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Self-portrait of a high school assistant principal as a curriculum leader

Johnson, Brenda S., Ed.D.

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 1991

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SELF-PORTRAIT OF A HIGH SCHOOL ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL AS A CURRICULUM LEADER

by

Brenda S. Johnson

A Dissertation Submitted to
the Faculty of the Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
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JOHNSON, BRENDA S., Ed.D. Self-Portrait of a High School Assistant Principal as a Curriculum Leader. (1991) Directed by Dr. Dale Brubaker. 103 pp.

This autobiographical case study of a secondary school assistant principal who serves as a director of curriculum and instruction in the high school of a military dependents' school system is the story of a female administrator balancing a male principal's directive leadership with nurturance and empowerment.

The study is phenomenological in that the meaning the administrator gives to her behavior is based on her background and beliefs. This self-portrait contributes a detailed description of the school administrator creating the role of a curriculum leader and taking the audience "backstage" to lived experiences recorded in journals, newsletters, minutes, logs, correspondence and from interviews. This autobiographical, interpretive method of inquiry is a self-searching for one's unique contribution to an educational setting which results in personal and professional growth for the researcher. The first person, literary approach to conveying the complex interactions in a school setting increases the utility to practitioners of this reflective study of practice.

The following conclusions were drawn from the literature review and the researcher's corroborating experience. Curriculum leaders are strengthened by a commitment to their work as a cause or "calling." They are able to communicate a shared mission and to work constantly to maintain commitment to the mission. Listening is a crucial skill in their "super-vision," which conveys trust, respect, and support for personal growth of the adults as well as the students in their setting.

Characteristics of creativity such as risktaking, aesthetic and dramatic consciousness, and sensitivity to the history and culture of the setting also help convey and maintain their vision. School administrators are much more likely to become curriculum leaders if they have first had successful teaching careers. Presently in America's high schools women have most experience in teaching and can make a valuable contribution to an administrative team. Unless teams have a member committed to curriculum leadership, each member of the team can share responsibility. Well-established curriculum leaders can serve as mentors. The demands of the daily governance of high schools are so great that a principal may be neither trained in curriculum leadership nor have the time it requires; therefore, a diverse administrative team is a great asset.

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of the Graduate School at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Dissertation Advisor _____

Committee Members _____

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I appreciate the support of all my colleagues at the Camp Lejeune Dependents School System--especially Susan Rumbley. Having just led her school to national recognition as a school of excellence, she was in much demand as a staff development speaker, college lecturer, and host to many visitors. Still she always made time for my every question and went even further by keeping and sharing a journal.

I appreciate the support and guidance of my associate superintendent, Dr. Duane Linker, and my superintendent, Dr. Conrad Sloan, who supported my application for a sabbatical and encouraged me to complete my doctoral program.

This work is dedicated to the memory of my mother, Ruth Greene Foy, and my father, Marvin Wilson Johnson.

PROLOGUE

As a former English teacher I know especially well the value of narrative to teaching and learning. From that humanities perspective I have selected the narrative mode as the method which meets the highest standards of originality in presenting this self study of the background, beliefs, and behavior of an assistant principal functioning as a curriculum leader. My task is the same as the title of Goffman's sociological study The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life. I find his use of the metaphor of the theatre as a framework for his observations of human interaction appropriate for my own purpose as well. When one is both subject and object of a study, there can be no pretense of objectivity, so why not attempt a deeper engagement of the audience by adding a sense of an unfolding drama? Indeed, the evolution of a life continues until death and that of the setting continues after that. My hope is that the actions of the person described in this study will have a continuing influence on the evolution of the setting. As both subject and object of this study, I have given voice to a unique perspective, yet one which joins an ensemble of conscious actors in history, working to shape the future.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND

The Audience

The front row seats are reserved for secondary school practitioners: the assistant principals whose talents are not being fully utilized, and the administrators and teachers who could be sharing leadership of curriculum and instruction as we do in my setting. In the latest volume in a series of national studies of the high school principalship conducted by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (Pellicer, 1990, p.1), the Association acknowledges "the complexity of the principalship and the importance of the entire administrative team." A recent issue of the NASSP Bulletin focuses specifically on the assistant principalship. The senior author of the national studies concludes that the assistant principal's role in a secondary school is so demanding and critical that it calls for "persons who are equally as qualified as principals in terms of the knowledge, skills, and experience brought to the job" (Pellicer, 1991, p. 60). He recommends enhancing the role of the assistant principal by means of compensation and a title commensurate with the responsibilities, suggesting titles such as "associate principal for instruction" (Pellicer, 1991, p. 63).

Special sections are reserved for women who need support for consideration as members of the administrative team of secondary schools. Scroggs noted that the "softer, more cooperative and collaborative style" of

the female teacher-leaders in his study was empowering and deserving of further discourse (Scroggs, 1989, p.121). A former assistant principal's commentary lamented the male behavior model traditionally expected in the role: breaking up fights, checking the restrooms for smokers, etc. (Hassenpflug, 1990, p.25). Indeed, comparisons to traditional male roles such as "head coach" and "chief executive officer of a corporation" are often used for principals (Firestone & Herriott, 1982, p. 53). Smith & Andrews (1989, p.7) and Lightfoot (1983, p.323) mention the military metaphors used in education, such as "in the trenches," "runs a tight ship," "protecting the flanks" and "guarding the fort." Lightfoot sees these images of "paternalistic authority," as "anachronistic perspectives on the role," a view supported by the literature review. The male principals of the good high schools she studied all appeared to need an "intimate colleague...a professional marriage." All struggled to balance work and home as do working women. I have heard one assistant principal refer to herself as the principal's "wife at work." Lightfoot (1983, pp.323-328) concluded that a redefinition of leadership to include both masculine and feminine qualities contributed to the goodness of these schools. In reporting a five-year study by the National Center on Effective Secondary Schools, Fred Newmann (1991, p. 8) reported the finding that the most effective leaders seemed to "strike a delicate balance between directive decisions and guidance, on the one hand, and the support/empowerment of staff on the other." Associate Dean of Harvard's School of Education, Jerome Murphy (1988), pointed out the danger of lionizing the leader as a hero who knows all the answers: "the 'great man' theory of leadership" undermines participatory site-based management and "ignores the invisible leadership" of other staff members

working backstage to make an organization succeed. This is the story of one such staff member.

Previous research at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro on the role of the principal has indicated the need for more detailed description of a curriculum leader (Owen, 1989; Rogers, 1988; Williams, 1987). Pinar (1981), while praising ethnographies such as Wolcott's effort to describe The Man in the Principal's Office, declared that it is a "newspaper account...from a perspectiveless perspective." He argued that what we need are autobiographies that describe "lived" experience. The writer of a self-study, free of the expectation of impartiality, can present "the spirit behind the role...the reality underneath...the events," or in Goffman's terms, can take the audience "backstage." Therefore, the remaining space in this audience is for anyone interested in a detailed description of a curriculum leader--particularly from one who prepared the documentation for a high school nominated by the state as a national school of excellence and whose mentor was an elementary principal whose school was selected as a national school of excellence. Perhaps it will aid in the selection of school administrators who are more likely to be curriculum leaders and especially those who would contribute to the administrative team a focus on nurturance of student and faculty development.

Also in the audience for this presentation are those educators who are interested in research which is a self-searching look at one's own unique contribution to a setting, a methodology which is accessible to all educators. To lead others we must first become "students of ourselves," Pinar said; thus "one's research work...ought to benefit the researcher personally" (1965). The autobiographical method is a transformative

learning experience in the tradition Jackson discussed in chapter six of The Practice of Teaching (1986) as a moral and philosophical undertaking which must be described afterward, not prescribed before, the process.

Backstage: Methodology

I will set the stage for the drama by taking the audience backstage first to look "from the inside out" (Lightfoot, 1983, p.3) at the process of producing this work. The framework of the theatre is a familiar one, aiding me in the struggle to find the language to give meaning to my life. According to Barritt *et al* (1984, p.16), "If there is no struggle by the writer to be clear...or honest, then there is likely to be little benefit to the scientific community and no benefit to the community at large" in the results of phenomenological research. My words have been painstakingly chosen and painfully honest because I am very conscious of the aesthetic dimension of my work and because I want this study to help educators create more supportive settings. Hence this is not the statistical, experimental research which so many practitioners feel only "frustrates us in our search for ways to improve education" (Caine & Caine, 1991, p. 20). Neither does it present a model for emulation, but rather a unique case study in an attempt to penetrate the essence of one curriculum leader's experience. The language of control from quantitative research is neither as accessible as qualitative research to the practitioner nor as adequate to the understanding of a phenomenon as complex as interaction in a school setting. Interactions in schools are perhaps more complex than in any other institution in our culture. In seeking a language of understanding and openness to interpretation as I probed for meaning of experiences lived

in this setting, I found reassurance in the words of Sarason: "The creation of a setting is far from a rational process and the same is true in studying it" (1977). Following the discovery of subatomic particles, which cannot be observed, and explosion of the myth that bias can be eliminated from research, a paradigm shift occurred in educational research. The disenchantment with scientific inquiry parallels a growing awareness of the need to attend to morals, values and less measureable goals in education. However, my struggle to be honest ran head-on into a major disadvantage of qualitative research, the ethics of revealing the experiences involving others who might be embarrassed by them. Grevatt (1982) quotes author Doris Lessing's metaphor for official history: "smoke left in the air after the fire of events. The real facts are committed to memory and passed on verbally or written down and concealed for the information of the few." I have tried to present the smoke and the fire with a minimum of concealment, but I have found, as Goffman said, that "somewhere in the full round of activities there will be something " that "cannot be treated openly" (1959, p. 64).

The method I have used for examining the experiences I have lived is an interpretive approach based on the examples of artistic educational criticism of Eisner (1976) and McCutcheon (1981). McCutcheon says of interpretation that it "serves the function of allowing a researcher and an audience to make sense of what transpired in a setting, yielding patterned, synthesized understanding of it...[and] conveying to readers the nature of the phenomena explored" (p. 6). Viewing from the framework of an artist, Eisner saw the need for a branch of educational research which rendered, through the tools of metaphor and analogy, description and interpretation

grounded in the humanities rather than science. His own metaphor for the negative effects of traditional experimental research was that the present is sacrificed on the altar of tomorrow as quantity takes precedent over quality, complexity is reduced to oversimplification, beliefs are ignored, and priorities are influenced by testing rather than a reasoned philosophy of education. He called for a "breakthrough in conception, a wedge in the door of possibility" (1984). He found that Sara Lightfoot, Harvard sociologist of education, answered his call "with style." In the work she termed "portraiture" she sought to add an aesthetic dimension to her writing by careful selection of concrete details. The cornerstone in the foundation of my observational research was the study of Lightfoot's portraiture and my own practical application through coursework in the initial stages of an ethnographic study. There I practiced Lightfoot's impressionist style portraiture based on three days of observation and the subsequent componential analysis of interviews at a middle school.

For the current study I conducted interviews with my superintendent to seek information about the origin of my position as well as disconfirmation of findings. I also had open-ended interviews with some of my mentor's teachers and colleagues about their views of her leadership. These were done informally over lunch or in drives to meetings. I had intended to interview my mentor formally with a tape recorder, but she did not want to do that because it made her feel very uncomfortable, so we just had informal conversations. I found that I could easily remember what I wanted to note later. Since time is the sacrifice one makes for establishing rapport, this approach is more suitable for a long-term study. My relationship with my mentor was established in the few days after I

completed my graduate courses in summer school and before I resumed teaching English, which consumed approximately sixty-five hours per week. The relationship was maintained for the duration of that school year through brief contacts, primarily by telephone. I was only able to observe her on a few occasions during the school day. On the day my students were taking standardized tests, I observed at her school and asked a heterogeneous class of the oldest students, fifth graders, to write what makes a good principal. I observed her in meetings before and after school, including the parent-teacher meeting the night they were presented the flag of excellence from the United States Office of Education. I also learned much from reading her journal. My personal curriculum leadership principles and supporting practices then emerged over the next two years of total immersion in the culture of secondary school administration.

In this process Stake's characteristics of qualitative studies served as reassuring guidelines (1987):

> It is holistic: contextuality is well developed and it is relatively non-comparative, seeking to understand its object more than to understand how it differs from others.
>
> It is empirical: it is field-oriented, devoting extra effort to getting data from where the action is; preferring natural language description and disdaining grand constructs.
>
> It is interpretive: researchers rely more on intuition; it is attuned to the fact that research is a researcher-subject interaction.
>
> It is empathic: it is sensitive to the risks of human subjects research; its reporting provides vicarious experience; its design is emergent, generating explanations from field experience rather than predetermined hypotheses.

The final interpretations emerged from the procedure discussed below. Telling one's own story is a slow and often painful process because memories do not always flow easily onto paper. Sometimes the price they demand for being awakened is a replay of the emotions that recorded them. The archival data for the longitudinal study of my life were the journals I have written periodically over the years; daily calendars; newsletters I write monthly for parents; minutes from the Curriculum Council and School Improvement Group Network (SIGN); and notes to and from faculty for the two years I have been the Director of Instruction at my high school. My mentor provided access to data from the same sources at her school and also to a journal she started keeping when I asked if she kept one. (That was my first indication of the impossibility of an observer having no influence on the subject.) The study was also aided by Brubaker's (1982, p.8) counsel and some of the questions for exploring thought and feelings about one's past in relation to the present from his writing about professional autobiographies; e.g. What teachers have influenced me? What influenced my choice of college? He shared Pinar's suggestion to begin with free-associative thinking, which was most helpful for journal entries when long periods had passed without having time to write. After gathering a rich accumulation of life-material, I read the raw data over and over again until I could construct the platform of beliefs which upheld these actions. Then I read and reflected on the beliefs again and again to refine them into principles which I could illustrate with practices. Then again I read and reread, cross-checking for corroborating or negating experience. The recursive nature of the process drew me into a dialogue with myself, as if following a spiral until centered. Brubaker (1986, p.23) described a number

of processes Macdonald identified that would facilitate "centering," a spiritual strength which helps a leader maintain a healthy balance, as in attending to tasks, to others, and to self. One of these processes was the ordering of personal and cultural data into a pattern. Thus the act of writing this study created a greater depth of self-understanding. For example, I was struck by the realization that I was noting again and again the need for achieving a balance between people and task, but I was leaving myself out of the pattern. Lightfoot's call for leadership with "softer images that are based on nurturance given and received" (1983, p.333) took on new meaning--especially "received." I also found, as Lightfoot said, that the experience of autobiography offers "sources of guidance and direction" (p. 271). The interaction of subject and object in this interpretive study was holistic in the sense of making me whole and aware of my own needs as well as those of others. My hope is that the readers will also be drawn into the dialogue and that it will resonate, as does literature, evoking their own stories.

Thus by uncovering another pane of our window on the world, we grow in understanding of the whole by understanding the parts. Of course the audience sees through the pane only the scenes the researcher uncovers. If the researcher is the director and producer, as well as key actor, the audience expects to see her in her best light. As the key actor, or subject of the study, I feel that I am in my best light in the role of curriculum leader. Yet I am out of the limelight, rewarded by seeing the performance of students and teachers improve, regardless of whether I am seen as having contributed to it. I attribute my strength as a leader to my dedication to building a better world rather than building my own

reputation. However, the story of how I came to be a curriculum leader and what I am learning about creating the role is a story worth sharing, or I would not have risked being the subject of the study. As Lightfoot asserts, "Researchers do not function like the lens of a camera...[they] must interpret information in the light of their own training, culture, and personal predilections" (1983, p.242). My methodology rests on the same beliefs as my leadership. "Because good communication is both a sign of the existence of trust and an ingredient in the building of trust" (First & Carr, p.6), I am trusting that my audience will accept my self-portrait as an honest one, or at any rate, will find that the concepts and issues communicated are thought provoking.

This narrative study tries to capture the spirit and spirituality of a school leader in her setting, including the dilemmas in the everyday setting of a school administrator in the nonrational, post-modernist society. The process of qualitative research such as this study does not follow a linear pattern but rather the weaving together of memories, reflections, intuition and description, working more in the mode of a playwright or storyteller:

> Stories go in circles. They don't go in straight lines.
> So it helps if you listen in circles because there are
> stories inside stories and stories between
> stories...part of the finding is the getting lost. If
> you're lost, you really start to look around and listen.
> (Metzger, p. 104)

Listening is the most crucial skill of both the curriculum leader and the educational researcher. In both roles, getting to know others as well as possible is vital. The only way to do that is listen, listen, listen. Thus a prerequisite to listening is patience that goes much deeper than only waiting to speak. The way I clear my mind of what I want to say in order to

attend fully to what the other person is saying is to write it, put it away, and carry on as if it had been said. If the speaker reaches a point of seeking to hear what I wanted to say and if I am listening carefully enough to recognize that moment, then I will say it. My "super-vision" is a sharp eye (or ear) for opportunities! I identify with Foster's image of school as "an anthology of competing stories" with the administrator in the "dual role of storyteller and listener" (1986, p. 196).

Review of Literature

As science advances in technology and society struggles to balance "hi tech" with "hi touch," there is renewed interest in the old concept of the charismatic leader. Burns (1978), who modified the concept to include those who inspire followers to change, called them "transformational leaders." Clark and Clark (1990), in the introduction to their edition of a collection of papers presented on leadership at an invitational conference of behavioral scientists, concluded that transformational leaders do make a difference. One example they cited is Naval Academy graduates: those who rated high in transformational qualities "had subordinates who expressed higher satisfaction with their work...and expended more energy on the job" (p.6). In Bennis' study of leaders (1984), he found these qualities: a vision of the future; ability to communicate the vision; persistence, consistency and focus to maintain the vision; and the abilities to learn from errors, and to empower others. Looking at the leader in the context of a setting, he saw the transformative power of leadership coming from an interactive process. Scientific managerial competence does not create tranformative power, no matter how ingenious the leader is at crafting

structure, designing impressive charts, meeting deadlines, and constructing budgets. Bennis concluded (p.70), "It is the ability of the leader to reach the souls of others in a fashion which raises human consciousness, builds meanings, and inspires human intent that is the source of power."

In their investigation of how principals make a difference, Smith and Andrews (1989) applied Bennis' work to the investigation of educational leadership in over 200 schools. They reported that principals who fit Bennis' description of leaders were interacting with teachers by providing resources, serving as an instructional resource and communicator, and being a visible presence throughout the school. The principals communicated praise verbally and through informal written notes. They inspired greater commitment by being role models themselves. The elementary principals tried to be in every classroom every day. Secondary principals felt their week unsuccessful unless they were in every classroom once a week. Smith and Andrews postulated that we know from "intuition alone" that teachers who feel positive about their setting "will perform at a higher level" (p.vii). They further suggested that "strokes" for staff and students are "perhaps the most important aspect of creating an effective school" (p.19). McPherson *et al* (1985) recommend that principals not abandon teaching but become "andragogical" educators, or teachers of adults, focusing on the needs of their staff. Articles by Levine (1987) and Krupp (1987) cited numerous works on life cycle theories supporting the need to attend to the personal development of the adults as well as the students in school settings. Brubaker reminded us of Sarason's belief, "You have to get at a high level to give at a high level" (Brubaker, 1985, p.

178).

Even though Sarason (1972) wrote about the creation of human settings as a work of art, he warned of dangers: "lost sense of shared mission" (p.276), and the leader's "increasing sense of privacy, fear of openness, ...and boredom (p. 277). Clark & Clark (1990, p. 124) reported on a Bell System longitudinal study of men who were managers. The most successful were increasingly caught up in their work "while the least successful began to become detached." I have seen no discussion in the literature of the origin or the loss of the dream or vision and the charismatic quality it conveys. Therefore, I intend to reveal in the plot of my life story how my vision results from a personal and professional history which sensitized me to injustice and gave me the belief that I can help create change--that working together with others I can make a better world.

The literature of creativity, as well as common sense, supports my belief that people with vision are creative. Their drive for far-reaching goals leads them to be risk-takers. These characteristics of creativity are also found in the leadership literature. In Smith & Piele (1989, p.23) Pejza is quoted: "Leadership requires a vision, a sense of dissatisfaction with the status quo, a hunger to see improvement...A leader continuously scans the environment noticing where change is needed...aims at something no one else can see and hits it." The authors also discussed the finding of Blumberg and Greenfield that effective educational leaders have a sense of security that "fosters a high tolerance for ambiguity" (p. 22). In the NASSP study by Pellicer *et al* (1990, pp.57-58), the description of instructional leadership included shared purpose and responsibility, which promote

"mutual respect and trust" and the "willingness to sacrifice...The more risks taken, the better the outcomes." Patton (1987, p.247) found over half of the Fortune 500 corporations have started formal creativity training for their leaders and that people want a "calling," a purpose. Even in the literature of effective schools, Lezotte (1989) declared that leaders articulate a vision that makes the work seem as if it is a calling rather than simply a job. He also acknowledged that training school administrators as scientific managers took away passion and vision. Sergiovanni (1990), in advocating passion to the point of symbolic acts of "leadership by outrage," also conveyed the value of a creative sense of drama in leadership, as discussed further below.

In a 1986 seminal article Brubaker and Simon, updating the history of the principalship, also discussed the "limited horizon" of a leadership role such as the scientific approach based on control and efficiency. They reported that in the seventies the principal began to be expected to add instructional leadership to his role, but even that role was limited and also fragmented between instruction and governance. The authors defined curriculum as "what each person experiences in cooperatively creating learning settings" (p.19), as opposed to courses of study. Their definition was derived from the progressive educationists' realization that everything in the learner's setting is the curriculum.

Hence the curriculum leader's actions are based on assumptions in these areas: history, culture and politics of school settings, aesthetics, values and spiritual or religious centering. Sergiovanni (1990) has recently written a book on Value-Added Leadership about nourishing the spirit of schools. In a section on "Leadership as Drama" (pp. 92-95), he emphasized

the importance of a dramatic consciousness. Such leaders create excitement for their vision because they allow neither routine nor bureaucracy to dull it. Foster (1986) is among others who also advocated educational leadership as a moral endeavor. There is growing support for the view of the educational leader as a whole person with the creativity of an artist and the power to transform. Brubaker & Simon explained that a curriculum leader's aesthetic dimension comes through in what Eisner termed educational criticism and Dewey the reeducation of perception. An example of leaders' artistry is found in the description and interpretation of what they see in learning settings. Another is in their sharing of the future vision with the dramatist's sense of timing and the poet's use of analogy, metaphor, and symbols.

The need for a tranformational leader is clear in this era when educational reform is being mandated. Still a school can be good enough, according to Lightfoot's definition, "to keep growing and changing" (1983, p.311), with a principal who maintains a managerial role as long as someone takes the role of curriculum leader. Patterson, Purkey, and Parker (1986, p.103) agreed, and cited several others for support, that the principal is not the only person who can provide leadership, "especially leadership for school improvement," because the skills involved are different from those for administration of the daily routine. Few principals have received the training for those skills. Further, they agreed with Lightfoot as previously cited on page two of this study that there is a tendency to presume school leaders should have a strong, masculine image comparable to a CEO in industry or the captain of a ship. They argued that this is an inaccurate model because a school is a nonrational organization,

not a logical, stable system. There is evidence that leadership for such an organization "can assume another voice that, among other things, is more democratic and more sensitive to relations among people. Gersten *et al* (1982, p. 48) declared that it "makes more sense to consider a team approach" than to expect the kind of "exceptional principal" Edmonds described in the effective schools literature. They noted, "School and situational variables can bring forth leadership qualities in an individual who previously did not exhibit them." McAndrews, (1981) defining a good school as one with "high morale and expectations," asserted that it is "unreasonable and unrealistic" to expect a high-school principal to provide the "substantive instructional leadership" which department heads can. He saw the principal's most important task as creating a healthy climate, which in turn contributes to academic achievement, and this task "cannot be assumed by anyone else." Goffman (1959, p. 99) maintained that the audience holds the director "more responsible than others for the success of the performance"; thus he is "slowly edged into a marginal role," which may explain the leader's "increasing sense of privacy" (Sarason, 1972, p. 277). McAndrew recognized that good leaders are "in short supply, yet public education has made its job more difficult by relying almost exclusively on white males to be its high-school principals." His 1981 report noted that "98 percent of the country's more than twenty-four thousand high schools are headed by males" (p. 106); in 1986 Miller-Gladney found women had gained to three percent of the secondary school principalships. McAndrew pointed out that even though a good teacher will not necessarily make a good principal and even though most principals "are not very interested in matters of teaching and learning,...classroom experience may

be a valuable prerequisite." Along with McAndrew, Boyer (1983, p. 223) also saw classroom experience as important in establishing a school leader's credibility with teachers. Evans (1989) went even further, calling for "dramatic change": "The deep significance of the task of the school administrator or principal is to be found in the pedagogic ground of its vocation" (p.180). As in McAndrew's interviews, Evans also found principals' views lacking in pedagogic concerns or educative motives. Evans work is consistent with my strong belief, supported by the examples of leadership provided by my mentor and myself, that a curriculum leader has a thorough grounding in teaching. McAndrew's study also lends support to the consideration of more women in this role in the nation's high schools.

Finally, the current move to a broader base of shared leadership through a diverse administrative team and site-based management is likely to result in schools that are "good enough," but to create a transformation a school needs a curriculum leader in the sense in which Brubaker & Simon defined it. Because of their awareness of the whole setting as the curriculum, curriculum leaders work to create a healthy setting which nurtures the spirit as well as the minds of both the adults and students in it. Thus the term curriculum leader in this paper will refer to one who believes that the curriculum is what both adults and students experience in cooperatively creating learning settings. These leaders are sensitive to the history and culture of the settings in which they lead. They share their values, not to impose them, but to stimulate moral reflection in others.

Other references to related literature are interwoven throughout the dissertation as multiplicative corroboration.

The Setting

The Camp Lejeune Marine Corps Base is the equivalent of a small city. Approximately 45,000 active duty military personnel are stationed at the base or across the New River at the air station. Their dependents number almost 55,000. With 4,565 housing units available, the base provides services to support a city of 80,000 Marines, sailors, and their families. Named in honor of Lieutenant General John Archer Lejeune, Commandant of the Marine Corps from 1920-1929, Camp Lejeune covers 173 square miles of southeastern North Carolina. Of the reservation's 110,000 acres, 26,000 are water. The base also includes fourteen miles of beachfront on a barrier island connected to the mainland by a drawbridge over the intracoastal waterway.

Prior to 1940 the land where the base is now located in Onslow County was farmland devoted to the growing of tobacco, peanuts, and food for local families. The population of Onslow County in 1940 was a little less than 18,000; in 1990 it was only a little less than 150,000. This tremendous population increase began with the construction of the base in April, 1941. The location at the mouth of the New River was chosen because of its proximity to the Cherry Point air station and deep-water ports at Morehead City and Wilmington. In 1986 the base won the Commander in Chief's Award for Installation Excellence among Marine Corps Bases and worldwide. A Human Services Directorate coordinates all the services that would be available from the county's social services, plus a proactive Family Services Center which helps families cope with the special problems caused by the deployment of spouses. The Special Services

division of Camp Lejeune's Morale, Welfare and Recreation Department employs more than 300 civilians to provide recreation activities and services including youth centers, community centers, swimming pools, hobby shops, beach pavilions, marinas where even jet skis can be rented, stables, golf, bowling, and concerts by a variety of well-known performers. Hunting is allowed in certain seasons, but the base is a wildlife sanctuary for endangered species such as the black bear, the red cockaded woodpecker, and the alligator. Recently renovated clubs offer good restaurants and night clubs and a variety of activities such as dinner theatre.

Families enjoy being stationed here and the waiting list is months long to get base housing because only those who reside in base housing are eligible to attend base schools. Approximately 3,700 students are enrolled in the Camp Lejeune Dependents' Schools system, which consists of one high school, one middle school, and six elementary schools. The system was first established in 1942. In 1976 E. Conrad Sloan became the superintendent of the system. Dr. Sloan has encouraged and supported thoughtful risk-taking. Under his leadership the schools have implemented many successful, innovative practices such as whole language literature-based reading, teaching writing as a process, cooperative learning, and Socratic seminars. An outdoor ropes adventure course has been constructed jointly with the base. The system is one of four in the state participating in an exchange with Japan in which we are hosting a teacher from Japan who will teach the Japanese language and culture. Stone Street Elementary and Brewster Middle School have been recognized by the U. S. Department of Education as national schools of excellence; Lejeune High School, as a state school of excellence. Despite the

problems presented by a transient student and teacher population, the school system enjoys an excellent reputation. Programs are in place to assess quickly the needs of each new student, including learning deficits. Student outcomes resulting from the system's innovative programs include student achievement consistently above the national average.

The high school moved into a new structure in 1962 and into another attractive new structure in 1990. The faculty and staff of the high school are a cosmopolitan blend of people who have been there long enough to have established good reputations and a number of new teachers with new ideas every year. The faculty includes four former students at Lejeune High School. Graduates return also as visitors and volunteers. One reason for this allegiance to the school is that the administration and faculty are very student oriented and provide tremendous flexibility in meeting student needs.

Lejeune High School offers a multi-leveled curriculum to students in grades nine through twelve. Students, with the assistance of their parents and school personnel, place themselves into courses at the level their previous grades and standardized test scores would indicate they need. Much emphasis is placed on the students' responsibility for the role they play in the curriculum. Students may reschedule to another level up until the third quarter of the school year. The school has been accredited since 1945. Currently it is one of the first schools in the state to participate in the Southern Association's new alternative route to accreditation by means of a school renewal process. School athletic teams participate in 1-A competition, and Lejeune traditionally has a strong track team. Coaches are often elected by their peers as coaches of the year because of

competitiveness they accomplish with the almost complete turnover of players from year to year. For the past two years Lejeune scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test have been the second highest in the state.

CHAPTER II

CHARACTERS

Administrative Team

My experience reaffirms the recognition of the need to integrate masculine and feminine personal qualities in high school leadership. In examining the relationship between my role and that of the male principal, I found I was redefining school leadership along the lines of Lightfoot as a blending of masculine and feminine qualities. Of the sources of power Brubaker identified as available to help a curriculum leader reach her vision, I feel most empowering with what he termed succorance, or emotional support (1982, p.7). Our principal is a white male in his forties, who is also a lieutenant colonel in the Marine Reserves, working in communications. His specialty is computer technology. As a Marine and son of a career military officer, he is accustomed to operating from the power of positional authority. My principal's encouragement led to my becoming certified as a principal. Together he and I achieve a blend of masculine and feminine qualities in leading the school. He has reached the mid-life transition period and has two pre-school sons who require his nurturing energy. I am now in the generative period of middle adulthood with no children and am able to give my nurturing energy to the staff. Women's studies of developmental psychology support the appropriateness and readiness of women teachers for leadership roles in education because

of their sense of responsibility toward others. (Gilligan, 1982, Sheehy, 1974). Levine's review (1987) of the work of life-span developmental psychologists Erikson and Levinson underscores the importance of a more supportive setting for the adults in a school in order to attend to their developmental needs. Adults "are moving through periods of developmental transition for almost half of their adult lives" (p. 18). Other research notes that women have a more "accommodating" style that "preserves interpersonal relationships" (Smith & Piele, 1989, p.91). Ihle (1991) reports that the subjects of Edson's study of women who aspired to be educational leaders often cited the encouragement of their current superiors as an important factor in their career decisions, and that was true for me.

The assistant principal is a sixty-year old black male, who is a retired enlisted Marine. His focus is "the plant," as he calls it, and discipline. I have resolved as a result of my study to see that the assistant principal and I each become more involved in at least one of the other's major areas of responsibility: his, discipline; mine, teacher evaluation. In this his first year as our assistant principal, he only evaluated the teachers in his teaching field of physical education. Since there are three required observations by a team for each new teacher, and there are three administrators, I think it will be beneficial for the new teachers to have the administrator in charge of discipline to be a part of the first observation team. This means I will have to handle more discipline, but that will be helpful. Each time I have dealt with a discipline problem I have been able to establish or strengthen a relationship or get an idea of a way to improve the setting. Like Lightfoot, I want to change the perception that "School structures are perceived as normal (and therefore correct) and individuals

(whether teachers or children) as the negative forces who are likely to threaten the equilibrium" (1979, p. 26). I am encouraged by the hope the assistant principal has for young people. We have had several brainstorming sessions on how we can help our minority students succeed. We share this common concern and steadfast commitment. By sharing more of our responsibilities, we can avoid creating between us too much of the "natural tension between goverance and instruction areas" (Brubaker & Simon,1986, p.16).

I am exactly between these men in age, a white female, whose career in education began almost thirty years ago. My duties fall under these major headings in my job description: curriculum development, staff development, communications, and related administration such as observations, reports and conferences with teachers; interviews with applicants; coordination of assemblies and ceremonies, the accreditation process, summer school, and the School Improvement Group Network (SIGN). In addition, I attend the weekly meetings of the department heads/team leaders and the students at-risk team.

During my first year as Director of Instruction I was in charge of the weekly meeting of department heads/team leaders, and the principal attended upon request. This group served as an expanded Curriculum Council, which previously had consisted only of the four department heads who were given an extra planning period for their administrative duties. As a part of my practicum, I had observed the original Curriculum Council and immediately warned against the dangers I saw inherent in the composition and intimate nature of the group, as well as the lack of minutes: intimacy to the point of gossip, racist remarks and other

language of elitism--particularly since department heads taught almost exclusively above-average students. I also recommended inviting other staff members who were available during the period in which the Council met. A particularly valuable resource would have been a member of the special education team who was just finishing a doctorate. Their team felt excluded from the school because their location in trailors placed them literally out of the mainstream. (One of the first faculty meetings I planned was an opportunity for them to familiarize everyone with their work.) I also made other suggestions for improving communication so that everyone would feel represented on the Council. Another key staff member, who knew the curriculum better than anyone in the school, had also been excluded--the Director of Guidance. Though the group was productive, the ill will created by its exclusiveness took some time to overcome. When the expanded Curriculum Council began, it was not only doubled by adding all team leaders, I asked for volunteer at-large members. I furnished all faculty and staff extensive minutes with additional tidbits of teacher recognitions, curriculum and instruction, and cartoons, making it almost a weekly newsletter. The assistant principal selected a Governance Council but only met with them a few times, in effect cutting off any input to administrators on anything other than curriculum. In their loyalty to each other the principal and assistant principal had developed what Goffman (1959, p. 214) called "a high in-group solidarity within the team, while creating a backstage image of the audience" which derogated them. Therefore, when the school system offered planning days for teachers to work on the school's goals, site-based management was a top priority with our teachers. With the implementation of the School Improvement Group

Network (SIGN), the next year the purposes of the Curriculum Council and the Governance Council were accomplished in one leadership group.

During the two years I have served as Director of Instruction I have encouraged or facilitated the addition of the following courses to our curriculum: Algebra IA & IB, American Studies, AP Biology, Dance, Japanese, Multimedia, Piano, Reading through the Arts, TV Studio, and the mainstreaming of special education students. I have also personally supervised new independent studies in philosophy and education. As a teacher I taught something new every year, initiating a fine arts appreciation course, creative writing, writing and learning strategies, AP Language and Composition, and a literature-based writing course. I especially enjoyed the courses for which I had to develop the curriculum as I taught the course. Even when a curriculum existed, I adapted it to my students. Currently I am coordinating an experimental project for the Center for Creative Leadership with teachers who volunteered to try to apply the industrial and business model of self-managed work groups to the classroom. I see the curriculum of course offerings as dynamic; the content of the courses as organic.

All these progressive practices are encouraged and supported by the superintendent, who serves as a curriculum leader, meeting weekly with principals and curriculum coordinators. He knows how to effect change in curriculum and teacher behavior by providing his administrators and teachers with the best in staff development. Often in the schools, he feels he has as great a stake in their success as the principals and is almost like a member of the administrative team. He recognized that curriculum could easily be neglected because the operation of the high school is so much

more complex than that of the other schools in the system. Thus he created the position of Director of Secondary Instruction, which I hold, by proposing that the board add a second assistant principal to provide in-house day to day attention to curriculum and instruction.

In an interview Dr. Sloan (1991) said that he was careful to approve for sabbatical leave people who would have much to offer the system upon their return: "I have tried to influence them toward curriculum in their doctoral studies." He cited examples of staff members who had been given positions upon return from sabbaticals in which they could grow professionally while helping the system move in new directions also: technology, middle school, and gifted education. After I completed my certification for the principalship, in addition to certification in curriculum supervision, he had a person who could give the attention to curriculum which he saw that a high school principal hardly had time to give "even if strongly interested in it." He allowed his assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction to serve as our interim principal when the principal was called as a reserve to active duty during Operation Desert Storm in the Persian Gulf, again emphasizing the importance of daily attention to every aspect of school administration.

The three members of the present administrative team represent a diversity in background and viewpoints. As Sarason (1972, p. 283) said, "there is always a tension ...from which something new may emerge." The process of analyzing the role relationship between the principal, assistant principal, and myself was disquieting. We are not an intimate group that spends time talking to each other to the exclusion of others. Our totally opposite approaches to problem solving are sometimes stressful for me

because the men's is based on efficiency and the power of positional authority to expedite action. My approach is based on the power of communication and collaborative support. I listen to others, then determine not only what is best for all concerned but also what steps need to be taken to prevent the problem from recurring, which usually requires time-consuming communication with several individuals. Bennis and Nanus (1985, p. 21), who characterized the difference as "effectiveness versus efficiency," or "vision" versus "judgment," summarized the difference in approach with the following chiasmus: "Managers are people who do things right and leaders are people who do the right thing." Yet the analysis of our administrative team was ultimately rewarding in that it helped me to appreciate each person's contributions and to acknowledge that our mutual leadership is contributing to a better school.

Curriculum Leader

Personal attributes

I view the curriculum leader as one leading a school not only in determining the courses and content offered but also in modeling personal attributes which inspire teachers to inspire students. The personal attributes of a curriculum leader are essentially the same as traits of creativity. For example, creative individuals are constantly alert to discrepancies and the need for changes in their setting. When a person becomes an evaluator of others' performance, the sensitivity to one's own deficiencies and the desire to learn from errors become crucial because those who are being evaluated find it more difficult to point them out. One must also create outlets for the expression of frustrations, as through our

school's and school system's Teacher Advisory Groups, and become sensitive to undercurrents of unrest which one has the potential to calm. The unquenchable thirst for improvement helps create the aesthetic vision which, in a curriculum leader, is the drive toward a better life for the students and adults in the setting they are creating. This drive is not to be confused with the traditional view of upward mobility on a "ladder of success" under an "arc of optimism." As Brubaker (Forthcoming) reminds us in a reference to leadership literature, a creative leader is not climbing a ladder so much as following "intuition, hunches, affection, trust and love" through a zig-zag path. The creative leader does not deny the reality of the obstacles in that path but rather senses them before others and guides them past. Brubaker (Forthcoming) sees the eternal optimist as trying to control the uncontrollable and to escape grief through denial: "There is much to grieve about as a creative leader and to deny this reality is to say, 'I don't value you or myself enough to be honest...'" The creative leader is seeking not to control but to free the creative potential of others and is not so much an optimist as a believer that this liberation is possible. In my case, this belief, or vision, has been strengthened by seeing its reality in students I have taught and colleagues I have empowered.

A sense of humor is related to the exploratory way in which creative people play around with ideas and is an effective way for a leader to defuse tension in a group. The amusement and strangeness of a new way of thinking produce creative solutions to problems, but people must be flexible and self-confident enough to risk appearing foolish and to laugh at themselves. Though I do not feel comfortable as a joke teller, I always sprinkle my talks with a little humor. My sense of humor serves me better

in dealing with embarrassment by laughing at myself and in enjoying the humor of others. Patterson *et al* (1986, p. 48) identified "the acceptability of playfulness" as a clue to school climate. Bolman & Deal (1991, p. 267) illustrated the role of humor in reframing organizations. When a panicked principal called the late Marcus Foster, superintendent of schools in Oakland, California, and said twenty-five armed Black Panthers were outside his office, Foster's only response was, "Think of them as pink panthers." The principal then relaxed about the situation. On the other side of the country, Gordon McAndrew (1967) was being confronted by angry white parents who had brought their children to the opening of the NC Advancement School to find they would be living with black children too. Panicky, Dr. McAndrew went to Governor Sanford, who was present for the opening. The Governor said, "Gordon, that is an interesting administrative problem. I'd like to see the rest of the school." Later the governor relaxed the tension by addressing the faculty and parents: "I just want you people to know that I'm for this school. This is my school, and it is okay."

I have never thought of myself as charismatic in the usual sense of having personal charm. However, my belief that I am the right person to be the curriculum leader of my school, that my abilities are needed at this time, that education is my "calling," is close to the theological definition "a divinely conferred gift or power" and may give me some special attractiveness as a leader. The social distance I keep as a result of long weekday hours and the need for weekend rest may generate some mystification which contributes to charisma, but that is not my intent.

The efforts of creative teachers and leaders to nurture creative thinking in recent years have been constrained by outside authorities and pressures to raise test scores. Our school system is fortunate to have a superintendent who values creativity because he knows it is equally important that our graduates be able to think as well as read. Still the very fact that we participate in state testing is enough reason for some teachers to teach to the test, at least insofar as feeling compelled to cover material. Neither do we build our curriculum around textbooks, yet teachers tend to latch onto a reading list or find something outside themselves and the students that they feel they must do. The curriculum leader must find a way to break the crust of habit and get teachers to experience the joy of the emerging curriculum, of unleashing the hounds of intellectual curiosity. Almost as many ways to accomplish this are needed as there are teachers to inspire: alternative evaluation processes and sharing results with other teachers, teaming teachers with varied styles, co-leading seminars, sending someone to observe someone else, asking teachers to show and tell about their new courses in faculty meetings, building self-confidence by helping them do something they did not think could be done, getting involved with a class and helping to teach it.

As a classroom teacher I created settings that I tended like gardens in which to nurture the growth of my students. It was an overwhelming task. I taxed my ingenuity to find a way to maintain my high level of expectations and still have energy left for a life of my own. If I had taught part-time, I would have received no personnel benefits. Summer renewals sustained me. Finally, to have a longer renewal, I took a sabbatical leave, which eventually led to my position of curriculum leadership. Now I can

help teachers work together to accomplish as a school what I learned I could not do alone no matter how good a teacher I was. I have a teaching situation more appropriate to my strengths--coaching teachers individually or in small groups, weaving strands together from all the teams and committees until we have a strong, unified tapestry that is not only beautiful to behold, but will sustain students for years to come.

Vision brings its own grief, however, when the creative leader foresees ill fate for those who cannot or will not be sustained by the support we offer. A few students have fled my classes because they were unable or unwilling to face feelings or problems that were arising in class discussion or in their writing. Eventually their problems surfaced wherever they went. One beautiful, intelligent girl apparently knew too much to be allowed to leave the underworld which had seduced her, unbeknown to me. I wrote her a note very early in the year telling her my perception of her as lovely and talented, but never smiling and always looking tired or ill. I encouraged her to keep a journal to help her cope with whatever was bothering her. Her response was to change to another class. Once when she saw me in the hall later in the year she said, "I should never have left your class." Within a year her badly decomposed body was found in a bag in the woods. I thought of her when I heard the last words of the main character in the final episode of "China Beach," who said as she tried to come to grips with her experience as a nurse in Vietnam, "I couldn't save them all, but I saved some of them."

Principles and Supporting Practices

Our beliefs form the platform we stand on and the parameters of our vision. By practicing our beliefs educators are part of the curriculum.

Leaders contribute to what teachers and students learn because everything we all do in our setting creates the curriculum from which we learn. Making schools better requires educators to articulate the beliefs which form the basis of their actions. Recent research suggests a "compelling source of difference" in "highly effective" principals is that they act on a "consistent set of criteria," which includes goals that they and their staff have developed, their own beliefs and a vision of what their schools need to be. Their impact accumulates in a way that consistently fosters school improvement, but the actions of principals who operate in a "relatively piecemeal fashion" may work at cross purposes. (Leithwood, 1990, p.85) I share the following beliefs which have emerged from analyzing what I do as the assistant principal for curriculum and instruction in a good high school. These beliefs will emerge again and again throughout this self-portrait and a brief discussion of each immediately follows:

> I believe a curriculum leader has a thorough grounding in teaching, that a good teacher is an eternal student, and that good teachers and good leaders possess personal attributes that are traits of creativity.
>
> I believe it follows then that good curriculum leaders would view the creation of the school setting as a work of art, and that as eternal students, they would study the history and culture of the settings in which they lead.
>
> Curriculum leaders trust and respect teachers as they would have the teachers trust and respect students. Their trust and respect empowers others.
>
> To have an outstanding school, a leader needs a vision, a passionate drive to reach it and the metaphorical language to inspire others to share it. The essence of my vision is that students will not only achieve but do so with a sense of justice and concern for others and by assuming the major responsibility for it themselves.

> I believe the leader sets the example for reaching the vision by balancing a commitment to followers with a commitment to the task.
>
> Finally, I believe just as a new teacher needs a mentor, a new leader needs a mentor, preferably one who is a curriculum leader

Vision, Passion, and Compassion

Most transformational leaders need a public and a private vision as well as a sensitivity to their public's readiness for the private vision. I have a private vision of a school that can transform students into people who can transform society. The passion of this loftier vision may infuse the setting even before I reveal it. My public vision of parents and teachers actively allied to reach our higher expectations for students is more readily attainable, I hope, and a necessary step toward my farther reaching vision. A first step, however, was to lead the faculty in arriving at a consensus as to our vision. At the beginning of each new school year I lead them in revising or recommitting to that vision. Currently we have utilized an acronym as a way to begin so that teachers and students can keep it in mind: We **WRAP** our students as a gift to the future. They will be

Well in body, mind, and spirit

Responsible

Achievers

Participants in the democratic process.

I try to inspire the faculty to work toward this vision by conveying my passion for both the task and for them. For example, I have opened a faculty meeting in which I planned to give feedback by telling them, "There is not only something good and exciting going on around here everyday; there are innumerable good and exciting things going on around here

everyday!"

My commitment to compassion is conveyed in the following epilogue to Ginott's Teacher and Child (1972, p. 317):

> On the first day of the new school year, all the teachers in one private school received the following note from their principal:
> Dear Teacher:
> I am a survivor of a concentration camp. My eyes saw what no man should witness:
> Gas chambers built by learned engineers.
> Children poisoned by educated physicians.
> Infants killed by trained nurses.
> Women and babies shot and burned by high school and college graduates.
> So, I am suspicious of education.
> My request is: Help your students become human. Your efforts must never produce learned monsters, skilled psychopaths, educated Eichmanns. Reading, writing, arithmetic are important only if they serve to make our children more humane.

I too fear excellent minds which lack ethics and compassion for all cultures. One step toward my vision of achievement balanced with compassion is to include a study of the Holocaust in our high school curriculum. We began with tenth grade English studying The Diary of Ann Frank and expanded this year to joining the German class in a seminar on Elie Wiesel's Night. I am co-leading seminars with the teachers as a form of in-service training in this Socratic method, bringing together students of all ability levels. Also I am urging yet another review of our multileveled course offerings. Although the stake holders were satisfied with it in the last survey, that was over five years ago. Teachers and parents of bright students fear their learning will suffer in classes with average students. At first that may happen because of the gap that exists from the years of separate groups.. There may be embarrassing, difficult moments until students build a mutual background in a subject. To

facilitate that, we will need to offer after-school coaching/tutoring. Our valedictorian was assigned to me in an independent study of homogeneous (his experience at out school) vs. heterogeneous groups (his experience tutoring at the middle school). Now our site-based management group will look at his recommendations.

Education is a sacred calling to a cause beyond oneself. I have always viewed the lives in my care as a sacred trust. I agree with Macdonald and Purpel that education is a "questing for our highest human aspirations...[and] a sacred process" (1987, p. 187). I could not make anything else my life work, any more than an artist could stop creating. Though I have not discussed this spiritual or religious dimension of leadership (Brubaker & Simon, 1986, pp.22-23) with the faculty, they know that I see my work as more than a job when I try to inspire everyone to work together to achieve our vision for our students. Sergiovanni (1984) used the image of "high priest" to describe the communicator of the school's vision because the leader's purpose is to get people to believe the vision is possible. I guard against tears or a choked voice when I talk about the good work we are doing and can do because I do not want to make someone uneasy that I am too emotional. Empathy is my strength; aesthetic distance, my weakness. On the other hand, I worry that I may overcompensate by doing too much to show I care. But I am reassured by the message on Taylor's (1991) transparency in his keynote address to administrators in southeastern North Carolina:

> Excellence can be attained if you
> ◊ care more than others think is wise
> ◊ risk more than others think is safe
> ◊ dream more than others think is practical
> ◊ expect more than others think is possible.

I refer to Goffman's theory (1959, p.216) of dramaturgical discipline to remind myself that my focus must remain on the task: "offer a show of intellectual and emotional involvement" but keep from being "carried away...lest this destroy...involvement in the task."

The first year I joined the administrative team I became known as "the one to see if you want something done." The faculty senses dedication in me as much as I did in the administrators and teachers where I was a high school student from 1955-59. But to what were those educators in the fifties dedicated? We knew their high expectations of behavior very well, but they did not even expect the top students to be able to write their own graduation speeches--they ordered some for us! People get what they expect from others, and they expect what they project of themselves. I am a hard-working, conscientious, dedicated educator. I expect others to be the same. I therefore set the tone for high expectations. I invite everyone in the setting to share this belief and to share it in turn with students. We have to test our limits to stretch theirs, making us vulnerable to failure, but that vulnerability is the opportunity to grow stronger, not weaker. My vision for our students today is to stretch their minds to the utmost, unlike my education in the fifties, and to develop not only students' self-discipline and sound character but also their desire to uphold democratic values. All through my high school days I watched a bus travel the same route as mine, taking black students to another high school. I felt it was wrong, but it was never discussed, and we were practically oblivious to the fact that segregation was a current event. Twenty years later, one of the first black students to enter a previously all-white N.C. high school decided to become a teacher: "I had received my summons as surely as the men of the cloth

receive theirs. I felt...the anguish that change was bringing...I realized we would need people in the classrooms to ease that pain. I felt I was one of those special people." Donna Oliver told about this decision in the University of North Carolina at Greensboro alumni newspaper when she became the National Teacher of the Year. Lightfoot (1983, p.342) said good schools have a few stars, such as Donna Oliver, and a few "duds," but they "must collect mostly good teachers and treat them like chosen people."

To attain my lofty private vision, I would follow my mentor's passions as a model upholding excellence and equity for students and act to remove a teacher who was a "dud." I will take whatever steps are necessary to help a teacher improve, but if he or she does not improve to at least standard, I will also document that and take whatever steps necessary. Sergiovanni (1990, p. 24) used Lipsitz' description of North Carolina principal Wilma Parrish as an example of "leadership by outrage," caring enough to show passion and take risks for the sake of her students. Parrish reminds us that tenured teachers can be fairly evaluated and dismissed through proper due process. However, the evaluation of new teachers in our system is so rigorous, we are not likely to have a teacher below standard. Each year each new teacher has three formal observation reports and conferences by a team of three people: a mentor, an administrator, and a central office observer/evaluator. Mentors conduct additional observations and conferences, as needed, for the purpose of giving feedback and assistance for the growth and development of the new teachers.

Curriculum Leaders: Eternally Teachers, Students and Creative People

To be a good teacher, one must be an eternal student. Brubaker (1985,

p.177) defined curriculum as "what each person experiences as learning settings are created," and asserted that the learning of the adults is as important as the learning of students. He found from a study of autobiographies and biographies of educational leaders that "the curiosity or desire to learn on the part of the leader was a key factor in motivating others." Staying well informed is extremely time consuming and requires an unquenchable thirst for learning; however, there is little opportunity for leaders to read during school because time is spent interacting. Moreover, I want to read reflectively, pausing to think and write, so I read, study, and plan at least half of my waking weekend and evenings. "Introspection and reflection are at the center of creative leadership" (Brubaker, Forthcoming), and a curriculum leader is a creative leader. A curriculum leader is also an intellectual leader, who not only fosters greater achievement in students but also enriches the intellectual lives of teachers. I share ideas and materials from my reading and viewing with students and teachers.

A curriculum leader is a teacher--first, foremost, and always. Originally a principal was the principal teacher in a school. Sergiovanni (1990, pp.82-85) reported on a principal who is the principal teacher, relating how he turned a bad school into a good one. One reason the principal was successful was that he was so "comfortable with his knowledge of curriculum and teaching" that he did not hesitate to let teachers know when their performance was not up to his standards. Barth found "an unmistakable correlation between the way a person works with faculty and the way teachers work with students."(Barth, 1980, p.215) I once heard a Principal of the Year, Dan Jones, say, "I was a born teacher. I'm still a teacher--a teacher of teachers." As a "born teacher," I

demonstrate anything I expect teachers to do. I plan a presentation just as I would a lesson for the classroom, making the same efforts to create a setting conducive to teaching and learning. I begin one staff development session with a review of the last. I use good humor and recognition to win over the rebellious and followup with individual coaching. In my first year as the Director of Instruction I also had a student, who became our valedictorian. She came to us having already completed the senior Advanced Placement Literature and Composition course and wanting to take the philosophy course she would have taken in her previous school. I agreed to supervise her independent study of philosophy. This unique opportunity resulted in performance assessment of the highest order: we were privileged to hear a valedictory address which is not likely to be surpassed. The principal warned me against taking a student and definitely did not want me to teach a class. I can see from the experience of the athletic director, who teaches two history classes, how very difficult it is to meet a regular class because of the unscheduled demands on an administrator, but I am glad that I found a way to continue to teach through what actually became a mentor role. Since graduating, the student has returned to help lead seminars. The salutatorian for that year wanted so much to have a similar experience that he returned in the summer after his freshman year in college to be a volunteer administrative intern. After I asked the next year's top-ranked student to tour middle school teachers around the school, he and they proposed combining tutoring at the middle school with an independent study of educational philosophy. I hope these positive experiences will set a precedent which will grow to include more administrators and more students.

At a point in the year when because of maternity leaves and military deployments we had no substitute teachers and everyone was getting on edge from losing planning periods to cover classes, I tried to model to the team leaders the attitude I hoped they would have with teachers and students. I told them they could be the determining factor in creating a more positive climate and made the following remarks:

> We can model the willingness to take responsibility for our own behavior, and say--as some of you have--"This is our job. This is a far better setting than most. Let's get on with it and stop complaining about it!" How can we expect students to take responsibility for their behavior and improve their attitudes if we do not? At the same time, we need to be supportive of each other and alert each other to the danger of turning our frustrations on each other over flaws in the system that none of us can control. We teach our students a tremendously valuable lesson when we model the willingness to do something about problems--adapt and adopt, not moan and groan. If you hear a teacher or student complaining about some change and mistaking it for disorganization, tell them we prefer the flexibility for change to the stagnation of a bureacracy that is well organized because everything continues in the same old predictable way. Tell them the working world is going through a transformation. Jobs are not routine anymore. For some time now industry has been requiring collaboration, creativity, and the flexibility to keep learning and trying new ideas. Surely you can vouch for this transformation in teaching, as well as model it for them. Sarah Levine, of the Harvard Principals' Center says, "Everyone in the school--administrators, teachers, support staff, and children--must exhibit, model, even exude the uncertainty, vulnerability, curiosity, openness, and questioning characteristic of lifelong change learning." (1987, p.18)

The openmindedness Levine describes is an essential characteristic of the creative person. It is closely related to the willingness to take risks and learn from mistakes, accepting the risk of failure as part of the

learning/creating/making meaning process. I have always preferred "working at the edge more than the center of competence" (Perkins, 1982, p.2). Every year as a teacher I developed a new course or at least taught something different. Risk taking is also an essential part of the creative leader's intuition in decision making. Since intuition is based on past experience, the more one risks experiencing, the greater one's potential intuition.

I am a proponent of Sizer's principles for reforming secondary schools (1989). He uses the metaphor of coaching as the pedagogy which will provoke students to learn how to learn and thus teach themselves. He believes teachers should model themselves after athletic coaches, advising and encouraging students rather than lecturing them. The Coalition of Essential Schools, which Sizer has started, is trying the same approach to staff development and so am I. The way I prepare teachers for coaching is by making clear expectations in staff development sessions and providing some opportunity for practice with feedback from colleagues. Teachers schedule a time they prefer for a classroom observation. In a post conference I ask questions leading them to reflect on what transpired. Then I share my observations, and together we try to determine the best way to proceed. I offer pertinent articles to enrich them intellectually, and they bring articles to me. I have also encouraged team teaching and/or planning as another avenue to collegial coaching, a practice which was totally unknown in my setting until the advent of official mentors in recent years. I am operating from the blend of masculine authority and feminine nurturance which Lightfoot saw as a redefinition of leadership common

in the good high schools she studied (1983, p.333).

Mutual Trust and Respect

Administrators and teachers need to show each other mutual respect and trust, just as teachers and students do. My belief that teachers deserve all the respect administrators can convey was reinforced by Poole's study (1990) in which teachers in our school system identified a major responsibility of administrators as being supportive and respectful of teachers. Indicators of respect were listening to teachers, asking for their ideas and assistance, and including them in school planning. Murphy (1988) observed that leaders who want to project a heroic image perceive listening as appearing uninformed and weak. I spend the majority of my time listening to teachers and following up with resources or whatever action is appropriate. I seek teachers' opinions to include them in decision making. I show my respect for them by being well planned for staff development or any other presentation to them. I offer to help them or to demonstrate anything I ask of them; e.g. leading them and their students in seminars. I include them in interview panels. Because I am a risk-taker, I am honest and open with them. I think it is usually best not to do something if I would not want them to know. This is not to say I am unaware of politics. The site-based management team does think politically to develop strategies to accomplish what they as an elected body think is best for the school. But I do not feel the need to preserve a front. For instance, I like the messy process by which I arrive at results to show on my desk. I have posted on my door a photograph of Einstein's messy office with the caption, "unfinished cosmic business." I want to convey that

authentic problem-solving--the work of improving a school--is a big job. I want everyone to see how much I need everyone's help, and that it will not be a perfunctory fill-in-the-form task but time-consuming questioning and reflecting.

Trust grows from the amount of time people spend together. I spend a good deal of time with individual teachers, but I also see that we spend time together as a group building mutual memories. In the first staff development session in the new building I stressed the unique potential for creativity in our liminal state. I also acknowledged the grief many were feeling at the loss of the old setting. The longer we had been there, the more memories it held. The same was true of students: the seniors disliked the new setting. The less time students had attended the old setting, the more they liked the new one. I urged them to be young again and revel in the newness of the setting. We literally could not operate in the same old way, but we could use the tension to charge our creativity to deal with the change. Stripped of almost all our old baggage, standing on the threshold of new beginnings, we had an opportunity to create a setting that would be a work of art. I encouraged them to charge their students' creative juices with an exchange of power, getting out of the focus and giving students power to make choices and decisions. After I had used the analogy of the teacher as artist, they had fun generating their own analogies. I encouraged characteristics of creativity such as fluency by asking the teachers with the longest lists to read theirs.

Creation of a New Setting

Because of my experience as a successful teacher, the staff

development I presented was effective according to the evaluation forms. However I realize now that the change to the new setting--particularly the loss of a classroom all their own--was too overwhelming for many teachers. There were terrible morale problems from the lack of ownership of the building's design. Teachers were not creating settings in the classrooms they used. Perhaps they were protesting having to move from one room to another or perhaps they were so preoccupied with getting everything they needed to the next classroom that they lost sight of the setting once they got there. In the new school, there is no space to spare. It was designed to give teachers office space with telephones on each teacher's desk. Teachers leave the classrooms for planning periods. All classrooms are always in use. The communal office suites for math, science, and the humanities encourage collegial planning, and the telephones encourage communication with parents. The trade-off has been the teachers' frustration over the loss of classrooms of their own. We have not yet resolved this dilemma of setting, but we have managed to make teachers much less mobile. Teachers seem to appreciate our efforts given our constraints and exhibit much better spirits in this second year.

One setting over which I did have some control was the faculty meeting. I changed it from the cafeteria, which is close to the office, large, impersonal, and smelling of disinfectant after school, to the largest classroom, which is the farthest from the office and has better acoustics and chairdesks that can be put in discussion circles. The atmosphere was totally different. Teachers were attentive and quiet in the large group, then communicated well with each other in small groups. Also, since the auditorium was cut from the budget, and the acoustics in the gym made it

hard to have even a pep rally, there was no place to build a sense of community by bringing everyone in the school together. The head of the Faculty Sunshine Committee and I shared an intense covenant to plan rituals which would build a sense of community. At the end of the first semester, students were leaving for a break at a time when we had no idea what tragedies they might face from Desert Storm. She had the chorus prepare a song I suggested, "Let There Be Peace on Earth," which they sang for the student body before we lit a candle to burn until all the troops returned. At the end of the school year, we had our talented faculty members entertain students with songs, creating a setting in which students could feel the caring all around them in a memorable way. Both ceremonies were short, so we simply had everyone standing in the large lobby designed to accomodate the missing auditorium.

Ceremonies we continued from the old setting were those for recognition of academic achievement, such as an evening banquet for scholars. In the future I would like to add discussion/seminar opportunities for the scholars such as I tried this year with a few of them when they found the speech made at the banquet controversial. In the old building the entire student body had attended the awards day ceremony and honor roll assemblies. These ceremonies were long, causing student restlessness that could be interpreted as disrespect. The tone of these ceremonies improved when we had two awards days and assemblies only for the honor roll students in the cafeteria, where we could not seat the entire student body.

Aware of the need to start off right, the setting I created for myself in my new position as the Director of Instruction endeared me to the

counselors and the teachers. The counselor who was going to be moved to the library to make room for me in the administrative offices was almost ready to retire. She leads a very regimented life and was already having difficulties coping with her elderly mother's recent death. Another change would have been at worst traumatic and at the least terribly inconvenient. I maneuvered to make my office a room recently vacated by an aide for a blind student when he graduated. It was located in the middle of the school and made me the most accessible administrator. A phone was installed just for teachers' use, so there was much communication between us as they came and went using the phone. I was able to give them the support that they needed in order to continue giving support to their students.

Brubaker (1986, pp.19-20), in applying Sarason's concept of the creation of a setting as a work of art to the curriculum leader, recommended that new leaders study the history and culture of a setting. Though I was new to the position, I had been in the setting twelve years and thought I knew the setting. Then the superintendent brought the information to consider applying for the U.S. Department of Education's School Recognition Program. The principal had been called to active duty as a reserve in the Marines, but the team leaders wanted to try. Of the seven categories of conditions of effective schooling documented on the application, I wrote or edited all because I did not want teaching to suffer from lack of time or attention. I had read Glickman's charge that "Ordinary schools are busy convincing themselves and others how excellent they are; great schools know that they are not as good as they can be" (1990, p. 71). We are fortunate in some ways to have at least a ten percent turnover--often twenty--in faculty annually due to military

transfers. The majority of our faculty cannot dwell on some golden age of the past to the neglect of the future. As my mentor points out, there is a continuous source of fresh ideas from new teachers. The unfortunate aspect of this situation is that there are few remaining heroes, but I will tell in the next paragraph about one.

The process of producing the portrait of our school forced me to learn more than I realized there was to know about our setting and proved invaluable in giving me direction. An unexpected benefit for the students and community was an outgrowth of my discovery that one of our faculty members, a former student who became a teacher after serious injuries in Vietnam ended his career as a Marine, was a walking history of the setting. What he does not carry in his head and heart is literally stored in his archives, or he knows someone who has it. When he mentioned that the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the school was almost upon us, I encouraged him to offer a course in which students could write the history of the school. He is already working with the multimedia teacher and we expect the entire school to become involved in a memorable celebration. Sergiovanni (1990, p. 88) passed on the recommendation of Terrence Deal in his book Corporate Cultures that "a school's culture can be strengthened by first beginning to explore and document its history."

My twelve-year knowledge of the setting from a teacher's perspective gave me a firm foundation of ideas for improvements based on an understanding of the points of view of teachers and students. I am holding onto that perspective and seeking to integrate it with the administrative perspective to achieve the coherence that builds trust. Patterson *et al* (1986, p. 117) described my point of view and actions very well: "Integrity means

to deal with the many challenges...from a central point of view that integrates values, intention, and action...When the actions of the organization are integrated, they have integrity."

Leaders Balance Commitments

Leaders constantly struggle to balance a commitment to followers with a commitment to the task. My dilemma is to help teachers enough to earn their respect, yet to maintain my expectations and their feeling of autonomy. I was afraid there might be a problem evaluating friends when I became their supervisor, so I asked a department head who had been trained in the state evaluation process and a system evaluator to help me. I proceeded to do the evaluations without compromise and continued to show my care for friends. There has not been any problem. In fact, a friend and former colleague followed my suggestions for improvement and has since informed me that she credits what I taught her about collaborative performance assessment with getting her next teaching position. I credit my teaching experience with my own credibility with former colleagues. I further involved department heads in doing teacher observations by asking one to combine it with the opportunity to take her student teacher with her to see another teacher. Another department head volunteered to substitute for one of his team members during a planning period and to combine following up on his lesson with doing an observation. This unobtrusive expansion of teacher leadership set a successful precedent which I expect to continue.

The mature leader also represents a balance of traits traditionally both male and female, as a symbol of authority, yet one who inspires others

without fear. Students were mystified by my new and unfamiliar role. After I observed classes I gave them positive feedback when I saw them in the hall. After I read their complaints about the enriched level of classes (E) in a student government report, they learned that I will listen and that they do have influence on curriculum and instruction. I came to the classes and encouraged closer communication between the enriched level teachers and advanced placement level. We have eliminated the E level in some courses and are studying all of them.

An example of the way a curriculum leader blends concern for individuals with commitment to the task is my involvment with an art class. Students in the last class period of the day are harder for everyone to manage, but the art teacher's last class was an especially difficult situation because of the combination of individuals in the class and the freer nature of the activities. I recruited a parent volunteer who was an art education major. When the art teacher had to go into the hospital for surgery, the volunteer became his substitute. I suggested she give the class that gave him the most trouble the opportunity to create greeting cards for him as a way to strengthen a bond between them.

My mentor's journal revealed a way she was struggling to maintain balance: "I am trying not to fall into traps--people trying to 'play up to me'--people and events hardening me. I am taking a second look at myself." This sort of reflection and self-assessment is essential for a leader because people find it difficult to give honest criticism to their leader. She was also very interested in my observations as an outsider. The superintendent's way of attending to followers as well as tasks is to be sensitive to the concerns he hears expressed in the Teachers Advisory Group, where

representatives of each school bring the concerns from their faculty. Since people tend to defer to the leader ("Not many times has someone come directly to tell me I am wrong."), he has established opportunities for dialogue where he can get indirect feedback. When he hears others identify goals and barriers to reaching them in strategic planning process, he has another opportunity to reflect and assess himself as a leader.

Responsibilities

The position of a director of instruction should include time for scholarship and reflection, but there is no time for that during the teachers' hours. Time is consumed interacting with individuals at the rate of several dozen a day, meeting with groups, and observing and writing evaluations of classes. Boyer's description of a principal is apt when I am in the halls: "a state of perpetual motion...to deal on the run with a wide variety of people in brief, episodic fashion" (1983, p. 222). I have sacrificed visible presence in the halls to stay in my office when I am not scheduled to be elsewhere. I have chosen to be accessible for more in-depth discussion. Regardless of other major responsibilities, discussed further into the chapter--such as accreditation, site-based management, and teacher evaluation--I feel my primary responsibility is communication with the people in the school. The importance of communication is the part of the curriculum I teach. I have accepted the fact that other work will have to be done before and after the teachers' working hours, which last from 7:30 to 3:30. I usually even write positive, personal notes to teachers after I am at home, where my train of thought will not be interrupted. I remember so disdainfully the cryptic summons "See me" of a previous school leader. Furthermore, a more

specific note can be included in a teacher's documentation requirement for a rating above standard. I also send positive notes to students. Notes are less problematic than public praise because of backlash from those who are not recognized. References to what other teachers are doing to implement progressive practices are carefully worded for more subtle recognition through announcements; e.g. "Ms. _____ and I will be conducting a seminar Tue. 2nd period in 206 on the holocaust. You are welcome to attend or you may borrow the videotape."

The interpretive method of inquiry, based on primacy of experience, is a powerful process of self-reflection for the practitioner, enabling a deeper understanding of a setting and one's role in it. In the writing of this study I became more fully aware of the extent to which I have begun to serve as a curriculum leader, a role for which I had some unique preparation. I had worked in schools across the state helping teachers field test a communications curriculum we had developed to replace English for underachievers at the North Carolina Advancement School. I had been on the staff of Project Change, an innovative humanities curriculum consortium of twelve school systems in the state. Though my title in my new position was Director of Secondary Instruction, the principal told me in addition to needing help with the many hours required in evaluating teachers, he also needed more help in supervising evening activities. I was primarily interested in instilling higher morale by helping teachers any way I could. To the first person who asked me what I wanted to do in my new position, my spontaneous reply was, "Make teachers feel someone cares about them." My first teacher contact showed my commitment to a more personal, nurturing workplace. I involved a department head in

decision making regarding teaching assignments. Then she asked for my guidance in her graduate program. She also needed reassurance in her new role as a department head and later in the year during a serious health problem. My thoughts were constantly of ways to help teachers and to improve the school. I really was not thinking of myself as assuming a leadership role so much as being the faculty's cheerleader, another role I had experienced. The faculty needed an advocate and positive recognition; I had enough self-confidence from a career of successful teaching to have little need of personal recognition. The directory in the lobby listed the principal, assistant principal, director of student activites, and director of athletics, but not the director of instruction. I was introduced to the faculty but not the parents at Open House. My office was not in the administrative suite but near the faculty. They needed an advocate and positive recognition. Individually and in faculty meetings I acknowledged the pressure they were under and gave specific examples of the good things I saw them doing. I did not make decisions in isolation but in consultation with those who would be affected by them. Having already established mutual respect with colleagues, I was open to their wisdom, not threatened by it. I had always been amazed that administrators seemed so unaware or unconcerned about the ripple effect of their last minutes changes in plans. I was content with faculty appreciation for my support. A problem had grown out of the close loyalty of the principal and assistant principal to each other. The principal had no experience teaching in a high school; the assistant had taught in our school one year. They developed a "high in-group solidarity...while creating a backstage image of the audience" which derogated them. I knew I was the right person at the right time, and I

worked away night and day--not as a manager doing things right but as a person of conscience doing the right things for the teachers and the students and using every opportunity to raise the administration's respect for them. Murphy (1988, p.657) observed that administrative positions vary in their requirements: "Administrators who succeed hold positions that match their talents and their personalities." I was a good match for my position.

Leadership was quickly thrust upon me. In their concern that I might "burn out," teachers said things were "dumped" on me, and indeed my first leadership task was. The principal and assistant returned from the superintendent's office with a form for the school's first site-based school renewal plan and handed it to me to do. They offered nothing more except expressions that were hard to fathom. I did not know whether they were looks of pity or guilt, but I had the feeling I was being given my initiation. In fact, I was being given the opportunity to become a curriculum leader. I had been prepared for this by my selection to represent the school at a strategic planning retreat. I chose to lead the faculty through the same consensus building process of goal setting that I had experienced at the retreat. The principal, who had been to the same training I had, told me that he learned a lot from watching me lead the faculty through the process. I thanked the faculty for the excellent contributions they made in our first experience ever at open discussion aimed at assuming responsibility for the school's direction. In subsequent goal group meetings I listened to the "oldtimers" vent their frustrations. In the discussion of their goal to improve school climate they were able to address their morale problems openly and officially. The experience was a dramatic turning

point, producing a cathartic effect.

Next I was asked to select a group of teachers who would be released from classes one day each month to represent us at system-wide meetings of the School Improvement Group Network (SIGN). Instead of leaving it to the group to decide what our agenda would be in our first site-based management experience, the principal asked the superintendent what he suggested. The superintendent's suggestion was, "High expectations," so I asked for volunteers from that committee. Then I recruited someone from each of the other committees who would give the group a mixture of race, gender, and teaching experience. I also included the most knowledgeable and cynical members of the faculty so that a diversity of viewpoints would be represented. I was carefully starting to weave us together as a community. These teacher/administrator collegial groups were planned to give principals the opportunity to learn strategies for instructional leadership from teachers, but the prinicipal designated me to attend. I had just left teaching myself, so we were a very collegial group, but we had to plan how to include the principal as well as how to improve the school. We asked the principal to meet with us and one of the project's university consultants, Dr. Dale Brubaker of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, who led us toward commitment by asking individuals to tell, "What is in it for me?" We identified ownership, renewal, and a broader view of education--answers which indicated commitment to a cause larger than oneself. The principal indicated a dilemma of wanting to support the site-based management team but having to support the superintendent as well. He expressed his belief that being a team player is important; he apparently felt he was caught in the middle between two teams, not knowing where to

play. I believed the superintendent would support site-based management. Because the superintendent is a curriculum leader also, I have confidence in my interpretation of his expectations and philosophy. At that point the faculty was skeptical of the principal's support, and the principal was skeptical of the superintendent's support. I think my confidence and optimism was the factor that kept our forward momentum, and it was based on my trust in the superintendent, which has proved to be well founded, thus bolstering the principal's confidence in me. Since then the principal has turned more to the people he leads for shared decision making as well as to his leader. We create a base of support for him and a sense of ownership for ourselves.

Another major responsibility I was given is the accreditation procedure for membership in the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). We decided to participate in the new alternative procedure focusing on continuous school improvement activities. Instead of the principal appointing committees and chairs as traditionally done, SIGN provided direction. We reviewed our goals and decided the goals should determine our committees. We asked everyone on the faculty to rank their choices among our three goals. Then a computer program formed committees representing a mixture of subject areas and number of years experience at the school. Since we have three goals, the committees were large, but they assumed responsibility for establishing their own subcommittees. They also decided what steps to take, who would take them, and by what timeline they will meet the goals. By enabling faculty members to take real responsibility for the direction of the school, we develop leadership and a sense of ownership. Despite the frustration of the

ambiguous nature of the task, that same lack of structure has generated a creativity which is empowering teachers.

A third responsibility for which I have been a curriculum leader in the right place at the right time is staff development. For the first time we have been expected to plan much of our own staff development at each school in another aspect of site-based management. Out of my own curiosity I attended a state conference to hear Dr. Theodore Sizer speak on the Coalition of Essential Schools. Then the school system sent me and a teacher to Brown University for a Coalition Institute. I then presented the following Coalition principles in sessions during our staff development days prior to the opening of school: Teacher as Coach/Student as Worker, Teacher as Generalist: Essential Questions to Shape a School Curriculum, Authentic Work/Performance Assessment. Also all SIGN members led faculty groups in consensus building. Teachers were asked to invite an administrator to observe them trying one of the ideas presented in staff development. Teachers' efforts were noted in the written reports of their observations, or if these practices were not in evidence, suggestions for their use were noted and discussed in conferences with teachers.

All these responsibilities were new ventures which were based on a new sharing of power; therefore, the faculty and administration needed education. Our School Improvement Group Network provided the SIGN members with this opportunity in monthly system-wide meetings, reading material, and consultants, but we had to educate the rest of the faculty and staff. In my first year I had also been given responsibility for the newly expanded Curriculum Council, so I took the lead in sharing information with the Council and with the principal. I challenged them to be in the

vanguard and to accept the fact that we would have to find our own way, tolerating ambiguity. I pointed out that I was probably the only one who had ever experienced shared decision making in an organization because of a unique experience in an experimental school where no one--including the director, who was a PhD and Fulbright recipient--presumed to know enough to make decisions alone. Certainly our principal had not experienced it in the military. I acknowledged the frustration we would experience but predicted the benefits would sustain us. I brought into the open old frustrations which had caused gossip and griping. For example, members were feeling that they just had to do work administrators did not want to do, and the administrators were feeling that shared decision making just made more work for them. I asked everyone to accept that the process would be more time consuming for everyone but was a necessary part of becoming a more effective school. I suggested we turn to technology to try to save time which we could then spend on site-based management. The group agreed that the process was slow but had these benefits: prevents problems, generates more good ideas, gives individuals a greater feeling of worth and everyone a greater sense of ownership and responsibility. The council members then shared their understanding with their teams. Later SIGN members also met with teams to determine whether there was a consensus on support of site-based management because we did not get an open exchange when we presented the proposal to the faculty as a whole. We speculated that the concept of participatory management was so radical that they were either silent in disbelief or in fear of spontaneous comments and questions in the presence of the principal. Indeed there were some indications that what we were learning

about site-based management and the principal's conception of it were quite different, as when he said, "I will not let you make a bad decision." His confidence in SIGN's decision-making skills grew after its first year in operation while he was absent due to the Desert Storm reservist reactivation.

When he first assumed the principalship six years ago, the principal designated the four department heads as his curriculum council. Empowerment has since expanded to a site-based management team made up of representatives elected by students, teachers, staff, and parents. Personal attributes of patience, honesty, risk-taking, openness, sensitivity, vision, intuition based on keen observation, tolerance for ambiguity, trust, and appreciation for diversity have helped me lead us to this point. According to the stages of leadership for school improvement that Sergiovanni (1990, p. 30-32) outlines, building on Burns and Bennis, my first year of leadership in my school setting was initiation. We started by bartering: I gave them support and recognition in return for their support and trust. The second year was the stage of uncertainty as we muddled through the new site-based management and accreditation processes for the first time. Morale had been built to the point that we could experience empowerment. In this third year I am trying for a breakthrough to transformational leadership. In my speech to the faculty on the opening day of school I tried to "elevate school goals and purposes to the level of a shared covenant that bonds together leader and follower in a moral commitment."

Mentors and Understudies

I found my own mentor, just as a young teacher working on his certification has gravitated to me for advice and exchange of philosophy on curriculum and pedagogy, a void he says I am filling at the school. (I was his English teacher there also when he was in high school.) He appreciates my "constant flow of ideas" which he knows results from "an extraordinary amount of time thinking about the curriculum at this school." He is interested in every aspect of the school and has already assumed a strong leadership role in SIGN. In his initial presentation to the faculty he showed his storytelling ability by relating how he manipulated his parents as a teenager as an example of how students will try to manipulate us if we are not united in enforcing the school's rules. In this informal mentoring relationship I am doing what I learned in graduate school a leader should do: start grooming a replacement as soon as one assumes a position. He is an excellent teacher and a student--constantly seeking stimulating discussion. He says he does not always know how to answer the questions I regularly raise and leave in his mailbox, but he appreciates the food for thought. I asked him to assist in training and demonstrating the leading of seminars. He will be a wonderful curriculum leader.

"Creative leadership occurs when the leader uses his or her talents to help others identify and use their talents" (Brubaker, Forthcoming). Just as the superintendent released the potential for curriculum leadership he saw in my mentor and later in me, I have already begun to do the same. On our faculty and staff are three extremely capable women who have reached the generative stage of middle adulthood. I have enabled them to

share their abilities with the rest of the faculty and staff. One has a counseling degree but prefers "teaching to testing." She was willing to become coordinator of our advisory program, in which teachers have a guidance role with approximately a dozen students, meeting them a period each week. Another teacher represents the era of talented women, soon to retire from teaching, who probably would have entered other professions if they had been born later. She probably would be a lawyer or journalist had the University .of North Carolina been open to women when she entered college. Now that she has an ailing husband, she cannot go back to school, but she was willing to attend a summer institute at Harvard and become coordinator of our Harvard-Milton Study Skills program. Our school nurse is highly overqualified and was delighted to assume leadership on the team serving at-risk students and in the sex education aspect of our advisory program. She also has assumed the unofficial role of the teachers' nurse and as such does more nurturing of them than all the rest of us. These people have kept in almost daily contact with me, and my support helped boost their confidence.

In none of the instances described above has there been any overt acknowledgment of a mentoring relationship. On the other hand, a new colleague told me she needed me to be her mentor. With a background of competitive recognition for teaching excellence and high expectations from her father, she feels much pressure to achieve more prestige and authority. Her demands not only alienated others, they undermined the efforts of the site-based management team, thereby preventing her from being elected to it and causing me to think twice about helping her achieve leadership. Learning via the hard route of experience does offer added benefits of

patience and humility. I had been offering her advice, hoping to get her to share my beliefs rather than to take on the language and role of the oppressor. Too often her head is tilted back in superiority or lowered in a coquettish, little girl gaze rather than a straightforward readiness for honest communication. In the hours I have spent listening I have heard language filled with negatives and self-pity. I can hear the pain and see the fear, distrust, and insecurity of over half a century of feeling discriminated against. All I can do is try to be with her in her pain but not her pity, and hope that she may be able to share some of the trust in and respect for the faculty that helps give me confidence. I will go on trying to help her "transcend the limits of cultural awareness" (Macdonald, 1977).

Now that I have studied Goffman, I have a new appreciation for being a "team player," which I can share with her. Heretofore I had reacted negatively to the term because I associated it with a good ole boy network of administrators who were former "jocks." However, I now think of our site-based management team, elected by the faculty and staff, as an example of Goffman's concept of teams as "individuals whose intimate cooperation is required if a given projected definition of the situation is to be maintained"(1959, p.104). Being a "team player" is no longer just going along with what some higher authority pronounces or what the good ole boys want; it is cooperating to reach our joint goals and presenting ourselves as participatory decision makers. The process in itself develops leadership in the faculty and staff members elected, but I have been encouraging further leadership by having the members speak regularly to the faculty/staff meetings and lead group discussions to get input from everyone.

During my educational administration practicum, my high school principal served as my mentor. The associate superintendent volunteered to be a mentor also. He enjoys teaching and wanted to teach me about administrative work at his level--particularly in finance, since that was a gap in my education and an area for which he is renowned. The principal gave me major responsibilities: overseeing the new advisory program which was replacing homerooms, assemblies, and the Five-Year Interim Report for accreditation. I also became a participant-observer of the weekly Curriculum Council. In addition, I did odd jobs that arose and continued to be a full-time English teacher. There was little time to discuss anything, but the log I kept was a dialog with myself about the experience. Much time was spent listening to faculty and staff members who hoped through my access to the office their concerns might be heard. Thus I became very aware of the need for nurturing that I set as my first goal when I later became a part of the administrative team. But I also saw the benefits of the principal's distance. For instance, when two department heads were uncompromising, he used impartial data to resolve the conflict. However, with the creation of a position of curriculum leadership and the site-based management group, we are not having such turf battles. Also, by being available to listen I have facilitated the resolution of conflicts, preventing the principal from even having to make a judgment.

As helpful as these men were, their expertise lay in the masculine domains of law and finance. I was curious about the legendary curriculum leader in our system, an elementary principal whose school had just been selected as a national school of excellence. Was she a slavedriver to get her students and teachers to perform at such high levels? What was she like?

Could I be anything like her? Would I want to be? Would she let me find out?

I went to her school to ask if she would be the subject of a case study for my doctoral program in educational administration. The setting is an ordinary school building constructed in the fifties, which is transformed into a virtual feast for the senses with exciting products of learning everywhere, beginning at the glass entrance doors decorated with animals. Inside, doors are book covers; walls are maps, bridges, islands, art and photograph galleries. In the foyer is the parent-run school store and membership drive posters for the parents' organization. In the front office staff photographs are on sale. In the principal's office are plants, plush chairs, plaques (ABWA Boss o the Year, Civitan of the Year, North Carolina IRA President) diplomas, the poem "Children Learn What They Live" and books about teaching and curriculum. The most worn is Piercey's Reading Activities in Content Areas. The one with the word administrator in the title, Daily Thoughts for School Administrators, is stuffed with cartoons and quotes.

"Effective principals are mentors by nature" (Calabrese, 1991, p. 68). Mrs. Rumbley was happy to let me "study" her. Of the five other elementary principals in the system, she nurtured two of them from teachers to assistant principals with her. Like her, they were reading teachers. She also was selected to serve as a mentor in a pilot program in North Carolina for initial certification of administrators. Her mentee, who was in another county, told me that Mrs. Rumbley did so much to help her that when she talked about her at a meeting of the mentors, their reaction to such a person was, "You have got to be kidding!" Since I might as well

have been in another county for all the commitments to our respective elementary and secondary schools, she shared a journal with me and even wrote answers to questions when we could not get together to talk. Thus I was able to gain what may be most valuable from a mentor--getting to know how a leader thinks. Now in decision-making I can say to myself, "What would she do?"

Mrs. Rumbley provided me with her self assessment for a systemwide effort to establish a baseline of our strengths relative to the correlates of effective schools. Since these are the foundation of the selection of the schools of excellence, and her elementary school won during the first year dependents' schools in the United States were allowed to participate, I am including the following summary of this information:

1. Strong instructional leadership of the principal. She has articulated her vision to the staff, parents, and students. She has an "avid, vigorous interest in curriculum and likes to be a part of its development in annual planning." She relates to students and is highly visible in the school. She feels "slow on technology."

2. A pervasive and broadly understood instructional focus. The school provides a rich environment and purposeful activities which involve the entire group. She monitors lesson plans and classrooms closely for higher order thinking and a high rate of time on task. Each teacher displays Bloom's taxonomy of the cognitive domain in her classroom or within her plan book to facilitate planning for all levels of thinking.

3. An orderly, safe, purposeful climate conducive to teaching and learning. The school is well kept and students' work on display shows that it is important. Procedures are well thought out. Students are rewarded

for showing ownership in the school.

4. Teacher behaviors that convey high expectations. She conveys to her staff a strong belief in equity and the necessity to give every child the time needed to achieve it. She trains new teachers to give sustaining feedback. She has to train new teachers continuously but sees the new ideas they bring as an advantage. She gives workshops for parents so that they will understand the expectations.

5. Measurement of student achievement. The academic progress of the students in her school on the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills is exemplary. She feels that accountability through testing is important but that there should be an equal emphasis on the affective growth of students.

I discovered not only that I indeed wanted to be like her, but also that I had enough in common with her to feel confident in my own judgment. In addition to the principles and practices enumerated in the preceding paragraph, we have the same commitment to a cause, the same view of "educaring" as she refers to it, as a calling. In fact, we both come from families full of service to others--teachers, preachers, doctors, Vista volunteers, and missionaries. Both of us began teaching as high school students in Sunday School and as substitutes at our high schools. We are both very domestic, longing to plant flowers while struggling to accomplish everything necessary to close out the school year. We are lovers of language and very aware of the influence of language. She makes a conscious effort to say "staff," not just "teachers" so that everyone in the school feels a sense of ownership. I make a conscious effort not to say "You guys" and not to use the masculine generic pronoun so that neither gender dominates the language. (I prefer to use plural nouns and "they.") We are writers

(everything from notes of praise left with a class to stories for publication), readers (everything from our curriculum area journals to cartoons), and even good speakers, but only after much listening and reflecting. If the blabbermouth theory of Biklen & Brannigan (1980, p. 37) is true ("Unless a person talks so much as to be obnoxious...quantity of statements will qualify a person as a leader."), I wonder how long it would have taken, or if we ever would have been selected to a leadership position in a competitive interview process. Ambition did not bring us to administration. We did not view the position of curriculum leader as a stepping stone or a way to make more money. Neither are we married to men whose salaries are impressive; we are both married to retired enlisted Marines. Like the principals in Brubaker's study (1989, p. 49), we "aren't very interested in personal status." What we are very interested in is learning. She says it best: "My most profound characteristic is that I drive everyone crazy with my questions." We are more introverted than extroverted personalities--quiet, unassuming, with enough humility to be eternal students, always willing to listen and learn. The strong drive to serve led to leadership. When we are needed, we answer the call. We did not seek so much as we were sought to be curriculum leaders. She was asked by the superintendent to act as principal for a year. During that year she became certified and continued. I was encouraged to become certified as a principal during the year that I was granted a sabbatical for graduate study. Since I already was certified as a curriculum specialist, the principal's certificate made me the only teacher in the system eligible according to the qualifications established for the new assistant principal's position as Director of Instruction at the high school. So we never spent energy politically

preparing to move up the career ladder. Since she has reached the culminating stage of middle adulthood and I have begun the transition into it, we look forward to things we plan for retirement, but remain rewarded, totally absorbed and content in positions currently held. Curriculum leadership is such an overwhelming task that it could hardly be done well by someone who spent time politicking for a promotion.

Gordon Cawelti (1989), executive director of the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development, in addressing school administrators at a Southeastern North Carolina Regional Summer Leadership Conference, identified five characteristics of effective adults: lifelong learners, clear sense of values united with action, communication skill and commitment, positive self-image, and psychological maturity as indicated by androgynous individuation employing traditionally masculine or feminine behavior according to the situation. Both my mentor and I would be effective according to these criteria.

In answer to my question as to whether I could be anything like her, I found one huge difference: her incredibly high energy level. She can "get by on three to five hours sleep...can catch winks anywhere--ten minutes by the side of the road...I can time it and awaken refreshed. I have an inner peace and an eternal security." The difference began in the expectations her parents had for her from her conception. Her mother played music for her when she was in the womb. Her mother promised her first born to God as a missionary. She was the first born, and the idea of being a missionary as a second career after retirement is intriguing to her. Since there was "no son," she hunted, fished, hiked, and went to work with her father in the five counties in which he, a doctor, had health departments. She was

delivered by her father, and he was her model. He gave her chores on their farm. They had long talks every night: "He taught me to love nature, explore caves...to read before I went to school and always had high expectations of me." I do not know whether my parents would have conveyed high expectations to me if their marriage had endured. I know divorced fathers do not demand much in the way of chores when their children come for brief visits. They are not able to have long talks every night. They are reluctant to speak much of expectations when they are suffering from their own failures and disappointments. However, being relatively free of expectations has its own rewards. There is no stress or lack of confidence from failure to live up to an image. Risk, resourcefulness, and many aspects of creativity develop in a child left on her own with little fear of adults. An example of the difference that results is that neither my mentor nor I am overbearing, but she is more direct in setting expectations. Rather than telling teachers what they must do, she often says, "I think it would be a good idea..."; whereas, I try to phrase a question which might lead the teacher to come up with the idea. If what my male mentors say is true, elementary teachers are much less independent than secondary teachers; therefore, our different approaches are appropriate for their respective settings. Another contrast I noticed is her effort to be "hard-nosed" with young teachers to get them to "see the serious side of educating children, while giving them a hug to let them know that I care and appreciate them." With high-school teachers who are very subject matter oriented, I am trying to get them to "lighten up" while maintaining expectations of improved student achievement. We both enjoy the challenge of such dilemmas. One final comparison/contrast is the idea

I have found intriguing ever since a former NC Advancement School colleague invited me as a consultant to a summer teacher's workshop at the Institute of American Indian Arts. I have thought of working at a school for American Indians, but my mission would be to share my appreciation of their heritage, not to convert them from their beliefs. There is a story of one of my ancestors marrying a native American, or maybe I want to atone for all the trees my grandfather cut in his lumber business. This poem written by Littlebird when he was a student at the Institute of American Indian Arts is one I have shared with my students:

Death in the Woods

Corn swaying in the rhythm of the wind,
Graceful ballerinas,
Emerging at the edge of the forest.

All dip and dance,
Wind tunnels through long silken hair,
Golden teeth-seeds.

Trees chatter nervously
Awakening sky in fright
Pointing at Woodman.

A mighty thud! Blow leaves deep scar;
He strikes again.

Corn mourns golden tears,
Bows, praying for fallen brother.

Jay mocks the greedy beast
Who has doomed majestic brother,
His life home.

Wind tosses leaves aside as
Woodman tramps on his way,
Ax dripping Oak's blood.

The forest, damp and silent,
Mourning for lost Oak.

And now remains but a
Chirp of a lonely cricket and
Silhouette of Woodman,
Diminishing,
beyond the
saddened hill
as the far
sun sinks.

Perhaps the most important way we are alike is the way we struggle to achieve a vision by balancing a commitmnt to learn and teach (get) with a commitment to nurture (give). However, the degree of her giving far exceeds mine. For instance, she is heavily involved with church work, serving on the executive council, doing visitations, teaching Sunday School, directing a children's choir; still she points out that she is not giving a tenth of her time. Again I think this degree of involvement stems from childhood models and expectations. I console myself with Foster's quote (1986, p. 187) from Zaleznik: "Leaders tend to be people who...may work in organizations but never belong to them. Their sense of who they are does not depend upon memberships..." They are more interested in changing than belonging.

I interviewed one of the current principals who had served as Mrs. Rumbley's assistant. This principal had decided early in her career that she wanted to be a principal and had observed twelve different principals. She worked as an assistant with two different male principals who were non-directive, as was mine. She was grateful that the superintendent then made her Mrs. Rumbley's assistant: "I knew I was working for a master teacher. Everything was well grounded in research. She had tremendous confidence in what we were doing and that gave me self-assurance ...constantly looking for better ways." One of the "better ways" Mrs.

Rumbley developed was "Explorations," multisensory activities integrating the curriculum through themes such as "Oceans," in which the school became a maritime museum. Her assistant was "dazzled" by the simplicity and soundness of the explorations Mrs. Rumbley developed and later presented at a national conference. She saw this curriculum leader as a "nurturing master teacher" and her teachers as her students: "She knows each teacher inside and out and develops their resources by listening, questioning, sharing articles." She even gives summer assignments "because we get stale." She promotes collegiality by setting expectations so high that people have to help each other to meet them, but she works hard herself "to set them up for success." The chance to work with Mrs. Rumbley was a turning point, for this aspiring principal and came at a time when she was so frustrated she had been thinking of "getting out." Now that she has been a principal herself for several years, she still has an image of Mrs. Rumbley as a "pig-tailed little girl with blue eyes full of wonder and a mind full of ideas."

One of Mrs. Rumbley's teachers elaborated on her principal's expectations: "She has raised people's expectations of themselves so that they will continue if she leaves. She has done it by setting people up for success, for example, as in their placement assignments." Other comments from faculty and staff: "She knows what she wants...You know where you stand...You have to give your best when the person you work for is so dedicated." Teachers' comments reveal that the principal is still a teacher to the students also. She brings them articles about things they are studying. She reads to every class and likes to have the students come read to her in her office and write her letters. In the Reading Intervention

Program she tutored one at-risk first grader thirty minutes a day, four days a week for twelve weeks. She continues to be a student herself, combining her role of teacher and student in a Research Roundtable she has started with teachers. Recently she received training to become a trainer in cooperative learning. She "stays current" in the teaching of reading by teaching it for colleges. She has students do annotated bibliographies and she continually uses new texts. She served as president of the state reading association and brought people she always wanted to hear to be the speakers for the annual conference. She had "tremendous" training in leadership for her Civitan presidency. She teaches other teachers in workshops and demonstration classes.

Her teaching role with parents is what I most admire because parental involvment is one of the biggest challenges for a high school. Her vision statement includes "service to the school and community, stronger families and positive school-family-community relationships." She sets the tone of caring from the first PTA meeting: "We are pleased to have all 678 of your children with us this year." She sets the example for her staff by modeling what she calls "little gracious acts" and can elaborate on repercussions from a teacher assistant's rudeness to a parent who was being rude. Her secretary said that she had seen many parents change from the personal attention Mrs. Rumbley gives them: "They are helped just by having someone listen to them." The displays of student work is another avenue of parent education. But she also teaches them directly in workshops, such as one on assertive discipline. She also spends a good deal of time setting her PTA officers up for success. Early in her career she had as PTA president a military officer, who told them what their curriculum

should be. That started her preparing mothers for leadership through appointment to committees. Attention is paid to the learning of everyone in the setting. No one is overlooked; everyone is educated--pupils, parents, teachers and other administrators.

Mrs. Rumbley is highly respected by everyone, including other administrators. There was no jealousy or ill will for the recognition her elementary school won because she is as giving to other principals as she is to her school community. When principals and central office coordinators have a special task, such as revising Effective Teacher Training for new teachers, she is always depended upon to play a major role to ensure success. During the interviewing, she can be counted on to concede a good teacher candidate to a principal who needs the candidate more to fill a particular slot. She always puts the good of the school system first. Everyone knows her strong sense of justice and integrity. When educators were feeling much public pressure for higher standardized test scores, she withdrew her support from a teacher she found teaching to the test. That teacher transferred to another school.

The two qualities she is best known for, teaching and nurturing, are clearly grounded in the value she strives to instill in her own children and in all whose lives she touches: "People are more important than things." The following poem was at the end of a staff meeting agenda:

I WAS IMPORTANT
One hundred years from now,
It will not matter what kind of house I lived in,
How much I had in my bank account,
Nor what my clothes looked like,
But the world may be a little better because,
I was important in the life of a child.

Another agenda closed with a joke a teacher's assistant had given her to use. As Pellicer *et al* (1990, p. 58) said about instructional leaders, "They are noted for their attention to the little things and for caring actions...The principal's philosophy and credibility (internal) were powerful shaping factors in the schools we visited." She recognizes that teachers are in different stages of personal development and patiently waits for them to "come around to our philosophy." She spends hours working with new teachers, who in many cases--as one pointed out--"are far away from home." She remembers birthdays and weddings, takes teachers and parents food when they are sick. She remains concerned and communicates with teachers after they leave. A teacher says of her, "You know she cares about you and that she will listen. You want her to be proud of you. I wouldn't want to disappoint her." One reason everyone has so much respect for her is that she does not ask of anyone anything she does not do:

> Teacher: "I've seen her washing windows."
> Student: "A good principal needs to stand out by the bike rack and watch for fights just like Mrs. Rumbley does."
> Teacher: "The morning I had the interview she called to tell me she knew I would do well."
> Student: "I've seen my principal take a tick out of a girl's head."

The first week of the school year I found her videotaping an apparently autistic child as part of documentation she would use to try to get help for him. She said the child's mother had left the father and their five children. She is teaching the students to be community-service oriented. Instead of going to the mall to sing, they go into a nursing home for the elderly.

I found that she is demanding, but not a slavedriver, because she is so giving. As one person said of her, "She could get blood out of a turnip."

She gets so much out of people because she gives so much to them. The paragraph describing the principal in her school's application for the school of excellence recognition is a good summary of this curriculum leader:

> The principal exhibits a personal interest in each student and each faculty member. From an extensive educational background, she provides clear, research-based curriculum leadership. Her practical advice and leadership stems from lengthy experiences as a classroom teacher and language arts coordinator. These traits exemplify what a school should be: a warm, caring place where students meet with academic and social success. She allows teachers to use their professional judgments, ideas, and skills within a pre-established framework of goals, curriculum and children's growth patterns.

CHAPTER III

PLOT

Theatre of the Absurd

Williams' survey of North Carolina teachers asked them to identify the most important contributions a principal could make to a school. The term most frequently mentioned was "support" (1988, p.113). Curriculum leaders take advantage of unique opportunities for coaching and supporting teachers. In one critical incident I took a strongly supportive role to prevent an excellent young teacher from quitting after a mother and son made particularly malicious charges in a conference the mother requested with the teacher and the assistant principal. The details of the incident illustrate the broad scope of a curriculum leader's involvement in all aspects of the school as well as the reward for having established a supportive relationship with teachers.

We considered ourselves extremely fortunate that our associate superintendent discovered a UNC doctoral student, a native of Germany, who could not only teach German and Latin but also a media class in the studio of our new high school building. I suspected the combination of her classic blonde beauty, teaching experience only at the college level, youthful idealism, and a new elective in a studio setting could lead to problems in a high school setting, but the observation reports first semester on her German class and one of her media classes were excellent. As teachers always seem to do in order to have a good production class, she devoted

much free time to medi projects. She even managed to get some of her students, including the one who later made the accusations, into a Wilmington film studio for auditions. Perhaps she came to be viewed by students too much as a friend and confidante. At any rate, they discovered an apparent vulnerability in her sensitivity to injustice. When she tried to discipline a black girl, the girl walked out of the class and went directly to the black assistant principal, in charge of discipline, implying prejudice. Students passed the word that he talked to the teacher about her problem maintaining discipline based on the what the girl had told him. Even though the teacher had supporting documentation from following the school's assertive discipline plan, she did not try to defend herself with him because "she had heard how he got his job through affirmative action." The very next day the assistant principal received a call from the mother of a white male student whose stepfather the teacher had called previously about the student's misbehavior. The parent wanted a conference because the teacher was the problem, not her son. The teacher told me about the situation as soon as she heard from the assistant principal that there was to be a conference. Later he informed me of the conference also. The teacher had given me a video the boy made for her class. I came to the conference and when the mother became particularly savage in her attack on the teacher, I showed her the video. When the mother saw the obscene gestures and words the boy and his brother had used, she said to her son in collusive intimacy, "I told you to tell me everything!" Nevertheless, the boy was able to turn the focus immediately back on the teacher by saying, "Why make a big deal about what I did? What about her? She uses language just as bad to us." The teacher confessed she had let a word slip in frustration

with some equipment, but never to the students. The assistant principal did not say anything except to tell the teacher how she should set up her class in stations as he had when he taught PE. I was able to say that she already had her students working in stations and that her observation team had given her excellent reports on the way she conducted her classes. I also questioned the boy directly to determine whether the mother's proposal to take him out of the class was the only satisfactory solution to the problem. He wavered momentarily toward being conciliatory until the attractive, youthful, dark-haired mother reasserted her influence and said she was "not out to get the teacher fired." She would be satisfied if the assistant principal would talk to other students and move her son. Seeing how totally baffled the teacher was by this boy with whom she thought she "had a good relationship," I realized we were all players in a Freudian theater of the absurd the mother and son were playing out. The stepfather and the assistant principal were bit players; the teacher the audience. I had been the unexpected outsider who did not follow the script. However, even though the boy's story was not supported by other students, I thought it would be in the best interest of the teacher's other students, as well as all the students who might not get to have her otherwise, to let the boy move.

As I had feared, the next day after experiencing such devastating persecution, the teacher came in to tell me she was going to resign. I called the assistant principal and the central office evaluator to help me convince her that we supported her and knew she was doing a good job. She stayed, but on a later occasion the assistant principal again came into her class and started questioning her about one of her students in front of the class: "Do you recognize this name?" After she explained some background on

the situation, he said, "Write that down and sign it." After he left, her students asked her if she was "in trouble." Fortunately, there must have been no one in that class so disturbed by a dysfunctional family as to take advantage of the situation.

How I Came To Be a Curriculum Leader

I now know that the curriculum of my own beloved high school was discriminatory and that those teachers I liked so much cheated us by the lack of challenge. Ninth-grade girls were placed in home economics and the boys in physical science. I am thankful to the Russians and Sputnik for putting an end to that practice. I was also placed in general math, but that may have been because I was able to do what I wanted. I am thankful for one wonderful man, who was also a minister, who served as our dean of students and taught me World History. He registered me for algebra and would not let me drop when I cried to get out, tormented because I could not understand it even though I made good grades by memorizing. He is also a teacher whom I clearly remember having high expectations for us, which I was thrilled to meet! I know he must have felt "called" to us as much as to his church members.

My high school served students from the mill hill to the county border, where I lived in farm country. We were children of the working class, living comfortably off lower middle class earnings from what was then a prosperous tobacco industry. A few of my male classmates became doctors and lawyers, and a few of my girlfriends became nurses and teachers, but most went into the factories and offices of the tobacco company. Practically the only challenging learning experience I

remember was a research paper for World History. I chose to investigate the evils of Stalin. When I went to the public library and read the newspapers on microfilm, history came alive.

There was also an English teacher who challenged us to write. She had especially high expectations of me. She praised my writing and arranged for me to be her substitute teacher. She gave me The Sound and the Fury to read and took me to her Saturday college class at what is now the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. She challenged all of us to think about our behavior by comparing students' persecution of a history teacher who was unable to maintain discipline to the treatment of Christ. One girl said indignantly as we left the class, "I'm going to tell my mother!" My reaction to the teacher was "Wow!" A teacher was making a connection between school and church and touching our lives with it! Surely this teacher was called to a cause beyond herself.

Since so little was expected, I took the initiative to find my own creative outlets. I can understand the surprise of people today who learn that I was the head cheerleader in high school, but the leadership has a similar aim to unite and inspire. I used the position to write inspirational letters to teams and to create skits for pep rallies. I found other audiences by writing copy for the yearbook, scholarship application essays and campaign speeches. I was fortunate to have felt the joy and power of writing for real audiences without receiving the criticism I probably would have if I had been given assignments.

As a college student I hardly wrote anything more than criticism of literature, but again there were a few exceptions. In English Education we were asked to create a writing assignment as part of a lesson we taught and

then to write it ourselves. Apparently my creative subconscious led me to take a music appreciation course. The professor, a talented pianist, asked us on the exam to relate the campus architecture to the music we had been studying. He also took me totally by surprise by speaking to me about the death of my mother. I have no idea how he knew about that, but he certainly reinforced my belief that a good teacher is a caring person even at the university level.

My first year at a college which primarily prepared teachers seemed too much like high school. I transferred to Wake Forest. With the combination of the professors there, brighter students, and challenging expectations, I found greater satisfaction in what a Harvard education professor called "working at the edge more than the center of competence" (Perkins, 1982, p.2). After a period of adjustment, I did make the Dean's List there too. I also found a creative outlet in the drama department and a literature teacher/scholar par excellence in the dean. The main memory I have about my education courses is that the rumor I had heard held true about student teaching. After observing me once for a fraction of a period, the instructor of the audio-visual course gave me the same grade I made in that course, where I certainly was not so motivated.

After the three-year funding of the NC Advancement School ended, I became a teacher in a high school with the reputation of being very innovative. I had no duties other than teaching, but the work was emotionally draining. Students told me my class was the only one in this school of almost 2,000 juniors and seniors where they felt like individuals. The flexible schedule was a rigid cycle of A-Day, ninety-minute period; B-Day, fifty; C-Day, twenty. Windows were sacrificed for a folding partition

between my room and the next, but it was only opened for SAT testing. A poor ventilation system gave me sinus headaches all year.

Disillusioned completely with what I know now as the "shopping mall high school," I went to Camp Lejeune in a new consortium with the University of North Carolina at Greensboro which would enable me to become certified in intermediate education. Already possessing a master's degree in supervision of instruction and fifteen years of varied experience in education, I was able to complete the competencies in the competency-based program in the first nine-week grading period. The professor in charge would not accept the assessment of my supervising teacher and let me receive the certification. About that time, I was offered an English teacher's position at the high school. I saw that its small size and small classes made a difference in personalization, so I accepted. High school students anywhere in America were hard to discipline and motivate in the 1970's--the uprooted dependents of often-absent Marines were perhaps even more so--but the professionalism and support teachers gave each other made me want to be part of them. Administrators and teachers seemed as separated as they had been everywhere else, except for the Teachers' Advisory Group, which allowed some constructive communication.

The new principal had recently received his doctorate and encouraged me to ask for a sabbatical to enter a doctoral program. He said women were scarce in secondary school administration, and he wanted a second assistant who could help with the time-consuming new state teacher evaluation procedures. He had also wanted to free me a period to work on the accreditation report, but English teachers are hard to free from classes because the size of other English classes increases as a result. The

paper-grading load was one of the reasons I felt a need for the renewal of a sabbatical, so I entered graduate school in educational administration. I was not following a career plan. I was not driven by ambition. I just knew I had not yet found my niche and that my eyes were not going to endure a full-length career of reading compositions. I also knew the job I had found most rewarding was a short-lived federally funded position as a director of in-service education in another small school system. However, my love for my subject area led me to keep taking English courses, and my love of teaching led me to take courses in curriculum and pedagogy, in addition to the courses in administration.

Upon returning from my sabbatical, I was almost as disappointed in the circumstances of my practicum as I had been in that of my student teaching twenty-five years earlier. Then I had been a full-time student going into a high school one period a day for a semester. Now I was a full-time teacher going into the office during lunch, after school or my planning period. The next year I was not involved in administration in any way except that I was invited to be the teacher representative to a regional conference on the state's career development plan and a strategic planning retreat for the school system. Then the principal told me that the position for a second assistant had been approved for the next year, that it would be titled Director of Secondary Instruction, and that it would require certification and experience in curriculum supervision as well as in administration. I appreciated knowing well in advance that I could be teaching my last students. I needed to know I was in a transition period. I wrote my last students a farewell from a different perspective than I ever had before.

During the course of this self-study I have traced the source of my sensitivity to injustice and my compassion for its victims to my parents' divorce and my mother's lack of prejudice. In doing so I found, as did Macdonald (1977), that my mother influenced my morals and my father my intellectual curiosity. Weiler's work on women educators and the study of women writers with Dr. Gibson at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro heightened my awareness of political and social movements' influences on my family and me as well as on the women being studied. The study of the writers and the use Belenky *et al* (1986, p.19) and Lightfoot (1983, p.13) made of the metaphor of voice and silence gave me a greater appreciation for a gift my mother had given me by her silence. Lightfoot said to listen for "the deviant voice as an important version of the truth." My mother's voice was her silence, but her actions were deviant for the time in which she lived. After my father returned from World War II, he and my mother were divorced. She never said anything about him to prejudice me against him. I thank her eternally for that because it was my father who modeled one of the "more pronounced attributes of creative people...sensitivity to surroundings--an ability to see things to which the average individual is blind...to stretch perceptual powers..coming up with unusual and detailed observations" (Weschler, 1962, p.15). I can see the influence of the divorce in my childhood in the way I try to bring together male and female, black and white, all those who must join together to create a harmonious world, not only for justice, but for the survival of an interdependent world. As Macdonald (1977) said, "Curriculum theory is asking how shall we live together."

My realization of the impact of my parents' divorce on my developing leadership began with the first course in my doctoral study, for which we kept a journal. From the journal I wrote the following poem as a sample assignment for my students imitating the style of the American poem "There Was a Child Went Forth" by Walt Whitman.

Every Adult Is a Child Going Forth

The clear brook became part of this child,
and the meadow it wandered through,
with the daisies and bobbing robins,
and the horned cows and the curly red bull
and the fat calf named Butterball,
and the squishy clay of the creek bank,
streaked with gray and yellow,
and the rooster staggering to the back of the barnyard
to die from the blow of the stick
that was only meant to make him ruffle his feathers
but struck him too hard beside the head.

And the railroad track where the child practiced walking a tightrope
on the way to town,
and the mountain lake with the diving hole so deep that the waters
gave the child a deathly chill if she did not turn up
as soon as her body entered the water,
and the price of the blackberries counted in chigger bites.

And the cheerful white-haired lady who would mix cherry syrup
in the child's Coke after school at the drugstore
on the corner of the intersection with the town's single stoplight.

And the grandfather, stern and tall, addressed by the child's father
as "Sir,"
placing treasured, hard-earned coins in the child's hand
for a good report card,
speaking gruffly to the woman who let the child play with the
tenants' kids who wore no underwear under their overalls.

And the grandmother, so proper she did not even sweat
when she worked outside all morning
separating clumps of iris and weeding tomatoes,
who rested on the Chippendale sofa in the afternoon
and still had smooth pink cheeks and dark hair into her seventies,
who let the child taste the biscuit dough and the freedom of the woods

beyond the garden.

And the mother at work in the cigarette factory
bringing home the smell of cured tobacco in her clothes
even though she worked in the office,
and the tiny tree branches she used for switchings
that made the child dance and cry at the same time.

And the father, moving back to his father's farm from the factory,
teaching the child who came to visit how to twist a certain weed
in just the right way to send its head hurtling into space
like a sling shot sends a rock,
teaching the child how to curl a fallen rose petal
to capture air in a pocket which pops like a burst balloon
but with fragrance.

And the stepfather, idolizing the only son, the child's little brother,
the heir apparent, sitting before his idol, the television.

And the children of the father and stepmother, the three who vied for attention
while the child, visiting, sat apart,
secure in her separate identity as the only child
her mother and father ever produced together.

The child became a blend of the opposites who had lost their
attraction for each other during the war,
and the child goes forth every day
to help opposites understand each other.

Mother was a working woman, who left me in the care of a loving black woman named Mary. I never heard my mother speak a derogatory word about Mary or her race. I remember Mother taking me with her to visit a black woman she knew from work. I now know that at that time, the woman we visited would have held a position very subordinate to my mother's, but my impression was that she was another friend of my mother's. I realize now how unusual my mother must have been as the grandchild of a slaveowner to relate to black women on such an equal basis. My mother only lived another decade after that, dying of cancer in the same

year and at the same age as the president I so deeply admired, John Kennedy. The woman who had taken care of me as a child came to our home to pay her respects.

I had just finished my first year teaching in a small, rural elementary school when my mother died that summer. Because I had become certified to teach biology as well as English, I had been the right person for this school with two classes of eighth graders. I taught English, science, and girls' physical education; my male colleague taught math, social studies, and boys' physical education. The principal reminded me of my childhood minister, a kind old gentleman one could hardly disrepect. The parents were my support group and their children were my sacred trust. We were a happy, nurturing community, which is still a sustaining memory. We strengthened each other for the future, as the outside world closed in on us and the universe opened before us . We listened to John Glenn orbit the earth and Kruschev threaten us from Cuba.

In the fall of 1963, the city and county schools merged, and I moved to a consolidated junior high in the suburbs. The change was as traumatic as losing one's family and being sent to a foster home. We rarely saw the principal and never saw parents. Instead of teaching two groups as in the rural school, I saw hundreds of young adolescents on alternating days. The principal was afraid to support an original production I had begun called "Bye, Bye Beatles," so all we produced for the school was a Christmas play for which no one thanked us. I had been prepared to accept my mother's death by her months of suffering; Kennedy's I denied with the response, "What President?" when a student came into the auditorium to tell my drama class the President was shot. I recall no official

acknowledgment of this event. I stood behind a podium and read "O Captain, My Captain" in an attempt to stifle the disrepect some showed for the first Catholic president. As I write now I can see part of the origin of my intense dedication to the task of crisis preparation at our dependents' school in the year of Desert Storm: the moral deprivation in that junior high school during the national crisis of Kennedy's assassination.

The next year the American troop buildup in Vietnam began. In my own hometown I found a way to answer Kennedy's call to do something for my country. In the recently abandoned, old city hospital, a group of educators from across the country cleaned the blood off the delivery floor and gave birth to an experimental school for the study of underachievement. At the North Carolina Advancement School, brainchild of Governor Terry Sanford and his special consultant, novelist John Ehle, I found visionary leadership and passion for a cause, equally balanced with commitment to the people in the setting. I literally found a home. I became the first woman to live and teach in the first integrated residential school in the South. From the idyllic country community to the foster home of the suburbs I moved into a global village. A faculty literally from every corner of the country and returning Peace Corps volunteers from around the world were creating a curriculum that would motivate students and visiting teachers from all over North Carolina.

The freedom which released our energies came as a result of then Governor Sanford's creation of a unique governing organization, which took the school out of the jurisdiction of the NC State Department of Public Instruction and away from its superintendent of thirty years. The new organization, headed by Harold Howe, was created to link educational

research to the classroom; therefore, it was called LINC, an acronym for Learning Institute of North Carolina. With no existing paradigm upon which to build, director Gordon McAndrew trusted his staff and shared decison making power with them. Policy and program were developed jointly, inductively, and empirically in an on-going interactive process which is finally reaching the public schools of the state a generation later. My enduring image of Dr. McAndrew is strolling down the hall or on the campus, deep in conversation with a staff member, a paradoxical blend of casual concentration or what Sizer (1984, p.227) terms "unanxious expectation." When speaking informally, his voice almost always had a tone of playfulness, conveying self-assurance to meet any challenge. When we asked for experts, he asked, "Who are these experts?" Indeed people were coming to learn from us as we created our setting. We learned to draw upon all our inner resources and profit from mistakes. We were forced to forge ahead on our own because our mission was to serve a segment of the population which education had failed in the past. Our goal was to develop and disseminate teaching methods and materials which would eliminate underachievement.

Alas, our success was too unique to be replicated. Such reforms as ours in curriculum and pedagogy were, in the words of Ravitch (1983, p.233), "swept aside by the onrush of the racial revolution." As an integrated residential school our revolution was total, but we could only disseminate the innovations in methods and materials. We stood as a model of racial harmony, but that only made us an easy political target.

Like Martin Luther King I have been to a mountaintop and seen the glory of what can be. The three years of the Advancement School

experiment gave me an undying vision of releasing the potential of children and adults. The only way this experience sets me apart from others is that it empowers me to try to create a setting that will do the same. It gave me "a respect for that which will unfold." (Brubaker, 1986, p.23) I trust and respect the colleagues with whom I taught for over ten years as capable of cooperatively creating such a setting. Therefore I am confident that when they are guided by a vision of growth in character and intellect, and enabled to reach it, they will. Like the women in Weiler's study, Women Teaching for Change, I was "profoundly influenced" by helping to establish programs "emphasizing social justice and participatory democracy...founded on a belief in ...what teaching means and could become" (Weiler, 1988, p.90). I agree with Sergiovanni (1990, p 21) that even more important than teacher empowerment is leading a "total group to work together to build a quality school" because I have experienced that reality.

CHAPTER IV

CURTAIN CALL

Summary

Curriculum leaders have inner strength, sustained by a spiritual commitment or "calling," which enables them to create a learning setting that contributes to everyone's wellness of body, mind and spirit. They are able to communicate a shared vision and to work constantly to maintain commitment to the vision. Although the effort is not altogether unlike that of weaving all strands of the school community into a tapestry that is beautiful to behold, the analogy does not hold because a learning setting is not a static work of art. Improvisational drama is a more appropriate analogy because curriculum leaders are continually trying new ways to improve the setting through a collaborative process.

My own study lends support to prior studies that indicated a school can be good without a principal who is a curriculum leader. A principal whose style is managerial may not be able to become a curriculum leader. The tacit knowledge which became explicit during this study from reflecting on my own experience and that of other principals in my system, is my strong belief that school adminstrators are better curriculum leaders if they have a thorough grounding in teaching and are able to retain the teacher's perspective. A principal is much more likely to become a curriculum leader if that individual has first proved to be a successful teacher. Nevertheless, an administrative team which includes a

curriculum leader can have a high school effective enough to be one of six in North Carolina nominated for the U.S. Department of Education School Recognition Program in 1990.

The literature raised the question as to whether a transformative curriculum leader is "born or made." In this self-study I traced my own development as a curriculum leader. I can see that my experience gave me the qualities which contribute to good leadership, my family life developed the qualities which led me to seek that experience, and my education gave me the knowledge and support to enhance those qualities. I found the key qualities of transformational leadership, none of which are enough alone, are present: ability to inspire, empower, and give nurturance. Transformational leaders are creative people who are sensitive to the needs of others and alert to ideas to improve the setting. But this narrative is an unfinished story. It has been an honest portrayal of where I am in my professional life in this setting. In Cotton's review of McPherson's work on Maya Angelou's five-volume autobiography, she quotes McPherson as saying autobiography "defines and redefines the self on its spiritual journey through time and space" (Cotton, 1991). I am finding this to be true.

My own contribution to the literature about leadership in a school setting is threefold: the presentation of a high school administrator who serves as a curriculum leader from the perspective of a creative teacher and eternal student; the example of an autobiographical methodology, corroborated by the literature and the study of a mentor, which in itself contributes to transformational leadership; the appropriateness and readiness of women for roles as curriculum leaders due to their traditional role as nurturers and teachers.

Recommendations

School systems need to experiment with a variety of ways to ensure that every administrative team includes someone committed to curriculum leadership. Curriculum specialists might be relocated from the central office to individual school settings. The administrative team may be able to share the responsibility for curriculum leadership. However, when a principal prefers the role of manager, a position may be needed carrying a title, such as Director of Instruction or associate principal, and compensation commensurate with the vital role of curriculum leader. Consideration should be given to encouraging creative teachers to prepare for this role. Recruiting good teachers who view curriculum as more than the courses of study and mentoring them to become leaders might be more beneficial than the traditional process of selection. Tradtionally male educators are more ambitious to take the courses that make them eligible to apply for administrative openings. If we want curriculum leaders in charge of schools and good teachers to remain in the classrooms, we have to reduce the large disparity that exists between the salaries of administrators and teachers. What would be the values on which decisions are based by people who are attracted to educational leadership to escape the classroom or to make higher salaries? One would certainly expect them to be different from the valuing of people more than things, a characteristic of at least my mentor and myself and probably others who feel called to education. Schools of educational leadership could help in the selection and preparation process by requiring autobiographies. Thus the potential leaders will realize what everyone in the setting in which they lead will be

learning from them by virtue of who they are. Their preparation could also include the study of autobiographies such as this one for the benefit of those who may not have a curriculum leader available to them as a mentor.

When this position is in place, provisions should be made for the person in the role to have a designated mentor, a person well established as a curriculum leader. New administrators should have mentors, just as new teachers do. If new administrators spend the majority of their time in relative isolation, consumed in system-specific procedures and computer programs, they cannot establish themselves as curriculum leaders. Their leadership may be diminished by learning the hard way what behavior is regarded as appropriate or necessary in the social and political reality of the setting.

All educational leaders and professors of educational leadership need mutual affiliation: professors, for familiarity with daily school dilemmas; school leaders, for distance from the dilemmas. One way to achieve this affiliation is through an exchange of roles. This would help the school leader retain the perspective of the teacher. Another way is to conduct joint investigations. The same skills which make good research also build good curriculum leadership: listening, reflecting, and probing for meaning.

Further study is recommended to determine the extent to which educational leaders don the cloak of teacher and to investigate the effect on the setting in which they teach. Even though one cannot assume successful teachers will make good curriculum leaders, successful experience as a teacher gives strength to the leaders in this study. The role of leaders of schools recognized as schools of excellence could be examined

for evidence of teaching. Data could be compiled on the amount of their teaching experience. What effect does their teaching have on the perception students, parents, and teachers have of them? Does it have a positive effect such as deeper commitment to the leader's vision or a negative effect such as causing others to feel threatened? Those curriculum leaders with special recognition for success could be interviewed and observed.

Investigation is also needed as to what school systems are doing in the way of personalizing staff development, especially in light of life span developmental psychology. Are school leaders knowledgeable about the developmental stages and transitions of adulthood? What opportunities are they providing to expand or alter the roles of faculty members--especially those in the generative stage of seeking to leave a legacy by giving to others? Are their developmental needs being linked to school goals?

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