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EDUCATIONAL PLANNING
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PLANNING FOR, IMPLEMENTING, AND SUPPORTING SHARED DECISION MAKING

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The purpose of this article is to provide a framework for infusing participative structures and processes - referred to commonly as shared decision making - into continuing school reforms in order to ensure active restructuring and to create and sustain organizational conditions necessary for school improvement. In this framework, SDM is viewed as a mechanism which facilitates other processes, based on the premise that the devolvement and sharing of authority in schools is central to school success (Wohlstetter et al., 1997). In some cases, the approach is direct, focused on specific facets of SDM itself; in other cases, the approach is indirect, involving creating structures and practices to support SDM in the facilitation of other processes. For purposes of presentation, the areas are clustered into three general categories: targets for planning, targets for implementation, and targets for ongoing support of SDM efforts.

INTRODUCTION

While the practice of shared decision making (SDM) in school settings has grabbed the attention of educators for many years (Conley, 1991; Conley & Bacharach, 1990; Ferrara, 1996b, 1997b), field studies continue to illustrate difficulties practitioners have in conceptualizing and implementing SDM (Conley, 1989, 1991; Ferrara, 1992b, 1996b; Kentucky Institute for Education Research, 1995; NYSED, 1996a, 1996b; Taylor & Levine, 1991). The practice of SDM not only involves fundamental changes in the way schools are organized and managed, but also necessitates altering roles and relationships of those who are part of the school community (Allen & Glickman, 1992).

A Nation at Risk is widely acknowledged as having served as a primary catalyst for waves of sweeping changes occurring in American schools since the early 1980s; many initiatives followed the report's publication. Over time educators were introduced through the literature to the terms "reform," "restructuring," "site-based management" (SBM), "shared decision making," "outcomes-based education," "student outcomes," and "standards." Meanwhile, practitioners struggled as every several years, or so it seemed, the "rules" and language of proposed reforms changed, without a context for understanding and practice. Most in the field did not have the expertise to respond to mandates, plan and implement the innovations, and transform schools into visions held by state education departments and policy makers of what schools should "be" and "do." Further, the role of SDM, central to the conceptualization and practice of many reforms, suffered from a lack of clarity.

It is not surprising that studies of state SDM initiatives conducted in the early to mid-1990s (Kentucky Institute for Education Research, 1995; NYSED, 1996a, 1996b) indicated that not all SDM efforts were proceeding smoothly. Even as schools were struggling with how to implement shared decision making as an SBM strategy, large-scale reform interest again shifted, this time to content and performance

standards and high-stakes learning, leaving many involved in SDM initiatives confused about the role of shared involvement in continuing cycles of school reform efforts.

What was overlooked as one "magic bullet" innovation after the other was introduced was a substantial body of literature that depicted schools as complex organizations of interrelated parts (Fullan, 1982, 1991; Gross et al., 1971). Within the complex systems view, a shift in any one part of the organization would result in shifts - and/or forced adaptations - in other parts of the organization. Also overlooked was that schools as systems administered to disparate constituencies; that among those constituencies, stakeholders held conflicting views of what schools should look like, what schools should do in everyday practice, and what schools should produce in the students they graduate. Also, for 25 years, the change literature had not only consistently underscored that most innovation implementation efforts fail but had provided insight into why such efforts go awry (Fullan, 1982, 1991, 1993; Giacquinta, 1996; Gross et al., 1971; Sarason, 1990). When the conversation shifted in the late '80s and early '90s to shared participation, early SDM efforts ignored the obvious: restructuring and realigning authority patterns require changes in organizational culture - its beliefs, assumptions, and practices (Sidener, 1995).

Fortunately, researchers have made gains in more recent years in identifying the many problems preventing site-based decision making from impacting school improvement and teaching practices. Among these are issues of locus of control and authority, questions surrounding the structures and processes related to implementation of shared decision-making models, confusion over school mission, constraints on time, absence of expertise of all people involved, role ambiguity and dissonance, fear of risk-taking, and lack of motivation (Guskey & Peterson, 1995/1996). And, while more recent empirical studies of the relationship between shared decision making and school achievement have not supported a direct linkage between SDM and student outcomes or provided evidence that schools improve just because decision making occurs close to the classroom (Ferrara, 1996b; Guskey & Peterson, 1995/1996; Malen et al., 1990; Marks & Louis, 1997; Miller, 1995), there is evidence that SBM, combined with curriculum and instruction reform, can work to improve school performance (Wohlstetter et al., 1997). Further, there is evidence that achieving success with SBM is related to ensuring that the school is actively restructuring. Evidence also indicates active restructuring and effective SBM result when organizational conditions, both at the district and school levels, foster involvement which serves as a context for promoting organizational learning and integrating processes (Wohlstetter et al., 1997).

Newer evolving models for school improvement have, therefore, reconceptualized the role of shared decision making, treating shared decision making not as an end in itself or directly related to student achievement but as a facilitating mechanism by which site-based school management, school improvement, and classroom change are addressed (Bauer, 1996; Guskey & Peterson, 1995/1996; Wohlstetter & Odden, 1992). As a result, views regarding the purpose of shared decision

making have shifted from a practice with its own inherent rewards (which may exist) to a strategy that is a component of a complex matrix for improving school effectiveness and student learning by increasing staff commitment and ensuring that schools are more responsive to student and community needs (Bauer, 1992).

While we have made strides in the last 10 years in uncovering linkages, both direct and indirect, that optimize learning, many practitioners are still struggling with when and how to use SDM as a vehicle for supporting active restructuring and optimizing organizational conditions to promote classroom change and enhance student outcomes.

The purpose of this article is to provide a framework for infusing participative structures and processes - referred to commonly as shared decision making - into continuing school reforms in order to ensure active restructuring and to create and sustain organizational conditions necessary for school improvement. In this framework, SDM is viewed as a mechanism which facilitates other processes, based on the premise that the devolvement and sharing of authority in schools is central to school success (Wohlstetter et al., 1997). In some cases, the approach is direct, focused on specific facets of SDM itself; in other cases, the approach is indirect, involving creating structures and practices to support SDM in the facilitation of other processes. For purposes of presentation, the areas are clustered into three general categories: targets for planning, targets for implementation, and targets for ongoing support of SDM efforts.

PLANNING TARGETS

Most school innovations over the last decade, including SDM initiatives, have been entered into as "knee-jerk" reactions to calls to reform, largely ignoring planning models which emphasize assessing capacity for change, gaining support for initiatives, systematically organizing for the change, integrating professional training into the process, and adopting strategies that optimize opportunities for success (NYSCOSS, 1996; NYSED, 1996b). Therefore, before SDM can be introduced as a mechanism for change and improvement, substantive steps must be taken to promote the change and to prepare participants for their roles and the ensuing organizational transformation.

UTILIZING A SYSTEMS APPROACH

While ultimately SDM will be utilized to facilitate improvement at the site base (the school) and the classroom (teaching and learning), the importance of systemic thinking in planning for shared endeavors must be addressed at the forefront. A systems orientation is required for several reasons. Boards of education and superintendents are ultimately accountable to the community for the educational health of the entire system, as well as the progress of individual schools. A systems approach provides a global view of the district and the schools within it; systems thinking assists in coordinating efforts and in mitigating against inequalities across school sites (Johnson & Ledbetter, 1993).

DETERMINING READINESS FOR CHANGE

Many planners charge "full speed ahead" when confronted with the pressure or mandate for change. Unfortunately, they seldom stop to assess the system's readiness or capacity for change. Assessing readiness and capacity will involve scanning activities, including determining present conditions of climate and morale; ability and willingness of the system and the individual schools to change; barriers to change (Gross et al., 1971; Giacquinta, 1996; Hord et al., 1987); and needs related to collaborative planning. Many SDM efforts have failed because the organization failed to understand the capacity of the people within it to change.

ESTABLISHING A CONTEXT FOR CHANGE AND SHARING THE VISION

Given the continuing disenfranchisement and low achievement of minority groups and the overall declining achievement of our total student population (in the face of raising the ceiling on standards), school improvement must be viewed and supported as necessary to the survival and future success of our educational system. Therefore, the culture of schools must evolve so that change is viewed as a desirable and necessary condition, not as a time-bound event or as a responsibility that is relegated to administration alone. Those in leadership positions need to emphasize the necessity for cultural growth and to articulate that improvement involves both shared responsibility and shared participation in making decisions related to school success.

The board of education, the superintendent of schools, all central office administration, and building administrators must be committed to the concept of change for improvement as well as to using SDM to facilitate change and improvement. If the commitment necessary to move forward does not exist among the district policy body and its administrators, steps must be taken to shore up this support.

While in most states some form of reform is now mandated, many districts have merely given "lip service" to implementing reforms, often lagging behind time lines established by state education departments. Research has indicated that lack of top-down support for bottom-up change serves as a barrier to improvement initiatives at building levels.

In introducing the concepts of shared decision making in the service of school improvement, planners and initiators must consciously develop theory and ensure that the need for change and the role of shared decision making are broadly understood (Liontos, 1993).

This includes communicating clearly the vision of the initiative, the course the initiative will take at system and school levels, who will be involved, how decision making will be shared, and expectations for the system and its schools. Ultimately, participation in and accountability for decisions will be shared, at varying degrees, once team work is initiated.

Support is diffused from the top through articulation of the shared vision and demonstration of shared ownership. Many attempts at school reform, including the use of SDM, have failed because

commitment was not established, devolved, and supported, the result of a variety of factors.

First, administrators as well as other participants often entered blindly into the initiative, with little understanding of its content, processes, and limitations. Frustrations then occurred over lack of knowledge, role ambiguity, stakeholder conflicts, time constraints, lack of expertise, and what appeared to be fragmentation in the process (Ferrara, 1996b, 1997b; Guskey & Peterson, 1995/1996; Kentucky Institute for Education Research, 1995; NYSCOSS, 1996; NYSED, 1996a, 1996b).

By laying out the philosophy and mission of the initiative, explaining clearly the model of shared involvement, setting realistic time frames, acknowledging impediments, clarifying role expectations, providing training, and streamlining the process whenever possible, it is possible proactively to mitigate against many predictable obstacles and to gain support and commitment early on from the school community.

ADDRESSING RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ASSUMPTIONS

It is critical to demythologize the view that SDM is a practice that will cure most of the problems in schools today. Initiators should honestly address the many assumptions surrounding SDM (some of which have been supported and some of which have not). School leaders and planners have a responsibility to share empirical findings from the SDM literature in an honest, cautious manner.

It must be acknowledged that while no demonstrable and consistent link between the use of shared decision making and student achievement has been uncovered (Ferrara, 1996b; Lashway, 1996; Miller, 1995), the use of SDM and the wide distribution of power are linked ultimately to creating changes in teaching and learning (Wohlstetter et al., 1997). The best defense for shared decision making is that responsibility for student improvement is shared - by administrators, boards of education, teachers, parents, students, and community members.

ASSEMBLING THE TEAMS

Teams should be assembled prior to the implementation phase, with determination made concerning the roles of the district team and the school teams and the relationship between functions of the district team and the school teams.

The district team can be utilized to study the system - its linkages, its strengths, its weaknesses, as well as data individual to schools, first to spearhead improvement efforts and later to monitor the process across the district. The focus of efforts of teams at school levels will be to address school improvement and classroom change through collaborative, collegial decision making. All teams should be as representative as possible with efforts made to reach out to a cross-section of teachers, parents, and community members.

INTEGRATING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Training is critical to the success of SDM. Initially, training should focus on awareness and becoming familiar with the structures, contents, and processes related to SDM and how the SDM process will facilitate school improvement.

Awareness training should occur across the system, so that even those not directly involved with the planning and implementation of the school improvement initiative will nevertheless be aware of the cultural transformation that is about to take place. This especially applies to teachers, all of whom at some time will be called upon to address curricular and pedagogical change. During the planning phase, participants of teams should also be introduced to existing state-level initiatives and standards and should collect all documents related to curriculum and assessment for preliminary review.

IMPLEMENTATION TARGETS

The implementation phase should be entered only after at least a semester of careful study, preparation, and planning. Activities will focus on continuing dissemination of information, preparing teams for their shared involvement in the school improvement process, conducting assessments, and creating plans for improvement.

PREPARING TEAMS AND DELIVERING THE CHARGE

Teams must be prepared for collaborating in decision making, with attention focused on the effect of collegiality on the success of SDM efforts. Both district-level and school-level teams should have already received general awareness training regarding SDM and the use of the strategy in supporting school improvement.

Training during this phase will be tailored to the level of service of teams. District-level training will be more global in nature, focusing on district responsibilities; building-level training, more discrete, focusing on building-level needs related ultimately to change in classroom practices. Teams must also receive training that prepares them for their unique roles based on group membership.

Training in consensus building and conflict resolution is critical for successful functioning of all teams. Reports from teams regarding initial experiences with collaborative planning indicate they were not adequately trained to work as a collaborative team (Kentucky Institute for Education Research, 1995; NYSCOSS, 1996; NYSED, 1996a, 1996b).

The charge to the teams must be clear: the shared decision making teams have been assembled to facilitate school improvement. Plans will be developed at both district and school levels. The district-level team will serve a leadership, monitoring, and process-evaluation role. Building-level teams will develop plans for school improvement, implement those plans, and determine mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating their specific plans. The domain for involvement of each team, as well as domains of consideration by each constituent group,

must also be established from the outset to offset role ambiguity, potential conflicts, and power struggles, which may result from confusion over locus of control, final authority, and accountability (Weiss et al., 1992). Vertical and horizontal planning, communication, and decision making will be ongoing between district and school teams.

FOCUSING SHARED INVOLVEMENT ON TEACHING, LEARNING EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT, AND STUDENT OUTCOMES

Research indicates reluctance on the part of teachers in particular to focus SDM efforts on curriculum and instruction practices (Weiss, 1993). From the outset, participants must commit to focusing primarily on the interface between teaching and learning and on school contextual characteristics that impact student outcomes. The literature provides some guidance on the types of outcomes that can be measured to determine the effectiveness of schools. These include, but are not limited to, achievement results, retention rates, absenteeism rates, percentage of students pursuing higher education, and performance on statewide testing programs. The district-level SDM team should develop profiles of student exit characteristics, as well as delineate benchmark indices at intervals across the grades (for example, 4th grade, 8th grade, 12th grade).

Shared involvement efforts, therefore, will be focused on the status of outcomes, determining which areas need improvement, deciding which interventions will be implemented and how, and monitoring and assessing the efficacy of the interventions (Ferrara & Domenech, 1994).

COMMITTING TO DATA-DRIVEN, MULTIPLE-MEASURE MODELS

Decision making should never be separated from data collection (Ferrara & Domenech, 1994; Ferrara & Repa, 1993). Data, in the form of specific assessment tools, student grades, and attendance, retention, and drop-out information, can inform and assist decision makers. Assessments should be conducted at district and school levels. Multiple measures should be used to ensure reliability, with investigations including both cross-sectional and longitudinal designs.

Determining which school improvement needs to address should also be data-driven. Assessment tools now exist which can gather information separately or simultaneously on shared decision making, school improvement needs, and school improvement practices (Ferrara, 1992a, 1993, 1994, 1995a, 1995b, 1996a). These evaluative (difference generating) measures, indicating congruence between expectations and current condition, can provide a complete profile for school improvement decision making and interventions. Areas identified for school improvement will ultimately emanate from expectations for student performance and other outcomes and the extent to which outcomes criteria are not congruent with existing outcomes measures (Ferrara, 1997a, 1997b).

Therefore, assessment at all levels should include the use of collaborative review mechanisms and decision sharing to determine school issues that will become subject to improvement activities.

ADDRESSING PARTICIPANT ROLES

During the 1980s, redistribution of decision-making influence was primarily focused on the principal-teacher interface. By the early 1990s, decision making in schools was expanded to include parents and community groups, who were also viewed as having interests in the results of schooling.

Implementation studies have reported both role confusion and conflict experienced by all groups involved in SDM (NYSCOSS, 1996; NYSED, 1996a), ranging from principals, who experience difficulties in accommodating new leadership roles (Lashway, 1996); to teachers, who perceive themselves primarily as curriculum managers; to parents, who have no context for interacting with teachers on core issues of curriculum and instruction; to community members, whose contact with educators is generally circumscribed.

Since the new roles and relationships being forged are ambiguous, time consuming, and uncomfortable (Weiss, 1995), one thrust of the SDM initiative must be the marshalling of human resources and the optimization of the various roles played by the constituent groups (Mohrman et al., 1992; Vollansky & Bar-Elli, 1995/1996; White, 1992). At the same time, the new roles of participants must be clearly defined at all levels (Sidener, 1995).

The acknowledgment of the role of the principal as instructional leader and the primary facilitator for change appears to have stood the test of reform initiatives over the last 15 years. Not only is the principal's leadership role viewed as pivotal to school improvement efforts and the attainment of high achieving schools (Baron, 1997), but the role of principal has continued to evolve and expand within the SDM framework. In this expanded role, the principal serves as organizer, adviser, and consensus builder (Stine, 1993). Principals are faced with the dilemma of playing an active, visible role while not presenting the appearance of "taking charge" (Prestine, 1993). Principals who have been successful with SDM are those who have worked at developing effective decision-making skills and structures (Petersen et al., 1995).

While the relationship between principal leadership and improved achievement outcomes has been demonstrated to be indirect (Firestone & Wilson, 1986), nevertheless key aspects of the role, style, and support of the principal are critical to shaping school mission, formulating clear educational goals, and effecting significant change in schools (Hall & George, 1997; Lee et al., 1993; Short et al., 1996). Schools that are most vulnerable are those whose leadership cannot articulate the growth achievement of their students (Richardson et al., 1997). Therefore, the vision, skills (facilitative and directive), and support of the principal are viewed as primary correlates of effective SDM initiatives (Johnson et al., 1996; Johnson & Ledbetter, 1993; Lashway, 1996; Sidener, 1995).

Since teachers have been involved in the shared decision making movement longer than have other stakeholder groups, this group has been under investigation for a longer period of time. Some research now calls for support of the teacher role as the primary instructional manager and technician in the practice of shared involvement (Wohlstetter & Odden, 1992). Most teachers are not yet prepared to assume the role of instructional leader, however. Additionally, conflicts may arise among the teachers themselves (Weiss et al., 1992), thus undermining the potential for collaborative improvement efforts.

Presently, the extent to which the teacher role of instructional manager should evolve into that of instructional leader is still unclear. Nevertheless, since the classroom is indisputably the primary unit of instructional improvement in the school, the role, support, and involvement of the teacher in the process is as critical as that of the role of principal as instructional facilitator. Since teachers are more likely to support collaboratively made decisions, their empowerment in the SDM process appears to be of vital importance. Inevitably, the challenge lies in encouraging teachers to examine daily classroom practices (Weiss et al., 1992).

Disenfranchisement on the part of parents has been reported in the literature (Ferrara, 1996b; Ferrara & Domenech, 1994; Kushman & Shaughnessy, 1996), with parents reporting more disenfranchisement than teachers (Ferrara, 1996b; Ferrara & Domenech, 1994). Involvement by parents is congruent with assumptions supporting SDM and the democratization of the school setting (Duke et al., 1981; Murphy & Beck, 1995).

Conceptualizing and articulating the parent role is especially challenging as research has suggested that the relationship between parents and teachers is characterized by a high level of competitiveness (Casanova, 1996). While the parent role in shared involvement and school improvement has yet to be refined, there has been little challenge to the value of their inclusion in the process and the expectation, based on this involvement, of support for educational decisions and programs.

To a certain extent, community members have suffered the same fate as parents in recent reform agendas. While they may experience less disenfranchisement, they are also more isolated from the everyday life of the school. Many operate either on recollections of what school was like when they were students or on mythologies derived from hearsay and misrepresentations of school functioning. Most are not aware of the high degree of complexity in school organization, contents, and processes; current national and state policy initiatives; the many legal constraints and mandates that emanate from state education departments; or current national policy initiatives. Nevertheless, since community members are part of the voting public and their support of school programs is desirable - if not necessary, means must be found to inform them and to utilize their position power within the community.

Thus, it is incumbent upon schools to encourage the community to participate in current school improvement initiatives, to establish linkages that inform the community about the work of the school, and to capitalize on reciprocal needs. The major challenge for schools, in

widening the circle to include community members, is the means by which community involvement will be orchestrated (McPhee, 1995/1996).

SDM AND MAPPING PLANS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Many SDM efforts have failed because the SDM structure has not been focused on creating plans for improvement.

Many planning models exist. Those most commonly utilized today are those predicated on goals-setting paradigms. The model includes in its simplest form goals, objectives, activities/ interventions, time lines, people responsible for implementation of the activities, and plans for assessment/evaluation. Goals and objectives should be based on rationales emanating from student needs identified through data-driven decision making and congruent with any statewide curriculum and standards guidelines; activities/interventions written into plans should be supported by research findings.

Additionally, a blueprint for determining priority order for interventions should be developed. The Effective Schools assessment tools as well as others similarly developed (Ferrara, 1996a, 1997a; Ferrara & Domenech, 1994) provide information concerning the extent to which needs require addressing and are being addressed. Rationales for choices for intervention are the extent to which an identified need is central to the school's mission; has potential for impact on quality improvement; represents student needs; demonstrates practicality, manageability, and/or efficiency; and possesses marketability to the community.

Decisions regarding goal-setting, data-analysis, planning, interventions, and assessment should all be determined through differentiated SDM processes.

DEVELOPING A DIFFERENTIAL COLLABORATIVE MODEL

Only recently has the literature suggested that variability should be considered as a factor in the design of SDM models (Ferrara, 1996b, 1997b) and that perceptions regarding both shared decision making and identified school improvement needs differ by condition of stakeholder group (Ferrara, 1996b, 1997b; Rice & Schneider, 1994; Shedd & Read, 1993).

These findings suggest that it is not necessary to involve all stakeholders in all decision making and planning for improvement to the same degree. Since time is a constraint in collaborative planning, assigning different tasks to sub-committees or task forces appears to address both issues of perceived need to be involved as well the perception that involvement "takes too long." Measures indicating the status of stakeholder perceptions regarding SDM involvement must be administered at individual school sites when school improvement collaborative planning and decision making occur, both to streamline efforts and to maximize human resources.

SUPPORT TARGETS

Just as insufficient time and energy are customarily given to planning for most school innovations, sustaining commitment is often overlooked once the innovation is implemented. Many initiatives have failed because the need for a supportive infrastructure was overlooked (Johnson et al., 1996; NYSED, 1996a; Zuckerman, 1993).

Continuance and institutionalization will occur only if attention is given to issues related to the infrastructure of the system, such as resource allocation, monitoring and assessing changes in the system, nourishing communication systems that facilitate change, providing ongoing training, and persistently addressing documented impediments to achieving school efficacy. These issues can be addressed through the SDM process.

ADDRESSING THE ISSUE OF RESOURCE ALLOCATION

Resource allocation on an ongoing basis must be focused on school improvement initiatives and the goals of the organization. Therefore, the entire budgeting process should be intricately tied to supporting plans that move the system and the individual schools forward in the quest for student success. The support for the difficult decisions and the frequent "trade-offs" related to budgeting and resource allocation can be garnered through the SDM process.

MONITORING AND ASSESSING INITIATIVES

Reform initiatives have historically been poorly monitored and assessed within school systems. Improvement plans should include a framework for assessing progress using the same instrumentation, information, and data initially used for identification of needs and planning activities. In this way, progress can be tracked over time, comparing measures on the same indices, permitting value-added evaluation. Both quantitative and qualitative changes and growth should be targets for assessment.

Participants in the process should utilize formative as well as summative information. Formative information is useful for determining "how we are doing," as opposed to "how we have done" (summative). Many necessary adjustments can be made smoothly during formative stages. Frustration and lack of motivation are more likely if glaring failures are not addressed in a timely manner. Summative evaluations should be used primarily for targeted reporting dates and for the purposes of redesigning improvement plans within specified time cycles.

Throughout, monitoring and assessment should be regarded as a broad-based shared decision-making activity. Authority for review and new recommendations should be devolved to appropriate SDM teams. Additionally, the mechanism of shared decision making itself should be assessed to determine to what extent it is facilitating or hampering the improvement process.

SUPPORTING COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS THAT FACILITATE CHANGE

When schools are faced with change, communication becomes an important facet for understanding, support, and continuance. It is critical to communicate freely, often, and accurately concerning plans and implemented activities.

Some rules of thumb apply here. Disseminate information first to the group of interest before publicly sharing findings. The group or groups most affected by the information have a right to study the information and respond before findings are widely reported. Secondly, focus on general trends and specific successes. If some part of the effort is not succeeding according to expectations, study the causes and design remedies/interventions. Then report the investigation and the remedies.

Do not over-exaggerate the successes. Report accurately and fairly. Make certain that the person reporting has knowledge of measurement, statistics, and evaluation methods and can cast information in terms of over-all goals and objectives.

Most importantly, keep the initiative visible. While communication venues should not be supersaturated, progress with the initiative must be kept to the forefront, and those involved should be acknowledged in some public way for their time and efforts. As part of any established communication system, shared decision-making/improvement team representatives must have a mechanism for reporting back to their constituent groups. This is especially critical with teacher groups who will share the most responsibility for improvement efforts in classrooms.

COMMITTING TO ONGOING TRAINING

Training should be ongoing (Liontos, 1993; Sidener, 1995). Training opportunities should be provided not only for all groups in the acquisition of skills and competencies required for involvement in collaborative decision making but also for unanticipated and emerging needs and priorities as well as the introduction and implementation of new programs and instructional techniques at the classroom level. Commitment to ongoing training provides optimal chances for success of school improvement interventions. Much of the training will fall primarily on teacher groups (Smylie, 1996b), including those not directly involved with the SDM process.

TROUBLESHOOTING

When problems arise, address them quickly and expeditiously. Seek causes for the problems before generating alternatives for addressing problems. Study alternatives carefully and have well-formed rationales for interventions or solutions.

Most recently, impediments to the implementation of shared decision-making models have focused on lack of understanding of school change in general and participative structures in particular; confusion over roles; confusion over levels of governance; lack of support in training

and resources; subterfuge by teachers unions; lack of board of education and superintendent support; unrealistic expectations regarding the pace of change processes; and lack of skills to sustain initiatives (NYSCOSS, 1996; NYSED, 1996a, 1996b). One of the greatest barriers to sustaining SDM efforts may be the increased demands on participants' time (NYSCOSS, 1996; NYSED, 1996a). Difficulties with unanticipated occurrences that appear to slow the progress of teams may frustrate efforts as well.

Many of these problems should be addressed proactively in planning stages. However, troubleshooting should occur through all stages of the initiative, with remedies applied collaboratively as quickly as practicable.

CONCLUSION

Shared decision making landed in the laps of schools with only a limited research base to guide efforts. It is clear now that while shared decision making by itself cannot cure the ills of declining student results, its power to improve schools can be tapped (O'Neil, 1995/1996; Wohlstetter et al., 1997). Shared involvement as a facet of school restructuring can facilitate positive change in schools, focus collective energies on teaching and learning, support instructional programs, and hence optimize student performance and success.

Schools where collaborative models have been demonstrated to work most successfully are parts of systems that work to improve organizational conditions, encourage devolvement and sharing of decisions across the school community, and give teachers leadership roles in curriculum and instruction (Odden & Wohlstetter, 1995; Wohlstetter et al., 1997).

Therefore, the critical aim for today's schools is to discover better ways of integrating site-based management and shared decision making (governance reforms) with curriculum and instruction improvements (content reforms) (Wohlstetter & Odden, 1992).

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Planning as a Reflection of Cultural Values: A Brief Historical Perspective of Educational Planning in Cuba

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Educational planning, as most aspects of educational leadership, does not operate in a theoretically or scientifically prescribed vacuum. Instead, it derives from the environment and cultural value system of the schools and society in which it is conducted. Although the knowledge base in educational planning provides insight into the characteristics of distinct planning models (e.g., centralized/de-centralized; top-down/participative; rational-comprehensive, mixed scanning, incremental, or goal-free), the choice of an appropriate model must align with the current political, social, cultural, and economic values and realities. In this article, the author elaborates on this perspective of planning, using an historical review of educational planning in the Cuban educational system for illustration.

INTRODUCTION

Cuba, located only 90 miles from the Florida coast, comprises 1600 islands in the Caribbean SM covering an area roughly the size of Pennsylvania. It is the home to approximately 11 million people over 2 million of whom live in its capital, Havana, and over 73% live in urban areas. Of this population, 56% are under the age of 30, with 35% under the age of 16. Its major exports are sugar, tobacco, citrus fruits, and nickel, but only 20% of its work force work in agriculture, compared to the 30% in government services, including schools (1).

During the decades of the 1950s through the 1980s, Cuban scholars and educators were prolific in informing the world about Cuba's educational system. However, the severe economic austerity faced by Cuba since the late 1980s has severely reduced the flow of information from, or even about, that nation: "Castro's Cuba has long been the most hermetic society in the Western Hemisphere. Investigative reporting in Communist Cuba is a formidable task for a U.S. journalist" (2). The highly polemic nature of the current Cuban government tends to foster highly pro-Castro or anti-Castro "perspectives," rather than more balanced, objective approaches (3). The study of educational planning in Cuba is not exempt from these difficulties, to say nothing of the U.S. Treasury Department's restrictive policies regarding the author's presence in Cuba.

Nevertheless, Cuba remains a unique environment for the study of educational planning, especially in its current period of severe economic austerity, following relatively more prosperous periods. At the same time, it displays many characteristics and experiences common to all nations. Cuba has such a complex social, cultural, political, and economic history that its educational decision making defies such obvious stereotypical labels as Communist, bureaucratic, participatory, or centralized/decentralized (4). It is this complexity that motivated this study.

THE EARLY ROOTS OF CUBA'S EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Following Columbus' arrival in 1492, the Spaniards began to establish settlements as early as 1511; by 1519 Cuba became Spain's base for "New World" exploration, including serving as Cortes' base for his conquest of Mexico. Spain retained firm control until 1867, when the Cubans began a war for independence which lasted through 1898, when the U.S. entered the war with Spain and was granted control over Cuba at the Treaty of Paris. During this period of Spanish rule, the cultural value system could be described as colonial, religious, elitist, and discriminatory, with Spanish ancestry, wealth, and power being key determinants of privilege. Consistent with this culture, formal educational planning was highly centralized, with control resting almost exclusively in the hands of officials appointed by Spain's kings and queens. Discrimination against Cuban participation in planning and administration was strong, with schools serving primarily the children of the wealthy or aristocratic Spanish families, explicitly excluding blacks, mulattos, and children of "artisans and workers." At the beginning of the war for independence, over 95% of the students in Cuban schools were white and schools received very little government support (5).

Because of Spain's distance and lack of concern for all but its own economic interests, educational planning and governance fell primarily to the Catholic Church, among whose accomplishments was the establishment of the University of Havana in 1728. By 1842, however, the Spanish government became worried about the rising power of the Catholic Church in Cuba and the rising discontent of the local population. This led it to issue its first comprehensive plan for education in Cuba, assuming control of the University of Havana and abolishing many of the schools formed as charitable efforts to educate the Cuban population. By the time the war of 1898 began, less than 900 schools existed and the university enrollment had dropped from a high of 1,000 to only 229 students. At this time, only 44% of whites over the age of 10 and 24% of blacks were literate (6). In essence, Cuba effectively had no tradition of public education under Spain (7).

THE INFLUENCE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ON CUBAN EDUCATION

Upon assuming control of Cuba, the U. S. instituted much greater local autonomy within the educational system, emulating its own educational planning and governance model, and, in large measure, substituting its cultural value system for that of the Spaniards. The heart of this value system was increased access to education. Consequently, by 1900 Cuba had opened over 3,500 new schools, an increase of 1,000% (Lutjens, 1996, p. 72). The new Constitution of 1901 guaranteed free compulsory education for all children ages 6 to 14 (Fitzgerald, 1994). However, the costs of this expansion, along with growing political tensions, led to the creation of a strong centralized planning and governance structure.

With independence from the U. S. in 1902, prevailing cultural values again changed, although far less significantly than with the previous changes from Spanish to American domination. Centralized and bureaucratic educational planning continued to predominate through the 1933 revolution. The latter years of this period were characterized by low enrollment, lower attendance, shortages of schools and teachers, and few students continuing beyond the primary grades (Johnston, 1995). Such educational deficiencies led to a lack, and/or a misallocation, of skills among the population (Fitzgerald, 1992, p. 22).

EDUCATION UNDER BATISTA

With Batista's election in 1940, cultural values again demonstrated a shift, remaining capitalist, but more highly nationalistic and militaristic. As one of his two primary foci, Batista gave immediate attention to public education, primarily for political reasons, since teachers and students had been among the most vocal and staunch critics of the previous regime. To combat this, he "militarized" many of the rural schools, assigning army sergeants, regardless of their qualifications to teach, and allowing the military to build schools, commission textbooks, and design the curriculum (8).

However, with cultural values reinforcing free enterprise and individual benefit, many of the skill deficiencies and misallocations continued under the highly centralized planning and "impotent" local governments of the 1940s and 1950s (Lutjens, 1996, p. 34). A 1950 World Bank report pointed the blame at poor planning and administration, as well as on the corruption which characterized the central government. The central administration absorbed 20% of all educational budgets, compared with less than 4% allocated to vocational and technical education (Jolly, 1964, p. 171). Even among the 1% of the Cuban population who completed a university education, the preferences were for liberal arts or "law" degrees, rather than for studies in areas of economic interest to the country. The 1953 National Census recorded over 6,500 lawyers in the work force, versus only 309 engineers, 355 veterinarians, and 294 agronomists (9). For the nation with the highest expenditure per national income for higher education and a highly centralized planning system, such lack of manpower planning was significant (Perez-Stable, 1993, p. 28). As a consequence of "the failure of Cuban governments to tackle the problems in public education," many parents opted for private schools, both religious and secular, for their children (10).

EDUCATION DURING THE FIRST THIRTY YEARS OF THE CASTRO'S GOVERNMENT

By far the most significant cultural value shift came with the "triumph of the Revolution." Emphasis moved from free-enterprise to "access for all," from distinct socioeconomic classes to a homogenization of the populace, from racial discrimination to equality, from individual interests to the benefit of the "state." These changes were clearly reflected in Cuba's educational planning during this period.

Castro's government was able "to progressively raise the educational level" until the serious economic crisis of the late 1980s and 1990s (the special period") (Evenson, 1994, p. 125). Although the Cuban population only grew by 50% during this time period, enrollment in schools increased by 400%. One of every three Cubans was educated for free, including being provided with free textbooks (Balari, 1990). During Castro's first 30 years in office, education served economic, ideological, and public relations (especially external) purposes. Centralized control of education was both a necessity and a choice in post revolutionary Cuba with the reforms taking place within the context of "the centralization of planning, party, and a socialist state" (Lutjens, 1996, pp. 43-44). Following the Revolution, Cuban schools faced a plethora of accumulated problems. Students were heavily concentrated in the early grades, a consequence of rigid testing and promotion requirements, as well as a lack of availability of secondary schools especially in rural areas (11). Castro's government made education a priority and instituted massive programs to build Cuba's educational sector. This rapid expansion was not without problems, however. The problems of inefficiency continued, the action of the new "administrative guerrillas" often caused "conflict, orders, and counter orders" standards were lowered to prevent "bunching" of students in the lower grades, teachers were prepared through "crash courses" (12) and operational planning was not always carried out very effectively (13). A strong exodus of Cubans leaving the country exacerbated the problems. By 1962, 250,000 had left, including 15,000 to 20,000 professionals, including many teachers (14).

Although strategic planning remained highly centralized, operational planning became more decentralized. An official policy statement of 1962 read:

The system of education in Cuba has been decentralized through the delegation of large areas of authority to municipal and provincial departments. In this way the defects of an over-centralized system of the type from which Cuba suffered for many years are avoided. This policy is implemented through the autonomy of each provincial department in matters of organization, supervision, and administration of education, but also in economic matters (Jolly, 1964, pp. 186-187).

This approach became more pronounced in 1965, with the "offensive against bureaucracy" and in 1967, when this attack on overstating and bureaucracy continued even more intensely, transferring many state and Party officials to agricultural Work (Lutjens, 1996, p. 41). However, strategic planning remained a highly centralized function, with education viewed as crucial to attaining ideological, political, and economic goals. (15). In order to attain these goals, in 1961 a new educational system was planned by the national Ministry of Education.

As the culture moved from traditional religious values to Communistic values, as well as for motives of international politics, the new education system called for the abolishment of all church-run and private schools (Clark, 1997, p. 3). Similarly, education was expanded to include more females, although during the first decade of Castro's rule, it was available only to middle and upper class females (Evenson, 1994). The system also opened to all racial and ethnic groups during this time period.

The general re-structuring of the educational system required all students attend school until the age of 16, with the alternative being to join the Youth Movement, which combined study with vocational training and service. All schools were centrally controlled by the Ministry of Education, with uniform curriculum, scheduling and examinations (16).

Another major national planning effort was the designation of 1961 as the "Year of Education." During that year, most formal schools were suspended in support of a massive, nation-wide adult literacy campaign in which 27 1,000 Cuban volunteers reduced illiteracy from 23.6% to 3.9% (17).

Various national planning foci emerged during the initial 30 years of Castro's tenure. Following the 1961 literacy campaign, emphasis shifted to "rectification" and "democratic centration" in 1970. There was also tremendous expansion of the system between 1962 and 1980, secondary graduates rose from 17,583 to 510,957 (Fitzgerald, 1994, p. 86). This expansion:

... required more effective control of the schools and their administration. Presidents of municipal and provincial boards of education were replaced with Ministry designates. The municipal and provincial levels could name teachers, inspectors, and other personnel, and though basic finance flowed from the center, provinces had responsibility for 50 percent of the Ministry budget in 1964 (18).

With the help of Soviet advisors, a national campaign to study economic conditions and alternative paths began in 1973. "As the role of education in economic development was more clearly defined, the calculation of the investment needed to expand and transform the system led to the creation of a planning process" (19).

In 1976, the new Constitution established a new legal and philosophical basis for education, recognizing it both as a right and a duty of all Cuban youth. That same year, the Ministry of Education was re-created, along with a separate Ministry of Higher Education. The new

Ministry of Education remained responsible for planning and supervising national policy about educational principles, methodological standards and procedures, the training and use of administrators, research and experimentation, technical advice, supervision, and statistical information. This Ministry established the national plan for each subsystem of education, including for the technical training of workers, and the norms for teaching every subject at every level. Planning at the local level focused on working within these plans to ensure the proper functioning of local schools, including repair, maintenance, operations, and provision of material resources - ranging from furniture, laboratory and factory equipment, dormitory and dining supplies to food and clothing. The Ministry's planning office and office of construction made projections which guided the annual plans, although "no plans were made for the school by the Ministry (20).

Recognition of Cuba's pre-Revolutionary planning focus on centralization, to the exclusion of meaningful local planning, led to the creation of *Poder Popular* (local participation), which altered the distribution of formal authority in education with decentralizing reforms that stressed both efficiency and participation. Defined constitutionally as the "highest authority for the exercise of state functions within respective territorial boundaries (Article 102), the municipal *Poder Popular* was to manage local economic and service units and to develop other activities to meet the needs of the community. This included control of 86% of the educational centers, under the premise that "ordinary Cubans" could more easily decide "which schools to repair and when, which teachers seemed unqualified, and sometimes, what might be added to the curriculum- they could also participate in the upward movement of planning in numerous settings, in base-level discussions of laws, policies, and programs, and in the formal and informal review of the 'happenings' of schools and society (21).

The local offices of education not only served and worked within the constraints imposed by this central planning authority, but were also subordinate to the local *Poder Popular*, which coordinated municipal plans, monitored municipal activities, and controlled teacher placement. As such educational planning began with decisions taken by the Communist Party and with the annual, five-year, and long-term national social and economic development plans. After 1976, the "supply of school materials, textbooks, and teachers, the needs of the local labor force, maintenance and construction, and the cost of supervising education were all calculated at the municipal level and reconciled at the provincial level." This *Poder Popular* also attended to matters of hygiene, food services, materials, and other physical condition issues at the school. For these purposes, an average of 50% to 60% of the municipal budget was allocated to education.

Below this level were the "school councils," which prepared an annual plan at the beginning of each school year, as well as a monthly plan. In these planning processes, the council was expected to both provide information and identify problems to be addressed (22).

Following "an emergency super centralization of planning at the end of 1984, Castro launched his "rectification" campaign in 1986. This

campaign attacked a diversity of educational problems, including the declining promotion rates in secondary schools, overemphasis on final exams, automatic promotions, overemphasis on memorization, poor preparation of teachers, lack of parental involvement, excessive specialization within the university system, and general passivity within both the educational bureaucracy and universities (23).

Higher education was clearly a state monopoly. All policy was developed, implemented, and evaluated centrally, and through a Marxist-Leninist view. University enrollment rose from less than 14,000 to over 83,000 during the first three years of the Revolution (Evenson, 1994). In conjunction with centralized manpower planning, students were permitted to express a preference for a field of study, placement was made on the basis of guidelines, quotas, and plan requirements. For example, graduation in the agricultural sciences rose from only 759 students in 1959 to 5,154 in 1970 (24).

The net effect of these planning efforts on manpower planning can be seen in the re-configuration of the Cuban work force between 1970 and 1984. The "intelligensia" increased from 16.6% to 32.7% over this time period, "administrators" from 88,300 to 244,800, technical personnel from 211,400 to 604,000, and "leadership personnel" from 97,400 to 250,600 (Prieto & Moreno, 1990).

EDUCATION IN THE "SPECIAL PERIOD"

The mid-1980s witnessed a series of factors that were combined to cause tremendous economic hardship in Cuba- these hardships once again altered the cultural values of the nation, with repercussions on its educational planning. The 35-year blockade continued and was even increased in intensity. In 1985, Hurricane Kate caused over a billion dollars (U.S.) worth of damage; in 1986 Cuba defaulted on its foreign debt, making it then eligible only for short-term credits in the world financial markets; in 1989, the Soviet Block Common Market (Council for Mutual Economic Assistance) disintegrated, causing the most pronounced effects of all. Conditions became so difficult that in September, 1990, Castro declared "The Special Period in Time of Peace," calling for renewed national unity and great economic sacrifice (25).

Certainly the "Special Period" has had a negative financial impact on Cuba's educational system. Cuba's expenditures for education went from 1.1 billion pesos in 1980 to only 1.6 billion in 1990, with no adjustment for inflation (26). Newly qualified teachers earn only \$2.50 to \$2.80 (U.S. equivalent) per month, with senior university professors earning only \$4.20 per week. Gerrard (1994a) found that this has led to significant teacher absenteeism as they leave schools to pursue foreign currency available in the tourism sector (Gerrard, 1994, a&b). However, on his recent visit to Cuba, the author of this article found no substantiating evidence of such absenteeism; some teachers, especially those with foreign language skills needed in the tourism sector, had indeed left teaching in favor of tourist-related occupations, a situation by no means limited to the teaching profession (27). However, it may

produce negative effects on the now mandatory English courses at the secondary level.

Although schools have not closed, they may only be open three days per week (another claim not substantiated by this author's very recent visit to Cuba) and lack textbooks, paper, pens, and pencils. In some schools there are only two textbooks for twenty students, crackers and sugar for breakfast at boarding schools, a lack of aspirin, antibiotics, and even toothpaste at boarding facilities, and exams typed on stencils on 40- year-old typewriters. The paper shortage is so severe that there has been discussion of moving the national examination system to an oral exam. Cuba's pre-schools enjoy a good reputation, but financial exigencies limit access only to students for whom both parents are in the labor force. University enrollments have been cut back also, with students competing (primarily on the basis of their performance in their last three years of secondary school and on standardized exams) for limited vacancies in specific courses of study. Many of the boarding schools opened earlier in the Revolution have been replaced by neighborhood schools, thus saving the costs of transportation (a national scarcity area), food, etc.

Perhaps the most poignant synopsis of these hardships can be found in the words of Canek Sanchez Guevara, Revolutionary hero "Che" Guevara's oldest grandchild: "There's no paper, no pens, and no interest on the part of the teachers to do anything. And if you graduate, there's no work in your field. They'll ask you to go to the countryside and work in agriculture (Oppenheimer, 1992, p. 269).

As Castro said in announcing the "Special Period," "We have to be prepared to work with less and less, with almost nothing." However, by 1994, Castro recognized that education must be given a special place within the Cuban economic and political agenda, as a means of "safeguarding" the basic accomplishments of the Revolution (Lutjens, 1996, p.4). As Minister of Education Luis Gomez stated in 1994, hard currency and petroleum are not the only resources Cuba needs during this "Special Period"; educated human beings are also a key resource (28). This author's recent visit to many Cuban schools confirmed that education is clearly one of the highest national priorities, both for the government and for the people.

During this "Special Period," cultural values have again shifted somewhat. There has been a greater emphasis on democratization, at all levels; capitalism is beginning to re-emerge within the Communist system, as those Cubans with access to foreign exchange clearly enjoy economic and social advantages. Finally, there has been an increased need for foreign recognition and support. All of these modifications are reflected in the educational planning going on at this time in Cuba.

This author's recent visits to a wide variety of Cuban schools (including pre- schools, elementary, middle, and high schools, boarding schools in the countryside, college preparatory schools in which students spend half-days in manual labor, schools for students with special needs, teacher preparation institutes, and universities) all confirmed Cuba's current commitment to a highly collaborative educational planning model that blends both centralized and site-based governance.

This unique model represents not only an evolution from its historical predecessors, but also a conceptual reflection of, and response to, the nation's current social, economic, political, and cultural realities.

Education, in many regards, remains a centralized national system. As such, the Ministry of Education continues its primary role as formulator, disseminator, and monitor of a national curriculum. Conversations with representatives of the Ministry of Education revealed a strong emphasis on ensuring that Cuba's curricula are based on the best research findings and theoretical models from all nations, yet carefully adapted to Cuban needs and conditions. The Ministry not only disseminates and monitors these curricula throughout all schools but it also assembles and prints the textbooks, workbooks, and year-end examinations which embody the curricula. Financing of Cuba's schools is also a federal function, although these funds are passed to provincial and municipal levels for final decisions on their distribution. Conversations with directors of many schools suggested that this distribution of funds is essentially equitable, with most of the variation attributable to issues of local economies of scale, special needs, residential school costs, etc. To some extent, funding may also vary with the ability of individual schools to petition municipal or provincial administrations for needed additional resources, e.g., for facility modification or repair.

One significant cost differential factor among Cuban schools is the facilities, themselves. Cuban schools are housed in virtually any type of structure available. This author observed schools located in former mansions, former military installations, former convents, and in buildings specifically designed to serve as schools. With the tremendous shortage of building materials (attributed to the US blockade and Cuba's lack of capital for foreign purchase of materials), deferred maintenance has reached crisis proportions for many schools. Essential repairs represent major resource commitments which must be considered in municipal and provincial planning and resource allocation.

The financial exigencies, as well as the national political agenda of seeking foreign recognition and approval in favor of the Revolution, has led schools to seek foreign sponsorship to supplement federal funding. Schools often are named in recognition of foreign embassies or organizations sponsoring the school, providing essential funds for facility repair and maintenance, technology, special events, etc.

The municipal and provincial administrations also provide pedagogical assistance and supervision to schools under their aegis, both in terms of assuring understanding and implementation of the national curriculum, and in ensuring proper modification of that curriculum to regional and local needs and conditions. Although such local and regional planning is configured as "discussion among equals," (among national, provincial, municipal, and site representatives), evidence of respect for and perhaps even deference to hierarchical structures is clear.

The planning process for such modifications, as well as all operational planning, is accomplished through a highly representative, participative process. At the site level, although school directors appear

to have considerable authority in the administration of their schools, each school is governed by a council of representatives who meet monthly to plan and evaluate the implementation of those plans. Council representatives typically include elected representatives of the faculty, staff, Young Pioneers, and youth organizations operating within the school, as well as the director and vice-directors. Council representatives evaluate the implementation of the previous plan and discuss current directives, school needs, and emerging issues; this leads to the formulation of a monthly plan of action for the school that accommodates each of the representative's perspectives and identifies an action plan for each group.

These structural aspects of Cuban educational planning are clear reflections of cultural values shaped by necessity. The Revolution centered on effecting radical changes in participation, moving from a highly differentiated socioeconomic class structure to an egalitarian structure as exists in the world today. Although role differentiation within society is both inevitable and essential, the cultural value is to prize value all roles "equally." The elected representatives of the various interest groups serving in the school councils universally showed great pride in having been selected by their peers and took their participation seriously, not as a formality or "token" role. The devastating financial conditions of the nation force educational planners to seek constant modification to ideals, without losing sight of those ideals. This leads to a prevailing mentality of action research in planning, one of experimenting, adjusting, and evaluating. Despite the Cuban government's obviously high priority for education, economic uncertainties so dominate practice that long-range planning is not as feasible as had been previously experienced. The current educational planning modality is essentially a highly participative, incrementalist model.

CONCLUSION

Dominguez (1994), sums up the long history of Cuban educational planning to date: "Ultimately, Cuba's main resource is its people. Cubans remain a well educated, healthy people, extraordinarily resourceful under extremely adverse circumstances at home and abroad" (p. 214). Despite centuries of foreign domination and resulting changes in cultural values, Cuba has built an educational system that has made it the envy of developing nations around the world. Planning has accompanied these political, economic, social and cultural value changes, shifting from a very highly centralized system to a balanced system, and now into a system with greater decentralization.

There is evidence that Cuba is on the brink of exiting its "Special Period" (29). World support for the 35-year U. S. blockade is waning and Castro's age will inevitably lead to a change in leadership. Foreign investment and tourism are already producing noticeable changes in the economy, social structures, policies, and even the cultural values of the nation. Consequently, in the years ahead Cuba will remain a very

interesting subject for observing the inherent linkages between cultural values and educational planning.

REFERENCE NOTES

1. For further general information on Cuba, see del Aguila (1994) and Robson (1996).
2. See Oppenheimer (1992), p. 11. It is interesting to note that this personally experienced frustration is despite the fact that Oppenheimer had been awarded the Pulitzer Prize prior to attempting to study Cuba. Fitzgerald (1994) echoes this viewpoint, noting, "Cuba scholars have long been aware of the virtual impossibility of outsiders conducting scientific social research in Cuba. Those who have bravely tried, have come away with suggestive impressions, but admittedly less than scientific results" (p. 17).
3. Robson (1996) explains: "There is general agreement that the level of Cuban education is very high, but sources disagree as to why: Those favorable to the Castro government claim that it is the result of the emphasis placed on education since the revolution, while anti-Castro sources assert that the level of education in Cuba has always been high" (p. 15).
4. See Lutjens (1996) for a comprehensive description of this complexity.
5. See Lutjens (1996), p. 70, for further details on education during this period. 6. See Lutjens (1996), pp. 71-72. 7. Johnston (1995), p. 26.
8. Since 1930, "schools had been closed, teachers, fired, salaries withheld, and students and teachers arrested and imprisoned (and frequently tortured and murdered) because of their opposition to illegitimate and violent government." For further information on schools in the early Batista period, see Johnston (1995), p. 26.
9. See Fitzgerald (1994), pp. 24-26. Although 23% of the state budget (3% of GNP) was dedicated to education in 1956, less than 6% of the population had any secondary education and only 2% had any university education. In 1953, 52% had not gone beyond third grade, 44% had between fourth and eleventh grade educations, and only 1% had completed a university education. For further details, see Mtonga (1993), p. 113 and Jolly (1964), pp. 169-173.

10. See Johnston (1995), p. 29. These schools were "impervious to state direction or control," effectively creating two educational systems in Cuba, with the private schools following U.S. curricula, U. S. textbooks, English courses, and with environments significantly segregated by economic, racial, and gender considerations. By 1958 there were 1300 private schools and 4 private universities (see Lutjens (1996, p. 74).
11. See Jolly (1964), pp. 23 1 & 18 1. For example, in 1960-61 there were over half a million students in the first grade, compared with only 58,000 in the sixth. However, by 1962, matriculation in primary schools had doubled, secondary basic education (grades 7 through 9) had tripled, and technical school enrolments had quadrupled. Class sizes fell as more teachers were hired- textbooks and supplies were not in short supply, as 500,000 pre-primary books and 4,500,000 primary books were printed between 1959 and 1962'. The budget for education tripled over this time period. Military barracks were converted to schools and by the end of 1961, 671 new rural schools, 339 urban schools, and 99 basic secondaries were built (See Lutjens, 1996, p. 75).
12. For a more complete discussion of the leadership and administrative issues affecting Cuba's schools, see Lutjens (1996), p. 39.
13. For more general discussion of education and educational planning during this period, see Jolly (1964).
14. See Lutjens (1996), p. 78, and Jolly (1964).
15. Castro's first reason for demanding reform and expansion in education was that the prerevolution education system embodied extreme inequalities and tended to intensify class division. Second, a year and a half after the revolution, several expatriate technicians and administrators left the country as a result of a nationalization policy (Jolly, 1964). The shortage of skilled manpower was aggravated by the departure of thousands of Cubans, many of whom possessed technical and professional qualifications. There was, therefore, the need to increase technical education. The third reason has increasingly turned out to be a political and doctrinaire reform of education as an integral and essential part of Marxism-Leninism. Mtonga (1993), pp. 391-392.
16. At the primary level, students attended class for 6.5 hours per day, studying basic literacy skills and composition, basic arithmetic, and ideological orientation. At the secondary level (grades 7 through 9, 10, or 11), students chose or were assigned to one of three tracks: general secondary, teacher training, or vocational training. All tracks provided instruction in Spanish, mathematics, the sciences, history, and technical/agricultural production. Instruction was held for 26 hours per week, with no electives. Qualified students could also move on to three more years of pre-university education.

17. For further details on this literacy campaign, see Fitzgerald (1994), p. 41. Literacy was defined as attaining a first-grade level in reading and writing (Mtonga, 1993, p. 15). Unfortunately, later data reveal that illiteracy rose to 12.91% by 1970 (Fitzgerald, 1994, p. 41).
18. See Lutiens (1996), p. 78. As part of this reform, a movement toward improvement (*perfeccionamiento*) was begun, with goals of addressing the shortage of teachers, materials, equipment, and facilities; improving academic performance; reducing dropouts and repetition of grade levels; improving control at the Ministerial and provincial levels; providing better links with the community, and addressing better the demands of economic, scientific, technical, and cultural development.
19. See Lutiens (1996), p. 80. Over 1,350 school programs and 620 textbooks were revised, as part of an overall curriculum improvement effort. In 1973-74, the "school to the countryside" program was implemented, through which secondary students were boarded at rural schools during the week, dedicating half their time to study and half to working in agriculturally related endeavors. Participation in this program rose to 38% of secondary students in 1978, later falling to 34% in 1980-81 (Fitzgerald, 1994, p. 16). Specialized secondary schools were created in the 1970s to prepare talented students for specific fields of university study, or for the arts, sports, or the military (Lutjens, 1996, p. 103).
20. See Lutjens (1996), p. 82. Although not a planning or policy function, the Ministry also maintained an Office of Inspection, which investigated complaints related to the discipline of students and teachers, the absence of teachers or other school personnel, organizational problems, and thefts. Similarly, "in addition to oversight through planning, inspection, and methodological guidance, renderings of accounts to the municipal and provincial assemblies were used to assess the positive and the negative in performance and the progress of problem-solving efforts" (p. 87).
21. For a comprehensive review of *Poder Popular*, see Lutjens, 1996.
22. For further information on school councils, see Lutjens, 1996.
23. See Lutjens (1996), p. 2. See also Paulston (1989), pp. 17-18, citing Villarubia-Cabrera (1986).
24. See Paulston (1989), p. 10, citing McDonald (1985), p. 169. See also Fitzgerald (1994), p. 45. In 1983, for example, 173,000 students graduated from ninth grade, with only 69,000 slots available in the pre-university track (Lutjens, 1996, p. 102). Beginning in 1970-71, slots were distributed on a percentage basis; in 1973-74 this system was replaced by a provincial quota system designed "to reconcile national and regional priorities" (p. 101). However, several features of the organization of higher education prevented manpower planning from creating permanent

inequalities of access or outcomes. First, direct progression to the university from public schools was only one route of entrance. "Egher education remained an option for workers with the necessary preparation" and a "special preparatory course for military veterans was created" in the early 1980s. "Also, access was facilitated by state scholarships and a distributional bias toward students in the outlying provinces" (p. 104). The rationale for all higher studies became to provide a Communist education which integrated study, work, sports, and military training, but only for those who best supported the Revolution (Paulston, 1989, p. 1). As Kaufman (1988-89) explains, this emphasis on ideology over economic issues was made possible by the large Soviet contributions to the Cuban economy and the Soviet interests in having a strongly Communist nation located so close to the United States. Higher education students worked 20 hours per week and served one day per week in the national militia (Paulston, 1989, pp. 16-17); increasing numbers of women, blacks and mulattos were enrolled in higher education (Evenson, 1994); and applicants were screened on the basis of their attitude toward the Revolution (Paulston, 1989, p. 10 and Gerrard, 1994b). Higher education programs were made more accessible to the working population of the nation- by 1979-80, 54,4% of higher education students held jobs and attended classes by correspondence, evening classes, or at work centers. By 1973, 95% of the University of Havana students were in work-study programs and graduates were required to work in third world nations or rural areas of Cuba for several years (Fitzgerald, 1994, p. II 7). Consistent with Communist ideology, status differences between professors, students, and staff were vastly reduced, with professors and students jointly planing curriculum, evaluating each other's goals and accomplishments, consulting on promotions, and jointly collaborating in the administrative policy and practice of co-governance (Torres, 1983, pp. 47-48). University professors were promoted by these student/faculty committees on the basis of their teaching and "Revolutionary" commitment, rather than on research contributions (Paulston, 1989, p. 15). By 1982, Cuban higher education enrolled 19% of the total population, a higher figure than Italy or the United Kingdom (Paulston, 1989, p. 9, citing Mujal-Leon, 1988). By 1986, over 45 university-level facilities enrolled some 268,000 students (Paulston, 1989, p. 9, citing Padula & Smith, 1988).

25. In 1989 Cuba imported 13 million tons of oil from the Soviet Union- by 1992 this had fallen to only 6 million, crippling internal transportation and machinery-based enterprises. In 1984, Cuba imported \$8.4 billion (U.S.) of goods; without the subsidized Soviet market for its sugar and machine parts, by 1992 this fell to only \$2.2 billion. Castro reported that year that the loss of Soviet subsidies and assistance reduced Cuba's international purchasing power by 70%; further drops in the price of sugar have continued to reduce this buying power, although increases in tourism and foreign investment have partially helped to offset those losses, although the average Cuban received only one-third of the consumer goods of 1989. By October, 1991 Cubans had access to less than 5% of the soap, 18% of the canned meat,

10% of the spare parts, and 22% of the powdered milk expected from the Soviet Union. Despite these economic setbacks, the government claims that in the field of education, "a widespread campaign has been undertaken to improve the system." See Blanco (I 994), p. 186; Dominguez (I 994), p. 205; Fitzgerald (1994); and Rodriguez (I 990), p. 93.

26. These expenditures decreased at the primary and secondary levels, with the percentage gain being exhibited only in higher education. Expenditures on education as a percentage of the Gross National Product also dropped between 1980 and 1990, as did capital expenditures for education. Although teaching staff in both pre-primary and vocational education rose from 1980-81 to 1994-95, it fell overall quite drastically at the primary and secondary levels (UNESCO, 1996).

27. For further discussion of school conditions during the Special Period, see Gerrard, 1994a; Robson, 1996; and Walsh, 1996.

28. As cited in Lutjens (I 996), p. 90. Despite the active presence of four universities (La Habana, Las Villas, Camaguey, and Oriente), higher education has suffered strong enrolment loss during the "Special Period," as emphasis shifts to maintaining agricultural production despite the decrease of mechanization and to the blossoming tourist industry, which brings in the much-needed "hard currency." From a high of almost three million students in 1987-88, higher education enrolments fell to only 176,228 in 1993-94 (Lutjens, 1996, p. 166). Despite this, there were 1,005 scientists per million inhabitants and 32,000 people working in science and technology at the start of 1994, respectable by any international standards (p. 167). Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan reports between 50,000 and 60,000 physicians in Cuba, although the Jamaican Medical Council recently repealed its 20-year exemption of Cuban-educated physicians from the Jamaican medical bar exams, on the grounds that entry to medical school in Cuba only requires a high school diploma and that the quality of their preparation is no longer as strong as previously believed (Nation of Islam..., June 11, 1996).

29. By March, 1994 there were 129 new economic associations formed with foreign investors, with more under discussion. Tourism rose from a quarter million in 1985 to a half-million in 1992 and a million projected for 1996 (Fitzgerald, 1994, pp. 175- 176. Foreign investment totaled \$1.5 billion (U.S.) in 1994 (Lutjens, 1996, p. 190). For 1995, sugar production rose by 34%, root vegetables by 29%, fresh vegetables by 30%, consumer rice by 55%, tobacco by 30%, oil refining by 31%, nickel production by 31 %, fertilizers by 20%, and steel by 17% (*Cuba Aficionado*, 1997).

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PLANNING AND TEACHING STYLES

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"When we accept that people are really different, we must also accept that teachers will certainly bring their own uniqueness to the way they teach. We call this 'teaching style'. . . [and a teacher's] teaching style governs the reality of . . . [his or her] classroom" (Guild & Garger, 1985, p. 36). Teaching styles, then, are the overall patterns that provide general direction to a person's way of teaching; and every teacher has his or her own unique style. Because teaching style influences how effective a teacher is, it is important that teachers know ways in which their styles can be altered or made more effective. This paper describes the general nature of teaching styles, as well as the relationship between planning, specifically interdisciplinary group planning, and understanding and improving teaching styles.

Teaching style in and of itself is important, for it provides general direction to a person's teaching. Appropriate style alone, however, is not enough to make a teacher effective in the classroom. In order to provide the best conditions for learning, a teacher must also know how he or she will interact with students. Most experts in the teaching profession agree that for teachers to truly be effective, they must plan. Lalik and Niles (1990) find that "teachers' plans and decisions have been linked to students' learning" (p. 320); Yinger (1980) believes that planning is essential to learning and contends, "Teachers and classrooms rarely function effectively without some kind of planning" (p. 107). Borko and Niles (1987) state their position quite simply: "To teach successfully one must plan successfully" (p. 167). Planning actually can improve the overall educational setting. "If the school is to become a setting that encourages teachers to continue to develop their teaching ability throughout their careers, planning can function as an activity to aid this professional growth" (Borko & Niles, 1987, p. 182).

Good planning also leads to good teaching styles. Borko and Niles (1987) found that "the overwhelming majority of teachers agreed that planning was an extremely important factor in determining overall effectiveness as a teacher" (p. 179). Implementing effective planning, then, is a good way for teachers to improve their teaching styles.

It is critical that teachers become aware of their own teaching styles and how these styles influence what occurs in their own classrooms. "The more teachers learn about their own teaching and learning styles the more they can explain what happens in their classrooms and why" (Cornett, 1983, p. 19). Once teachers understand their teaching and learning styles, it will be easier for them to see specific ways their styles can be amplified or modified (Cornett).

However, most teachers who try to strengthen their teaching styles through planning have limited resources for doing so, as well as little time to devote to planning. Because of this limited time, and often because of limited imagination, teachers sometimes must rely upon their own experiences as their only guide to improving their teaching styles.

Given the limited time available for planning, assert Borko and Niles (1987), teachers generally begin with ideas that have worked in the past and spend what time they do have embellishing and elaborating upon these ideas.

Within these constraints, then, it would seem that teachers' teaching styles would become more effective and more accommodating if teachers were able to become aware of their own teaching styles, as well as those of others, through group planning. In this way, teachers might well be ". . . encouraged to use planning as a vehicle for expanding their repertoires of teaching strategies and activities and for optimizing the match between instructional content and the learners" (Borko & Niles, 1987, p. 183).

IMPROVING STYLE

Teaching style is not a personality trait, but there are certain characteristics of teaching style that may reflect personality. Teachers can always modify or improve their style of teaching (Cornett, 1983). The best way for teachers to improve their own style is to study various types of styles, decide upon one that seems appropriate, and compare their own styles to the model selected. Guild and Garger (1985) found that by working with one model of instructional style, teachers initially developed self-awareness about their own teaching styles.

Secondly, they examined students' learning style needs. Increased awareness of the styles of their students can enable teachers to be more effective in promoting learning in the classroom. "Once teachers gain an appreciation of the variety of learning styles, they can respect learning style differences and adapt their teaching styles for different situations" (Cornett, 1983, p. 19).

PLANNING

With a greater understanding of how their teaching styles affect what occurs in the classroom, teachers will know better what to plan for; thus, they will be more prepared to meet the learning needs of their students. For the most part, however, teachers are isolated from each other and must plan and teach alone (McCutcheon, 1980). Lack of interaction with other teachers can stagnate a teacher's teaching style. Therefore, for planning to truly enhance one's teaching style, it should be done in collaboration with other teachers as often as possible. While teachers are encouraged to plan, much of that planning is expected to be done alone and on their own time. For planning to become more advantageous, it should occasionally involve other teachers (Borko & Niles, 1987).

IIINTERDISCIPLINARY TEACHING TEAMS

In an attempt to facilitate teacher interaction while planning, interdisciplinary teaching teams are being implemented in many schools, especially those adopting the middle school concept. These teams are designed to provide common planning time for teachers. Interdisciplinary teams provide the chance for teachers to collaborate with one another while they plan. Further, "interdisciplinary teams may eliminate the isolation that many teachers feel by providing a working group of colleagues to conduct activities and to discuss and solve mutual problems" (Mac Iver, 1990, p. 460).

One of the most important components of interdisciplinary teams is common planning time. In fact, according to McKenna (1989), interdisciplinary teams need a common planning time to be effective. Mac Iver (1990) also emphasizes the importance of team planning: "In order to obtain the greatest benefit from interdisciplinary teaming, a school must provide teachers with adequate common planning time" (p. 461). It is common planning time that gives teachers the opportunity to gain insight into the teaching styles of one another.

PLANNING AND INTERDISCIPLINARY TEACHING TEAMS

The concept of team planning is also relevant to teaching styles; such interaction can strengthen teachers' understanding of effective teaching styles by allowing teachers the opportunity to discuss what has or has not been successful in the classroom. Team planning sessions provide teachers with the opportunity to learn from one another as they discuss their practice of teaching (Borko and Niles, 1987). Common planning can also provide different options for teaching styles by allowing teachers the opportunity to explore together, new possibilities. Collaborative planning can be a time in which teachers explore alternative teaching methods and activities together. They no longer rely on routines that they have found to be successful in the past (Borko & Niles, 1987). An important advantage for interdisciplinary teams and the common planning time they provide, is that they allow an opportunity for teachers to become more cognizant of their own personal styles. Interdisciplinary teaming also provides a forum in which these styles can be studied and modified as necessary.

Through such awareness, teachers will possibly better understand how to work with their own teaching styles to make them more suitable to the various learning styles of their students. As one teacher states, "when I understand the style of others, I can use my own and others' strengths to work together for the best results" (Guild & Garger, 1985, p. 24). This greater awareness will enable teachers to be more flexible, and more confident, in their own classrooms. "Once teachers gain an appreciation of the variety of learning styles, they can respect learning style differences and adapt their teaching styles for different situations" (Cornett, 1983, p. 19). In this way, teachers will

achieve a greater measure of success in effecting student learning in the classroom.

CONCLUSION

Teachers can benefit tremendously from the type of collaborative planning traditionally associated with interdisciplinary teaching teams, particularly in terms of understanding and improving their own teaching styles. In fact, Mac Iver (1990) even found that "the single strongest predictor of higher ratings of quality of school programs overall is the use of common planning periods for members of interdisciplinary teams" (p. 443).

Teaching style is central to how well a teacher can communicate with students. As such, style is central to the learning that takes place in the classroom. For these reasons, teachers need to be aware of their teaching styles. The best way for teachers to accomplish the goal of understanding and improving their teaching style is to interact with their colleagues in interdisciplinary teams that provide common, collaborative planning time.

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PLANNING AN EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY FOR URBAN PRINCIPALS: PUTTING REFLECTIVE THINKING INTO PRACTICE

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The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation under the direction of the National Association of Secondary School Principals agreed to implement a professional development policy tailored to the specific needs of 19 participating principals and respective schools in the Jefferson County Public Schools (Louisville, KY). Following an intensive job shadowing program during the 1997-1998 school-year, each principal was asked to identify one administrative or leadership practice that would serve as a "target" for reflective thinking and positive change during the 1998-1999 academic year. Working closely with a consulting coach assigned to the project, the principals were guided through a multi-step, reflective practice model designed to bring about reform at the individual school site under the direction of the respective principals. This article reports on the implementation of the reflective practice program. The methods employed were qualitative and included in-depth interviews, structured shadowing encounters, reflective conversations between the principal and their coach, and document analyses.

INTRODUCTION

By far the most significant learning experiences in adulthood involve critical self-reflection -- reassessing the way we have posed problems and reassessing our own orientation to perceiving, knowing, believing, and acting (Mezirow, 1990; p. 13)

The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation (the Foundation) and the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) engaged middle level principals in a professional development program based on Schon's (1983; 1987) reflective practice. Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) was selected by the Foundation based on its noteworthy efforts in standards-based reform throughout the 1990s under the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA).

Understanding the uniqueness of each school, the Foundation/NASSP agreed to design professional development policies tailored to the specific needs of each of the 19 participating principals. Following an intensive job shadowing program during the 1997-1998 school-year, each principal was asked to identify one administrative or leadership practice that would serve as a "target" for reflective thinking and positive change during the 1998-1999 academic year. Working closely with one of the two coaches assigned to the project, the principals were guided through a multi-step, reflective practice model designed to bring about reform at the individual school site under the direction of the respective principals.

The Division of Professional Development for the Kentucky Association of School Administrators (KASA) annually recognizes one

professional development program with the Tom Vest Recognition Award for outstanding achievement in professional development. The purpose of the award is to recognize and promote the "best of the best," to showcase effective professional development that can be replicated or adapted to, local schools and districts across the Commonwealth. The Foundation/NASSP program in JCPS received the prestigious award at the annual KASA conference held on July 12, 1999 at the Louisville Galt House East Hotel.

HISTORY OF THE CLARK FOUNDATION/NASSP PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR JCPS PRINCIPALS

In 1997, NASSP was awarded a grant of \$325,000 for 16 months to design and implement a one-year professional development program for middle school principals in JCPS. The challenge to NASSP was to design activities that focused on building the capacity of principals to support standards-based reform by increasing their knowledge of the standards implementation process and improving their instructional leadership, communication, reflective practice, and interpersonal skills.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE AND THE URBAN PRINCIPAL

Reflective thinking and acting has emerged as critical aspects of professional development for urban teachers and principals. For example, Brubacher, Case, and Reagan (1994) applied reflective thinking in their efforts to restructure the teacher education program at the University Connecticut. Their research disclosed the fact that, all too often, urban educators, when confronted with complex educational dilemmas, rely upon 'prepackaged' programs, techniques, and plans or merely rely upon their instincts and experience rather than employ structured megacognitive processes.

Ross and Bondy (1993) have demonstrated the application of reflective practice to enhance student empowerment as an essential aim of elementary education. They have shown in their research how teachers can draw upon reflective decision-making to help elementary-school children become caring, involved, and productive citizens.

Central to reflective practice for urban principals, however, is to move beyond a focus on the techniques of school administration to a focus on the critical purpose of school administration. This shift requires a principal to no longer think exclusively of management skills needed for effective decision-making, but to also consider the reasoning behind those decisions, and also their consequences. Reflective practice challenges urban principals to no longer think in terms of *how* (technical) to solve problems, but *why* (critical) when considering a particular solution, and *what* (interpretive) message that decision(s) sends to the school community (see Polite 1997; Schuttlöffel 1999).

PHASE ONE 1997-1998: SHADOWING ENCOUNTERS

A semi-structured Shadowing Encounter Instrument and procedures were developed by Polite (1997) as a working tool and component of an on-going, multi-year professional development institute to be used with urban principals. The shadowing encounters were not fashioned totally within the genre of structured observation of school administrators established by Mintzberg, 1973 and others (see Dempsey 1976; Martin and Willower 1981; Kmetz and Willower, 1982; Willis, 1980). The shadowing served two important purposes for the professional development policies in JCPS:

1. It provided a method to identify individual principal's preferred work behaviors and trends; and
2. It aided in the establishment of a rapport between the principals and the professional development coach.

The shadowing procedures were designed with the express purpose of facilitating technical and interpretive levels of reflection among the affected principals. Each principal was shadowed for two full days during the 1997-1998 school-year. Each engaged in a feedback session, and an in-depth interview related to the shadowing encounters and summer 3-day retreat. In addition to being prepared to engage in a rigorous reflective practice activity during the 1998-1999 year, each principal was able to categorically answer two overarching questions at the close of Phase One:

1. What do I tend to do with my time daily? and
2. What do my collective work behaviors mean with respect to instructional leadership for my school?

The social context of each school is also particularly challenging. Among the 19 principal participants, 5 are located in school communities generally considered particularly challenging, replete with the most negative elements of urban life. Each principal's school is considered 'urban'. Along gender lines, the principals are fairly well balanced with 11 men and 8 women. Each principal was paired with a coach, either Vernon C. Polite or Merylann J. Schuttloffel and there were no subsequent changes in the pairings throughout the program.

The data gleaned from the shadowing encounters were disaggregated so as to afford each principal an opportunity to discern routine daily behaviors across four elements that emerged as central to their duties in an urban middle school. The elements are:

1. Promoting students' cognitive development,
2. Administration-management,
3. Leadership behavior, and
4. Attending to students' social behaviors.

TABLE 1

*Shadowing Encounters: Observed Principal Behaviors during Phase One
Reported in Minutes and Percentages¹*

<i>Cognitive Development</i>	<i>Administration/ Management</i>	<i>Leadership Behaviors</i>	<i>Social Behaviors</i>
Effectiveness 2,112	Personnel Issues 2,214	Critical Friend 509	Advising Students 3,171
Curriculum 748	Attendance 1,232	Learning 3,373	Disruption 852
Teaching 924	Desk Work 2,105	Prof. Develop. 232	Violence 164
Tech. Issues 344	Budget Issues 356	Community Issues 1,342	Weapons Issues 12
Testing Issues 522			Gang Issues 45
			Monitoring 3,944
4,650 19%	5,907 24%	5456 23%	8,188 34%

¹Reported in total minutes observed by category and by percentage.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE SHADOWING ENCOUNTERS

Typically, nothing depleted more of the principals' time than attending to students' social behaviors (advising, addressing discipline, and monitoring) as shown in Table 1, Category 4. Monitoring occurs, mainly, before school, during lunch, during the exchange of classes, and after school. Nearly 35% of what was seen during the shadowing encounters was some form of managing students' behaviors.

There are significant discrepancies in resources available across the schools. Much of this seems to depend upon the individual principal's ability to draw resources to the school and the resources available in the surrounding community. As a related issue, there emerged a need to conduct a race by gender analysis of the utilization of the various discipline options present within the district. Surely the district, like most urban districts that grapple with this dilemma, has considered these issues, but shadowing revealed a salient relationship between these factors and students' academic achievement.

Extant research on the role of urban principals has confirmed the 'fragmented' nature of the principal's work. The shadowing encounters disclosed the fact that several factors contributed to the degree of work fragmentation: 1. Rapport with the administrative staff, 2. Relationship

between the principal and the secretary, 3. Experience in the job, and 4. The principal's personal organizational skills.

The technologies available to students and teachers vary significantly from school to school. The principals' use of personal technologies ranges from 0 to 10 (10 being the highest). Some principals have established meaningful formal and informal partnerships that seemingly have positive impacts on the participating school. The 'how-to' of the partnership process does not seem to be shared across schools.

It appeared that certain principals were emerging as effective "CEO's" (a new concept). They have established relationships with teachers and staffs that afford them the opportunities to meet regularly with groups of teachers and staff for the purpose of generating strategies and monitoring activities much like a manager in the macro domain. They hold their teachers and staff responsible for their work behaviors not unlike professionals in the corporate world, where the emphasis is on client services and satisfaction. This is different from the focus on one-on-one relationships and micro-management methods of the instructional leader.

Some principals are rather successful in their efforts to involve parents from low-income households and communities. Their successes should be shared across schools.

Tracking continues in a variety of ways across the districts and within individual schools. The persistence of tracking emerged as a troubling finding given the extant research on the negative outcomes of tracking on minorities and girls. This persistence of tracking remains an issue of social class and access to these programs (are poor children equally involved in these programs?). The role(s) played by the middle school principals in the establishment and maintenance of these tracking programs and monitoring access to these programs is most interesting.

Some principals have developed and shared their 'visions' of improved schooling with teachers and other relevant persons in their communities. They have amazing outcomes.

Phase One of the reflective practice professional development program involved one-on-one interactions between the principals and their respective coaches. The outcomes were insightful, disclosing patterns of work behavior previously identified by established researchers, but the shadowing encounters serve as wonderful opportunities to establish the working rapport between the coach the principals needed to carryout the "Phase Two: Individuals Reflective Practice Experiences" discussed below.

PHASE TWO 1998-1999: INDIVIDUAL REFLECTIVE PRACTICE EXPERIENCES

During the 1998-1999 school-year, the 19 principals from JCPS were asked to engaged in a reflective thinking project based on the work of Ellis, 1994; Polite, 1997; Schon, 1989; and Schuttlöffel, 1999. Each principal was asked to consider one administrative or leadership practice that would serve as a "target" for reflective thinking and positive change

during the 1998-1999 academic year. The principals were told to consider from the following possibilities, but were not restricted to only these possibilities: Administrative team; monitoring students' behavior and discipline; community partnerships; use of technology to enhance administrative practice; or delegation of administrative responsibilities. In most cases, the target practice emerged as salient based on the knowledge gleaned from the shadowing encounters.

The reflective thinking projects were multi-step projects and involved on-going and incremental interactions and decision-making with the support of the affected coaches, teachers, staff, parents or students. The ordered steps involved were the following. "Visioning—Critical Reflection (desired outcome)" was the first step in the process. Principals were asked to spend time considering what should be occurring with the target practice selected and to consider the ideal outcomes and persons who will support the planned activities. They were admonished that this first step would take some structured reflection and reflective conversations with their respective coach if done correctly and would likely include perspectives and insights from their administrative team, teachers, parents, and possibly other support staff. "Reflection for Action (consider the current state)" was the second step in the process. At this point, the principal considered what is happening at his/her school with respect to the target practice *prior* to any interventions. The principal would, at this point, write a detailed description of the "here and now" to be used as a benchmark to measure change. "Technical Reflection" (how will you cause change?) was the next step in the reflective process. At this step in the process, the principals were ready to begin designing and implementing a plan of action to bring about change. Each principal stated clearly exactly what steps were to be put in place to bring about the desired outcome(s). Each principal also reported to the coach the names and roles of those persons who would be involved in the change process and what resources were required to impact the change? The Foundation/NASSP provided many of the resources.

"Interpretive reflections" (what are the implications of the change(s)) was an essential step in the process. After the plan was implemented, the implications of change emerged. An understanding of the implications of change were critical to the process. Additionally, determining what data or evidence would be needed to document the change was probably the most difficult step in the process for many of the principals. Beyond "feeling" good about the change, what specific evidence would the principal gather to verify that there was an actual change in the target practice? Data collection is an area that emerged as new and difficult for urban principals. Finally, a list of the persons who assisted the effort was generated.

Finally, the principals were asked to indicate what other individuals were involved, what roles they played, and how were they brought into the process. The principals learned from this step to draw upon resources that are readily available but rarely utilized. These persons were likely teachers within their building or central office personnel.

THE 1998-1999 REFLECTIVE PRACTICE OUTCOMES

Although each principal generated a totally unique reflective practice during the 1998-1999 school year that was tailored specially to conditions in his/her school building (see Table 2), the projects, liberally, could be grouped into four general categories or foci: 1. Focus on Assessing Student Work; 2. Focus on the Achievement Gap; 3. Focus on Technology; and 4. Focus on Basic Skills Acquisition. Four of the 19 reflective practice project summaries generated by the principals are presented follow below.

TABLE 2

School-Based Reflective Practice Projects: 1998-1999

<i>Principal</i>	<i>Middle School</i>	<i>Project</i>
Baker, Debbie	Meyzeek	Create a teacher evaluation process that results in greater student achievement
Calvert, Jan	Farnsley	Establish a mentoring program for all new teachers
Clemons, Skip	Southern	Improve students' reading skills and CATS scores
Cole, Albert	Crosby	Closing the achievement gap
Crutcher, Ronald	Noe	Focus on student work
Frepartner, Susan	Knight	Focus on instructional practices as they relate to performance standards
Gaebler, Thomas	Moore	Communication: Staff and community
Goins, Ann	Carrithers	Close the achievement gap between Black and White students
Graham, Betty	Newburg	Use of technology to enhance administrative practice
Hardin, Mary	T. Jefferson	Restructure the administrative team
Hite, Dean	Western	Focus on instructional management
Martin, Butch	Kennedy	School-wide focus on reading in the content area
Nolan, Holly	Highland	Recruit more business partnerships
Peak, Kevin	Frost	Focus on effective classroom management to improve the learning environment
Rose, Mark	Iroquois	Use of technology for administrative functions and promote staff proficiency in their use of technology
St. Clair, Steve	Conway	Prepare teams of parents to assess students' work
Watts, Stuart	Barret	Improved communication for the implementation and modification of the Consolidated Plan

Wosoba, Jonathan	Westport	School-wide curricula Modification
Zachery, Robert	Jefferson County	Modification of the math curriculum

FOCUS ON ASSESSING STUDENT WORK

The Conway Middle School became an unofficial showplace during the 1998-1999 school based on the effort of Steve St. Clair to focus on identifying and displaying quality student work. St. Clair and his teachers spent a tremendous amount of energy considering possible ways of getting teachers and parents involved in the educational processes at Conway. In addition to the ongoing focus at professional development days, St. Clair wanted his teachers, students, and parents to become thoroughly familiar with the work generated by students and felt that the average parent could be empowered by training and support to score student work using appropriate rubrics. Teachers were trained and asked to display high quality students' work within their classroom. Teachers were allowed to 'walk through' the building during professional days to see high quality student work displayed. Educators from school districts around that country arrived at Conway during the 1998-1999 school year to see the massive examples of high quality student work and the scoring rubrics used for assessment.

Rubrics refer to a specific procedures used in assessing the quality of students' work as measured by objective standards (Popham 1997; Shepardson and Vicki 1997; Luft 1997). Rubrics are used widely across the nation and are now central components of state-sponsored assessments. For example, the state of Colorado has used rubrics to score portfolios that document the information literacy performance of students (see Callison 1997): According to Gramann and Aram's (1996) research, rubrics focus on the processes of recording data, analyzing data, drawing conclusions, and providing evidence. Albeit educators generally support the use of rubrics for the scoring of oral presentations, science projects and even some mathematics projects, rubrics are not without controversy. Many educators argue that rubrics tend to be too task-specific, general, lengthy, or confusing (Popham, 1997).

St. Clair decided to focus on assessing student work for his reflective practice project for the year. Specifically he wanted to increase the number of parents who were knowledgeable and proficient in the use of rubrics for scoring students'. His vision statement is particularly detailed and goal-driven.

A core group of parents will volunteer to be trained by the teaching staff to score student work. After being trained, the parents will join their child's teachers to score actual open-response scrimmage questions. The desired outcome would be that parents would come away from the activity with a deeper understanding of what students must know and be able to demonstrate when answering open-response questions. Consequently, parents will reinforce and support the school's efforts with their child. To accomplish these goals, there is a need to involve the science department chairperson, science teachers, parent

trainer, PTSA Board, the professional development chairperson, cafeteria staff, the computer teacher, and team teachers.

When reflecting upon the current state of parent involvement at Conway, St. Clair concluded that there is a small core of parents who are involved in school's activities. Poor or limited parent involvement is not uncommon among urban schools. St. Clair thought that the Conway parents have limited knowledge of performance standards and quality student work. The teachers work hard, posting student work and identifying quality student work, but they shoulder the load and felt a lack of support on the part of the parents.

The Conway plan of action included the following steps:

1. We will invite parents to score student work during a professional development day by way of the school's newsletter;
2. Each team will personally invite at least ten parents;
3. The science department will select an open-response question;
4. The science department chairperson and the parent trainer will meet to prepare training materials;
5. The office support staff will make calls to confirm parents' attendance;
6. The principal will meet with the professional development chairperson to prepare a "Parent Responsibilities," rubric for the purpose of training parents regarding rubrics.
7. All students will be given the selected science question to answer on a given day;
8. On a professional development day, the parents will be trained and subsequently paired with their child's team teachers to score the student's responses.

A. FOCUS ON ELIMINATING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

The thrust of Principal Ann Goins' reflective practice activities were to compel teachers and parents to critically reflect upon the nexus between the Carrither Middle School's continued status as a prominent school in the district and the education of African American and poor students. Goins reflective vision statement supports her intentions:

Faculty and staff [at Carrithers] will look at the poor student who is usually low achieving, minority, and/or male with the same expectations for success as for all students. The adult's eye will see beyond that face. The low achievers will experience success because they will be taught with strategies that will motivate and make them desire to do better, academically. All students will perform at a higher level and inappropriate behaviors will decrease.

This focus on eliminating the achievement gap between the ethnic poor and White students is consistent with the national trends in urban education (see Miller 1995; Brown 1999; Polite and Davis, 1999). In fact the national focus can be traced to 1983 when the National Commission on Excellence in Education released its, "A Nation At risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform." The purpose of that nationally celebrated report was to articulate, in the simplest possible terms, the problems besetting urban education and to render specific solutions.

Most recently, Miller (1995) provided evidence to support the continued need to improve schooling in urban America because of the high concentration of minority students dwelling in urban enclaves. If these educational attainment gaps persist, the overall standard of living in the U.S. will be lower. Miller's work acknowledges the overall progress made by minorities, especially during the second half of the century, but argues that much is yet to be achieved. This can be verified in school communities like Carrithers. He informs us that the educational advancement realized by ethnic and minority group has not matched their growth in numbers. For example, Miller states that 3 out of every 10 students are minorities, and the minority numbers are increasing rapidly.

When reflecting upon the situation at Carrithers with her coach, Goins asserted that there is a poignant relationship between poverty and academic achievement at Carrithers. When considering the appropriate actions needed to turn around the achievement of poor and minority students, Goins stated, "according the 1997-1998 state performance report, there is a major difference between Carrither's white and African American students in the critical areas of writing, mathematics, and reading." She concluded that "from a study of the performance data, it appears that some teachers vary instructional strategies to accommodate all students, but we need more teachers to learn how best to serve all students."

According to Polite and Davis' (1999) research, the longer students are in poverty, the greater the likelihood they will not achieve at expected and appropriate levels in schools. The present realities at Carrithers are that African American students, especially the male population, are more likely to experience long-term poverty than whites, with increased mobility and health problems contributing significantly to their performance in school. Miller's (1995) research suggests that young White adults generally possess a broad range of skills and knowledge acquired mostly from school, skills needed to function in society, but often African American and Latinos are less prepared to work in a technology-driven society. This is, as Miller reasons, directly related to the amount of family resources and opportunities that have historically been available to these groups.

In an effort to begin enhancing awareness and eliminating the achievement gap issue at Carrithers, Goins undertook a personal research effort that involved reading important works related to the national issue, and she shared her insights with Carrither's teachers at planned professional development workshops. The works were Miller's "An American Imperative: Accelerating Minority Educational Advancement" (1995); Kunjufu's "Countering the Conspiracy to Destroy Black Boys"; and Polite's (1999) "A Cup that Runneth over: Personal Reflections on the Black Male Experience."

Goins' plan of action called for a pilot project, mobilizing concerned African American men in the business community to serve as mentors and tutors for the low achieving African American males. She relied on affected students' questionnaires about the efficacy of the services provided and written comments from the mentors that will guide the

future of the pilot efforts. The school's Consolidated Plan Committee also spent a considerable amount of time focused on the school wide achievement gap issue. Goins has agreed to continue spearheading the effort to eliminate the achievement gap and realizes that her role as principal is central to ameliorating the differences between African American poor students and whites. This reflective project was off to a remarkable start during the 1998-1999 school-year and will continue with school wide emphases during the 1999-2000 school year.

B. FOCUS ON TECHNOLOGY.

Newburg Middle School opened its new facility in 1997. In its second year of operation, Betty Graham was appointed the principal of the technology-rich facility. The new structure, located within the same community as the old, is a state-of-the-art technology center within JCPS.

Graham, like many administrators across the country, was grappling with decisions about how to use the new technology-rich facility and the issue of public accountability. When Graham engaged in the "reflection for action" with her coach for the project, she and the coach dealt with the following facts: In addition to a new building and furniture, new technologies were included in the building. The technology has out-paced the staff's knowledge. Many of the teachers do not use technology when delivering instruction. The use of technology to communicate is also limited. The area of technology is vital to the success of Newburg Middle because it is the district's magnet school for mathematics, science, and technology. The school has been furnished with the following technology: 1. computer laboratory with 31 computers with access to the Internet; 2. an "Option 2000" classroom with 16 computers used to explore technology-oriented careers; 3. A media studio with technologies needed to produce daily in-house schools news broadcasts; 4. Each classroom is equipped with at least two networked computers, a VCR, and a telephone; and 5. the administrative offices are equipped with networked computers.

Crouse (1997) and Kaufman (1997) remind us that school administrators are commonly forced to make technology-related decisions annually, hoping that they are spending the public's money wisely and the new systems put in place will actually benefit their students. Much depends on the vision and expertise of the principal. Often the principals and others are responsible for establishing the "vision" for technology usage for his/her school and providing ongoing support (see Meltzer and Sherman 1997). Central to the technology issue is establishing a technology infrastructure, specific to the individual school building and the networking of technologies throughout the building to local and national systems (see Gilgi 1997). It is also clear that precious little attention is placed on staff development nationally while all too often much of the attention is placed on technology acquisition (Benson 1997). In the case of Graham and Newburg, the district has placed a significant amount of technology in the school, much more than the other middle schools in JCPS. Ms Graham felt a real responsibility to increase

accountability and output and to realize these outcomes she worked on creating a technology plan for Newburg Middle School as her reflective practice project for the 1998-1997.

Working collaboratively with her professional development coach and administrative team, Graham engaged in technical reflection in which a technology plan was designed for Newburg Middle School. Included within the comprehensive plan was the principal's continued use of a mobile technology office. Graham utilized a mobile desk that was complete with two-way radio that allowed her to be in constant contact with the school secretary, a computer and printer. She was able to move from room to room to observe instruction daily, spending much of her workday productively, in the classroom. This one factor had a tremendous effect on the teachers and students. Graham's presence in the classrooms for significant portions of each day compelled teachers to think of Graham as an instructional leader rather than the building manager.

Graham's plan for several professional development workshops for teachers focused on the use of technology to enhance instruction. These workshops were strategically planned to occur throughout the school year with follow-up activities in the use of technology to enhance instruction.

As many teachers were reluctant to use computers, The Graham/Newburg Plan called for a decrease in printed correspondence from the principal and an increase in computer-generated correspondence, forcing teachers and staff to rely more on technology. In short, Graham and other administrators decided to avoid (or at least limit) providing the normal newsletters, bulletins, etc. in print forms. Teachers and staff were forced to access the communication software to be informed of in-school activities. Graham insisted upon a "return receipt" in-house communication software package that allowed her to monitor which teachers were actually reading her correspondences.

Additionally, Graham's plan required all teachers and staff to participate in a technology skills assessment where the outcomes were used shape the professional development workshops that occurred during the school year. The Newburg Plan called for additional software purchases that included an electronic grading system and Microsoft Office for all teachers. Finally, Graham was instrumental in establishing a Technology Committee that included teachers, staff and parents. The Technology Committee was charged with the responsibility of developing a "Newburg Technology Proficiency Checklist" and oversight of the technology budget.

In documentation of the changes that occurred at Newburg in the area of technology, diverse sources of data were generated. The data collected included technology participation rosters, teacher growth plans, work samples, and the evaluation of the implementation of technology activities in the school's Consolidated Plan.

The issues related to technology in middle schools are multi-faceted and challenging. The work that occurred at Newburg, based on the reflective practice model, resulted in all teachers utilizing technologies, increased and diverse kinds of technologies available to teachers, and

increased proficiency in the area of technology for middle school students.

D. FOCUS ON BASIC SKILLS ACQUISITION

Determined to change the course of his school away from controlling student behavior to a focus on academics, a principal decided that his reflective practice project for the 1998-1999 school year would be on improving the reading skills of the adolescents assigned to his school. Butch Martin is the principal of the Alex R. Kennedy Metropolitan Middle School, a nationally recognized alternative school program. Kennedy Middle specializes in working with middle school students who are considered violent, incorrigible, and chronic truant adolescents. The students are referred to the Kennedy School by the principal of their regular school, Pupil Personnel Department, the juvenile courts and state agencies. The most common reasons for placement at Kennedy are school disruption, incorrigible behaviors, and violent and aggressive behaviors. Major factors that appear common across many of the students at Kennedy are low-income family status and poor reading and basic skills.

It is the school's philosophy that all students can learn through small class size, a cohesive staff, and a structured learning environment. The Jefferson County School System, in its commitment to the success of the Kennedy School, allowed the principal special permission to hand-select the school's teachers and staff for two academic years without following the teachers' union requirements. In exchange for the right to select his teachers, Martin agreed to take the worst behaved students from any of the middle schools in the county. In 1995, the school opened in a completely renovated building, located in a middle-income neighborhood in Louisville. The school's staff strives to help their students through varied methods, (using role modeling and varied learning techniques) to better understand that they must take responsibility for themselves both in their ability to interact socially in their mainstream school and in their abilities to achieve academic success. Once these skills are part of the students' foundational core, they are returned to their mainstream schools where hopefully they can meet with social and academic success.

The consequential research on high-risk students argues that poor reading and other academic skills are strong indicators associated with incorrigible and violent youth. The Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency produced a document titled "Facts You Can Use: Seeds of Help" (1997) which suggested that the escalation of youth violence is one of the major public health concerns of the United States. The agency stressed the decline in reading achievement as a major factor linked to adolescent violence. Likewise Pungello (1997) examined the long-term effects of family income and life events on math and reading achievement of 1,253 children and found that low income and minority status are significant risk factors for students' achievement.

When reflecting upon the current state of reading achievement, Martin wrote:

Before we started the program the data looked very dismal in terms of our students reading scores. The average students being sent to us [Kennedy] at the alternative school were reading 2 to 4 years below grade level. Some students were non-readers. The problem was compounded by the teaching staff's lack of proficiency in reading instruction. Less than 25% of our teachers feel comfortable in using reading strategies. Many of our teachers have not thought about reading instruction in 10 to 15 years.

The technical reflection plans that were put in place were simple and straightforward. Martin gathered and shared the students' reading data with the staff early in the fall of the school year. He subsequently interviewed each teacher regarding his/her reading strategies and instruction employed in the classroom. The initial data suggested that there were two groups of teachers in the buildings: those who grasped and used reading strategies regularly and those who did not. Martin and a group of teachers attended an extensive training program provided by JCPS. Following the training, Martin and the trained teachers began providing professional development workshops for teachers in the various departments at Kennedy.

Reading at Kennedy Metro has become the main focus of the school. Every teacher in each content area is focused on reading. Department meetings have become reflective seminars on what strategies worked and which ones did not. All the scattered resources have been put together (Accelerated Reader, Success Maker Laboratory, and reading tutors). Interdisciplinary teams are now sponsoring activities that require students to practice their reading skills in the content areas. The evidence that the reflective practice strategies were effective at Kennedy is impressive. Teachers have documented a change in attitudes towards reading on the part of their students. Surprisingly, the teachers also reported that students really were excited by their improved reading - skills, debunking the myth the learning was not important to these students. Students reported that books and other printed materials seemed, 'friendlier' and easier to handle. The exit test scores, compiled by the reading teacher, demonstrated an average gain in reading at 1.5 grade level increase in less than 5 months. Some students gained as much as 2 to 3 years in reading.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation has provided resources and substantial financial support to JCPS over a 9-year period beginning with the 1991-1992 academic year. The Program for Student Achievement currently concentrates its resources on four urban school systems that are working to increase the academic performance of middle school students. Over the past three years, the Foundation supported efforts in six school districts to develop and implement academic standards for what middle school students should know and be able to do in language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Each district set a goal for the percentage of eighth graders who will meet the standards in the year

2001. The Foundation will continue working with four of the six school districts in the next several years. Those four districts are: Corpus Christi, Texas; Long Beach, California; Louisville, Kentucky; and San Diego, California. The Program does not support middle school reform projects in other cities.

The Program's current grant making falls into the following categories:

- Direct grants to the four school districts to promote district-wide reform shaped around the implementation of academic standards;
- Support for local and national organizations that help the four districts work on improving staff development practices, designing curricula that enables students to learn more effectively and achieve at higher levels, and training teachers on how to assess student work.
- Grants to organizations that work with the four districts on campaigns to increase parent and community understanding of and support for the school districts.

KEY FIGURES

The reflective practice activities in JCPS came about as a result of a dynamic partnership between the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation's Program for Student Achievement (New York, NY), the Jefferson County Public Schools (Louisville, KY), and the National Association of Secondary Principals (Reston, VA). Since 1987, Hayes Mizell has been Director of the Program for Disadvantaged Students and later the Program for Student Achievement (a program name change) at the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, one of the nation's fifty largest foundations. Mizell is responsible for the Foundation's initiative to support middle school reforms that will enable all students to meet high academic standards by the end of the eighth grade. For excerpts from Mizell's speeches, search <http://www.middleweb.com/HMreader.html>.

JCPS is one of several school systems supported by the Foundation. The key figures at the JCPS are Stephen W. Daeschner, Superintendent; Sandy Ledford, Assistance Superintendent for District-wide Instructional Services; and Cheryl DeMarsh, Director of the Clark Grant.

Central to the coordination of the professional development activities at NASSP were Sue Galletti and Gwendolyn Cooke. Galletti is NASSP's Associate Executive Director, and Director of Middle Level Services. She provides leadership for NASSP products and services, publications, conferences, the convention, and staff development opportunities targeted to middle level leaders. Gwendolyn J. Cooke, is Director of NASSP's Urban Services Office. Cooke directs NASSP's Annual Leadership Academy.

Two consultants were responsible for designing the shadowing and reflective practice activities and also served as the coaches to the 19 JCPS principals: Vernon C. Polite and Merylann Schuttloffel. Polite is an Associate Professor in the Department of Education, at the Catholic University of America (Washington, DC). He specializes in research focused on organizational change, urban school leadership, minority

issues, and qualitative research methods. He has provided professional development workshops for middle school principals affiliated with the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation's programs for the past eight years. Schuttloffel is an Assistant Professor also at the Catholic University of America's Department of Education where she teaches course in Educational Administration.

SUMMARY

This article has demonstrated the value of shadowing encounters and reflective practice exercises as tools to facilitate technical, interpretive, and critical levels of reflection among urban principals. Based upon their comments, too many to showcase within the context of this article, the principals, unanimously attested, to the benefits gleaned from the reflective practices.

The coaches learned much, through the processes, about the complex roles of urban principals. One of the major lessons learned is the obvious discontinuity between the principals' formal preparation and the duties and activities of their daily jobs. Perhaps advanced training in anthropology, psychology, sociology, social work or even law would be far better aligned with what many principals actually do in urban schools.

The reality is that many urban principals must rely, to a great extent, on task-specific "on-the-job training," for their most effective professional development. To this end, the shadowing encounter and reflective practice activities are effective methods to quickly identify strengths and weaknesses.

Raw data from the job shadowing encounters and reflective practice activities has also afforded many of the urban principals the opportunity to recognize their fairly sophisticated and unique competencies in instructional leadership, social control, business partnership, school and community relations, etc. The irony is that many of the principals were either unaware of these wonderful skills until they saw themselves in action on a typical day or had no vehicle for sharing what they do with others.

Certain aspects of the professional development work reported here supports the technical findings of previous studies of administrative work behavior (Mintzberg 1973; Kmetz and Willower 1982; Martin and Willower 1981) highlighting the routine of principals' work including the fragmentation, multiplicity of tasks performed with fairly narrow time constraints, etc. The most important function of the work, however, was to aid in identifying trends of work behaviors.

Each veteran principal produced a unique reflective practice project that represented on-going work and attention throughout the school year and also on-going collaboration with their coach. The principals established wonderful working rapport with their coaches during the first year one of the project when they were shadowed. A critical component of reflective thinking and action for urban principals is the ongoing contact and visits from the coach. The principals agreed that without such contact, it likely the completion of the reflective practice project would have been doubtful due to competing factors.

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Opening a New School Building: Be Prepared!

T. C. Chan
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The opening of a new school building is a landmark achievement of a school system. After years of planning, a new school building is opened with the realization of planning ideas. The planning team is anxious to find out how the new school building looks and works. In the process of school construction, many expected or unexpected events could possibly delay school opening. Certain lost time due to delays could easily be made up by other fast track activities while some others could not. In the following paragraphs, some essential concerns for school opening are discussed

The opening of a new school building is a landmark achievement of a school system. After years of planning, a new school building is opened with the realization of planning ideas. The planning team is anxious to find out how the new school building looks and works.

For a new school building to be successfully opened, it has to be carefully planned (Chan, 1983). Educators, professionals, parents and community leaders will be involved in the planning to make it happen. The planning administrator of the school system needs to play a leading role in coordinating the school opening activities.

What could possibly hold a school from opening?

In the process of school construction, many expected or unexpected events could possibly delay school opening. Certain lost time due to delays could easily be made up by other fast track activities while some others could not. In the following paragraphs, some essential concerns for school opening are discussed:

UNEXPECTED EVENTS

Unexpected happenings, such as inclement weather, strikes, bankruptcies and late deliveries could delay the construction progress. Unless the lost time is compensated by other means, the original completion schedule will be missed. Therefore, it is essential for the planning administrator to check on the progress schedule in every site visit. Any discrepancy from the original schedule has to be reported to the school superintendent. Time delay in the critical path of the progress schedule could be addressed by increasing work force and work hours. Close monitoring of the situation is crucial in ensuring the new school building to open on time.

COORDINATION PROBLEMS

School construction work is performed by different groups of highly skilled workers who follow a predetermined schedule of work sequence. If a subcontractor experiences delay in completing his or her portion of the work, the entire project schedule will be delayed. It is important for the construction superintendent to have all the subcontractors lined up

especially on tasks that need to be accomplished on the critical path. A subcontractor not showing up to work as scheduled holds up the construction progress.

FURNITURE AND EQUIPMENT

Most of the school furniture and equipment items are not included as part of the construction contract and are therefore purchased by the school system in separate contracts. The planning, bidding, ordering and delivery of furniture and equipment need to be handled in a timely manner to coordinate with the progress of the construction schedule. Some of the furniture and equipment items need to be assembled, installed and tested to ensure proper functioning. All essential furniture and equipment items need to be in place and working for school opening.

BUILDING INSPECTORS

County/City building inspectors of all construction trades are invited to inspect the school building at critical stages of construction. Needed corrections are written up and addressed on a timely basis. Before a school building is declared substantially complete, the building inspectors, together with the fire marshal and the health inspector, will be scheduled for final inspection. A unanimous approval from all inspectors is needed for school opening. Because of the stringent safety and health requirements a school building has to comply with, the inspectors often need to schedule follow-up inspections to examine mandated changes. When all the required safety and health standards are met, occupancy permits will be issued by the building inspectors and the fire marshal as an approval for school opening.

CHANGE ORDERS

Since the drawings and specifications are not without errors, changes to the construction drawings and specifications may be needed to correct any detected error. These changes are initiated as change orders after the school construction project has been bid and the contract has been awarded. If changes are brought up in time, the delay of schedule may be avoided. However, any substantial work added to the contract as a result of change orders will definitely delay the project completion. The contractor will request for time extension of project completion on top of the allowed contract time.

PREPARATION FOR SCHOOL OPENING

Good preparation ensures smooth school opening. It is never too early to start planning for all the miscellaneous tasks that need to be accomplished before school opening. The following are some major items that deserve our attention:

- *Faculty and Staff Orientation*

It is crucial that the faculty and staff of the school know how

to manage the many technical systems that constitute the operation of the school building. Therefore, an orientation program needs to be implemented to provide training for the faculty and staff to properly handle equipment and system controls of the new school building. The knowledge and skills faculty and staff acquired in the orientation program will ensure safety and efficient management of the new school building.

- *Risk Management*

When a new school building achieves substantial completion, the school system will assume responsibility of risk management. The replacement costs of the school building structure and its contents need to be covered by proper insurance. As a matter of fact, insurance coverage should start as soon as the school owned equipment is delivered to the school. At the same time, workmen's compensation and liability coverage need to start when the school building is turned over to the school system. A new school building without appropriate insurance coverage for even one day is one day too many to risk.

- *Utility Services*

School administrators start their contact with the utility companies when the school building is in the planning stage. Service contracts are signed between the school system and the utility companies to agree on the appropriate services offered to the school building. As school opening approaches, the school system will work closely with the utility companies to arrange provision of services to the school building. All the utility service meters installed by the contractor will be turned over to the school system at the time of substantial completion. The school system will then assume payment responsibility of the services. When the school building is put to use, all utility services serving the school need to start. These include the electricity, the gas, the water, the telephone, and the sanitary services.

- *Safety and Security.*

The safety of the school building systems is inspected by the county/city building inspectors and the fire marshal while environmental safety is checked by the health inspectors. Other unsafe situations on campus could be created by left over construction debris, rock on playgrounds and unfinished construction work. Care has to be taken to ensure student safety inside and outside the school building. On the other hand, the security of a new school building is essential to protect school property. When a new school is opened, the intrusion alarm system needs to be tested and work. All security lights need to be in operation and all keys

to the school building need to be surrendered to the school system by proper transfer procedure.

- *Anticipated Problems*
All the design systems of a school building need to be tested and adjusted before they function properly. Some building systems fail the tests by showing their limitations beyond adjustment. In managing a new school building in the first year, problems seem to occur more frequently in roofing, drainage, equipment, and heating and air-conditioning.
- *Roofing*
Although standing seam metal roofing has proved to be a very durable system with few leaking problems, the traditional built-up roofing system still dominates over half of the commercial construction market (Kirby, 1997). Many school buildings are constructed with built-up roofing system because it is considerably less expensive than standing seam metal roofing. The problem with built-up roof is the difficulty of inspection and repair. Heavy rain and extreme cold weather will disclose any material failure and inferior workmanship of a roofing system. When it comes to repair, it takes time to locate the leaks of a roof and it takes several trips for a leak to be properly repaired. Wet ceiling tiles are often associated with roof leaks, but some of them could be caused by condensation from the air-conditioning units.
- *Heating and Air-condition.*
Thermal condition is the most significant environmental factor affecting the physical comfort of human beings in the environment (Chan, 1980). In the first year of a new school operation, the malfunction of heating and air-conditioning system is the most often complained item by the building occupants. Because of external factors such as outdoor temperature, insulation, ceiling height, hour of space use and number of occupants, the air flow of a well designed HVAC system has to be properly balanced to function efficiently. Extreme outdoor temperature especially creates a challenge to the HVAC system in the new school building. The school staff will work with the engineers and the mechanical subcontractor to check on the system. Sometimes, the problems are actually created by the school system itself in choosing a less efficient HVAC system to meet the project budget. Sometimes, staff incompetence adds to the confusion of the thermal control problem.
- *Drainage.*
Drainage of water away from the school building not only improves facility safety but also enhances school building

durability. To achieve this, appropriate size of gutters, down spouts and pipes should be installed to direct water away from the school building. In addition, proper grading has to be performed around the school building to ensure positive drainage. Heavy rainfalls will offer good challenges to the building drainage design. Any water ponding situation on parking lots, walkways or playgrounds creates a safety hazardous condition. Correction to the drainage problem is needed by reworking the grades and/or up sizing the drainage design.

- *Equipment Failure*
Equipment failures in kitchen, science laboratories, vocational shops and gymnasiums are the most commonly reported problems in the first year of school operation. Many of these "failures" are not breakdowns due to inferior quality, but are actually equipment abuses caused by ignorant staff. Some new equipment needs to be properly adjusted to suit the new conditions and requirements of school consumption, and school staff needs to be well trained in the operation of the equipment.

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

Every school opening situation is different. It is impossible in this short paper to identify all the possible solutions to address all the difficult situations of school opening. However, some of the proved-to-work strategies can be discussed in the following:

(1) *Timely Decisions*. When a school building gets closer and closer to completion, things will be moving faster and faster. The administrator needs to stay alert of current happenings and react promptly to resolve unanticipated problems every day. Time is of the essence. The right decision at the right time is essential to ensure school opening.

(2) *Division of Work*. Since there are many tasks that need to be accomplished for school opening, a smart approach is to organize a school opening task force to handle all the work. The task force will consist of the school principal, the teachers, the staff, the community volunteers, the architect and the contractor to examine the latest development of construction and to coordinate all the occupancy preparation activities. The planning administrator will assume the leadership role.

(3) *Contingency Plan*. A contingency plan of accommodating the students has to be on file. In case the new school building fails to complete on time, the contingency plan will have to be implemented. However, the contingency plan is usually a school system concealed plan that the contractor and the public do not need to know.

(4) *Volunteers*. When a school building is close to completion, the excitement of the community arises. It is not difficult to recruit a group of enthusiastic volunteers to assist on the many school opening tasks. After all, school opening offers a great opportunity for the school system to work hand in hand with the community.

(5) *Pert Chart*. Pert chart is more than a time control instrument. It actually puts all the major events into a logical sequence for consideration of possible actions by the administrator. By using the pert chart for managing school opening, the administrator is in better control of tracking the development of the many activities relating to school opening.

(6) *Area Focused Completion Schedule*. This calls for the school system to work with the contractor to generate an area focused completion schedule of the school building. The schedule plans for concentration of construction effort to complete certain portion of the school building first. This will allow the school staff to work on setting up classroom furniture and equipment in the finished portion while the contractor can still be working to finish other portions of the school building. This strategy avoids many unnecessary conflicts between the school staff and the construction workers.

CONCLUSION

It is important for the planning administrator to assume a supervisory role to monitor the flow of the school opening process. He or she needs to stay on top of the key elements determining school opening and exert every possible effort to ensure school opening on time. A review of previous experiences of new school opening is certainly helpful. There is no trick in managing the opening of a new school. Just plan ahead of time, stay alert and be prepared.

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