding is achieved also involves an exchange of social meaning (Lionberg, 1995).

### Purpose

My purpose in conducting clinical observations was to help the teachers reflect upon the strengths and goals in their own classroom communities so they could transform their own learning, communicate a belief in their potential through an honest, caring, respectful exchange, define and develop their own skills, and fully realize that self-directed learning works best and is lasting to the creation of efficacy and purposing.

Changing school cultures by developing a strong supervisor/teacher relationship provides learning for all. As a leader, I was able to become an integral part of the lesson and student interaction, while viewing the scene from the teacher's perspective through clinical observations. Dialogue before and after the observations helped me as the leader to identify strengths and weaknesses in order to better address teacher needs. Dialoguing also gave the teachers an opportunity to reflect by thinking out loud as a means to enhance their own learning.

The clinical supervision format features collaboration between the teacher and the supervisor. By working together, I hoped to improve instructional outcome by helping teachers to improve their behaviors in the classroom. During the pre-clinical conference, the teachers decided on the data that would be collected during the lesson and related that information to the supervisor. The supervisor documented the dialogue as field notes and transcribed the teachers'

words to later examine as data. A date was determined for the formal observation. The teacher and the supervisor discussed the framework for the observation, the contract itself, the teacher's orientation to the class, the lesson plans, and the specific behaviors to observe. The district approved observation form was used to collect data during the lesson (Appendix E).

Immediately following the observation, a post-observation conference was arranged. Again field notes of the dialogue were taken and transcribed. At that meeting, discussion ensued regarding the data collected. Together, the supervisor and teacher evaluated the results in a respectful environment.

The observation format was used with twenty non-tenure elementary teachers, nineteen females and one male. Seventeen special education teachers and three speech therapists were observed using the clinical observation model as a means of giving teachers choice or empowerment over classroom structure and activities, and to provide coaching or mentoring from the supervisor. According to Herzberg (1966), teachers are motivated when they successfully achieve and receive recognition and feedback.

In analyzing the data from the clinical observations, I identified themes and commonalities in discovery and self-assessment among the twenty non-tenured teachers observed through this method. I focused on the following themes:

- Theme 1 – Identification and recognition of what was going well
- Theme 2 - Acknowledgement of teacher strengths; assistance with weaknesses
- Theme 3 - Teacher self-assessment and reflection

In any department or school, a supervisor can find teachers who are very strong and competent, those who are emerging in their craft, others who are weak, but have potential, and a final group who must be encouraged to pursue employment elsewhere because they do not

believe in the vision of the department or show initiative to improve their practice, regardless of support. In this study, teachers were recognized for effective practices in an atmosphere of respect.

### Theme 1

- Attempts at co-teaching and integrative teaching
- Effective use of physical space
- Implementation of strategies learned in professional development experiences
- Use of questioning techniques to promote higher level thinking
- Use of technology
- Overall initiative

### Theme 2

- Use of effective instructional strategies/materials
- Ability to adapt to change in assignments
- Use of motivational techniques
- Structure and preparation
- Classroom management techniques

### Theme 3

- Use of viable modifications/accommodations to meet student needs
- Set high, but realistic, expectations
- Establish firm lesson objectives
- Follow appropriate pacing
- Use of problem-solving techniques

### Theme 1 – Attempts at co-teaching and integrative teaching

A special education resource teacher and a general education first grade teacher used the co-teaching model in order to integrate students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers in an instructional setting. The special education teacher asked me to observe the co-teaching dynamic, including evidence of pre-planning, sharing of expertise, feelings of mutual respect, use of instructional strategies, and implementation of modifications. The special education teacher stated,

“I will bring manipulatives for the math lesson where we will be reviewing and using pennies. I met with the classroom teacher to discuss the lesson plan objective and to view the materials. I pre-taught (the two youngsters) the concept of addition using pennies. I will sit between them to assist, but will also be in close proximity to the other children to help. The teacher is very accommodating and allows me to teach side-by-side with her.”

I observed obvious pre-planning as evidenced by a smooth flow of the lesson and familiarity of both teachers with the materials and strategies used. They worked collaboratively, as did the students during the lesson. The classified students were integrated in proximity during group work with their peers. The students seemed motivated by the use of manipulatives as noted by their expressions and compliance with the tasks. The special education teacher was commended for her familiarity with the names and needs of all of the students in the classroom. Her use of imitation pennies to reinforce the concepts provided the students with a multi-sensory learning experience. She then used a penny stamp to help the students to problem solve, transitioning them from concrete to pictorial representations and at the same time increasing the pace of the classified students within the lesson framework.

During the post-conference, the teacher reflected about the lesson, commenting,

“Originally, (the teacher) and I had arranged the students’ desks in rows, but it was difficult for us to get between the desks to reach the children. We switched to two U’s. When some of the students claimed they could not copy from the board, we realized we had to turn some of the desks to face the board. Having the students write on paper reinforced the concepts for the special education children, but using the stamps and manipulatives saved them time. I was pleased with the way they were able to grasp the concepts. In addition, from where I sat, I was able to easily guide other students who were having difficulties.”

A preschool handicapped teacher new to the district, did not have as successful an experience with integrative teaching. In this program, students receive many ancillary services, such as speech/language therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and transportation. In order to insure successful outcomes, it is imperative that all service providers communicate with each other and the paraprofessionals to collaboratively meet the needs of each student.

The teacher asked me to observe her afternoon class of students. She stated,

“The (September) lesson will focus on the themes of fall and apples. I will be teaching an instructional lesson with a small group, while a second small group meets in the classroom with the speech pathologist, who will reinforce the monthly theme with a focus on language, and a third small group meets with the paraprofessionals, who will assist the children with an art activity that is linked to the theme. After 15 minutes in each group, the children will rotate to another group until they have visited all three areas. I would like you to observe the effectiveness of the integrative services, the collaborative efforts of the adults, and the rotation process.”

I did observe a collaborative effort on the part of the staff members. Lesson objectives were reinforced through the expertise of each rotation leader and a common theme was followed



for consistency. The teacher was commended for making effective use of her paraprofessionals by including them in the lesson. Further, the rotation system enhanced the students' abilities to transition from one adult to another, an important social skill for them. It also provided an opportunity for structured movement.

During the post-observation conference, I asked the teacher to comment on her reflection of the lesson. She said, "I am still trying to get to know the children. I realize that I have to challenge the students more and plan longer lessons. Some of the students do not receive small group speech services, so I have to provide for them when they finish the other two rotations." We discussed strategies to more effectively implement an integrative plan, such as establishing firm lesson objectives, using appropriate materials, improving pacing in each group, and pre-planning with the other adults to establish guidelines for instruction.

With another of the speech/language therapists, I discussed the importance of integration of speech/language services in language arts and social studies classes. As I observed her pull-out lesson on parts of speech, the students offered protests about the fact that they were being removed from mainstreamed classes to attend a speech session. One boy said, "I have had speech since kindergarten. How long do I still have to come?" Another boy asked, "Why do we have to be taken out of our classes?" The teacher explained to the students that their IEP plans indicated they were to get speech services.

During the post-conference, I asked the teacher to consider integrative services. She said, "I am following what is in the IEP; it calls for pull-out speech services." We discussed how her participation and the students' participation at annual review meetings might help to promote more integrative services. She replied, "I suppose I could suggest that we try to combine speech services with language arts or reading lessons in grades 6, 7, 8 since the students do not like to be

removed from their peers at this age. Most of the time they don't come to class, and even when they do come, they complain about being there and it is hard to motivate them." We talked about how she might help other students as well by bringing her instruction into the mainstreamed classroom.

A speech/language pathologist in another building initiated her own integrative program with a self-contained intermediate communication impaired class. When she participated in the students' IEP meetings, she suggested that their related services experiences contain large group push in services, as well as small group pull out services. She would prepare them socially and with appropriate language instruction in the small group so they could be successful in the larger group. In addition, she was able to help students to generalize their skills from the small group to the larger group. She stated,

"I think language usage was enhanced because all of the students participated; they were all able to follow directions, even though in some cases, requiring some clarification and encouragement. The integration of a language lesson in the classroom increased the student's appreciation for the relevancy of the isolated skills I cover in the small group." She added, "The lessons provide important skills for all of the children in the class. During my integrative lessons with students, I focus on the skills of following directions, making eye contact, greetings, appreciation of personal space, and social peer interactions."

The lesson this teacher taught was based on a detective's theme. It was not only motivating for all students, but for a shy student who does not normally participate, this teacher was able to prepare the student ahead of time in the small group session. This student then felt more secure in participating in the large group because he had been prepared by practicing his responses in the smaller group.

A resource teacher in another building asked me to observe her in an in-class support class where she would be working with a first grade general education teacher. At the conclusion of the well-executed lesson, the teachers were commended for their efforts on behalf of the students. These teachers clearly understood the tenets of this instructional model. The special education teacher related,

“The in-class support model can sometimes present as a power play, or a turf issue, between two teachers. (This teacher) is great to work with because she is not afraid to give up sole control of her classroom. She is willing to share the responsibilities with another professional. (This teacher) doesn’t feel competitive about finishing the book or moving through material quickly. We assess the students’ needs together to determine when it is time to move on. She copies her plans one week before the lesson for me. There is never enough planning time, but we make do. The children see both of us as teachers. We follow the same rules in the classroom. We are both similar in philosophy and style.”

These two teachers assisted other teachers who were interested in effectively implementing the inclusion model. They suggested that running a week long seminar for interested teachers in the summer prior to teaching in inclusive settings for the fall would be a good idea, and they were willing to provide that in-service training for their colleagues.

#### *Theme 1 – Effective use of physical space*

A new to district self-contained teacher was assigned to a group of behaviorally challenged intermediate students. These students had not had much structure in their classroom during the previous year with another teacher, so the challenge for this teacher was particularly difficult. In addition, many of the students were weak academically, particularly in reading and language arts skills. This teacher set up individual learning centers in her classroom. She also

provided small group instruction areas where she could gather different students for training in specific skills. The individual spaces enabled the students to work without distraction, work privately on individual learning tasks, and permit individual assessment of behavioral and instructional progress.

She asked me to observe a small group reading lesson. She explained, “I use this reading series because it has somewhat of an upbeat vernacular within a controlled vocabulary environment. These students are not strong readers. When reading becomes difficult, they become frustrated and then act out in order to cover up their embarrassment, so I want to use something with which they will meet with some success. You will see that I keep them on track during the lesson by giving individual coupon rewards as well as adding or subtracting marbles from the group reward jar. Their behaviors must be kept in check for themselves as well as each other.”

In the two months since the beginning of the school year, I noticed that this teacher had instilled the importance of respect and manners in these adolescents. They were kinder to each other and had less frequent outbursts of behaviors as compared to the prior year. Through verbal praise, individual rewards, small group rewards, and class rewards, this teacher helped the students to transform their behaviors. In addition, she kept daily communication open with parents via a point sheet that she sent home. Through careful planning and establishment of trust in her classroom, by the spring of that school year, this teacher was able to use her physical space to improve her learning community. Desks were gradually moved closer to one another. Students worked in pairs for short periods of time. A quiet space was provided in the room for students who chose to work independently or required private space for a time. The students earned trips into the community. They improved reading and writing skills, and were able to

publish classroom stories which they read to first grade youngsters in the building. Self-esteem grew and inappropriate behaviors diminished.

*Theme 1 – Implementation of strategies learned in professional development experiences*

A teacher certified as a speech/language pathologist and a special education teacher taught a self-contained primary communication impaired class of students. Children ranged in ages from Kindergarten through grade 3. The teacher recognized that the students' disabilities often inhibited their listening skills and their ability to follow directions sequentially. After attending a workshop, she implemented a system whereby she wore a microphone and an amplification system. She explained,

“Using this system, my voice is projected loudly and clearly across the room to the students. As I speak, I also list spoken directions on easel paper that I place close to the children's desks. I use pictures as visual clues, or sign language while I am speaking. I find it helpful educationally to give strong auditory and visual input to these students simultaneously.” The teacher was able to support both receptive and expressive language skills in this manner, as well as to reinforce positive behaviors. By demonstrating speaking up loudly and clearly, she was able to reinforce the same behaviors with the children. She added, “I can say to them, ‘I like the way you are sitting’ or ‘You spoke up loudly and clearly when you gave the answer’.”

A young second year resource teacher displayed enthusiasm for a particular reading program and math program in which she had been in-serviced. She asked me to observe her teaching math using the new program. She explained,

“I investigated a motivational program that uses silly stories and chants to help students enhance their memory skills for mathematics. The children will each have an opportunity to learn the information using these methods and then teach it to the rest of the group. I am

interested in seeing the long term effects of this program. The students seem to like the stories because they don't think they are learning math.”

Although the pace was quick and some of the rules complex, the students seemed to follow the lesson. Because the stories were silly and motivational, they were able to learn the concepts with repetition and practice. All of the students were engaged in the lesson. They seemed to enjoy taking turns being the teacher. Outcomes were favorable. In follow up assessment, the students were able to remember the information as well as apply it to new situations.

This teacher is a risk-taker, which I tried to encourage. Because she is young and somewhat inexperienced, she sometimes loses sight of the objective of her enthusiasm, however, she is very open to constructive criticism, will often ask for help with students who are not achieving by reaching out to the supervisor or to colleagues for help, and she is always open to new ideas and strategies. Her students benefited from her constant level of enthusiasm.

#### *Theme 1 – Use of questioning techniques to promote higher level thinking*

A resource teacher in one elementary building has in three years established herself as a strong educator and member of the school community. She has set high expectations for her students, providing them with creative and motivational instruction rich in the use of technology. She coordinated daily with the general education teachers on her grade level and is successful in paralleling the general education curriculum with modifications for her students.

During our pre-conference dialogue, she said, “I would like you to observe my fourth and fifth grade reading class and provide feedback on how you think I motivated the students and whether or not I provided questioning techniques that encourage students to think on another level.” She went on to say, “I will be teaching phonics and decoding skills using advertising

media for motivation. Fourth and fifth graders are usually very aware of their environment and should be familiar with the three companies I have selected as a vehicle for learning. I believe when students can relate to information, they are more apt to retain it.”

Students were engaged in this lesson from the moment this teacher began to teach. They were enthusiastic and excited to see what objects she had hidden in a bag. Using advertisement campaigns and slogans, this teacher was able to teach decoding skills. She used ‘Shake and Bake,’ ‘Snack Pack,’ and ‘Slim Jim’ to help students identify rhyming words and the structural analysis of words. She reinforced her objectives with flash cards, categorization of words on an easel, and student handouts. By using the ‘thumbs up/thumbs down’ strategy, she was able to assess student understanding of concepts as well as insure their continued participation in the lesson. Through questioning techniques, students discovered the alignment between decoding and encoding skills. She integrated writing with mechanical reading and continuously challenged students to embellish their responses. She later reflected, “My challenge is always in planning too much for one lesson. I was surprised at how well they responded to questioning.”

Further, this teacher dedicated a bulletin board in her room to a game she called “Homeworkopoly.” In order to motivate students to complete their homework, students competed with one another as they played a game that aligns with Monopoly. The teacher commented, “The students are so excited to play the game each day, that I have never had a problem with them completing homework. Parents, too, are amazed and delighted that they do not have to fight with their children to do homework.”

A partner teacher to the resource teacher above was able to learn much in her first year from their collaboration. She often had the opportunity to observe her partner since they shared the same resource room space. She, too, asked for feedback regarding her use of instructional

techniques, such as questioning, guided reading format, development of higher level skills, and timing, particularly with regard to student response times. After the lesson, the teacher commented, “In the excitement of the lesson, I feel like I missed part of what I would like to do. Also, the lesson took much longer than I thought it would. We didn’t really have time to discuss all of the questions that I had planned in great detail.”

While the efforts of this teacher were commendable, her inexperience with student subjects off-set her pacing. I encouraged her efforts and in subsequent meetings we discussed each of her lesson objectives separately so she could determine how to effectively use each of the strategies.

### Theme 1 – Use of Technology

The use of technology has become such an effective tool for both teachers and students in the classroom. A resource teacher of sixth graders supported the social studies curriculum on the study of ancient civilizations by taking the students on a virtual tour of Egyptian tombs via the computer. The students themselves were able to explore websites offered by the teacher to learn about the daily life of ancient peoples. The teacher commented,

“Technology is an amazing tool. Not only are students motivated by its use, but in many cases they know as much or more information than I do, and so we learn from each other. Even the parents are surprised at the interest students can take in learning on the computer. They will often email me for websites that they can explore with their children. Teachers have access to so many lessons and activities via the computer.”

This teacher also used the computer for a language arts lesson. In the grade level reading anthology, the students were reading a story about the Iditarod. Together, they were able to go on line to follow the actual path of the current competition. The students were literally jumping



out of their seats with excitement during this lesson.

*Theme 1 – Overall initiative*

As a supervisor, I believe it is important to encourage a teacher's initiative, whether or not their attempts are likely to be successful. We all learn from mistakes as well as successes. One new resource teacher wanted to be successful at her craft. She tried to be creative in her planning, but oftentimes the subject matter she selected was too immature for the students she taught. In addition, she was a poor speller herself. Students would often identify misspelled words at the board. Further, she had not mastered classroom management techniques. Yet, I admired her spirit. If she was constantly condemned for her weaknesses, she would likely have given up on the profession. Instead, we met frequently, focusing on one specific area at a time. When I left the district, this teacher sent me a lovely card. She wrote, "Please stay in touch. You have been so helpful to me. I would never have made it this far without your support. Now that I am getting married and moving to a new area, I will take with me what I have learned from you."

One resource teacher was as an enthusiastic, creative young teacher who implemented strategies that were innovative and creative to enhance learning. She created a respectful classroom of pre-adolescents and was consistent in producing positive learning outcomes. As a new teacher, she did not hesitate to ask for help and was grateful for constructive criticism. Her one weakness, which nearly cost her tenure in the district, was her lax ways when it came to issues of professionalism. For example, she would forget to attend faculty meetings or would return late from her lunch break. I think the one incident that most disturbed her principal was the day she returned from lunch with wet toenails and flip flop shoes after having had a pedicure. We worked together to reinforce the importance of professionalism on the job. She was able to

adhere to timelines by structuring her planner and actually working with a peer buddy. By the end of the school year, she commented, “I learned that being an effective teacher also includes adhering to professional responsibilities outside of the classroom.”

*Theme 2 – Use of effective instructional strategies and materials*

Two new self-contained teachers embraced a research-based early childhood literacy program new to the district. They each reinforced the interdisciplinary objectives of the program in their own way. The enthusiasm and passion of both teachers were evident in their voice inflection and facial expressions. One teacher expanded the curriculum by developing community connections to enhance learning. For example, she said, “This past week I had visitors in the classroom; an EMT from the neighborhood and the mayor. The children were very attentive and polite. In our storybooks, we read about these community helpers. Then the students were able to see them and learn from them directly. They were very excited.”

Another new teacher embraced the literacy program by enriching her multiply disabled primary aged children with different genre in literature. Together, they recited poems and choral readings that aligned with the stories and characters. The teacher read biographies to the students. She used Big Books in the content areas to enrich topics read in the storybooks. She stated, “I believe that exposure to all kinds of learning will be beneficial to my students. Some of them do not speak. Others are low functioning cognitively. But, I think they all absorb information presented to them. I can see the excitement in their eyes and the alertness on their faces when we are engaged in learning.”

This teacher employed unusual, yet amusing, tactics to improve student behaviors. For example, one student had difficulty staying seated in his desk. The teacher traced his footprints, cut them out of construction paper, and secured them under his desk. When he was moving

about, she reminded him that his feet had to be on top of the feet under his desk. She used a similar tactic for students who could not keep their hands still during lessons. She had learned that students with communication disorders respond better to visual prompts than to auditory prompts.

### Theme 2 – Ability to adapt to change in assignments

Earlier in this document, I referred to an incident that occurred with the speech/language pathologists that forced them to compromise their integrity, ethics, and licensure to accommodate district policy as determined by the superintendent and the director. The teachers did not object to the change in their schedules because of their lack of desire to service children. They had accommodated students' needs for a long time with schedule changes. One speech pathologist commented,

“My schedule has changed twelve times. I keep adding students to my roster. I know they need help, so I keep taking them, but I don't feel as if I am helping most of them. We have cut their therapy time from 30 minutes to 20 minutes or 15 minutes in some cases. This is clearly in violation of what their IEP's say. I am forced to take students who are supposed to have individual therapy in groups because there is only so much time in a day.” Another therapist said, “I don't even mind staying after school to accommodate student needs. I would rather do that than not give students the attention they are due during the day.”

I tried to intervene by gathering all of the speech pathologists to my office one day after school. I prepared homemade snacks and wrapped small little gifts to distribute to them as a means of encouraging community and improving their sense of recognition and respect. They appreciated the effort as indicated by notes and cards, and we arrived at some sound solutions to the problem in the district during that gathering, however, the damage to efficacy and self-esteem

had been done. If the director had met with the therapists to brainstorm solutions, rather than impose solutions on them, I believe the outcome could have been more productive. As it turned out, two veteran teachers left the district; one went to another public school district and one went to a clinical setting. Although formal exit interviews were not conducted with these teachers, one teacher's parting comment was,

“I am tired of working for districts that treat us and our services as if they are unimportant to kids. I've worked for 25 years in the public schools and rarely have I been acknowledged for my efforts. I'm going to the clinical setting. I will be working collegially with the medical profession and other therapists to service very needy children and adults. I am hoping to enjoy this setting better.”

I have found that teachers are more flexible with change when they are included in the process. They feel disregarded and disrespected when changes are made in their instructional day without input from them. A leader cannot possibly envision all of the possibilities with schedule changes without all of the constituents involved. Teachers do problem-solve and reach sound conclusions when their voices are heard.

In a recent district, a special education teacher who was highly qualified in mathematics left the district in October. After advertising for 60 days with no responses from fully certified candidates, I met with the rest of the math teachers to brainstorm possibilities for solving this problem. We compared schedules and found that each of the four classes could be covered by existing teachers with no changes to students' schedules and only minor changes to teachers' schedules. We would need one teacher to teach an overload course; other teachers would lose their duty period to pick up another instructional period. We arranged the schedule so those who were teaching Algebra would add another Algebra section, or those teaching Geometry would

add another Geometry section, to alleviate the need for additional preparation time. The teacher who taught the overload course was compensated. We even brought a representative from the teachers' union into the discussion as a proactive measure. Then I wrote up the proposal in a brief and sent it to the superintendent. He approved the plan. The difference in the two scenarios refers back to my research question about the way in which districts support teachers, the effective association of dialoguing to efficacy, and the importance of recognition to job satisfaction.

### Theme 2 – Use of motivational techniques

A third year resource teacher asked me to observe a math lesson in which she teaches students in multiple grade levels whose skill levels are different. The content she was teaching involved regrouping for subtraction. She related, “I will challenge the students by giving them problems where zero is a placeholder in the ones and tens places. The students will use cubes to physically show the regrouping process. I will provide other hands on activities to address the differentiated needs of the learners.”

The students used wipe off boards to work problems displayed at the board. The use of the cubes enhanced learning by providing kinesthetic and tactile experiences. The teacher reinforced the difference between place value and face value with manipulative materials. The students required different levels of assistance. While the teacher worked with one student, the others worked independently on an extension of the lesson objective. One student was provided with more abstract concepts while another used more concrete measures. The teacher used a system of individual rewards for each of the students. A chart on their desks served as a reminder of the reward and kept the students on task. Students were able to discover their own errors based upon the problem-solving strategies taught by the teacher.

A speech therapist in an inclusive setting presented intermediate students with a crime scene description as an anticipatory set to her lesson. She reinforced various vocabulary words that aligned with the scenario. The students were invited to act as detectives. Together the students and the teacher acted as witnesses in describing the suspect and the crime scene from clues given. The objective of the lesson was to reinforce listening skills and expressive language skills. Additionally, students had to follow directions and interpret concepts based upon spatial relations. The students produced illustrations of their interpretations. The teacher commented, “I was glad to see that everyone could participate. It was interesting for students to see how varied the interpretations could be given the same information.” The students were motivated by the activities and all were enthusiastically involved in depicting detail in illustrations.

### Theme 2 – Structure and preparation

The resource teacher, who used advertising for her lesson, taught a small group around a semi-circular table in the center of the resource room. She commented, “I like to have my materials handy for teaching so I don’t have to go looking for things when the students are here.” Her easel and self-standing divider separated her space from that of her colleague in the same room. Her materials were well laid out for the lesson. In order to have pencils, pens, markers, rulers, tape, stapler, etc. available, she placed them in a three-drawer cart that was on wheels. Wherever she taught, she could bring her materials with her. They were neatly arranged and out of reach of the youngsters until they were needed. She did not have to spend instructional time looking for materials.

One of the speech therapists who worked with preschoolers did not have a specific room assigned to her. Whenever she was in the building, she used any available classroom space for her lessons. She gathered her materials on a cart. She commented, “I don’t mind sharing

instructional space, but the little ones don't like to stray too far from their classrooms or their teachers, so I occupy them by discussing something we are going to do, or dress up in a silly costume or hat to distract them. I treat the walk as if we are going on a trip and have them notice things along the way." Oftentimes, the classroom she had to use was on the other side of the building from the preschool classrooms. As she walked the students down to the room, she used the time for reinforcement of receptive and expressive language skills. By the time the students reached the room, she had already conducted her anticipatory set and the students were ready to engage in the lesson.

### Theme 2 – Classroom management techniques

I related the story earlier about how the primary communication impaired teacher taught her students to self-regulate their behaviors through a point system of monitoring. The teacher of behaviorally challenged students used individual, small group, and class rewards to reinforce appropriate behaviors. A resource teacher used individual cards that she attached to student desks to reinforce on task behavior. Older students in a resource center played a Homeworkopoly game that encouraged compliance with homework assignments.

Another resource teacher encouraged her students to reflect about what they had learned during her lessons, and then for lesson closure asked them to relate that information in a variety of ways. Some expressed their learning verbally. Others drew pictures. Still others wrote in journals. These closure activities provided a reflective ending to a lesson. Instead of students running out the door at the sound of the bell, they were required to think and were then rewarded with stickers on a class chart for their efforts. Additionally, this teacher provided 'wait' time for her students during lessons. If a student was unable to answer a question or needed more time to process the question, she commented, "I would tell them to take your time and think about the

answer. We will come back to you. I found that this prevents undue restlessness, frustration, and encourages students to take risks more.”

*Theme 3 – Use of viable modifications/accommodations to meet student needs*

A primary self-contained language/learning disabled teacher set high expectations for her students by aligning her curriculum with the general education curriculum for her grade, but modifying, adjusting, and adapting where necessary. She asked me to observe the students participating in an experiment depicting the scientific method. The first graders were so excited, as they donned aprons, gloves, and safety goggles in order to participate in their lab stations. The teacher had prepared simplified lab reports and each individual within the lab group was assigned a job. They conducted experiments using drops of food coloring to show movement of water and to create color combinations. The teacher and the paraprofessionals brought bowls of water and other materials to each lab station in the room. The teacher commented, “It took three of us to gather all of the materials for sixteen students. I wasn’t sure it would be worth it all until I saw the expressions on the students’ faces. I even got calls from parents telling me that their children could not stop talking about how they were ‘scientists’. I wanted to show the students that they were able to do the kinds of things that their peers do in general education classrooms.”

A fifth and sixth grade resource teacher in another building transformed her room into a science lab as well. With her small group of students, she pre-taught science experiments that would later be conducted in the general education classroom. Once the students understood the procedures and the vocabulary, she would bring them into the general education classroom to participate with their peers in lab experiments. “No one knows that my students have a sneak preview of the lesson. They are well-prepared when they have to participate with their non-disabled peers. They are familiar with vocabulary and the procedures of the experiment. The



experience provides a real boost to their self-esteem.”

*Theme 3 – Set high, but realistic, expectations*

A special education teacher, who teaches all of her classes in the in-class support model, sets similar expectations for her students as the general education teacher does for the non-disabled students. The teacher said, “I find that if I set high, but not unrealistic, expectations, they will more times than not rise to the occasion. If I set low expectations, they will remain low functioning.”

The teacher who heads the behavioral disabilities class saw how students can rise to meet high expectations when presented in an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect. Her students were accustomed to being rejected by the greater school community and as a result were antagonistic to one another. When the teacher began to respect their space and establish a level of respect and trust in the classroom, the students began to respond in a more favorable way. She stated, “If I did not try to establish a level of respect in my class, the students would have been at each other all year. I tried to show them that they each had strengths, and I kept building on those strengths.”

*Theme 3 – Establish firm lesson objectives*

Resource center teachers at the elementary level support reading, language arts, and mathematics instruction for the most part. About a decade ago, alternate criteria existed for core curriculum content standards for special education students. This policy has since been reversed. Now, special education teachers are required to follow the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards required by general education teachers. The difference in implementation depends upon the extent to which modifications and accommodations must be applied. Resource teachers strive to align their instruction with the standards.

A resource center teacher had the particular challenge of adapting fifth grade curriculum to meet the needs of a Down syndrome youngster whose IQ measured 58. She had to modify the curriculum extensively, creating parallel lessons on similar topics. She also supported his successful inclusion in the mainstreamed class. She commented,

“Fifth grade curriculum is pretty difficult. This child is reading on a pre-primer level. I arrange for him to draw pictures when students are writing, or arrange an alternate activity when students take paper and pencil tests. I can differentiate the instruction easier in the resource center. I adapt reading by tape recording stories or information from the social studies text. In science, when procedures are discussed, I write the steps on cards and give them to him one at a time to read and follow.”

### Theme 3 – Follow appropriate pacing

New teachers may have difficulty with the pacing of lessons. They generally over plan, as some of the teachers previously mentioned. Veteran teachers are usually more specific in their planning. The teacher who differentiated for math instruction and the teacher who used technology to enhance her lessons both had a starting point; a point at which they reviewed prior learning, introduced new learning, reinforced learning through activities, and then reviewed the learning through assessment. One said, “It is important to move through the lesson at a pace that insures learning is taking place, but not so fast that the students can’t keep up.” The other said, “You don’t want to spend too much time on prior learning that you lose your purpose. You also don’t want the students to think that the activity is the learning. Although it should be fun, it shouldn’t overshadow the learning.”

## Conclusion

I believe that the process of clinical supervision, while time-consuming, is an effective way for teachers to self-monitor their practice, while identifying areas of weakness and strength. Engaging in respectful and professional dialogue increases relationships between leaders and teachers, as well as enabling both to be learners. Dialogue captures our full attention, allows us to take risks, explore silences, and challenge our inhibitions (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2002). It is one way to show how a district supports its teachers.

As a result of this process, teachers became more confident, settled, and organized. They learned it was acceptable to take risks, which could result in success or failure, but always provided a learning experience. They began to problem-solve, individually and with each other. They collaboratively integrated more positively with building principals, general education teachers, paraprofessionals, child study team members, and parents.

Special education teachers indicated that they could cope better with the stressors of teaching from social and professional support provided formally and informally. Additionally, by taking the time for friendship and reflection, the teachers transformed into eager learners themselves who were able to experience the wide-awakeness made possible through the establishment of community and reflective thought (Rud & Olendorf, 1992).

As an extension of working with new and non-tenured teachers using Palmer's book (1998), *The Courage to Teach*, I tried to emphasize and explain his statement that 'we teach who we are'. The reason for this focus was twofold. First, I did not want the teachers to think that because we were peer-sharing that I was expecting each teacher to duplicate the same instruction. Instead, I wanted them to realize that they could adapt methods or materials to fit their style of teaching. I was presenting options for consideration. Secondly, I thought the

teachers might appreciate an opportunity to explore the moral and ethical standards that define their place in the profession.

To this end, during a department meeting, I asked the teachers to complete Senge's checklist of personal values (Appendix F1) to help them identify reflect upon values that are important to them personally and professionally. I did not ask for this data to be submitted, but rather asked each teacher to use their responses for self-reflection only, hoping their analysis might lead to "aha's" and possibly change.

The teachers were first asked to select ten values that were important to them. They then were asked to narrow the list to five and then to three. I asked them to consider the meaning of the values they cherished most, such as self-expectation or what they would envision an organization to be like in which those three values were revered. Finally, I asked them to consider whether their personal vision reflected those values and whether or not a school vision should be revised to reflect these values. Senge (1990) suggests that the results of this survey can help constituents align the department's purpose with their own and prepare the individual groundwork for creating a shared vision.

In addition to the values checklist, I also distributed other handouts for reflection (Appendix F2). For example, teachers were asked to consider their general beliefs on life and work, and what they passionately cared about based upon Kouzes and Posner's Leadership Challenge Tribute Sheet (1995). Secondly, teachers were asked to write a simile or metaphor for the statement "Teaching is like..." They were also asked to reflect upon why they wrote what they did. Thirdly, in groups, teachers explored personal values through an activity involving the development of an organizational culture, determining rationale for their selections.

Upon completing the activities listed above, we had a general discussion of results.

Teachers were able to identify the purpose of the activities. Some were comfortable with their findings; others were anxious. As teachers reflected, I asked them to consider whether they were willing to choose a life and organization based upon the values shared. I encouraged the teachers to take time to discuss their results with each other.

To continue with the effectiveness of dialogue and further discuss issues affecting job satisfaction in teachers, I asked for teacher volunteers to participate in a focus group where we could continue to dialogue in a small group about professional commitment and explore the factors that influence job satisfaction in the profession. This activity provided data for the next cycle.

*Cycle 6 Focus Group December 7, 14, and 21 2004*

*“Conversations about the Importance of Recognition to Teachers”*

### Introduction

Professional dialogue occurs when small groups of teachers meet for the guided discussion of their own teaching as it relates to current developments in education. When dialogue occurs in an intimate and relaxing setting, facilitating reflection about practice is accomplished more effectively. Peer supervision and peer coaching are concerned with teacher's skills, but professional dialogue puts cognition at the center. Professional dialogue attempts to raise the level of all three aspects of thinking through guided discussion, which ensures that the process does not degenerate into unproductive verbal posturing. What is important is to determine what the implications of the discussion are with regard to our teaching (Glatthorn, 1987).

### Purpose

Four elementary teachers (DG, PA, MG, MC) volunteered to meet for one hour on three consecutive Wednesdays during their lunchtime to discuss teacher recognition as a key to

professional motivation and efficacy. Three teachers were special educators and one teacher was a speech/language specialist. The discussions were tape-recorded. Field notes were obtained and transcribed after each session to consolidate results. During session 1, the topic for discussion was the definition of teacher recognition. During session 2, parameters for teacher recognition were discussed. During session 3, the group assessed outcomes of the discussions and determined conclusions regarding teacher recognition and its effect on motivation and efficacy (Appendix G).

### Session 1

To begin our discussion, I shared with the group statistics regarding teacher retention. We discussed Hertzberg's Motivation Theory (1966) and how teachers can feel like leaders. I was curious as to how these teachers defined job vs. vocation, professional recognition, and how motivation provides job satisfaction for them.

One teacher defined professional commitment by stating, "It is doing the greatest possible job you can; being involved as much as possible with student activities. It usually involves working on weekends to get ready for lessons. Being dedicated to your building and having responsibilities there and keeping up to date in your field are important. Also, to be committed means never to feel so comfortable that you think you know everything, because you don't."

I asked them to consider what might be their final opus in the profession; what will be the one thing for which we work our whole career and for which we hope to be recognized. One teacher said,

"For me the satisfaction I get out of the kids when they understand what I am teaching is important. I hope that throughout my career, I will continuously learn, enjoy what I am doing,

and have fun. Positive recognition for me is not so much as the principal coming in to tell me that I am doing a good job, as it is when I hear the students say, ‘Oh, we got it now...Now I know how to do this.’ That’s what makes me feel good.”

A third teacher agreed with her colleague. She stated, “I think the same way. I always like to be learning something new and then implementing it into my class. I also like to share knowledge and expertise with my fellow teachers. It makes me feel good about myself that I can help others and that I am always learning.”

We discussed their individual motivation for entering this profession and talked about what it is that makes their work so satisfying. Teachers explained what it is like working in an environment where they were encouraged and respected by peers, parents, and administrators.

One participant said, “It does make me feel good about myself as a professional when I get compliments from workers around me and when they seek me out for my input.” Another added, “I always wanted to be a teacher, so I like when I am recognized for my enthusiasm. I would love to have a mentor so I can learn more about this profession and although I may not be ready now, I would love to be a mentor. I would love to exchange ideas with my peers.”

Affirmation was determined to be a strong motivator for job satisfaction because it gave teachers the confidence to continue. In other words, it helped to promote efficacy so they could move forward in their jobs. I wondered how establishment of learning communities in the buildings and in the departments could be helpful to job satisfaction. One teacher offered,

“I serve on the Intervention and Referral Services Committee as the team leader in my school, so I get a lot of experience guiding other teachers to help students at risk by sharing my expertise with intervention strategies. I also learn from my students in the classroom. When I try interventions that work, I can share them with other teachers. They may ask how I deal with

a particular behavior problem or learning problem. When we work together, we learn from each other.”

Special educators are accustomed to working on teams and collaborating to help students. This model has been established by state policy and is unique to New Jersey. Teachers become active members of the IEP team, working closely with child study team members and related services staff to support students academically, behaviorally, socially, and emotionally. With knowledge, teachers are more comfortable to take educational risks. They discussed how they feel about risk-taking.

One teacher stated, “I have taken risks by my own choice and not by choice. I don’t like being ordered to do something. I feel I have to ask myself if it is the right thing to do. Sometimes you do not always have that option.” A second teacher responded, “I was asked to do something that later on I felt a little guilty about. Sometimes I don’t know if I should go with my gut or follow orders.” A third teacher shared different thoughts on this subject. “I don’t always follow my lesson plans to the letter. Sometimes, I just run out of time or change what I am doing in the middle based upon what the students need that day. I believe that is taking a risk because I don’t always know how the lesson will end up.”

As the teachers spoke, they shared their stories about specific experiences in the profession. I asked them to share what they felt were specific motivators that made them want to remain in the profession. The first teacher commented, “I’d have to say it’s definitely not the money. But I think that the environment that you work in is important. You have to have a staff with whom you get along and have a good rapport. I think focusing on the students and their needs is motivation for staying in the profession.”

A second teacher added, “I, too, just love the kids and working with them. I also love the



learning. I have the same group of children for different subjects throughout the day and have developed such a strong rapport with them. They know you and you know them. They respect you, almost like a family bond. Their behaviors are appropriate because they don't want to disappoint me."

A third teacher responded, "I like working with teachers; having a meeting time when we can get together to discuss children or teacher responsibilities, like scheduling. I think having the special education department meetings monthly are great. I like to hear what is going on with people in all of the schools and learn from the others."

The fourth teacher added that sometimes physical surroundings are important to make you feel comfortable in a setting. She said, "Just having a table in your room that is the appropriate size for your students makes a world of difference. Similarly, it helps to have your own materials so you don't have to share. That's important to me."

Before we concluded our session, we discussed Herzberg's Theory on motivation in the workplace; that is, his equation that Recognition + Motivation + Achievement = Job Satisfaction. I asked the teachers to discuss their thoughts on this theory.

One teacher responded by saying, "When parents compliment your efforts by writing a note or saying they are glad their child has been in your class this year, it makes me feel important. This may seem like a small thing, but it is important. It also makes me happy to be recognized by an administrator with a favorable evaluation. The little things keep me motivated and for me make a big impact on how I feel about my work."

A second teacher acknowledged recognition from staff as an important factor in job satisfaction. She stated, "It makes me feel good to know that somebody thinks I am doing a good job. It is important for me to be recognized. It is disappointing when you feel you are

doing the best you can and no one acknowledges your efforts. Parents are often quick to complain. I would like a little recognition for what I've been doing from parents.”

“Recognition from the principal, parents, and supervisor is important and motivates me,” said one teacher. “Also, when the children say ‘thank you for helping me’, that is really nice.”

It was interesting to hear from the teachers how work can be satisfying for them. They shared the experiences that motivate them to wake up and go to work every day, such as appreciation from administrators, parents, and even students. They seemed to agree with Herzberg's theory that recognition and appreciation do motivate them and provide them with job satisfaction. I thanked them for participating in this dialogue.

## Session 2

The same group reconvened the following week. To begin session 2, we briefly reviewed what was discussed the week before. I gave the teachers an opportunity to clarify, redefine, or add to the previous discussion. The teachers began the dialogue by describing what it means to be recognized as professionals.

The first respondent said, “I think the most important way to be recognized is to be acknowledged by other professionals in the field; especially people who know what it takes to do what you do and appreciate you for it.” A second teacher stated, “I've been recognized before by people who are not teachers. They say, ‘You must be such a wonderful giving person to be a teacher’ and they think very highly of you that you can work with children. I think that is a nice form of recognition.”

A third teacher appreciated recognition from teachers, parents in the community, but more from her supervisors who evaluate her competence. She shared, “I appreciate recognition from my principal and supervisor. To me, when I have a good observation, then I feel like I am

doing a good job. Parent recognition also helps me to know that I am succeeding at my profession.”

The fourth teacher concurred. “I agree. I was really surprised that actually our school doesn’t really give out the typical teacher of the year award. Even so; we can still recognize each other by sharing our appreciation with peers. It makes me feel special when colleagues ask me to do a workshop on something I know how to do.”

During the dialogue, teachers alluded to the fact that retention in the profession is determined by motivation and recognition. I asked them to specifically describe the parameters for recognition, as they interpret it. I asked them to describe the kind of atmosphere that should exist that would connect to job satisfaction for each of them.

“I think it’s pleasant when you have a nice group of peers to work with and when you have some parental support, as well as support from your supervisors and principals,” commented one teacher. “That always helps because without that support there is nobody to reach out to if you are having problems.”

A second teacher added, “I appreciate recognition when it comes from peers, supervisors, and administration, both formally and informally. Written assessments that are positive are always nice to have, but it is also nice when someone just casually mentions, ‘that was really a nice presentation’ or ‘you did a really great job in that meeting’ or ‘I saw what you did’. That kind of casual pat on the back can make me feel just as good as a long, formal written evaluation.”

A third teacher commented, “I think that one of the parameters that is for certain is that lines of communication remain open; I mean, for example, principals that leave their office everyday to be visible in the classrooms. Then there is not any real barrier for communication.

We can feel comfortable to chat about a problem or issue when we see the administrator informally.”

A fourth teacher agreed. “The principal who leaves the door open and you are able to go in and out instead of having to make an appointment provides the most comfortable situation. When you need something right away, this is helpful.”

The teachers continued to express what they would need in order to feel a sense of achievement in the workplace. One teacher shared, “Salary does make a difference. In New Jersey, teachers are paid more than most states. Salary is a way of recognizing the importance of what we do.” A second teacher added, “Opportunities to advance in a district or become certified in a variety of areas is a way of experiencing achievement in our field.”

We shifted the conversation to a discussion about leadership. I asked them to recall times when they assumed the role of leader and to dialogue about how teachers can feel like leaders. The teachers recalled when they had participated on district committees or arranged fundraising events for the students.

“I enjoyed the project I worked on during special education week,” commented one teacher. “We collected money and clothing for a children’s charity. The students felt important and it was a way to highlight special education awareness without singling out students with disabilities themselves.”

A second teacher restated her position of leadership on the I&RS committee in the building. “When you are a leader, people look to you as someone who is important or has something to say. You are recognized for a certain expertise and it boosts your confidence.”

I presented the teachers in this focus group with Kouzes and Posner’s list of Five Best Practices of Exemplary Leadership (2002): 1) Model the way; 2) Inspire a shared vision;

3) Challenge the process; 4) Enable others to act; and 5) Encourage the heart. I was interested to hear how they would interpret the tenets of this model.

One teacher stated, “When you are a teacher, you are used to modeling the way for kids. You know that you are helping, encouraging, and supporting your students. But it is up to the students to actually learn, so it is important to delegate the leadership.”

Another teacher shared, “I have modeled strategies and materials for other teachers. The principal asked me to prepare a power point presentation to share at a faculty meeting.”

The teachers further identified their strengths and weaknesses as leaders and learners, discussing the factors that help to improve their capacity as leaders and learners. One teacher said, “Frequent feedback is important so we know how we are doing. We want to hear the good and the bad. I know I have a lot to learn. But, sometimes principals think they know what is going on in your room and they really do not know. If they don’t come into our classrooms often, they can’t know what is taking place from an observation once or twice a year.”

Another teacher added, “I think it would help me a lot if I could observe other teachers in the district who do the same job as me. In the in-class support model, I learn a lot from my co-teacher.”

From this session, I concluded that recognition is importance to efficacy and purposing for these teachers. In addition, I learned that teachers perform better when they feel respected by peers, parents, and administrators, when they have voice, and when they experience new learning.

### Session 3

For session 3, the group reconvened in my office at the administration building one week later. I reviewed what we had discussed so far: 1) how teachers feel a sense of achievement in

their work; 2) how teachers feel like leaders and learners; 3) importance of frequent feedback as a way to assess self-growth; 4) importance of open communication with supervisors; 5) opportunities for achievement; and 6) implementation of the five exemplary practices.

During this last session, I asked the teachers to share any other thoughts they had on recognition, leadership, or the leader/learner paradox. One teacher was emphatic about the importance of continuous learning. She said,

“I think you are always learning, no matter what. Whether you have a mentor or try new ideas on your own, you can always learn. Even if you have been doing something the same way for years, you can always try things a different way. If it works, it works. If it is better, you keep it. And if it doesn't, you change it.”

Another added, “We have to try things all the time. What I find is that not every strategy or technique works with every child, so you have to play around with the ideas. By problem-solving, you are acting as a leader every day. At the same time you are a learner, because you are discovering what works.”

A third teacher feels empowered when her principal encourages her to try new things. She commented, “It is important as a leader in your classroom to try new things. If it doesn't go right the first time, it may the second time. Sometimes we need someone to guide us in a certain direction. Other times, we can take the initiative by ourselves.”

The teachers further shared their opinions on respect for longevity in the profession. One stated, “I like to try new things. Sometimes teachers who have been there longer feel like they know better than you and kind of look down on you for trying something, as if to say, ‘She doesn't know any better’. I don't want to step on people's toes, but new teachers bring new ideas. Just because something didn't work in the past, it may work in the future.”

Another teacher added to this statement by saying, “We all have different teaching styles and we can learn from one another.”

### Conclusion

The teachers who participated in the focus group sessions were given an opportunity to express their opinions and feelings regarding motivating factors present in their practice. For these teachers, respect, motivation, recognition, and opportunity for learning were strong indicators of job satisfaction. They concluded that motivation is affected by recognition for a job well done. Recognition is the steam in the engine that makes teachers want to take risks and try new things. In special education, teachers use a variety of methods and materials because student needs are so diverse. When they were motivated through respect and recognition, they felt greater confidence in their work and were more apt to look for new ways to help students reach their potential.

Since we concluded our sessions just before Christmas break, I sent each teacher off with a tiny Christmas stocking containing candy and a lottery ticket to show my appreciation for their time and efforts, as I recognize that teachers often use their lunch time hour to collaborate with peers, correct papers, meet with students and parents, or plan for their lessons.

I received lovely thank you cards from them. One teacher stated, “Thank you so much for the wonderful lunches, Christmas stocking, and for allowing me to be part of your discussion group. It was interesting to discuss motivation, leadership, and recognition with you and my colleagues.”

*Cycle 7 Leadership Practices Inventory Self-Assessment June 10, 2005*  
*“How I Measure Up As a Leader”*

Purpose

The purpose of conducting the LPI self-assessment (Appendix H1, H2) provided an opportunity for me to acquire quantitative information on my leadership based upon how frequently I believed that I engaged in the behaviors described. The rating scale ranged as follows: 1) almost never, 2) rarely, 3) seldom, 4) once in a while, 5) occasionally, 6) sometimes, 7) fairly often, 8) usually, 9) very frequently, and 10) almost always. From my responses, I was able to determine strengths in the following areas:

- Setting personal examples
- Seeking out challenging opportunities to test my own skills and abilities
- Developing cooperative relationships among constituents
- Praising/recognizing people for a job well done
- Challenging teachers to try out new and innovative ways to do their work
- Making it a point to let people know about my confidence in their abilities
- Follow through on promises and commitments
- Share an exciting dream for the department
- Search for innovative ways to improve what we do
- Treat others with dignity and respect
- Make sure that all constituents are rewarded for their contributions
- Ask for feedback on my performance
- Brainstorm new ideas
- Support decisions made by staff
- Recognize those who are committed to the shared values



- Share the goal of student progress
- Set achievable goals with measurable milestones in reasonable timelines
- Give teachers freedom of choice in how to do their work
- Celebrate accomplishments
- Speak with conviction about the purpose of our work
- Encourage risk-taking
- Ensure that teachers grow in their efficacy through appreciation and support

Areas that I must focus on to improve and make stronger in my leadership include:

- Describe a compelling image of what our future could be like
- Actively listen to diverse points of view
- Show teachers how their long term interests can be realized in a common vision
- Clarity about the philosophy of my leadership

### Conclusion

I recognize that I can be a better listener of teachers. In time, direction for change should come from the teachers in an educational organization. I know that the language I use is not always clear and universally understood. I do believe that the values I hold dear are revealed in my leadership. I believe I act in the capacity of a cheerleader for my staff, encouraging their efforts and initiatives, and celebrating their successes and achievements. I believe I have helped teachers to make changes in the way in which they carry out their jobs so that commitment and passion is obvious to parents, peers, and students.

Cycle 8 County Survey 2005

*“How the Needs of This District Compare to Other Districts in the County”*

Introduction

More and more school districts across the country are trying to fill teacher vacancies. This turnover is costly in terms of fiscal and human resources, and likely serves as an obstacle to long-term school improvement strategies and the development of a sense of community within the schools.

Purpose

A survey (Appendix I-1) was conducted to determine if the retention of staff and difficulty with recruitment was unique to the district of my study or if the same needs were cited in the other nineteen districts in the county. Eighteen responses were received from Directors of Special Services in this northern New Jersey county comprised of one large urban and eighteen semi-urban or suburban towns of varying sizes. Statistics were obtained regarding retention and turn-over of speech and special education staff during the 2003-04 school year and the 2004-05 school year. Directors commented on factors that they thought might have contributed to the loss of staff.

Conclusion

The results were not statistically significant. Most districts found it difficult to replace special education and speech staff. Each of the districts replaced teachers yearly in each of these disciplines relative to their district size. The district of my study was not more or less prone to turnover of special education staff than the other districts in the county. I could therefore conclude that it was an appropriate district to gain information regarding retention and recruitment because it was representative of the area.

*Follow-Up Teacher Comments and Survey 2006-2007*  
*“Analysis of Similar Leadership in Subsequent Districts”*

At the conclusion of my formal data collection in June of 2005, I was hired in two positions elsewhere; the first as a one year appointment in higher education at a central New Jersey state university, and the second as an Assistant Director of Pupil Services in a large central New Jersey public school district.

At the university, I had the opportunity to enlist the opinions and stories of both undergraduate, pre-service special education teachers and graduate students who were certified teachers employed in various New Jersey school districts. With the pre-service teachers, I shared the importance of professionalism in the field. Together, we explored goals, aspirations, and expectations for their anticipated careers in education. With graduate students, I used Parker Palmer’s book (1998), *The Courage to Teach*, to inspire discussions. These teachers used the currere process to determine the basis of their leadership in the profession, and wrote a code of ethics to define their values and philosophy on inclusive education.

One teacher commented, “In my district, teachers hear often and plenty when something is going wrong. Our principal highlights a teacher of the month with a plaque and breakfast, which is an appreciated gesture; however, reprimand for doing something wrong seems to resonate more. I would rather be recognized for something specific that I did, like the time I had a great lesson and the children really understood the concepts. One time during a conference following a formal observation my principal told me that I had handled a parent well, and she had called to express her commendation. That was huge to me, but on a daily basis, we are rarely recognized. This is hard because the children we teach in this urban district are challenging and it would be nice to know that someone appreciated your efforts. My job is very emotional sometimes, and sometimes we just need some support; someone to say we’re on the

right track. Just as children need a pat on the back, so do teachers.”

Another teacher shared her impressions regarding recognition in her Charter School district. “The principal recognizes a staff member of the month, too, accompanying the award with a gift card to Dunkin Donuts. This makes us feel appreciated, but similarly, so do poems or hugs from my students. When the recognition is unexpected, it has a greater impact. Verbal commendation is appreciated; we don’t expect tangible rewards. I share positive comments with my students and like to hear them myself.”

In the district of my study, my job responsibilities involved supervising elementary special education teachers and speech pathologists. However, in a subsequent district, I was hired to supervise secondary special education teachers, paraprofessionals, and child study team members. In this setting, I also reinforced the tenets of my espoused leadership during the 2006-07 school year. After working through many department transitions with the staff and effecting positive results, I asked the teachers to respond to a survey on the importance of teacher recognition to job satisfaction (Appendix I-2). The survey was optional and although I only received 5 responses out of 22, the results were interesting. Using Herzberg’s (1966) list of determiners of job satisfaction, teachers rated each in the following ways.

	Very Important	Somewhat Important
• Recognition	3	2
• Achievement	2	3
• The work itself	4	1
• Responsibility/Purpose	2	3
• Opportunity for Advancement	1	4
• Support/Professional Development	2	3
• Salary	2	3
• Interpersonal Relationships	1	4
• Working conditions	2	3
• Technical competency	0	5
• School policy	3	2

All respondents found these determiners to be at least somewhat important toward the achievement of job satisfaction. In terms of the teachers' personal and professional efficacy, teachers were asked if they would select this profession again and why. The responses were as follows:

- "I tried another profession and didn't like it. I missed interaction with the children."
- "I like the vacation breaks, subject matter, and the interaction with my students."
- "It is extremely gratifying when a student grasps a concept and can use it successfully."
- "The school schedule suits my family needs."
- "I'm good at what I do."
- "Educating our youth is the most important job one can do."
- "I love helping students to learn."

Respondents cited that the satisfaction they received when engaging with students was the most rewarding experience. Four of the respondents found no reason to leave the profession, although one teacher mentioned that if the salary were not commensurate with the importance of the work, that factor might be cause for consideration.

When asked to identify factors that could make the work more satisfying, inspiring, and motivating, teachers cited less paperwork/busywork, more updated classroom technology, unilateral classroom management techniques, more realistic expectations from the community at large, respect, and recognition from the Board and the community.

Teachers were asked to consider factors that might make colleagues leave the district or the teaching profession altogether. Teachers cited politics, fit, workload, student behavior, negative relationships with administrators/peers, salary, and unrealistic expectations as factors.

Special education teachers in this district defined recognition in the following ways.

- "I appreciate acknowledgment from supervisors, peers, administration for an effective lesson or idea."
- "Email/notes from supervisors for a job well done have a positive effect."
- "Refreshments at staff meetings make us feel special."
- "Being appreciated makes us feel important to the department."

Finally, teachers on this survey were asked to describe the type of support they thought was important to receive from an immediate supervisor. Most responded that realistic expectations for their job, a sense of appreciation for a job well done, immediate help when a challenging situation presents itself, constructive suggestions with lessons, availability and visibility to discuss any and all issues concerning students, parents, co-teachers, and administrators were important factors.

In analyzing the data in this cycle, I can conclude that teachers in different districts and at different grade levels seem to view job satisfaction in terms of similar factors. My many cards, letters, emails, and birthday acknowledgements were well-received and noted. Teachers, paraprofessionals, and child study team members commented verbally or via email the appreciation they felt by being remembered and recognized for their achievements. In this district, I observed growth in new teachers during my tenure, and my leadership served as a buffer for the child study team at the high school. At the middle schools, I worked diligently with special education teachers who had difficulty developing mutual respect with their co-teaching partners in in-class support situations. In addition, I believe I was able to encourage a renewed spirit and interest in teaching for a veteran middle school teacher. This teacher was visibly disregarded by the building administrators because of her lack of enthusiasm. I decided to try to help retrieve her passion for the profession by recognizing her strengths and encouraging her efforts. As a result, we developed a positive relationship and her students were rewarded with a teacher who made the effort to attend to their needs. I exchanged many emails with this teacher. In April 2007, I contacted her after we had met for a pre-observation conference. I said, "I enjoyed our chat this morning. It was really great to learn more about you and to hear your thoughts on instruction and student progress. I look forward to visiting your

class next Thursday at 11. Have a good day!” The lesson I subsequently observed was very effective. The students were engaged in a motivating activity that integrated a variety of disciplines. In November of that year, I received an email from the same teacher. She wrote, “You are a wonderful and supportive supervisor. I love the way you are always visible in our building. Thanks for all of your input and for the times you joined my classes.”

One of the high school social workers reinforced my efficacy with his acknowledgement and affirmation of my efforts. He commented,

“I see your unrelenting determination to bypass the bureaucracy and do what’s best for kids. You are a strong proponent of good teaching and best practices for kids, but what happens when what we want to do for kids because we believe in our heart of hearts that it is best, does not occur? How do we deal with constraints of budget, space, and staff or teachers who do not want to change their thinking about how to effectively teach?” The two of us had a long conversation that day and many subsequent conversations regarding the issues he raised. He is one of the most effective counselors and social workers I have encountered in this business. He is nurturing and supportive when he has to be, yet firm and direct when the situation warrants this response. He established mutual respect with students, who would seek him out for his guidance. His effect with high school students was amazing, yet a new transactional administrator, high in the district pecking order, moved him to an elementary school at the start of the new school year, despite her knowledge of his effectiveness with a developmentally difficult population. His comments above reflect his frustration. He resigned mid-year to take a job in a major university counseling college students. I am glad for him that a leader elsewhere was able to recognize his strengths and encourage him to move to a job that would bring him satisfaction.

The way of heaven is to benefit others.  
Lao Tzu

## CHAPTER VI

### Theories - in – Use

#### *Introduction*

Rudi Giuliani spoke with conviction during the 9-11 crises in New York City. Great leaders move us deeply and inspire us by touching our feelings. Self-confidence, intuitiveness, optimism, and teamwork combine as traits that mark good leaders. Leaders handle upsets and listen empathetically. They are adept at the ability to interact with people and excel in human resource endeavors. Strong leaders do not criticize, but empower by creating a positive sense of spirit, morality, and success. They are excellent listeners and motivators who have a clear idea of what is needed for organizational improvement. Leaders with motivating power bring out the best in their constituents. Leaders with empathy have the capacity to listen, relate, and communicate feelings. Leaders with integrity, support, tolerance, nonviolence, and humility encourage laughter and camaraderie in a trusting community (Goleman, 2002).

#### *Reflections on my Leadership*

My role as a leader of special education staff is not to set the stage, but to embrace the conflict and growth, and to guide teachers in self-efficacy along their road to self-actualization. I gained insight to this process as I let teacher stories unfold. I have discovered new “C’s” along my road; that is, collaboration, when I encourage teamwork, community, when I attend to group processes and concerns, and challenge, when I embrace the hard questions and feelings of discontent. I believe I also responded, reacted, recognized, respected, and reveled in teacher choices and progress.

From district to district, I learned that recognition, respect, and support can be interpreted



in a variety of ways depending upon the needs of the teachers and the overall morale of the department. In districts where transactional leadership was practiced, teachers were left with a sense of distrust. It would take administrators with transformational leadership philosophy much effort and time to regain trust and transform that trust into reciprocal respect.

Recognition and respect are important to efficacy and purposing for teachers. Teachers perform better when they feel respected by peers, parents, and administrators, when they have voice, and when they experience new learning. Leaders have to know that teachers feel empowered when they are encouraged to try new things. This energy then motivates them to strive toward success in their practice.

I have learned from my experiences in leadership roles that for me, loyalty is not an entitlement, but must be earned through consistent and honest actions and words. Teachers will not be fooled by extrinsic rewards given in an atmosphere of distrust. Trust must be gained first through ethical means of support, recognition, and respect and over time these efforts can lead to professional community with strong visions, commitments, and high levels of worker morale.

I was able to provide individual teacher support with the following tasks:

- Timing and synchronization of planning
- Assistance with scheduling
- Reassurance of efforts
- Building leadership support
- Networking of teachers between and among buildings
- Assistance with room usage
- Physical organization of files and materials
- Modeling of lessons

- Providing professional development opportunities in and out of the district
- Ordering of appropriate materials to meet student needs
- Promoting risk-taking in the use of methodology and materials
- Reviewing of IEP/s and the writing of IEP goals and objectives
- Providing visibility and availability for individual and small group meetings
- Addressing and problem-solving specific areas of weakness
- Expanding the versatility and scope of each/encouraging self-challenge

My role as supervisor is not just to observe what is right and what is wrong. I have to determine how I can best serve. It is important for me as a leader to create situations for staff to know themselves; to help them to transform themselves. To serve means to be actively involved from the inside out. I can't lead if I don't know what is going on with my constituents on the inside.

In other instances, I have been recognized by constituents for essentially doing my job, but it is the personal and individual contact that seems to reinforce respect, raise efficacy levels, and lead to truths within the vision of the department. Success in leadership depends on one's capacity to build and sustain collaborative human relationships (Kouzes & Posner, 2003). It is not in the supervising that change occurs, but rather in the realization that we are all in this together and if we want to achieve positive outcomes for students, then we had better be open to change, embrace it, and work hard to overcome the obstacles as a team. In this regard, we build team morale by recognizing the contributions of each member to the team effort. The study of leaderships is the study of how leaders guide constituents through adversity, uncertainty, hardship, disruption, transformation, transition, recover, and new beginnings (Kouzes & Posner, 2003). The leader, then does not just serve, but is served.

The discovery for me lies in the paradoxes of leading and learning, recognizing and being recognized, respecting and being respected. As a team, we share our beliefs (how the world is) and our values (how the world should be) in order to develop our culture (how we would conduct ourselves given this set of beliefs and values. In all groups, leaders emerge. Empowerment means giving them the space to emerge. Essentially, the leader's task is consciousness-raising (Ciulla, 2003).

Daniel Goleman (2002) identified skills that rate leadership abilities. According to his chart of skills, I have redefined myself in the following way: 1) Strengths-awareness, sets measurable goals, builds relationships, provides inspiration, helps to identify and develop the abilities of others in the organization; 2) Underused leadership abilities-knowing my strengths and weaknesses, believing the future will be better than the past, sensitivity toward others, dealing easily with change; 3) Unused leadership abilities-dealing calmly with stress, resolving conflicts efficiently and effectively, understanding political bases, and building power relationships. Goleman (2002) asks that as leaders we go beyond identifying our own abilities by asking co-workers or partners for their opinions on our leadership skills. Leaders are unique; they can show their talent in different ways. Input from colleagues whom you trust can give insight into effectiveness of leadership skills.

According to my data collection, I believe I have modeled the way in my department of special services by sharing my knowledge and observation as well as creating opportunities for teachers to model for each other and for themselves. I have inspired a shared vision of building a team of collaborative, networking professionals who can feel positive about their work and the work of their colleagues. Together, we have challenged the process of status quo, but influencing building leaders and the chief school administrator to recognize the contributions of

the special services staff to student achievement, as well as to support their efforts in the integration of students.

Through the clinical supervision process, I have enabled the teachers to take risks and to establish classroom communities where creative thought and high expectations provide students with the courage and recognition to perform. Along the way, I encouraged the hearts of constituents with whom I have had contact, whether they were certified teachers, paraprofessionals or secretaries. Efforts at recognition touched their hearts and contributed to job satisfaction and efficacy (Kouzes & Posner, 2003).

I have learned that during the hard times, such as times of ridicule or lack of support from fellow administrators, challenges with specific students or parents, influence of the political arena of schooling, or the attempt to fulfill legal mandates of policy, it is important for leaders to maintain their integrity and ethical beliefs. I embraced the challenge of assigning teacher schedules, implementing legislation, and providing necessary student services with the speech pathologists in my district. As a team, we worked through the logistics of the schedules, and together determined how we would best meet the needs of students. I believe our outcomes were satisfactory to the team. The teachers learned about working within physical constraints of districts, but more importantly renewed and redefined their values and ethical codes, both personally and professionally. As a group, we maintained integrity, recognizing that without a sense of right and wrong, we were not being true to ourselves as certified professionals and servant leaders. If we were to dismiss the importance of integrity, then we would in fact be dismissing the students we vowed to teach and the passion we felt regarding our vocation. Compromising was difficult for all of us as we worked through this challenge. Some teachers chose to stay and other chose to leave, but the defining lesson was in realizing our moral

culpability in this profession.

Jennings and Stahl-Wert (2003) propose that the emphasis on serving leadership is what the leader actually does to support teams and individuals. They further state that it is the serving leader who makes the critical difference. I did not find this to be true. I believe the teachers and I made a critical difference together. We all grew in this process. Our intentions were the key components to this growth process. As indicated in the teacher stories during the exit interviews, without support and recognition, not only was morale stagnant, but teachers felt hopeless and lost. Likewise, as a supervisor, my morale and efficacy could not have developed without cooperative, collaborative, and honest efforts of the teachers.

William James Rawls (1971) defines efficacy as a mathematical equation.

$$\text{Efficacy} = \frac{\text{Success}}{\text{Aspirations}}$$

In other words, aspirations tempered with success, or success achieved through the many efforts of constituents will produce a culture that is satisfying. Herzberg (1966) equates achievement or efficacy with recognition. Either way, a motivator must be present to support the ideas, actions, and trials that result from efforts by the constituents. If we engage the spirit of the people, they will create change. It is this spirit that sustains meaning and hope (Boleman & Deal, 2001). Additionally, if we are going to become part of a winning team, we must be willing to risk some losses. Losing effective teachers is a great loss to the mission of a department and the success of the students. Although we cannot eliminate all of these losses, still we must adopt ways to minimize them as much as possible. Lack of self-confidence or feelings of uncertainty may be easier to encourage than loss of integrity. Recognition and valuing the accomplishments of employees helps to improve their sense of efficacy, thus improving the quality of the instruction that they provide and their contribution to the department in general.

Sergiovanni (1992) states that in order to value teachers and unlock their potential for creativity and involvement, we must promote peer recognition of quality instruction, increase teacher awareness and pride, design ways to recognize staff, and create a climate where rewards help teachers to feel a sense of accomplishment. I believe I have achieved these goals. I am affirmed in my intentions as a result of the responses of teachers to my surveys. I believe I have dialogued with teachers to see how they feel, think, or what they personally and professionally desire. I have promoted opportunities for continuous learning, shared understandings, built knowledge, welcomed all perspectives, generated and shared new information, included constituents in the process, created department capabilities, and slowly began to change the current realities of a status quo mentality to one that was more vibrant and hopeful.

I have encouraged staff to reflect on these practices and use new knowledge by taking instructional risks. I have provided relevant professional development, time for staff to share best practices, and prioritized a focus for the future direction of the department. I have commended teachers for their contributions verbally, in writing, through extrinsic rewards, and by acknowledgement of their efforts. I have integrated individuals into the team and put aside hierarchical methods of control in order to establish a community where constituents would cooperate and reach common goals, as Argyris (1993) suggests. I have created interrelationships and developed patterns of change in order to give the organization unique character and shape, as Senge (1990) suggests. The momentum from the collaborative team provides movement along the path of actualization for leaders and learners.

For those constituents who chose not to participate with the rest of us, I gave them space to consider their own aspirations. They joined the team of leaders and learners when they were ready; when they had resolved issues of defiance, hurt, lack of confidence, or disillusionment. I

offered help if they asked and guided them with steps until their comfort and trust levels were raised. Often it was not my leadership, but other circumstances that encouraged their efforts.

Individuals are affirmed and reaffirmed in diverse ways. They also achieve a sense of efficacy at different times. I believe people respond to the level of confidence one shows in them. When I have worked with superiors who were self-centered and self-important and did not acknowledge my talents and abilities, my professional efficacy remained low. When I was recognized for efforts, knowledge, and achievements and treated with professional respect, my efficacy levels soared.

### *Conclusions about My Journey*

I am always grateful for the opportunity to continuously learn in this profession. During my 35 years in this profession, I have worked as a special educator and educational administrator in several districts. Some educators remain in one district for their entire careers. While that loyalty is admirable, for me, I have chosen to seek challenges in many different districts. I have sometimes changed positions for personal reasons and sometimes for professional reasons. For example, my first ten years of teaching I spent in one school district, but during that time, I taught elementary grades, special education, and developed and taught a gifted and talented program for the school. Having completed graduate studies, I sought a position as a child study team member. Then my personal life took precedence over my professional career. With the adoption of our children and birth of our son, I remained home for eight years to raise them. During that time, I was able to work part time as a learning consultant in many different districts, public, private, and parochial; urban, suburban, and rural. I found that professionally I very much liked working in different districts because I was able to gain varied perspectives about leadership, policy, and teacher commitment.

When I returned to public education full time as an educational administrator in special services, I worked for eight years in the town where I lived. Personally, it was convenient and necessary to be located in close proximity to my children who were in elementary and middle schools at the time. I learned much from my first mentor in that preK-8 district. When she left the district, I left to pursue preK-12 experience. My professional experiences until that time had been at the elementary levels. I felt that gaining high school experience would be important to my career in special services.

From time to time, it was necessary for me to have a more flexible work schedule in order to meet the needs of my family. But as a full time supervisor, assistant director, and director, I faced professional challenges that molded my career. I was hired by districts for my expertise in specific areas. For example, in one district I was hired to conduct a reform project. In a short period of time I was able to gather the constituents, develop a vision for reform, recommend for hire twenty-six child study team members, and recalibrate the special education policy to comply with the law. In another district I was hired to increase inclusionary practices, develop an in-district program for students exiting the preschool handicapped classes, and recommend a software program for writing IEP's. In a third district, my challenge was to prepare the return to district of students who had been placed out in private special education schools. I also had the opportunity as an administrator to move from a central office position to that of a building leader, giving me yet another perspective of leadership. My link has always been to the profession, not to a particular district or school.

I am grateful for each of these positions because on my journey I have learned much about my own personal and professional efficacy, which I have discovered, lies somewhere in a balance among sequential, precise, technical, and confluent learning styles (Kouzes and Posner,



2002). The constituents with whom I work may score much differently on the same assessment. Although our styles of learning may be diverse, however, I believe there are commonalities that connect us and spur our levels of efficacy. I have tried to recognize and promote these.

- Understanding of teachers' hopes, fears, aspirations
- Show of concern for their growth and development
- Offer constructive feedback
- Recognize their efforts
- Encourage their accomplishments
- Provide support, mentoring, coaching when needed
- Reinforce the importance of the department's mission.

Workers need a purpose and to feel valued. They must believe they are doing something important for the larger mission. Fred Smith, chairman, president, and CEO of FedEx, claims that he tells his drivers over and over again, "You are involved in the most important commerce in the history of the world. You are not delivering sand and gravel; you are delivering someone's pacemaker, someone's chemotherapy treatment, the part that may keep the F-18 in flight, or the legal brief that may decide the case." Whatever the task, workers need to think that they are doing something important and that they are part of a larger mission.

The leader's goal in empowerment is to encourage constituents to be free to do what makes sense (Sergiovanni, 1992). It is the leader who must try to change the notion of what is wrong, to the realization of what is right, regardless of obstacles. It is important to an organization's success to have the right people on the bus (Collins, 2001).

As educational leaders, we aspire to make a difference in the lives of children. It is in demonstrating the tenets of our leadership that our dream is fulfilled. I admire Madeline Cartwright, the principal who with scrub brush and pail in hand, set off to remove graffiti and dirt from her school building, thereby instilling a sense of pride for the surroundings. I admire the chief school administrator who enlisted the help of local businesses in order to improve the

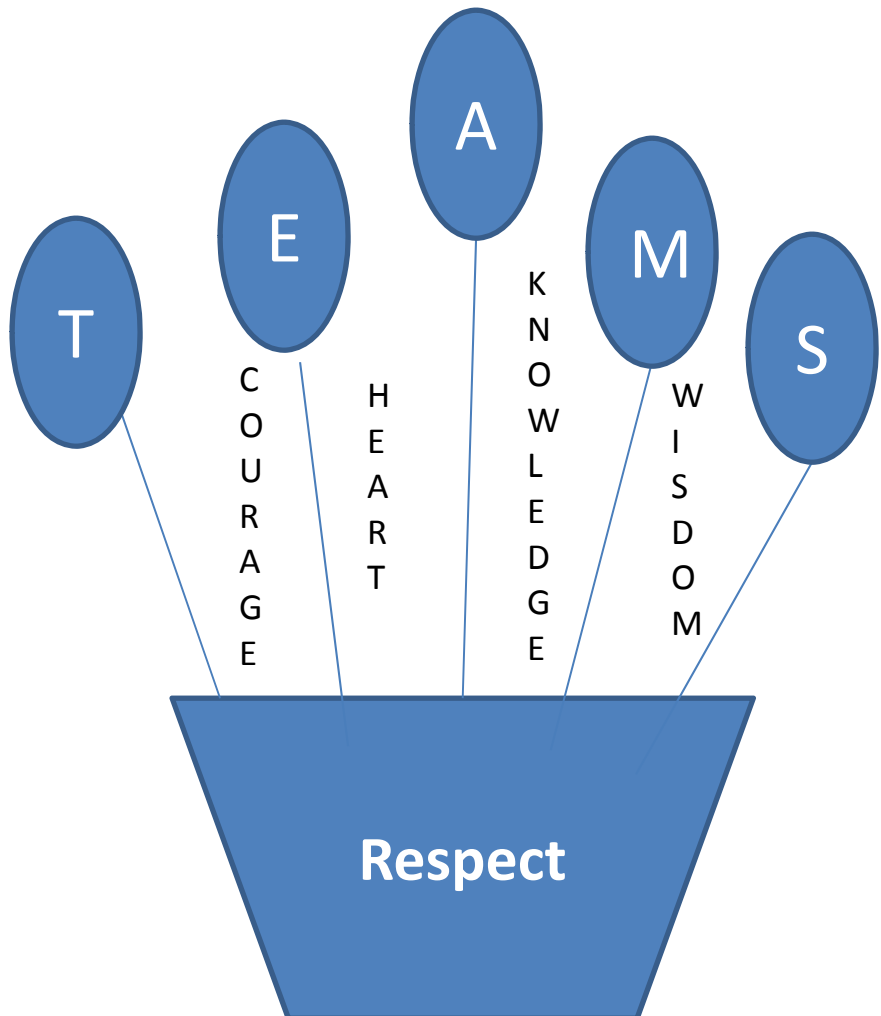
quality of his schools. I believe that the servant helps constituents to recognize their personal gifts and passions, and then mobilizes them in the community. The leader sets the pace in the hope that the constituents will be willing to run toward it (Jennings & Stahl-Wert, 2003).

When I entered into this change project, I had already experienced some of the impact of recognition on job satisfaction and morale, but did not have the data to support my hypothesis. I was curious to see the extent to which Herzberg's Theory of Motivation (1966) would influence professionals in the field of education. My espoused leadership reflects my need for recognition and respect as necessary to the development of my own personal and professional efficacy. Perhaps my reaction either to the lack or the support of recognition and respect experienced in my own career led me along this path of exploration.

My faith in people and God reinforce my espoused leadership style based upon serving others through a TEAMS process. I depend upon the qualities of my metaphor, that is, wisdom, knowledge, courage, and heart. The roots of my leadership beliefs are grounded in, and held together by respect. I see myself as a leader of TEAMS.

# Conclusion

The roots of my leadership beliefs are grounded in and held together by  
The tenets of these beliefs are held strong by the supports of wisdom,  
courage, and heart. I see myself as a leader of TEAMS.



I have faith in the future because I know it is not a predetermined path that we are obligated to walk down. We can change direction from here.

Margaret Wheatley, *Turning to One Another*, 2002

## CHAPTER VII

### Future Study

#### Power

The themes of power and politics have always had a negative connotation for me in my work, likely because in my experience, educators who have been in positions of power, have been abusive of that power. Given choices to use the position for good, they have chosen to be selfish and used the power inappropriately. For example, purposefully setting constituents up for failure is contrary to effective leadership. In educational institutions, I have seen good works thwarted by those in power and how the misuse of hierarchy stifles leadership, ultimately hurting programs for students.

Power seems to get in the way, rather than help. To me, it is contrary to respect. Forces of power create fear. Fear is toxic, while respect is nurturing. Fear destroys self-confidence, while respect builds it. Fear is imposed, while respect is earned. Power results in manipulation, rather than collaboration. It stands in the way of constructive change in an atmosphere of respect. It seems in times of confluence, upper managers use the “power card” to settle issues, rather than allowing the coherence to take place.

As a result of these strong feelings and my experiences, I must further explore how power can be a critical element in effective leadership, how it can positively affect efficacy and capacity, how I can open spaces for others to be powerful, and how I can accept that I may need power in order to care. I also see how empowerment can be the process of sharing power, as stated by Davis and Wilson (2000).

### Renewal Center

I believe that a renewal experience for teachers is critical for them to become knowledgeable about their craft, understand cultural and socio-economic diversity, and engage in social capital and networking as a means of support. Because New Jersey is a cacophony of mixes, our teachers come from very diverse learning and social environments. We must think of ways to entice bright, creative thinkers in the profession to sustain at a high level of enthusiasm.

To this end, I hope to actively engage in a plan for teacher renewal in New Jersey, especially in light of the pressures of high stakes testing, power learning, and teacher accountability. The development of a teacher renewal center will be a place where teachers can renew their minds, bodies, and spirits in an atmosphere of respect, recognition, and appreciation so they can return to the difficult task of educating our youth. This center would provide respite for teachers in order to enhance professional efficacy and renew passion for the vocation.

### Student Achievement

Educational leaders recognize that effective teaching is critical to student achievement. Activities that encourage teachers to be reflective in their practice are vital to professional development. According to John Dewey (1933), the most effective student learning is based on doing, observing the doing, and reflection on the observation. I believe that the Wiggins and McTigh (2005) have developed a curricular framework in their Understanding by Design (UbD)

model that will enable teachers to guide students in reaching new heights in learning through relevancy, discovery, and deep understanding. I would like to align the tenets of my theories of respect and recognition with the tenets of UbD, which include explanation, interpretation, application, perspective, empathy, and self-knowledge. If teacher success is dependent upon this level of reflection, then so should student success.

Additionally, Ebmeier (2003) studied the effects of supervision on teacher efficacy and commitment using a model developed by Tschannen-Moran, Hoy, and Hoy. In a future study, I would like to apply the tenets of this model, which include goal selection, instructional effort, and persistence, to see if improved teacher efficacy will result in a shift toward student achievement.

People will forget what you said,  
People will forget what you did,  
But people will never forget how you made them feel.  
Anonymous

### *Conclusion*

The path to enlightenment, self-discovery, and self-actualization is a personal journey. The journey is fueled by the desire to become more and more of what one is, to become everything that one is capable of becoming. The gratification of this need is different for each person (Maslow, 1943). Our heart's journey is inward, not outward. Knowledge cannot be taught. It is discovered through experience. Experience isn't the best teacher, but is the only teacher (Green, 1998).

Dorothy discovered that she already possessed the attributes she sought most passionately. However, it was only by embracing the unknown, experiencing uncertainty, taking risks, and opening herself up to infinite possibilities did she realize her dreams, discover freedom, and reach fulfillment. On her trip, she inspired others to join her along the path to self-discovery. The Scarecrow was paralyzed by others he thought were smarter. The Tin Man was paralyzed by indecision and lack of passion. The Lion was paralyzed by lack of courage and cowardliness (Green, 1998). Together, they pooled their strengths to form a community with a common purpose. When Dorothy and her comrades regained their self-respect, their journey was complete. They realized that the Wizard was not what they were seeking, just the motivation and the means of self-discovery. Oz was not their destination. Once they recognized their own talents, they could then revel in finding the security of their home environments.

Teachers wrestle with the complexities of themselves as personal and professional beings. They, too, must learn that in order to become self-reliant and realize efficacy, they have

to love themselves. Although teachers can take steps individually to preserve their professional satisfaction and morale, they must also be nurtured, supported, and valued by the broader school community. When they are provided with recognition and respect in order to remain inspired and enthusiastic in the classroom, then students as well as the teachers will be beneficiaries (Mendel, 1987). When they recognize their own self-worth, then they will become whole and self-actualized.

As I explored my leadership and worked through the change project, I realized that the nourishment that would make my TEAMS community grow was based on recognition and respect. When respect for all constituents is taken seriously, then leadership is forced into the servant mode (Sergiovanni, 1992). I realized that respect was the reflective piece missing from my leadership. Respect bridges my leadership with my change project, because it is the impetus that enables me to lead and encourage change. This realization provided the “aha” of my study.

For Aristotle and Hume, respect is earned by the quality of one’s character, but for Kant, respect is deserved regardless of character. Kant believes that we have a moral duty to respect others (Ciulla, 2003). As a child, I was taught by my parents to respect elders and people of position. I have come to learn that respect is not something necessarily due people because of status, but instead a means of connecting people in relationships at home, at work, and at play.

The theoretical framework based on the studies of Maslow (1943, 1998) and Herzberg (1966) provided the model and structure for exploration of teacher efficacy. The literature, the storying, and the personal reflection have contributed to new ways of thinking about learning organizations and educational change. Appreciation for the change process has been realized over time; the time it takes to develop a sense of trust and to make constituents feel validated.



As I continue on my journey toward personal and professional efficacy on the quest for self-actualization, I will hone my skills as an educational leader by examining my own learning and providing space for teachers to examine their own. I fully appreciate the importance of recognition and respect to job satisfaction. The Yellow Brick Road is not without potholes, but the challenges will make me stronger. I have accepted that on some days, I will easily solve problems; sometimes I will have to stay and fight, sometimes I will have to defer to others, and sometimes I will have to go home with the hope of reopening the issue on another day, and when confronting these challenges, I will need the wisdom, the knowledge, the courage, and the heart to know when to do what. As a transformational, ethical, authentic, moral, and spiritual servant leader who embraces these tenets, I must believe that the universe will unfold. If I only follow one path, I may arrive at my destination, but if I follow my heart, I may leave a trail (Boleman & Deal, 2001).

My path, my spiritual journey, has taken me many places. I hope I have left a legacy trail with those I have touched; new and veteran teachers, fellow leaders, and college students. My passion for this profession gives spirit and life to my heart. Hopefully, I have transferred that spirit to the educational organizations in which I have been proud to serve.

Servant leaders are living paradoxes. ...  
They qualify to be first by putting other people first.  
Bolman & Deal, *Leading with Soul*, 2001

## *Epilogue*

Like Darren John Main (2000) whose book, *Spiritual Journeys along the Yellow Brick Road*, has allowed him to explore the depth of his soul, this project, too, has enabled me to see how far the human spirit can be stretched and to what extremes we can expect to go. Through time, pressure, defeat, discouragement, and defiance, I was surprised to find the strength and the wherewithal that I did to persist.

Sources of my strength have come from my parents. Over and over they modeled overt and covert signs of love, appreciation, and respect; respect for themselves, for their children, and for each other. They left to me and my brother a strong legacy. One that was deep in roots, but that also provided us with the wings to fly. They respected my personhood and trusted my abilities. It is through their eyes that I complete this project.

I suppose as a true leader it is my destiny to encourage others to persevere, but that doesn't mean it isn't often hard, tiring, and frustrating. As we seek the self-actualized soul, we recognize the blood, sweat, and tears that accompany us on this journey. Life happens, despite any of our efforts. We are sidestepped along the road, we trip on rubble, and we wade through puddles. But, in the end, looking back is easier than looking forward, and we revel in our accomplishments.

During this project, like no other, I realized that it will never be finite; that is, there was not a beginning and there will never be an end. Maslow (1943, 1998) doesn't overly emphasize the fact that this self-actualized process is ever evolving for fear that we will give up on the journey. What I recognized, then, is that this writing represents only the middle of my journey.

For now, I have done it! But, by tomorrow I will be looking to learn more from my family, my colleagues and friends, my teachers, and my students...especially my father. I deviate to tell his story because it is from him that I acquired the strength and fortitude to forge on with this project.

During my K-12 schooling experience, I was disciplined for learning and worked hard to be successful. Subsequently, I felt ready to go off to college where I would prepare to become a teacher. While I enjoyed my classes and my newfound freedom (my dad was a pretty strict Italian parent), I became shocked by the amount of knowledge that was “out there” and I couldn’t imagine how I would learn it all. I remember having a discussion with my dad at the end of my first semester of college. Very distraught and frightened, I told him that I didn’t think I could go back to college anymore because I would never be able to learn everything about everything in order to be an effective teacher. My father calmly looked at me and said, “Effective teaching does not come from knowing everything. Teaching is giving the students the encouragement, the wisdom, the caring, and the knowledge to find out what they want to know and who they want to be. When you do your job with all of your heart, you will be effective.” So now, it is easy to see the role wisdom has played in my life.

My father sacrificed for his family; for both the generation before him and the generation to follow. An avid reader, a lifelong learner, a disciplinarian, a dreamer, and a believer in the human spirit, he would cry watching the Miss America Pageant, and yet be highly respected in upper management in Ford Motor Company circles. A very smart man, he was accepted to Purdue University to study engineering at a time when most young people did not complete high school, let alone pursue post-secondary studies.

Unfortunately, his plans were changed by history, as the Pearl Harbor skirmish occurred during his final high school year. Knowing he would be drafted, he enlisted in the Navy, putting his college education on hold for the duration of the war. In 1945, he came home anxious to begin school, but instead found that his father had died a few weeks prior to his discharge. Being the oldest, unmarried son at home, his family obligation forced him to go to work while his mother stayed home to raise his younger siblings.

Although his plans for college were delayed once more, Dad did not feel sorry for himself or his situation, nor did he ever give up on his dream. Instead, he worked hard at his job on the assembly line at Ford, not only learning the job from the bottom up, but acquiring important life skills about humility and deference along the way.

In 1948, my parents married, and three and four nights a week after working all day, Dad rode the bus to attend community college in another town. He graduated junior college when my mother was pregnant with me. At the same time, he advanced on his job to Supervisor upon receiving his associate's degree in business. He continued his evening bus rides several nights per week, traveling now even further to the Seton Hall University campus. After a total of seven years, he realized his dream of an undergraduate degree in business. At this graduation, my mother was pregnant with my brother, four years my junior, so his responsibilities to work and family were great.

My father moved up quickly in his position, never forgetting where he started. He always made it a point to visit the workers on the assembly line, giving them encouragement and respect for the job they did. Dad eventually returned to Seton Hall University nights to acquire his MBA. He was so well-respected in the company, that he was offered a Regional Vice President position in Detroit. This respect and recognition was quite an accomplishment for an

outsider in a family-run business. Although his life ended much too soon, my dad's plans were to eventually retire from business and to teach business courses at a community college, giving back to those who supported him. I have always believed that he lived the American Dream.

I know he has watched me struggle with this journey, while inspiring me to continue. He would have wanted me to complete this project as much for me as for himself. He has always cheered my accomplishments; from induction into high school National Honor Society, when I stood on the stage and watched him cheer and cry in the balcony of the auditorium, to my many graduations, to walking me down the aisle the day of my wedding. DAD, I finished this project not just for you, but because of you. And I WILL see you again in heaven.

## **APPENDICES**

**CLASSROOM INVENTORY**  
**Bloomfield Department of Special Education**

**A**

**Teacher:** \_\_\_\_\_ **School:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Type of Class:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Do you have computer(s) in your room?** \_\_\_\_\_ **If yes, how many:** \_\_\_\_\_

**What texts are you currently using? (How many of each do you have?)**

**Reading:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Language Arts:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mathematics:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Science:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Social Studies:** \_\_\_\_\_

**What supplementary materials are you using for each subject? (Include materials for Social Skills training, Study Skills, Math manipulatives, other specific skills).**

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**Any programs you would like to learn more about?**

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**Any suggestions for Professional Development ideas?**

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**Have you been trained in any of the following programs? (Please circle).**

**Wilson Reading      Project READ      MTA (Multisensory Teaching Approach)**

**Stevenson Reading    Alphabetic Phonics    Recipe for Reading    Explode the Code**

**Other Orton based programs:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Saxon Math      Touch Math**

**Math Our Way      Other Math programs:** \_\_\_\_\_

**BLOOMFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
NON-TENURED  
OBSERVATION REPORT**

<b>TEACHER</b>	<b>BUILDING</b>	<b>SUBJECT/ GRADE</b>	<b>OBSERVATION DATE</b>	<b>OBSERVER</b>

**THE LESSON:**

**REINFORCEMENT OBJECTIVES:**

**GROWTH OBJECTIVES:**

**COMMENTS:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Teacher's Signature    Conference Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Observer's Signature    Conference Date**

Staff member's signature acknowledges discussion of this observation and receipt of the report

**FORMS/OBSERVA**



**Teacher Survey - June 2004**

**“Teacher Recruitment and Retention” Marie M. Simone**

A. Demographic information:

1. Number of years teaching in this district (please circle):

1-3                      4-5                      6-10                      10-15                      15+

2. Prior years of teaching in other educational systems or clinical settings:

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Reason(s) for leaving other districts, if applicable: (check reason-s)

\_\_\_\_\_ personal                      \_\_\_\_\_ professional opportunity  
 \_\_\_\_\_ relocation                      \_\_\_\_\_ non-renewal  
 \_\_\_\_\_ reduction in force                      \_\_\_\_\_ poor salary/benefits  
 \_\_\_\_\_ administration                      \_\_\_\_\_ colleagues  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

4. What initially brought you to this district? (check reason-s):

\_\_\_\_\_ impressions during interview                      \_\_\_\_\_ offer of a job  
 \_\_\_\_\_ description of the job                      \_\_\_\_\_ location  
 \_\_\_\_\_ salary                      \_\_\_\_\_ benefits  
 \_\_\_\_\_ reputation of the district  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

B. Professional Questions:

1. Have you felt supported this year by this supervisor? (please circle)

1                                      2                                      3  
 Yes                                      Somewhat                                      No

2. Specifically, how have I helped you to understand your job better and provided support for you to be more successful in your job?

3. How might I meet your specific needs in the future? What topics might be addressed?

4. (Refer to question 3). Through what forum? (check as many as apply):

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> staff development opportunities  | <input type="checkbox"/> formal observation  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> informal visits to the classroom | <input type="checkbox"/> post-ob conferences |
| <input type="checkbox"/> telephone                        | <input type="checkbox"/> discussions         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> email                            | <input type="checkbox"/> department meetings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____                      |  |

5. How might I intervene/interact with your building administrator on your behalf?

6. Where do you see yourself in 5 years professionally?

7. What factors would influence your decision to stay in this district?  
**(Rank these in order of importance; 1 being most important factor):**

- salary opportunities
- benefits (such as health insurance; dental insurance)
- reimbursement for college tuition
- opportunities for staff development
- collegial support
- administrative support
- opportunities for job flexibility within the district  
(move to another position in the district)
- opportunities for advancement in the district (to CST, admin)
- location

8. Do you feel the leadership style I have exhibited has been helpful to you?

1	2	3
Yes	Somewhat	No

Describe how you see my leadership. Please be specific:

9. Any other comments?

**Thank you for your participation in this survey. All information will be kept confidential and used for research purposes only. No names, schools, or district will be identified. Please return this survey to me in the attached self-addressed, stamped envelope. Have a great summer!!!**

### Informed Consent Form For Exit Interviews

(Participants over the age of 18)

I agree to participate in an exit interview for a study entitled “Recruitment and Retention of Special Education teachers in a NJ public school district.” The study is being conducted by Marie M. Simone, a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership program, Cohort 2002, at Rowan University. The data collected in this study will be combined with data from previous surveys and additional interviews. My participation in this study should not exceed one half hour.

I understand that my responses will be anonymous and that all of the data gathered will be confidential. I agree that any information obtained from this study may be coded and used for research purposes, and that I am in no way identified and my name is not used.

I understand that there are no physical or psychological risks involved in this study and that I am free to withdraw my participation at any time without penalty. I understand that my participation does not imply employment with the state of New Jersey, Rowan University, the principal researcher, or any other project facilitator.

If I have any questions or problems concerning my participation in this study, I may contact Dr. Kathleen Sernak, professor at Rowan University, at (896)256-4000.

---

Signature of Participant

---

Date

---

Signature of Researcher

---

Date



6. What do you feel is missing here? What might we do to improve the conditions for teaching here?

7. Are you going to a new job? Where? What will be your responsibilities there?

8. What do you see different about the new district? What attracted you to this district? What do you anticipate will be different?

9. Is there anything you would like to add that will help us to retain teachers in our district in the future?

**CLINICAL SUPERVISION MODEL**

The clinical supervision format features collaboration between the teacher and the supervisor. By working together, professionals can hope to improve teaching by helping to improve teacher behaviors in the classroom. The teacher is expected to make a difference that will increase student learning, and the supervisor is responsible for helping to make that change. The teacher decides on the data that will be collected by the supervisor during the pre-clinical conference. A date is determined for the formal observation. The teacher and supervisor discuss the framework for the observation, the contract itself, the teacher’s orientation to the class, the lesson plans, and specific behaviors to observe.

Following the observation, a post-observation conference is arranged. At that meeting, the teacher reviews the written evaluation and discussion ensues regarding the data collected. Together the supervisor and teacher evaluate the results. Hopefully, the two professionals will arrive at a fresh perspective and renewed interest for teaching.

This observation format will be used with non-tenured elementary special education teachers and speech therapists in a New Jersey school district as a means of giving teachers choice (empowerment) and providing coaching/mentoring from the supervisor. According to Herzberg (1993), teachers are motivated when they successfully achieve and receive recognition and feedback.

Special Education Teacher/Speech Therapist\_\_\_\_\_

Obs.

School\_\_\_\_\_Date\_\_\_\_\_Years in District\_\_\_\_\_

# Students\_\_\_\_\_Grade\_\_\_\_\_Subject\_\_\_\_\_Time\_\_\_\_\_

Pre-Observation Conference Strategy: (date)

(Supervisor’s comments regarding class description, strengths/weaknesses of teacher, etc.)

Pre-Observation Fieldnotes: (date)

(Discussion: What has been taught previously that will act as prior learning for this lesson? Do you anticipate any problems with materials, students, etc?)

Lesson Objective from Lesson Plan:

Post-Observation Conference Strategy: (date)

(What will be a follow up to this lesson for the students? How do you think the lesson went? Were your objectives met? Analysis of student responses, engagement, motivation, and accuracy of teaching.)

Post-Observation Fieldnotes: (date)



**F1**

Activity: Organizational Cultures

As teachers, we teach according to our personal values. You had an opportunity to examine your value system and to think a bit about what it is in this profession that creates a passionate or emotional response. Try this activity.

**You have just been informed that the world is to be destroyed in 24 hours. However, just before the world is destroyed, a rocket carrying 6 passengers will take off to begin life on a new planet. You have been assigned to a special task force whose assignment is to determine from the list below, the six persons who will occupy the six available seats. Consider what you wish life to be like on this new planet.**

List of possible parties:

- |  |                                |
|--|--------------------------------|
| 72 year old minister   | 38 year old female violinist   |
| 13 year old pregnant teenager                                  | 55 year old retired teacher    |
| 17 year old high school dropout                                | 25 year old male ballet dancer |
| police officer with a gun                                      | new born baby girl             |
| 26 year old female prostitute                                  | convicted bank robber          |
| 42 year old physician who is HIV+                              | disabled female architect      |
| 31 year old computer technician with a violent past            |                                |
| husband and wife college professors who will only go as a pair |                                |

**Mark above whom you would select. What is your rationale?**

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**The Leadership Challenge**  
Kouzes and Posner

**Writing a Tribute to yourself...**

1. What do you stand for? Why?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What do you believe in? Why?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What are you discontented about? Why?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. What brings you suffering? Why?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. What makes you weep and wail? Why?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. What makes you jump for joy? Why?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. About what are you passionate? Why?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. What keeps you awake at night? Why?

9. What's grabbed hold of you and won't let go? Why?

10. What do you want for your life? Why?

11. Just what is it that you really care about? Why?

**STUDY GROUP DISCUSSION**  
**December, 2004**

**Participants in this study group will be volunteers from the special education/speech teaching staff in the Bloomfield Public Schools. The group will be asked to meet for three one-hour sessions on *other than* school time in order to discuss *teacher recognition* as a key to professional motivation.**

**SESSION 1 focus: “Define *teacher recognition*.”**

**SESSION 2 focus: Discuss parameters for teacher recognition.**

**SESSION 3 focus: Assess outcomes of study group and determine conclusions regarding teacher recognition and its affect on motivation.**

14 Cannonade Drive  
Marlboro, NJ 07746  
October 30, 2004

Pfeiffer  
Permissions Department  
John Wiley and Sons, Inc.  
111 River Street  
Hoboken, New Jersey 07030

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a doctoral candidate in the Educational Leadership program at Rowan University in Glassboro, New Jersey. I am requesting permission to share a copy of the Leadership Practices Inventory (Kouzes and Posner, 2003) "Observer" form with our IRB committee in my packet for the description of data I will be using for my dissertation.

In addition, I would like to order copies of this inventory to distribute to teachers so they can assess my leadership abilities at the conclusion of my study. I will contact your customer care department at 1-800-274-4434 to order the copies that I will need.

Thank you very much for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Marie M. Simone

H2

14 Cannonade Drive  
Marlboro, NJ 07746  
December 1, 2004

Dr. Barry Posner  
Kouzes Posner International  
15419 Banyan Lane  
Monte Sereno, CA 95030

Dear Dr. Posner,

Paulette Goldweber from your legal department in New Jersey referred me to you with this request. I am a doctoral student in an Educational Leadership program at Rowan University in Glassboro, NJ. Dr. Kathleen Sernak (phone: 856-256-4000), my dissertation chair at the same university, has suggested that I use your Leadership Practices Inventory as data for my dissertation. I am investigating how teacher recognition will affect job satisfaction and retention in the profession. I am a Supervisor of Special Education in a public school district in New Jersey. I would like to use the LPI self-assessment to see how my leadership has affected the efficacy of special education teachers. I am anticipating using this instrument as I conclude my data collection. I am also requesting permission to use the LPI form as part of my IRB packet, which is submitted to the provost at Rowan University.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. You may reach me, if necessary, at [Lina00815@aol.com](mailto:Lina00815@aol.com) or on my cell phone at 732-547-1111.

Sincerely,

Marie M. Simone

**Essex County Special Services Survey  
January 2005**

As part of data collection for a dissertation on “teacher retention” from Rowan University, I would appreciate your input regarding special education and speech teacher turnover in your district for both the 2003-04 school year and the 2004-05 school year. Thanking you in advance for your time. Information will be kept confidential and will be used for research purposes only.

Marie M. Simone, M.Ed., Ed.S.  
Elementary Special Ed Supervisor  
Bloomfield Public Schools

**District: (optional)** \_\_\_\_\_ **Please circle: Pre-K-6 PreK-8 PreK-12**

**How would you categorize your district: Urban Semi-Urban Suburban**

**2003-04 School Year**

Number of special education teachers hired \_\_\_\_\_

Number of special education teachers in the district \_\_\_\_\_ Non-tenured \_\_\_\_\_

Number of speech therapists hired \_\_\_\_\_

Number of speech therapists employed in the district \_\_\_\_\_ Non-tenured \_\_\_\_\_

**2004-05 School Year**

Number of special education teachers hired \_\_\_\_\_

Number of special education teachers in the district \_\_\_\_\_ Non-tenured \_\_\_\_\_

Number of speech therapists hired \_\_\_\_\_

Number of speech therapists employed in the district \_\_\_\_\_ Non-tenured \_\_\_\_\_

**Which factors describe suspected reasons for why teachers have left your district:**

1. Non-renewal Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

2. Retirement Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

3. Salary Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

4. Benefits Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

5. Tuition

Reimbursement Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

6. Job Satisfaction Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

7. Relocation Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

8. Distance Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

9. Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Have you initiated any strategies to retain staff? No \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_. What?**

**How difficult was it to replace special education staff? (please circle one)**

Very Difficult      Difficult      Somewhat Difficult      Somewhat Easy      Easy      Very Easy

**How difficult was it to replace speech staff? (please circle one)**

Very Difficult      Difficult      Somewhat Difficult      Somewhat Easy      Easy      Very Easy

Importance of Teacher Recognition to Job Satisfaction

What are valued outcomes of your work? Frederick Herzberg lists these determiners of job satisfaction. How would you rate these in terms of importance?

1. Recognition	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
2. Achievement	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
3. The work itself	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
4. Responsibility/Purpose	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
5. Opportunity for Advancement	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
6. Support/Professional Dev.	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
7. Salary	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
8. Interpersonal Relationships	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
9. Working Conditions	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
10. Technical Competency	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
11. School Policy	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important

In terms of your own personal and professional efficacy, would you select this profession all over again?

Yes, because:

- ✓
- ✓
- ✓

No, because:

- ✓
- ✓
- ✓

What could make your work more satisfying, inspiring, motivating?

What might make teachers leave a district or the teaching profession?

How would you define “recognition” in the workplace?

What support is important from an immediate supervisor?



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