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Life After the ACSA/Harvard Principals' Center

Summer Institute:

A Look at Principals' Reflective Practice

A dissertation written in partial completion of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Education

by

Megan M. Scannell

1996

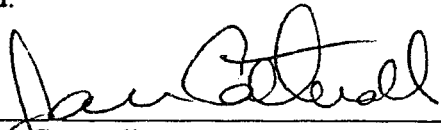
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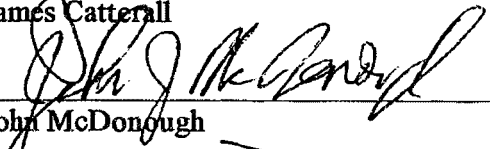
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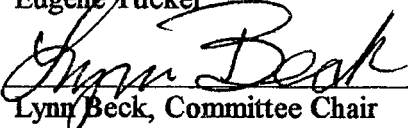
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1996

This dissertation is dedicated to David, Britney and Caitlin.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Life after the ACSA/Harvard Principals' Center

Summer Institute:

A Look at Principals' Reflective Practice

by

Megan M. Scannell

Doctor of Education

University of California, Los Angeles, 1996

Professor Lynn Beck, Chair

As we move into an era when principals are expected to have the capacity to be successful change agents, professional development programs that encourage reflective practice have potential to help build administrative leadership ability, yet few studies have been conducted on this type of staff development. Reflective practice as conceptualized by Donald Schon (1983), Thomas Sergiovanni (1987), and others, may help to improve principals' ability to work within the turbulent school sites of today.

This case study of three elementary school principals examines a professional development strategy which addresses the desire to build reflection into the daily routine of the site administrator. The Association of California School Administrators (ACSA)/Harvard Principals' Center Summer Institute is an intensive, two-week

professional development program which encourages reflection by facilitating discussions and activities which relate relevant research to practical application. This research attends to a main component of the summer experience -- the reflection -- and examines its incorporation into the principals' practice. The researcher employed a methodology which included semi-structured interviews of the three principals, their key teachers, and their superintendents. Documents, such as the Institute's curriculum and principals' reflective essays, enhanced the data gained from the personal interviews.

Findings in this study support the development of principals' reflective practice as a potential for behavioral changes in the leaders of schools. Reflective practice affected the three principals' leadership in three main categories. The administrators began releasing control, restructuring their time, and changing decision making processes. The results of this study have implications for school site relationships, leadership strategies, organizational structures, professional development techniques, and policy development.

CHAPTER I -- INTRODUCTION

*Knowing is not enough,
we must apply.
Willing is not enough,
we must do.*

-Goethe

INTRODUCTION

The cry is clear -- improve schools for our children, NOW! A variety of government agencies and parents are incensed by the perceived poor education our schools are giving the future citizens of America. The government continues to mandate more and more changes for school, yet there is no implementation support given to the school principals who are, according to the effective schools literature, the key to successful school programs. The principals gain little skill-based instruction in how to deal with change in their schools.

Advocates of systemic change, such as Fullan (1993), believe that no amount of fine-tuning of the school system will result in large numbers of schools being capable of meeting future demands. Instead, they assert, the education system itself must be rethought to support, encourage, and demand schools which educate students to world-class standards.

Peter Senge (1990), author of *The Fifth Discipline*, stresses the dynamic interaction among all components of various systems when an organization is completely re-thought. He emphasizes the need to help organizations build their potential to

is a human, generative process that accounts for the personal dynamics of individuals' change within an organization. Osterman and Kottkamp maintain that, "to improve education, we must change schools. To improve schools, we must change individuals. To improve individuals, we must change the way in which we have been attempting change" (Osterman and Kottkamp, 1993, p. vii). As Greenfield (1991) contends, organizations are human creations which are guided by human intentions.

In turbulent environments, such as school sites, leaders are being called upon to "make subjective judgments, take risks, and question the assumption on which they have operated" (Marsick, 1990, p. 23). Principals often fit into Schon's (1983) metaphor of "managing messes" as a leadership style. Administrators' individual responses to reform depend less on the substance of the reform and more on the individuals' readiness for the change (Evans, 1993). Thus, just as is advocated for teachers, principals as 'change agents' should be encouraged to build change from their individual perspectives.

Fullan (1993), Education Dean at the University of Toronto, emphasizes his belief that any strategy for systemic reform should build the capacity of schools to renew themselves as much as it emphasizes new accountability policies. One of the chief reasons the centrally led improvement efforts of the 1980s failed to penetrate local classrooms is that relatively few resources were expended on professional development or other means of promoting school-based change. The absence of a revamped professional development system "is the Achilles heel of the best-designed systemic reform efforts," states Stanford University professor Michael Kirst in an article by John O'Neil (1993, p.12).

The paradox is fundamental in educational systemic change efforts. The schemes shared by researchers and policy makers offer appealing visions of a new order but also contain a devastating critique of existing realities, which, if pursued, reveals the lack of many capacities that would be required to realize and sustain the new vision. Reformers can imagine a better world in which those capacities would be created, but their problem is more practical: how to create the new world when those capacities are lacking" (Cohen & Spillane, 1992).

Models of capacity-building programs which address Cohen and Spillane's assertion are beginning to emerge. The Principals' Center is one example of a people-oriented staff development approach. Roland Barth, founder of the Harvard Principals' Center emphasizes the importance of empowering people by giving them ownership of their learning (Barth, 1990). Osterman and Kottkamp (1993) offer the use of reflective practice as an avenue to encourage practitioners to personally and professionally develop by comparing personal experiences with research and new knowledge.

The ACSA/Harvard Principals' Center Summer Institute begins to put Barth's and Osterman and Kottkamp's theories into practice. According to their brochure, the Institute is "designed to facilitate discussions on topics of leadership from the source research to practical application." The Summer Institute attempts to address the need to build capacity in the principals who are within the educational system so that we may start to instill the major change needed to develop students who may be assured of a challenging school experience.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Principals have a large influence on climate and morale in schools (Barth, 1990). They are expected to display skills such as the ability to continuously develop staff performance, create safe and orderly school environments, and encourage successful community relations. These expectations underscore the principal's central role in the leadership of the school (Sparks, 1993).

The expectations also create a leadership role for principals which is similar to that of a "tennis shoe in a laundry dryer. It's hot, congested, turbulent, dark, and bumpy" (Sparks, 1993, p.20). In an attempt to build principals' capacity to address their complex role, the Principals' Center models conversation, brainstorming, reflection, and replenishment for administrators. These types of activities seek to "slow the laundry dryer down and extract the principal from the dryer" (Sparks, 1993, p.20) so he/she can make sense of personal experiences and improve similar subsequent experiences.

Reflection, Barth contends, is a factor which separates the powerful learning experiences from the many events which occur each day that seemingly have little effect on us (Barth, 1990). Reflective practice is considered a technique which brings principals' espoused beliefs (those which the principals say they believe) closer to principals' actions (those which principals do) (Osterman and Kottkamp, 1993).

To understand the Principals' Center as a model of reflective practice development, I looked at the principals' use of specific skills and behaviors which have been nurtured in the Principal's Center. I kept in mind the systemic reform needs of education in America and the focus on individuals as a means of getting to the absence

of a revamped professional development system (O'Neil, 1993, p.11) which is the "Achilles heel of the best-designed systemic reform efforts,". The research will attempt to discover what type of reflective practices are being introduced to principals through the ACSA/Harvard Principals' Center? What is the apparent relationship between the principals' experience at the Summer Institute and the reflective practices which they incorporate into their behavior once they return to the school sites? What are the principals' perceived linkages between the Summer Institute experience and their subsequent reflective practice?

The theoretical framework of the Principals' Center is founded on the importance of professionals establishing reflective practice and collaboration. In his work with principals, Barth sees finding ways to articulate practice often prompts systematic reflections about practice which in turn leads to an increased understanding of practice. The Center's main goal is to provide a collegial support system to site principals in which new ideas and insights are shared and change is nurtured and supported (Sparks, 1993).

Educators and policy makers have been focusing on a variety of change efforts such as restructuring and mandates -- all of which seem to avoid the human element of schools. With the need to concentrate on individuals and change their behavior within schools, this study examined principals who have experienced a professional development model, designed specifically for and by them, which focuses on the human element of change within schools.

CHAPTER II -- REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

*Sometimes when I consider what tremendous
consequences come from little things...
I am tempted to think...
there are no little things.
- Bruce Barton*

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

Experts (Basseches, 1986; Kegan, 1982; and Argyris, 1982) assert that if people are to appropriate new, learned knowledge into their value system and/or repertoire, it is important to develop their ability to relate new data, knowledge, and experience to that which is already known by seeking relationships between the two. Learning theorists, such as Lindsay and Norman (1972), believe the process of linking ideas and feelings related to one experience with those which occurred during reflection is central to the total adult learning process. Mezirow (1990) suggests that individuals make meaning of experience by interpretation. Thus, they utilize their interpretations of experiences to guide their decision making. Meaning is structured in two ways, through meaning schemes, which are "sets of related and habitual expectations governing if-then and cause-effect relationships" and through meaning perspectives, which are "structures of assumptions within which new experience is assimilated" (Mezirow, 1990, p.1).

Making meaning out of new situations is an important skill for principals to master (Silver, 1975). In an attempt to build "meaning perspectives," the ACSA/Harvard Principals' Center Summer Institute provides modeling of reflective

practice so that experienced principals may gain a better understanding of their own assumptions and incorporate new knowledge into their belief systems.

According to Fischer and Kenny (1986, p.63), there are at least two circumstances necessary for a person to build a skill. In the Principals' Center's case, the skill being developed is reflective practice. First, the environment must, "provide a context that induces and supports performance of the behaviors that constitute the skill." Second, the person must practice the skill until he or she has mastered it. One of the Principals' Center's goals is to provide an opportunity for principals to rehearse the reflective practice skills needed to become a good leader. The attainment of this goal will hopefully begin to incorporate cognitive development research in the building of "meaning perspectives" by the principals.

ADULT LEARNING

"Reflective practice" as developed by Donald Schon (1983) and Chris Argyris (1982) has brought about new questions and ideas about how professionals learn. Adult learning theory has reflection as a common element of adults' cognitive development. Dewey (1933), Lewin (1935), and Piaget (1958) all assert that learning is dependent on the integration of experience and reflection. Lewin's notion that learning is a function of the interaction between a person and the environment reinforces principals' need for reflective practice. Lewin and other adult learning theorists (Killion, 1988 and Knowles, 1980), maintain that learning cannot take place without experience and reflection.

Reflective practice encourages adults to build their experience-base through an incorporation of new information and experience. Adult learning theory principles address the needs of adults who are reflecting on their practice. There are seven main principles of adult learning according to researchers such as Loacher (1986) and Brookfield (1986). Those principles are:

- adults have a natural tendency to learn;
- adults learn best when involved in mutual planning;
- complex higher order thinking skills can be learned;
- adults improve their performance when they set specific goals;
- learning consists of experiencing, reflecting, forming new concepts, and practicing them;
- primary factors for successful learning are instructor attention, coaching, self-assessment, peer learning, and feedback;
- the learner's voluntary participation in the learning activity is key

(Loacher, 1986, p.39)

Stage theorists, such as Killion (1988), say that adults who gain experiences which take into account their needs as adult learners operate at a high level of complexity, have a wide range of learning strategies, use multiple strategies to solve problems, and are responsive to the needs and behaviors of others. Silver (1975) found that principals with more complex conceptual structures (i.e., those who have had experiences which incorporate their learning

needs) will interact frequently with staff members, plan a variety of functions at their school, and develop professionally oriented staff members.

As adult learners mature and become more self-directed, they have a greater need to be in charge of their own learning (Knowles, 1978). Andragogical theory (the theory of teaching adults), as presented by scholars such as Knowles (1978) and Murphy & Hallinger (1985), incorporates much of Dewey's thoughts about democracy, continuity, and interaction (Dewey, 1938). The four basic assumptions of andragogy are: adults are self-directed, draw upon a reservoir of past experience, learn what is necessary to perform their evolving social roles, and orient their learning toward problems (Knowles, 1978). These assumptions support the importance of reflective practice as a key in personal development of adults. Reflective practice is consistent with Murphy and Hallingers' adult learning characteristics:

- emphasis on the active role of the learner
- focus on learning that is job related and useful
- underscore the importance of self-directed learning
- emphasis on application of learning
- modeling of teaching and learning principles
- employment of a non remedial perspective in training
- provision of regular feedback during training
- focus on meeting an array of participant's process and content needs
- creation of an environment of trust and respect

(Murphy and Hallinger, 1987, p. 264)

The reflective practice experience principals gain through the ACSA/Harvard Principals' Center Summer Institute attends the adult learning concepts put forth by Dewey, Knowles, and Murphy and Hallinger. This study views the resulting reflective behaviors of principals who have experienced a professional development technique which is attentive to their developmental learning needs.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

Reflection, according to Boud, Keogh, and Walker (1985, p.8), is an "active process of exploration and discovery which often leads to very unexpected outcomes." Inherent in their description of reflection is the assumption that the experience of reflection, in and of itself, is not the only key to learning. The process of incorporating reflection in experiential learning is paramount to the behavioral outcomes sought through reflective practice. Consistent with the concepts of adult learning put forth by theorists such as Murphy and Hallinger (1987), Donald Schon's view of reflective practice encompasses those patterns of thought and behavior which enable a person to think deeply about daily experiences and then relate those experiences to previous and/or new events and knowledge. The complete reflective practice experience culminates in action and informed reconsideration of the experience (Schon, 1987). Schon's description of reflective practice begins to build an expectation of putting one's knowledge and thoughts into action.

Osterman and Kottkamp's vision of reflective practice builds on Schon's theory. Their model is circular in nature with no real beginning or end. Similar experiences build upon each other through reflective practice by the adult learner. The experience is consistent with

Loacher's concept that learning consists of experiencing, reflecting, forming new concepts, and practicing them (Loacher, 1986). There is a concrete experience, then observation and analysis, abstract reconceptualization, and active experimentation -- which might lead back to another concrete experience... and so on.

The importance of the "whole person" perspective is apparent in the British Further Education Curriculum and Development Unit's (FEU, 1987) model which focuses on three phases of reflective practice:

- 1) The learner has an experience or experiences
- 2) There is specific learning which occurs on the basis of that experience
- 3) Reflective activities are needed to extract specific learning from the overall experience

The FEU authors' view of the role of reflection in their model is that the individual's experience needs to be followed by some organized reflection. This reflection enables the individual to learn from the experienced, but also helps identify any need for some specific learning before further experience is acquired (FEU, 1981, p.21 in Boud, Keogh, and Walker, 1985, p.13).

No matter which model of reflective practice one chooses to follow, the human approach to reform is clear. Because much of the national research (Fullan, 1993; Deal & Peterson, 1994; Sergiovanni, 1987) pinpoints the principal's role as the key decision-maker, problem-solver, and agent of change I examined the ACSA/Harvard Principals' Center Summer Institute -- a different model of professional development and socialization which

utilizes reflective practice as a fulcrum to lift the capacity of schools' change agents: the principals.

According to J.S. Duley (1981, p. 611), "The skill of experiential learning in which people tend to be the most deficient is reflection." If this is truly the case, then we need to begin to converse about what reflection is and how to incorporate reflective practice into the repertoire of our school leaders. By focusing on Principals' Center alumni's reflective behaviors, I have gleaned some insight into principals' personal and professional reflective skill development and maintenance. Attempts of top-down, deficit model professional development have not seemed to gain the results which are needed to develop principals who have the capacity to instill the change needed for schools of the twenty-first and twenty-second century (Schlechty, 1992). This research investigates the resulting behaviors of principals who have experienced reflective practice development which attends to their cognitive and developmental needs as adult learners.

...

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Professional development for principals has been described as a "wasteland" (Barth, 1990). Administrators take assorted courses at colleges, attend various in-services within their districts, and attempt to retrieve professional literature from the pile of papers on their desks. Sometimes, there has been a more coherent approach by state departments or universities. Frequently, these more concerted efforts have been based on assumptions from the effective schools movement of the early 1980s (Fullan, 1993). The set of assumptions steering the professional development of principals follows a

common logic: find schools where pupils are achieving beyond what might be predicted, observe the principal and his/her traits, devise training programs to develop these traits in all principals (Barth, 1985).

While this model seems simple enough, in the view of researchers such as Goodlad (1984) and Osterman and Kottkamp (1993), it has not worked. The principals' trait model described by Barth, omits the principals' personal and school contexts. The one-size-fits-all approach will fail in the schools of today. Principals' work is not generic, nor are the schools in which they practice (Barth, 1985; Fullan, 1993; Deal & Peterson, 1994).

The role of the principal as the key decision-maker, problem-solver, and agent of change at the school site has been discussed extensively by education researchers. A recent study commissioned by the World Bank (Leithwood and Montgomery, 1986) has reviewed and synthesized the findings of research on the school principalship. As a result, we now have an increasingly firm basis from which to identify the knowledge, skills, and attitudes which are of most worth to school administrators. A central discovery is the need for administrators to be flexible problem-solvers who are willing to take risks to achieve their goals (Sergiovanni, 1990). Reflection on practice as conceived by Dewey (1938), Schon (1983), Argyis (1982), and Ostermann & Kottkamp (1994), seeks to encourage risk-taking by building support for connecting past experience and research to present and future experiences. With an understanding that risk-taking occurs when trust is built and adults are placed in charge of their own learning (Murphy & Hallinger,

1985), professional development attempts such as the Principals' Center Summer Institute consciously incorporate principals' socialization needs.

Begley (1990) shares four dimensions of principal socialization:

- 1) internal processes(values, cognitive processes),
- 2) relationships (with superiors, peers & subordinates),
- 3) organizational and contextual factors, and
- 4) image of the role.

Begley proceeds to discuss the need to examine these socialization arenas for principals in order to find appropriate professional and personal development modes. The importance of socialization was taken into serious consideration when the Harvard Principals' Center was created. An ultimate vision of the Center is to build a professional socialization capacity which is so strong that it is self-sustaining. The principals are expected to become the leaders and initiators of their own professional growth and socialization. The high involvement of alumni in the Principals' Center might be an indication that the alumni are initiating their own professional growth opportunities.

In his description of the development of the Principals' Center, Barth argues that placing responsibility on principals for their own development is key to the Center because, "people who run things, as principals run schools, don't want to be themselves run -- especially badly" (Barth, 1990, p.28). If one examines Begley's socialization framework, the importance of the human side of organizations is paramount. The framework looks at context and relationships; it encourages empowerment of people.

Barth contends that the Principals' Center shifts principals' professional development focus from, "What should principals know and be able to do?" to, "Under what conditions will school principals become committed, sustained, lifelong learners in their important work?" (Barth, 1990, p.157). The Principals' Center model begins to change the paradigm from one which attempts to advocate change by other people to one which focuses on internal, personal change.

Reflection on practice is a strategy that -- in recent years -- has been acclaimed for placing the professional educators in charge of their own professional development (Ostermann & Kottkamp, 1993). Conversely, the purpose of common professional development frequently has been knowledge acquisition. An assumption of the traditional, bureaucratic models has been that change occurs through standardized knowledge (Weber, 1947). The process of development through typical, conventional models of professional development is didactic, abstract individual, molecular, and cognitive. The practitioner is a "passive consumer" (Ostermann & Kottkamp, 1993).

In contrast, the goal of reflection is behavioral change which occurs via self-awareness. This goal compares well with many reflective practice models (Schon, 1987; FEU, 1981; Ostermann & Kottkamp, 1993). The process of professional development through reflective practice involves learning which is dialectic, experimental, collaborative, holistic, and personal. The educator is an "action researcher" (Osterman & Kottkamp, 1993). This approach to the professional development of administrators is consistent with Pitner's (1987) essential considerations in the design of effective staff development programs for adults. She encourages programs which occur away from the

worksite, allow for personalization of training, include opportunities for administrators to reflect on their action, build on the experiential base of the adult to foster culminative learning, incorporate modeling and peer coaching, and recognize and allow administrators to act upon their problems.

Pitner's effective staff development factors are incorporated in reflection on practice. An in-depth view of principals who have planned and experienced professional growth opportunities which are based on reflective practice, such as the Principals' Center, has given us additional insight into this 'new wave' of staff development.

THE WORK OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

W. Greenfield (1988) concludes that there are three basic assumptions about the work of principals affecting what they are able to do. First, how successful a principal is perceived to be is largely a matter of how closely one's personal qualities match the demands of the school, district, and community. Secondly, schools as social structures are complex and ambiguous with multiple standards of right and wrong. These standards reflect the views of students, parents, staff, and community, as well as state and district mandates. Finally, the social order is negotiated between the various stakeholders and is always subject to re negotiation. To succeed in this complex environment takes a combination of skill and artistry (Schon, 1983).

In addition, principals are expected to demonstrate moral leadership by modeling perseverance in actions such as standing up for one's beliefs even when met with opposition, by continuing to move toward one's goals even when faced

with obstacles, and by demonstrating patience, persistence and resilience after suffering defeat or setback. Successful principals develop alternative strategies to meet their goals and have confidence in their ability to complete the task (Serviovanni, 1990).

With this complex environment in mind, a study in North Carolina, Brubaker and Simon (1987) asked over fifty principals how they perceived their roles. There were five basic categories from which the principals could choose:

Principal Teacher - Routinely engages in classroom teaching for a portion of each school day does not believe special training is needed to be an effective principal.

General Manager - Is the official liaison between the school and the central office; implements the curriculum as mandated by the state and local school board.

Professional and Scientific Manager - Spends more time in classroom supervision than routine administrative duties; uses test data as a basis for planning, implementing, and evaluating instruction.

Administrator and Instructional Leader - Recognizes that his/her role encompasses both governance functions and instructional leadership functions; treats teachers as professionals.

Curriculum Leader - Views the curriculum in very broad terms to mean: what each person experiences in cooperatively creating learning settings; does not attempt to dichotomize administrative and instructional functions. (Brubaker & Simon, 1987, pp.74-75)

The results of this survey noted that seventy-one percent of the principals stated that they viewed themselves as "Administrator and Instructional Leader," but when

asked about their colleagues, sixty percent of the principals categorized them as "General Managers."

Why would these survey results be important to staff development of principals? Principals have been told by media and theorists (Defour & Eaker, 1987; Sergiovanni, 1990) they should be instructional and moral leaders; to admit that they are 'only managers' would be admitting failure. However, these principals find themselves in situations where they are given mixed signals by the professional development frequently offered for them. Many principals' seminars focus on personnel management, stress management, time management, etc. The subtle conflict in role definition forces principals to espouse certain beliefs (principals are instructional leaders) yet to act another way (principals are effective managers) (Sergiovanni, 1990). Manasse (1985) states that the practicing administrator is ready for specific learning, but also needs an opportunity to think about, write about, and discuss the professional practice. Collegial support and an opportunity to practice in a safe environment are two aspects of successful inservice programs like the Principals' Center. The value placed upon a professional's experience, through reflective practice, adds dignity to the learning of practitioners (Kilbourn, 1988).

Persons promoting effective professional development would do well to examine the expectations placed on principals and find the conditions which help principals become the committed, lifelong learners and leaders schools and society want. The Principals' Center provides one model of professional support opportunities which are on-going, reflective in nature, and created by Center alumni themselves.

CHAPTER III -- METHODOLOGY

*We are what we repeatedly do.
Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit.
- Aristotle*

THE MODEL PROGRAM

The ACSA/Harvard Principals' Center Institute began in the summer of 1992. Through a competitive application process, the Institute brought together experienced principals from all over California to spend two weeks filled with lectures and readings from famous researchers about educational issues, collegial discussions about the lectures and literature, an outward bound experience, problem-based learning, and professional socialization.

The purpose of this study was to examine the ACSA/Harvard Principals' Center's approach to the professional development of reflective principals and explore the incorporation of reflective techniques into daily practice by alumni of the ACSA/Harvard Principals' Center.

This is a multiple case study approach which attempts to gain a picture of principals who have experienced an intensive staff development model and to see what their behaviors are in the aftermath at their own sites.

As described by Robert K. Yin, "a case study contributes uniquely to our knowledge of individual, organizational, social, and political phenomena" (Yin, 1989, p.14). John Goodlad, in his famous book about American schooling, A Place Called School (1984), gave an overall view of schooling in the United States through a

sampling of case studies of schools across the nation. His large undertaking gave us a view of "what is" -- we gained some "baseline data", so to speak.

Now it is time to move on and build some data of "what can be." This multiple case study of reflective principals' professional development gives yet another model or perspective for researchers and practitioners to examine when studying the role of principals in educational reform.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The following questions guided this study:

1. What is the nature of the relationship between principals' reflective practice experiences at the ACSA/Harvard Principals' Center and their current reflective behaviors?
2. What personal and/or professional reflective behaviors do principals incorporate in their day-to-day lives?
3. What factors encourage the adoption and maintenance of principals' reflective practice?
4. How do principals who personally reflect model reflective practice for their staffs?

GAINING ACCESS

In September 1994, my co-researcher, Sharon Dezutti and I, talked at length to the ACSA/Harvard Principals' Center director, Jane Zinner. She shared, in great detail, about the Centers' inception and her continual encouragement of the alumni

group to build a program which will model reflective professional development for all who attend.

During the 1994 ACSA Conference, held in Palm Springs, the director allowed my co-researcher and me to attend the Principals' Center alumni events, which are usually "off limits" to non-alumni. We were also given the opportunity to talk to the group about our research interests and administer an "interest-finder" survey to gain information about who these principals are and what they consider to have been behaviors which were affected by their experiences at the Summer Institute. As noted previously, we administered these surveys to "scan the field" and begin to understand the experiences of principals who, after being exposed to reflective techniques, were attempting to implement them with in their day-to-day work. The surveys requested basic demographic information about the principals and their sites. Included also were two open-ended questions about the principals' reflective practice experiences, a checklist of possible behaviors in which a reflective practitioner might engage, and an opportunity for the principals to agree to be contacted for our research or not.

An incentive was given for the return of the surveys by the end of the conference, thus we gained a 70% return rate. The surveys solicited information about the principals' background and their perceptions about personal change in reflective practice behaviors which they attribute to their experience at the summer institute. (See Appendix C)

CHOOSING THE SUBJECTS

We utilized the surveys, a list of former Principals' Center attendees, and recommendations from Jane Zinner, the ACSA/Harvard Principals' Center director to choose our six administrators. Each researcher examined, in-depth, the reflective practice of three principals. The following characteristics were important as we searched for principals to study:

Principals' self-reported reflective practice behaviors

We desired principals who reported clear personal benefits derived from their experiences at the summer institute and who continue an interest in the Centers' alumni activities. Since we are looking at the nature of the relationship between the reflective practice of site administrators and their experience at the Summer Institute, we sought principals who reported the use of reflective practice in their work. These principals could afford us the opportunity to gain a perspective of the perceived benefits of this type of staff development.

Research (Schon, 1983; Ostermann & Kottkamp, 1993; and Boud, Keogh, & Walker, 1985) strongly suggests that reflection is a powerful tool for effecting meaningful and sustained changes in practice. An analysis of our survey data indicates that principals who have attended the ACSA/Harvard Principals' Center Summer Institute also credit reflection with powerfully influencing them and their work. As a site administrator, I am particularly interested in the site perspective of the “whats, hows, and whys” of this phenomenon. For example, how do principals reflect? Upon what do they reflect? How do they promote reflection in their schools? To get answers to

questions like these, I need to examine cases where the impact of reflection seems strong.

Number of years in the principalship - Five or more

With cognitive development and adult learning research in mind, we focused on the more experienced administrators in recognition of their different levels of readiness for personal development. For example, the Conceptual Systems Theory of staff development suggests a correspondence between individuals' maturity level and years of experience and their conceptual level (Harvey, Hunt, and Schroder, 1961; Santmire, 1979). Level three and four adult learners are defined as more experienced professionals who have had years on the job to form their own points of view based on experience and are predisposed to organize more of their own instruction and need more individualized staff development. These adults are also more likely to respond to team approaches and focus upon more complex school concerns. A principal who has been an administrator for more than five years has gained enough experience that he/she is more likely to be beyond the 'survival' stage and more capable of trying to incorporate reflection into his/her repertoire. Finally, Santmire (1979) contends that support and opportunity to exercise options better serve those individuals of high conceptual level maturity level.

Summer Institute attendance year

My co-researcher and I each selected a principal from every summer institute (1992, 1993, 1994) to gain first-, second-, and third-year alumni's perspectives. These representatives of the various cohorts allowed us the opportunity to note any similarities

and/or differences in the summer institute experiences which may support reflection. We also hoped the associates might give insight to any sustaining influences apparent throughout the various "seasoning" periods.

DATA COLLECTION

To collect complete data regarding the subjects and their experience with the Principals' Center's reflective practice model and their own reflective practice at the sites, these sources of information were utilized: (a) semi-structured interviews with subjects about their Institute experiences and personal reflective practices, (b) semi-structured interviews with key teachers at the principals' worksite, (c) semi-structured interviews with supervisory central office figures, and (d) review of documents such as the principals' journals, the Center's curriculum, reflective essays sent to the Principals' Center, and administrators' school documents.

The use of multiple data sources enabled us to gain a rich picture of the reflective behaviors of the six principals studied and to consider them in light of the curriculum of the Summer Institutes.

Interviews

To build preliminary insight related to the types of questions we might ask during the subsequent structured interviews, my partner and I interviewed two recent 'graduates' of the program. One "interviewee" was a principal of a

comprehensive high school and the other was a principal of an elementary school. These informal conversations afforded us insight into two administrators' thoughts and ideas about the Principals' Center and their behaviors after attending the Summer Institute.

Three distinct behavioral changes were cited by both leaders. They suggested that they were willing to take more risks, loosen their control, and trust their teachers more. These actions were initiated by the principals this school year after attending the Principals' Center last summer. Both principals seemed quite at ease while talking about themselves -- sharing their weaknesses as well as their strengths. The principals reported that this reflective thinking about their own behaviors was nurtured at the Summer institute. These informal interviews helped to focus the parameters of our future structured interviews with the formal subjects of the study.

The formal, structured interviews of our six principals and the informants were held over a span of approximately two months. The interviews were taped, and notes were taken about non-verbal behaviors, details of the office environment, and any events of interest which occurred during the interview. The audio tapes were transcribed for coding purposes.

We were primarily interested in talking with the principals to (1) gain their perspective about their approach to the job after attending the ACSA/Harvard

Principals' Center, and (2) gain a insight to the sustaining behavioral changes which might have occurred after the intensive summer institute experience. The following sample structured interview prompts were utilized. (See Appendix A)

Observation

As Yin (1993) suggests, we incorporated observation of the subjects in 'context,' before, during, or after our interview time(Yin, 1993). When we were able to watch a person acting in his/her own environment, especially after becoming acquainted in our interviews, some new insights became clear.

Document Review

The Principals' Center was rich with documentation to be collected and organized. The principals' essays gave much insight into what the summer institute experience meant to the participants themselves.

The summer Institute curriculum gave us some understanding of the program and the experiences which the participants gained as a result of attending the Principals' Center.

Principals who were selected maintain some sort of reflective writing and/or practice. We utilized the principals' personal reflections for insight into their ideas about personal behavioral changes/growth.

To gain a better perception of the principals' on-site behavior, documents such as memos, vision statements, and parent flyers were inspected.

Sample documents reviewed:

Documents related to Principals' Center

- reflective essays
- curriculum binders
- principals' notes

Documents related to site

- memos to staff
- flyers to parents
- meeting agendas
- teacher evaluations
- journals

Our main source of data was the interviews of the principals in relation to key informant interviews with teachers and central office administrators. These multiple perspectives helped build a picture which is rich with data and has been compared and contrasted. Sharon Dezutti and I shared our separate findings to achieve a more intensive picture of six, rather than three, principals. We obtained overlapping evidence as to the impact of the Principals' Center experience on the principals' behaviors.

As we reviewed this data, we wanted to focus on the reflective nature of the principals' experience with the Principals' Center and their perceptions of the impact and usefulness of the reflection. What conditions propel or inhibit reflective practice and how may the adoption and maintenance of reflective practice be encouraged once principals are "back at the ranch?"

DATA ANALYSIS

With our literature reviews and research questions in mind, and the interview transcriptions in our hands, my partner and I began our first data coding efforts to sort and manage the data obtained. Following Miles & Huberman's (1984) strategy of data reduction, we narrowed our scope of study without eliminating our openness to the unexpected.

In a method suggested by Strauss & Corbin, (1990) coding the data with a paradigm of reflective practice in mind gave us a manner in which to set the conditions and contexts of the principals' behaviors and motivations. The raw data, including numerous interviews and documents was substantial. Yet once we began to manipulate the reduced data, concepts and themes became more concrete. We found that a flow between data collection and analysis helped develop our case study analysis.

As related in the methodology section, I sought to answer four general questions:

1. What is the nature of the relationship between principals' reflective practice experiences at the ACSA/Harvard Principals' Center and their current reflective behaviors?
2. What personal and/or professional reflective behaviors do principals incorporate in their day-to-day lives?
3. What factors encourage the adoption and maintenance of principals' reflective practice?
4. How do principals who personally reflect model reflective practice for their staffs?

The next chapter tells the story of three principals' reflective practice through our case study findings. The final chapter explores the findings of my study and suggest possible avenues for further study and development based upon those conclusions.

CHAPTER IV -- FINDINGS

*Take calculated risks.
This is quite different
from being rash.
- George B. Patton*

The discovery, nurturing, and maintenance of principals' reflective practice has become a key goal of the ACSA/Harvard Principals' Center Summer Institute according to the director and some significant alumni leaders. This chapter details the experiences and behaviors of three principals who are 'graduates' of the Institute. The descriptions and analyses are a result of the compilation of preliminary surveys, interviews, observations, and documentation. The findings begin with an in-depth look at the subjects of the study -- including an examination of their reported and/or observed development of behaviors, attributes, and qualities that appear to incorporate reflective practice. These characteristics are then discussed in conjunction with: a) the principals' experiences at the ACSA/Harvard Principals' Center Summer Institute and b) the context of principals' professional development (i.e.- central office support, continuing alumni activities, etc.).

My co-researcher and I began this study with a hypothesis that reflective practice is a skill which, when developed in principals, can make a difference in the daily work lives of those administrators. Our opinion has been shaped by scholars such as Sergiovanni (1994), Schon (1983), and Barth (1990). We felt that principals who chose to attend an institute such as the Principals' Center are ones whose subconscious

reflective practices are in place. However, as Boud, Keogh, and Walker (1985) note, “it is only when we bring our ideas to our consciousness that we can evaluate them and begin to make choices about what we will and will not do” (p.19). Thus, we hoped to shed some light on the bridge building (in this case, ACSA/Harvard Principals’ Center) between the subconscious and conscious reflective behaviors of our subjects.

SUBJECTS OF THE STUDY

This section will present a short description of each principal-- including short leadership style descriptions, site environment examples, discussions related to Principals’ Center attendance, and informants’ (teachers and superintendents) quotes related to the subjects’ mannerisms. To further enhance the portraits of the three principals, this portion will briefly discuss the informants’ roles within the districts and their relationships with the subjects, and some of their perspectives on the principals.

SUBJECT I - “THE ECLECTIC”

Description of principal

A few days prior to the date I was scheduled to speak with this busy administrator, she called and requested to change the date. I felt from her voice a misgiving of the process and its embedded requirements. I reminded her that my motivation was to write a study which examined the ACSA/Harvard Principals’ Center Institute’s “magic” to which she had referred earlier when I met her at the ACSA Principals’ Center Alumni gathering during the November conference. After our

discussion, this administrator (the Eclectic) seemed more willing to meet. Moreover, when I arrived to interview the Eclectic, she was warm and inviting. This principal's office was bustling with energy -- the phones were ringing, students were requesting information and help from the two secretaries, and teachers were milling in and out of the office area. The principal seemed pulled in many directions -- answering a phone, signing a requisition, and motioning to a teacher to come in her office. This activity was short-lived, since it was the end of the school day, and by the time we began our interview, the office was calm and much quieter.

Before attending the Principals' Center, this leader has been an administrator at her school for six years. The school, which is located in an "urbanized" suburb (as the 'Eclectic' describes it), serves approximately 550 students in grades K-6 in a lower-middle socio-economic environment. Within this educational setting, the 'Eclectic' welcomes the opportunity to experiment with educational trends. In fact, she considers herself a risk-taker within her educational network. One of her motivations for going to the Center was to be on the leading edge. She attended this first year of the UCLA/Harvard Principals' Center with a colleague primarily for the thrill of being the first. "I like to be first," she says, "but the Harvard name had a lot to do with it too." Additionally, the 'Eclectic' recalls recently completing the second tier of her administrative credential at Long Beach State. She claims that she missed reading the research in her classes and she saw the Principals' Center experience as an opportunity to catch up on the most recent educational inquiry. The Eclectic's teachers, superiors, and colleagues refer to her as an energetic leader who enjoys getting involved in many educational practices for the good of the students.

[She] is multi-faceted because a lot depends on who she is dealing with and the situation at hand. When it has got to be done, make the decision, do it, live with it, and go with it. She is better under pressure. -- Mr. P, Teacher

[She] is a little more quick to get to a solution; she likes to get things accomplished and not a lot of things get in her way if she thinks it's in the best interest of kids. -- Mr. E, Central Office Director

Description of Teacher I

This male teacher seems comfortable with his role at the Eclectic's school. Mr. P met me during his lunch hour. He had previously arranged to have a colleague take his students if we ran over our planned time. Mr. P's role as the student council advisor appeared to give him a global view of the school and the principal's effect within it.

The Eclectic hired Mr. P into his first teaching job eight years ago at the same time the Eclectic started her administrative post at the school. Mr. P proudly states that he has watched the Eclectic develop her professional style over the years. Her style can lean toward hurried decisions which are not well-thought out, but when she attempts to include people in the decision-making process, the procedure can become drawn-out. Mr. P explains this phenomenon:

Something that can take some time takes too much time. I think she is still learning through the process of using the process, taking it step-by-step. She is getting better about using facilitators to get feedback. She used to just lay [an issue] on us and then just ask us for feedback without giving us time to think about it. There is one facilitator per grade level and they're just like a lead teacher for each grade... kind of an executive committee and they're the ones that will disseminate information down to us. That's been a real positive this year developing -- not a chain of command but at least a flow chart of where to go and how to take things. --Mr. P

Description of Central Office manager I

Dr. E is fairly new to the District and to his position as a director of elementary education. He was previously a high school principal in a different school district. Dr. E is proud to say that everyone in the District is "dynamic." He claims to be discovering that "nobody [in the District] is happy with the status quo." The superintendent "constantly provides administrators with reading lists of current topics for education literature...so she keeps us right on top of things." The Eclectic has "good experience in the District," according to Dr. E.

She has a really good personality style about her and people enjoy working with her. Again, [she has] a very non-threatening approach. [The Eclectic] looks toward solutions, and she is one of the most student-oriented principals that I have seen. --Dr. E

Description of Superintendent

The superintendent (Dr. B) is a progressive leader, who has developed an expectation of life-long learning in her organization. According to this superintendent, her personal philosophy is:

We are in what I consider to be a continuous improvement model here for all students and staff members.. No matter how skilled we are there are always new areas for us to explore and the nuances of our skills are really important as we begin to take on new jobs and responsibilities and so we believe, as an organization, that there's really open access to personal growth opportunities for teachers, classified staff, as well as for administrators. -- Dr. B

In addition to philosophically supporting staff development of site administrators, this superintendent fiscally supports it by instilling a specific budget category of professional growth activities for administrators and board members.

This supportive superintendent speaks with pride about the Eclectic and her day-to-day actions fulfillment of the Dr. B's vision.

I appreciate how [she] shares her personal thoughts with me. When I see her at her school or in our management meetings, her

attitude sets up an open dialogue and an opportunity to reflect and hear what she's thinking. -- Dr. B

Making the Principals' Center a Reality for the Eclectic

According to the Eclectic and my central office informant, Dr. E, the encouragement from the superintendent was key to the Eclectic's attendance at the Institute and to her resulting personal reflective practice development. The Eclectic refers to the superintendent's support of her attendance at the ACSA/Harvard Principals' Center Summer Institute as being of "immeasurable" importance. The higher level support from the superintendent allowed the Eclectic to feel safe enough to try the Principals' Center Institute, which at that time was so new and different in the area of professional development of administrators.

Many times during the interview, this principal referred to her opportunity to attend this prestigious professional development program with a colleague from her District as a key factor in her personal growth and interest in the Center's benefits. The two attendees, the Eclectic and her peer, were charged, by the superintendent, with sharing their learnings with the other principals. For almost a complete year after the Principals' Center experience, the superintendent put the Principals' Center disciples on the beginning of the principals' meeting agendas so they could share their experiences with all site administrators. In fact, during the kick-off meeting prior to the new school year, these Principals' Center graduates developed and instituted a complete workshop for their coworkers.

The cost of the Principals' Center experience, which is relatively high, did not seem a deterrent for the Eclectic. "I took it out of school funds," this principal shares with me. "We have a lot of control over our own budgets so there was no question." However, to save money and have more time with her family, the Eclectic did not stay in the dorms with all the other Principals' Center attendees. She now sees the advantage of living together with the group and, in a way, regrets her decision to stay at home. She claims a feeling of isolation -- "I felt a little left out, but I would still drive in early and make sure to meet my group on the track and split up the readings to discuss."

Thus, the Harvard/ACSA Principals' Center Summer Institute became a reality for the 'Eclectic' in the summer of 1992, which was the first year they ran this Institute on the UCLA campus in Southern California.

SUBJECT II - "THE WORKER BEE"

Description of principal

As I waited to speak with the principal who I have labeled, the Worker Bee, the office was "buzzing" with activity. A sick student was being cared for by an adult in the health office, phones were answered by one of the three adults behind the counter, and teacher mailboxes (located directly adjacent to the front door) were checked by various instructors. Children's work was displayed on various bulletin boards. I was told by the secretary that the principal was out on campus, as usual, with the students. The secretary got on the radio and let the Worker Bee know I was there.

The Worker Bee's school is a large elementary school which serves approximately 700 students who are in grades kindergarten through six. The student population is culturally diverse while the socio-economic level is lower middle class.

The administrator has been a principal for five years. Her post at this school is the first principalship she has attained. Her move into site administration was logical, according to my central office informant, Mr. D. He claims the Worker Bee was always willing to serve on District committees. In fact, Mr. D proudly eludes to the fact that this case study subject was willing to step in and chair the District technology committee in his place when it was necessary for him to take some time off to attend to a family emergency.

Through various other stories such as his technology committee story, Mr. D displays confidence in the Worker Bee's competence and caring. I must say, I too had experienced the Worker Bee's caring attitude. The Worker Bee and I had been active together in the Association of California School Administrators. Although we had not worked on any committees together, I had seen and talked with her previously. Thus it did not surprise me when each person who described the Worker Bee depicted her hard-working behaviors and attitude because I had felt that way also. The following quotations give a sense of her perceived competence and caring.

I think [she] is one of the hardest working principals that I've worked for --
definitely. -- Mrs. V

[She] is a very involved principal. She has brought a lot of important
programs to the school. -- Mr. D

The Worker Bee indicated that she wanted to attend the Principals' Center Summer Institute as soon as it began in 1992. She, however, had to wait until the summer of 1993 since there was a requirement to be a site administrator for at least three years and she had only been one for two years in 1992.

Description of Teacher II

Mrs. V was suggested as an informant by the school secretary. The secretary said that Mrs. V had been at the school for a long time and she would have a global view of the school, the Worker Bee's leadership style, and the Worker Bee's effect on the school's atmosphere.

This teacher is the bilingual teacher. She is proud to be part of a committee that the principal developed called WEB (Weavers of Educational Bridges). According to Mrs. V, the Worker Bee develops official and casual structures for gaining staff input. WEB is one of the official groups of decision makers. Mrs. V explained:

This is a team of people who are outside the classroom, have a helicopter view of the school, and who meet to discuss certain issues, to plan and to hopefully try to solve some issues or problems. The principal, vice principal, language arts specialist, the teacher on special assignment, the resource specialist, and [Mrs. V] make this team. --Mrs.

V

Mrs. V described a variety of formal and informal collaborations which the Worker Bee has put into place. Whereas WEB is an example of a formal group, Mrs. V

is able to give a personal account of the Worker Bee's informal, reflective information gathering style.

The Worker Bee likes to bounce ideas off of people. An example is yesterday when I went into her office to get my report signed off by her. And she said, '[Mrs. V], I'm wrestling with the class cards for next year.' So we sat down and one of the other teachers walked in and he sat down with us. The three of us worked until 4:30. It wasn't planned but she saw the opportunity and she asked for our input and we stayed and we worked together. I think that she's the type of person who definitely likes to work with her staff; she doesn't like to lead from a podium up here... no, she likes to get her staff involved. --Mrs. V

Description of Central Office manager II

Mr. D is the Assistant Superintendent in charge of curriculum. This administrator is a warm, friendly person who seems to genuinely care about education, students, and staff. He has been in his position for approximately four years. Previously he was a director of curriculum in a neighboring district.

When asked about the District's support of professional development for administrators, Mr. D enthusiastically shared his feeling that their site administrators are quality people who deserve professional development. Again, he referred to the Worker Bee's experience at the Principals' Center saying that is an example of the flexibility that principals have in choosing their own staff development.

Principals are given the ability to make their own choices about what inservice opportunities make sense for them and their sites. [The Worker Bee] is a site administrator who responsibly chooses professional development which makes her a better principal -- if that's possible! --Mr. D

The Worker Bee's traits and behaviors are described by Mr. D in a warm manner. One can hear the pride in his voice:

The [Worker Bee] is someone who is able to make decisions; she is also sensitive to people. It is typical of the [Worker Bee] to be willing to broaden her knowledge in whatever way possible so she volunteered to be on the technology committee. She facilitated the leadership of teachers and allowed them to flourish. Her decision-making skills have developed and have been enhanced by her people skills. --Mr. D

Making the Principals' Center a Reality for the Worker Bee

The Worker Bee articulately described her reasons for choosing to attend the ACSA/Harvard Principals' Center:

I had read about [the Principals' Center] and liked it because it was a little bit like imagining yourself going off to camp. I thought it might be wonderful because it would be like you are really removed from your environment. Sometimes I think the hardest thing about being a principal is the way we get so fragmented. I saw the Institute as an opportunity to slow down and think.. --The Worker Bee

The Harvard name initially attracted the Worker Bee to the Institute. She says, “the exposure to the Harvard effort and that east coast background is something that you can’t pass up when you live on the west coast.” She asserts her respect and admiration for the Harvard name, the ACSA affiliation, the presenters and the setting. “The opportunity to be with the researchers in person is really stimulating.”

When Mr. D, the assistant superintendent in charge of curriculum, saw the ACSA notice for the Harvard/ACSA Principals’ Center Institute, he sent it to the Worker Bee and encouraged her to apply. “I think she was wondering,” Mr. D began, “if she went would it conflict with district time. But I told her that we could be very flexible in arranging that. It would really be something that we would support her doing.”

The ‘Worker Bee’ applied for a scholarship to attend the Institute. At the time she applied, she was president of her local charter of ACSA and she had two sons in college. She received the scholarship, and financed the rest with school improvement money and some with personal money. She explained her thinking in relation to the funding of her professional development opportunity.

I was reluctant to fund the full thing from the school as a whole although I will say that most districts are very supportive because it is such quality leadership training. But I felt that by putting some of my money along with the other two things it is more like you are investing some of yourself into it. --The Worker Bee

The summer of 1993 is the year which gave the Worker Bee the opportunity to attend this “quality leadership training,” as she says. The Worker Bee attested to the fact that you “get so much more out of staying together for a period of time because you start opening up and making new friends... the honesty comes out... the personalization that you don’t have time to do if you are just going to a workshop.”

SUBJECT III - “THE STABILIZER”

Description of principal

When I contacted this principal to ask if he would participate in my study, he was enthusiastic about the idea. Immediately, he began to give me his thoughts and ideas about the possibility of including his colleagues in on the process.

He verbally shared some history about each of the other administrators in his district in a paternal manner. His pride in his colleagues and his positive professional relationship with them was evident. The Stabilizer was recently asked by the superintendent, in mid-September of this year, to move to this diverse, lower socio-economic school of approximately 700 students in grades K through six to replace a principal who was not well-accepted by the staff or the parents the previous year. This site administrator was willing to take on the challenge of this school situation.

During our interview, the Stabilizer was eager to give me any information I needed. He shared a story about his short adventure as a principal at a large comprehensive high school in his District. Although he enjoys the elementary level, he was asked by the superintendent to step into a high school position for one year. “I

never felt like I was really in control of anything,” the Stabilizer recalls, “but I learned a lot from the experience.” In addition, he is the most senior principal in this study. He has been a principal for eight years in this district. From all the reports I have received, the Stabilizer is viewed as one who is bright and socially intuitive. The following quotations help to describe that stereotype of the Stabilizer.

He likes to make sure that things are done correctly and ... always seems to find a way to get things accomplished that he wants ... in a very low key non-threatening style that people appreciate. -- Mrs. L

He’s highly intelligent and he knows how to diffuse disgruntled parents in situations that could become difficult -- and he does handle them with humor but also intelligence. -- Dr. E

The Stabilizer was attracted to the Institute for two main reasons: to keep himself current and to interact with other principals. He stressed to me that his desire to interact stemmed from an internal desire for personal and professional growth.

Description of Teacher III

Mrs. L has been a long-time member of this school’s staff. When I met her in her room well after school hours, she was busy organizing and planning for the next day. She is a first grade teacher who seems to be a professional in every sense of the word.

When describing the Stabilizer’s leadership style, this primary teacher easily shared traits and supporting examples. For instance, she described the Stabilizer’s

calm demeanor through a story about the school's experience with the Program Quality Review (a program review conducted by the State every three to four years).

I thought that it was interesting because last time we had [the PQR] we had an excellent principal but she was so nervous about [the process] that we were all nervous too. The whole faculty was so uptight on the day that they came, I remember I was so worried that I went to Nordstroms and was outfitted. I wanted to make a good impression but when I look back on it that was ludicrous. And this time because [the 'Stabilizer'] was relaxed we were all relaxed. There were no new clothes and there was no fear and no anxiety because [the principal] kept reminding us that the whole purpose of PQR is to improve our teaching for the sake of the children... And we did very well. --Mrs. L

Description of Central Office manager III

This district office administrator has been described previously because he is the same one who works over the Eclectic. Dr. E is fairly new to the District and to his position as a director of elementary education. He was previously a high school principal in a different school district.

Dr. E provided much insight into the Stabilizer's activities and reflective behaviors. According to this central office manager:

[The Stabilizer] has been around for a number of years; he's our district historian if you will. He is very process oriented. He likes to make sure that things are done correctly and always is going through proper channels. Again, he carries with him a lot of respect from board members to students, teachers, parents, and community. He's well known and established and looked to quite often as a guide for accomplishing things or for the norms of the organization. --Dr. E

Description of Superintendent

This superintendent, Dr. B, has modeled an expectation of life-long learning to her organization. In everything she does, she tries to develop a risk-free environment where principals can try new things.

According to this superintendent, the ACSA/Harvard Principals' Center has been a wonderful experience for the Stabilizer. In fact, Dr. B claims the following:

The [ACSA/Harvard Principals' Center Institute] was the best training that the principals have ever been through. Absolutely the best. And that's to every administrator. Every single one of them has come back absolutely charged. [The Stabilizer], when he went, was very close to retirement and in fact we had a little discussion about that when he went. He just came alive. He was supposed to retire last year and chose not to do that. --Dr. B

Making the Principals' Center a Reality for the Stabilizer

Responding to the question of why he attended the ACSA/Harvard Principals' Center Institute, the Stabilizer replied,

I know a lot of people go to the Harvard Principals' Center because it is a good contact-building setting. That is not something that had any allure for me. I'm going to finish my career right here in this district. I don't have any aspirations for a district office kind of job. I really wanted the professional growth opportunity or the kick in the pants... I felt it would be a good opportunity to interact with some strong dynamic leadership. --The Stabilizer

Interestingly, the Stabilizer referred to his colleagues who had attended earlier. According to him, their enthusiasm and descriptions of the program attracted him even more because they said that the interaction they had with the leaders at the Center was a very positive experience.

The superintendent, according to this subject, was "extremely" supportive of his professional development. The Stabilizer also pointed to the special projects people who coordinate the Chapter One and School Improvement budgets. Their office helped facilitate this site administrator's attendance at this expensive Institute. The Stabilizer says,

I scrounged some money together and robbed Peter to pay Paul.... I paid for none of it out of my pocket. We took about 25% of the cost from Chapter I, 25% from School Improvement, and then I took 25% out of

my building's conference and attendance allowance which is general fund money. Finally, the superintendent's office contributed 25%. --The Stabilizer

Hence, the 'Stabilizer' got the opportunity of a lifetime during the summer of 1994. He attended the Harvard/ACSA Principals' Center Institute at UCLA.

The Case Study Cast

<u>PRINCIPAL</u>	<u>INSTITUTE YEAR</u>	<u>TEACHER</u>	<u>SUPERVISOR</u>
The Eclectic	1992	Mr.P	Dr.E, Dr.B
The Worker Bee	1993	Ms.V	Mr.D
The Stabilizer	1994	Mrs.L	Dr.E, Dr.B

PRINCIPALS' CENTER PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

What professional development program and activity would attract and affect these three dynamic leaders? The ACSA/Harvard Principals' Center Institute offers these principals a chance to practice reflection away from the site in a guided manner so that when they return to their schools, these administrators are able to instill the models of reflection in their own behaviors.

The process of professional development through reflective practice involves learning which is dialectic, experimental, collaborative, holistic, and personal. The educator is an "action researcher" (Osterman & Kottkamp, 1993). The Principals' Center experience occurs

away from the site and gives principals time to reflect upon their jobs and behaviors. Once the administrators return to their sites, they have the experience, support, and background (through the summer experience) to behave more reflectively in their day-to-day jobs.

This approach to the professional development of administrators is consistent with Pitner's (1987) essential considerations in the design of effective staff development programs for adults. She encourages programs which occur away from the worksite, allow for personalization of training, include opportunities for administrators to reflect on their action, build on the experiential base of the adult to foster culminative learning, incorporate modeling and peer coaching, and recognize and allow administrators to act upon their problems. The Harvard/ACSA Principals' Center Summer Institute at UCLA incorporates Pitners' principles in a powerful and enticing manner which attracts and affects a variety of site administrators.

This section provides general descriptions and examples of the 1992, 1993, and 1994 Principals' Center's structure, curriculum, and leaders to develop a broad understanding of the experiences with reflection the three principals in this study encountered while at the Institute.

Assumptions and Goals of the Principals' Center

The 1992 overview of the program written in the Principals' Center invitation to apply shares some of the assumptions and reasons behind the Institute. The following is a quote from that overview:

There is little question that the principal's role is critical in the process of improving American schools. Principals bring rich backgrounds of

experience, skills and vision to the tasks of leadership. When these resources are combined with those in the school community, principals can lead the way in setting the educational agenda for the 1990s and beyond.

The leaders who will be needed to assure world class schools in the 21st century will be proficient in building coalitions, restructuring for greater inclusion, and focusing on improved staff and student performance. The goal of Leadership: Our Responsibility and Challenge [the title of 1992's Institute] is to prepare principals to fill these new leadership roles.

An outstanding faculty has been assembled to address these questions. The program will expose you to the current thinking of researchers and practitioners, challenge you to examine your educational values and beliefs, and encourage your active involvement in the continuing quest for good schools. (ACSA Foundation for Ed. Ad., 1992, p.2)

The leaders of this Institute feel that the principal's role in a school's climate is key, that it is possible to build upon principals' prior backgrounds to develop leaders who will collaborate with each other, share leadership with their communities, and examine their own personal ethics and values.

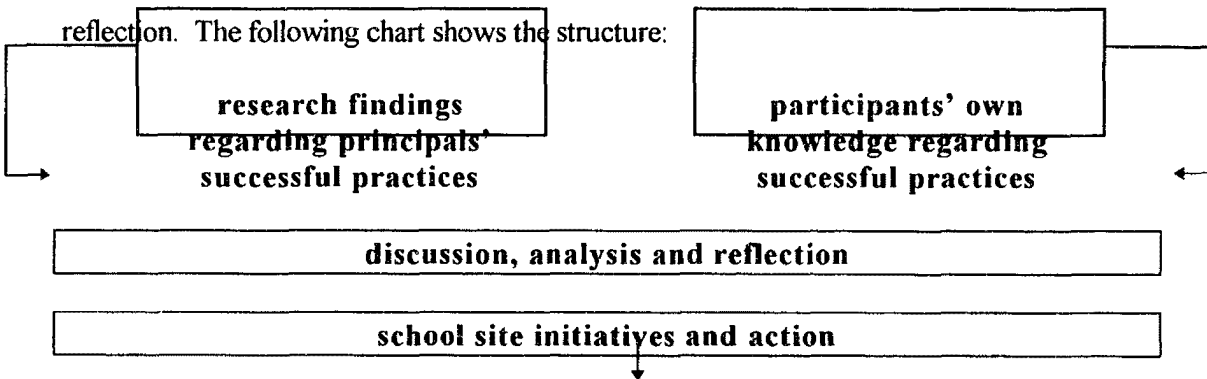
The theoretical framework of the Principals' Center is founded on the importance of professionals establishing reflective practice and collaboration. In his work with principals, Barth, the founder of the Principals' Center concept, asserts that finding ways to articulate

practice often prompts systematic reflections about practice which in turn lead to an increased understanding of practice. The Center's main goal is to provide a collegial support system to site principals in which new ideas and insights are shared and change is nurtured and supported (Sparks, 1993).

There are eleven personal outcomes listed in the Institute's program. All tend to be reflective in nature --they are geared to the professional and personal growth of the participants. Three activities designed to promote these outcomes which were mentioned most often by the case study subjects as attractions to the program were:

- 1) examining the ethical dimensions and expectations of the school leader;
- 2) exchanging ideas with colleagues from diverse backgrounds and settings; and
- 3) continuing to examine and affirm your own core values and priorities.

This institute has been designed to facilitate discussion on topics of leadership from the source research to practical application. The program structure is intended to facilitate reflection. The following chart shows the structure:



(ACSA Foundation for Ed. Ad., 1994, p.4)

Documents describing the Principals' Center Institute state that, "This Institute has been designed to facilitate discussion on topics of leadership from the source research to practical applications." (ACSA Foundation for Ed. Ad., 1993, p.3)

In order to accomplish this goal, the Institute provides a variety of activities. The large group presentations incorporate renowned educational leaders and researchers in discussions addressing critical topics. In ongoing groups, lead by team leaders, the topics are discussed and analyzed by the principals with a spirit of collegiality that is supportive of professional growth. Specific time is scheduled each day for reflective writing. Independent reading of faculty-selected research is expected. Team building occurs in a variety of settings including an Outward Bound experience. It is **STRONGLY** suggested that the principals live on campus for this ten day experience. One reason for this insistence upon the living arrangement is the informal team building which occurs naturally when people stay together for an extended amount of time. See Appendix B for samples of a typical day's schedule and sample researchers.

The days are packed with lectures and activities for the participants. The nights are filled with research reading and various team building activities. To give a better feel of the reflective nature of the experiences, I describe some of the activities in depth.

Reading Research

At the Institute, attendees are expected to read pertinent research and writings recommended by the faculty. This requirement was referenced, by all the case study subjects, as a reflective activity in which they did not previously engage as much at the site because it was difficult to build in the time and they did not realize the reflective benefits. In fact, two principals said that there was a great deal of reading, and at the time, they resented having to do so much. But, as they reflect

back on the experience, the background reading enriched their understanding and appreciation of the literature and the researchers. The principals also refer to their current, ongoing, day-to-day use of the readings and research. The Eclectic kept pulling out various Principal Center binders during our interview as she pointed to various research she had utilized in her practice.

Another principal described the link among the reading materials, the group work, and site management eloquently. He said, "I did find things that I could bring back and actually put into practical, applied use at my school and that was complemented by lots of intense reading, both before and after so that there was a link between print material, which is often dull and difficult to understand and verbal presentations that gave us a chance to interact and ask questions of the presenter."

The site administrators mentioned the variety of opportunities through which they learn from each other. In their business, they feel a need to be in control often times. Some of the Principals' Center experiences forced them to "let go." Examples of experiences that allowed principals to take on a less controlling persona, according to this study's subjects, were Outward Bound, the Problem-based learning activity, and informal team building times. In reflection, letting go and taking risks allows principals to bring others into their decision making process which, in turn, leads to a more informed and reflective outcome. Therefore, these activities allowed principals to gain positive experiences with risk-taking at the Institute so that they could return to their sites with more confidence in their ability to "let go."

Outward Bound

Outward Bound, an outdoor activity held in the mountains, provided the principals with a challenging, adventure-based experience which developed a sense of team and self-esteem. A challenging “Ropes Course” emphasized accountability while teaching cooperation, problem solving, communication and leadership skills.

According to one of the principals, Outward Bound was an important experience for her:

[I] looked and still look very seriously at taking [my] staff to Outward Bound. It was good for developing trust among a group of chiefs. We took all those strangers and (I don't do well with strangers) by the end of that day they were my best buddies. I just don't think anything else could do it. It was all leaders trying to solve this problem and in most group situations I'm involved recently – I'm the leader – and everyone turns to me as the leader and here you have all these leaders. I found myself taking a real back seat and I didn't like it but I found it key to my personal development. It forced me to let go. --The Eclectic

Team building also occurred when the small groups came together to work on an applied research problem together.

Problem-based Learning Activity

On-going groups led by Institute staff gave principals the opportunity to react to readings and speakers and develop a spirit of collegiality that is supportive of

professional growth. Each small group is led by an Institute staff member who is usually a Principals' Center alumnus. These groups helped to break down the isolation principals often feel when on the sites.

One long-term project given to each small group is a problem-based learning activity. Each group receives a different problem which they must address through applications of research and experience. On the last day of the Institute, the groups present their solutions to a panel of experts. These problem-based, hands-on activities are planned by the group leaders to align with the research and theme presented in the Summer Institute. According to the Program Director, this arm of the Institute meets with some resistance by the participants during the Institute because the principals find the presentation stressful. However, as documented by the Institute evaluations and the principal interviews, it gains the most written referrals of professional and personal growth by the Summer Institute participants. The activity truly models the idea of experiential learning which involves reflection and action.

As a principal was describing the Problem-based learning experience , he said the following:

[In] the evenings [we] were usually involved in [a] small group activity.

We would work on projects that were to be presented the last day... a problem-solving, real-life kind of situation. For me I think hearing some of the new information and research and some strategies that other people have used and have found successful probably was the highlight of the day for me. -- The Stabilizer

Informal Team Building

Finally, a trust-building experience to which all three case study subjects referred was the morning exercise. During this unstructured, informal time, the principals found themselves arranging their own time around their needs. All three principals in this study, even the one who did not stay on campus, utilized this time to share the reading workload and accomplish some information sharing. The principals would meet on the track at UCLA and walk together while they talked about the readings which they had split up so that each person only had to read specific sections of the tremendous amount of literature. “You know,” stated one principal, “We ‘jigsawed’ the material.” She was referencing an activity utilized in teaching where students become experts on one specific section of material which they are then responsible for teaching their group about.

In summary, there were three main attractions to the Center given by these principals:

- 1) a respect for the Harvard name and stature,
- 2) a wish to network with other principals, and
- 3) a desire to gain uninterrupted time for personal growth.

Once at the Institute, the principals seemed to be most involved and intrigued by the following activities:

- a) large group presentations by experts,
- b) discussion groups,

- c) reflective reading and writing, and
- d) team building activities

There were links developed between learnings at the Institute and their daily practice. Those ties seem to fit into three main categories:

- 1) release of control,
- 2) restructuring of time, and
- 3) utilizing research and models for decision-making.

Most of all, the principals refer to their Institute experience as a supportive one which positively affects their ability to practice reflective behaviors and thoughts.

Because of their experience at the Institute, the administrators feel more confident in their jobs as school leaders; and thus, they feel accountable to maintain this positive self-esteem in the important work they conduct as principals.

An analysis of our data indicates that principals who have attended the ACSA/Harvard Principals' Center Summer Institute credit reflection with powerfully influencing them and their work. Therefore, this study examines the activities and factors which occur during and after the Institute which encourage the adoption and maintenance of reflective behaviors of principals.

REFLECTIVE ACTIVITIES WHICH OCCURRED AT THE INSTITUTE

To what specific reflective Institute experiences do the principals refer when thinking about reflective models which affected their behaviors? The principals' recollections fell into four main categories: large group presentations by experts,

discussion groups, reflective reading and writing, and team building activities. The following discussions have been categorized beginning with large group presentations and ending with team building -- an order which ends with the category to which principals referred most.

There were some interesting leanings by each principal toward certain activities.

While the Eclectic referred to the “power” of the discussion groups, the Worker Bee focused more on the reflective reading and writing. Most of the quotations related to the large group presentations came from The Stabilizer. Universal among these subjects were many referrals to the team building activities -- both formal and informal. Perhaps this shows that no matter what personal styles the principals have, they all need to break down feelings of isolation in order to think and behave in a reflective manner.

Large group presentations by experts

Most mornings and some afternoons were filled with experts’ presentations and subsequent follow-up activities depending upon the nature of the presentations. Two principals felt that the large group presentations were opportunities to put famous names to real faces. The “real faces” encouraged the principals to implement ideas which were based upon the research -- an activity which is reflective in nature. The Worker Bee mentioned that she had previously read Howard Gardner’s research and felt cold about it and did not see how it could apply to her school. Yet when Mr. Gardner presented to the Institute attendees, her

perception changed tremendously. The research had become so real for her after her face-to-face experience with the man behind the book that she developed a model for a multiple intelligences approach to ESL (English as a Second Language) instruction for her site.

According to the Stabilizer, “Usually there was a presenter and either small group discussions or some kind of way to follow up from what had been done during the focal presentation.” During the follow-up, the researchers would often walk around to the small groups and participate in their discussions. Again, this was a chance for the principals to experience the “bridge” between research and practice. They were able to gain further meaning from the scholars and apply the research to their own situations. According to the Worker Bee, “The featured speaker of the day would spend the entire day there. He spent time giving us his lecture and perspective. At the end there was an opportunity to talk with him. I would leave those days feeling inspired to do great things at my school.”

These two principals related their feelings that reading and applying research became more of a priority in their day-to-day lives as principals. In fact, the Stabilizer utilized a process of reading in-depth research on multi-gradedness with his entire staff in order to help them make some decisions about not continuing a program which had been started. When those decisions were based on research, it made the teachers realize the decision was being made in the best interest of the children, rather than for political or structural reasons.

Discussion groups

These discussion groups led by Institute staff gave principals the opportunity to examine their espoused beliefs as related to the readings and speakers and mentally relate those beliefs to their behaviors back at their sites in a spirit of collegiality that is supportive of personal growth. The small discussion group time helped to develop the Worker Bee's and the Stabilizer's reflective thoughts and nature; whereas, it seemed to be a social activity for the Eclectic.

The evenings were usually involved with small group activity. We would work on projects that would be presented on the last day -- a problem-solving real-life kind of situation. Sometimes in our small groups we would just rehash the day or discuss our opinions about the readings." --The Eclectic

The small groups met quite often. This was key in the development of the principals' reflective practice, according to the Stabilizer.

We were in our small groups a lot -- that was extremely important for networking and trust building. The principals began to let down their "walls" and be honest about their fears and insecurities. Only then did we all begin to develop personal growth game plans. --The Stabilizer

Although she did not see the small group discussions as her main avenue of reflective learning, the Worker Bee did see the group discussions as a model of reflective learning. "In other words," she said, "problem solving that you face as a group equals the presentation of solutions, celebration, and evaluation."

Reflective Reading and Writing

All three principals noted the time given to reflective reading and writing as something that is difficult to give priority to once “back at the ranch.” The Worker Bee, particularly verbalized her perspective that these reflective activities were what was missing in many other inservices she had attended. Reflective reading, particularly, was an activity which the principals felt the Institute helped them acquire a “taste” for. The Institute gave them a workable model for attacking and understanding academic research. According to one principal,

There was much intense reading (which is often dull and difficult to understand), but the small group discussions developed a link between print material and verbal presentations that gave us a chance to interact and ask questions of the presenter and of each other. --The Eclectic

All three principals maintained their journals during the Institute because, according to them, there was specific journal time carved into the days. One leader commented that she felt less guilty about writing in her journal because everyone was doing it. When she returned to her site, she found it harder to make “journaling” a priority because it looked like she was taking a break at work. For the Worker Bee, the reflective writing gave her a chance to write mostly feelings rather than activities. Interestingly, although she enjoyed the fact that she could write whatever she wanted and not have to share, this administrator felt that there could have been more accountability for keeping up the journals.

The Worker Bee came to realize that the Institute was a model of structure reflection which included reading of research, thinking about one's own experiences, and relating the two to a problem in order to develop a solution. According to the Worker Bee,

There was structured reflection. The design was always a large group experience but then go into a small group setting where you would have time to think about it and discuss it or they would charge you with a problem to write about or present a solution to it. -- The Worker Bee

Team Building Activities

The large and small group presentations and discussions and the reflective reading and writing were formal exercises which touched one or two principals to varying degrees. Some principals appreciated the small group discussions while others liked the reflective writing. The formal and informal team building activities, on the other hand, were praised by all three principals. There were many referrals, by all three principals, to the effectiveness of the team building which occurred during the Institute.

The affect of the length of the Institute and the "encouragement" to stay on campus is a positive one according to the Worker Bee,

You get so much more out of staying together for a period of time because you start opening up and making new friends. The honesty comes out -- the personalization that you don't have time to do if you

are just going to a workshop. Personal qualities are important and you get a chance to gain insight into others' personal attributes. --

The Worker Bee

The Eclectic felt the same way as the Worker Bee, yet she experienced the Institute in a somewhat different frame:

I would get up really early because the four of us would meet on the track and split up the readings and then we would walk the track and share our readings while we walked. I felt a little left out because I didn't stay there so I did everything I could to achieve the same closeness I saw the other principals gaining. . --The Eclectic

The Stabilizer saw "chow time" as an effective informal team building exercise which would affect his practice back at his site:

The food was terrific but also the interactively between people from different districts was super. I think most of us tend to be real tunnel visioned. We see only that which we deal with on a daily basis and when you are in that kind of setting and you're talking with people that represent 50 or 60 different districts, suddenly you realize that problems tend to be very universal. I realized that I need to spend some more informal time with my staff, so that they see our school problems not so much as ones that the principal needs to fix, but as challenges that we all need to address. --The Stabilizer

The Worker Bee summarized the effect of team building on principals' reflective practice well when she said,

I think [working together] broke down some barriers and opened some doors for communication. The open doors to communication helped us to realize that communication is key in reflective practice. Without a willingness to risk with people and put opinions out to be challenged and questioned, principals will not be able to lead decision-making which is in the best interest of kids. We principals need to stop isolating ourselves. --The Worker Bee

This section has examined the Institute's activities and the principals' relations between these activities and their personal reflective behavior. The following section expands the reflective activities to examine the conscious attempts by principals, *during their time at the institute*, to develop links between their Principals' Center summer experience and their day-to-day practice. These links, or bridges, seem to vary among the principals depending upon their personal comfort levels.

LINKS BETWEEN INSTITUTE'S REFLECTIVE ACTIVITIES AND PRINCIPALS' SUBSEQUENT REFLECTIVE BEHAVIORS

Links developed by principals during the Institute

The ties (between the Institute experience and the principals' practice) developed for the principals seem to be very personal -- something which cannot be extensively

contrived by the Institute planners themselves. Each principal described different experiences as ones which bridged their reflective practice experiences during the Institute with their reflective behavior back at their sites.

Intriguing patterns emerged from the respondents' responses to the question of what Institute reflective experiences they remember and what experiences they feel created reflective practice links for them.

It seems that team building created a safety net which was important to each principal no matter what his/her traits tended toward. The theme of team building and collegiality came up time and time again in the interviews. As one of the subjects stated, "Being a principal is a lonely job if you let it be... the buck stops with you and people like to lay their problems on you to solve. The friends I made at the Institute helped me to realize that I do have support and I don't have to have all the answers." Thus, the feeling of support was there for the principals. The friendships developed at the Institute gave the principals new-found confidence to open up and allow themselves to risk because they knew there would be someone there to help them through a problem if need be.

Other than team building, the principals' "consumption" of the Institute activities seemed to depend on their personal reflective styles. For example, the 'Worker Bee' referred to the reflective writing and reading many times throughout our interview. Then, when we discussed her perception of activities which tended to solidify the connection between the Institute and her reflective practice, she referred back to an activity which was of the same genre as her most memorable activities. This occurred

with the other two principals also. It is interesting to ponder the need to address the 'multiple intelligences' (Gardner, 1983) of adult learners when planning an effective staff development program... What can be a 'life changing' experience for one type of principal may not be as momentous for another.

According to the Institute director, team building and networking comes up often in her conversations with the Principals' Center alumni. Alumni tell her that they have become more reflective in their work because they have a professional network and safety net which encourages educated risk-taking. Ms. Zinner states:

We hear from the principals that the networking time is important in their Institute experience, so we try to plan in time for them to informally reflect with their colleagues. I think it builds a real safety net for them. We have always had them go to the Hollywood Bowl. We went the weekend of July 4th last year. Even though that timing was difficult, everyone had a great time and seemed to really bond. -- Jane Zinner

The activities such as the Hollywood Bowl are formal attempts by the Institute to give Institute attendees "informal" bonding experiences. Interestingly, this type of activity is not addressed by the principals in this study. The principals non-interest in this contrived activity is perhaps an example of the fact that the informal team building occurs better when it happens naturally like meal times and early morning exercise time.

The three principals approached the development of their reflective repertoire in a variety of ways depending on their comfort level with their previous behaviors and

practice and their congruence with the Institute's reflective activities. The following vignettes give a taste of the principals' conscious reflective practice adoption techniques.

The Eclectic tends to be a social person who likes to have control. Therefore, the idea of loosening control and opening up to others is most easily accepted by her when she is in a social situation.

One of the reasons the Eclectic attended the Institute in the first place was social in nature. She knew she would be attending the activity with a colleague:

Knowing that we had each other [referring to another principal from her district who attended] at the Institute really gave us a chance to talk about how things would play out in our District. It was exciting to come back as a team. I remember, we were definitely the stars when we came back... [the superintendent] asked us to do an inservice for our colleagues and people kept calling asking for more information. . --The Eclectic

During the Institute, the Eclectic linked reflective thinking to social situations. She was the one who did not stay on campus, but who still came back early each morning so she could get the chance to discuss the readings with others. That social interaction seemed key in her personal reflection.

The Worker Bee, on the other hand, feels comfortable in a variety of situations. Whether in a social or private environment, she enjoys examining models and thinking about how to apply them to her situation. The Worker Bee tends to already be very comfortable with reflection and reflective practice as evidenced by her comments:

My journal helped me to sit and think and pull [things] together. One of the things I did personally was I took the agenda of the whole experience and roughed out what I thought was the design of the program. I tried to look at the ten days in such a way that I could see how it was laid out. I took the time to analyze the plan... how did they design that experience so you came away and it was so powerful? I wondered... what are the pieces when you look at it. So I thought of ways I could probably replicate the model. Writing my model helped me to talk it out with others later in the week. Having to articulate what I thought to others was good for me. The whole experience also reminded me how much I love what I do. It brought more enthusiasm back in my perspective. --

The Worker Bee

In the case of the Worker Bee, who came to the Institute as a reflective practitioner, the summer experience helped to give her time to practice her reflective skills and it re-energized her practice.

The Stabilizer, who was close to retirement from his district, also came be re-energized. This veteran principal is considered by those who work with him as socially and academically intelligent. In fact, he was describe to me as though he were on a higher plane of understanding than others. Thus, the Institute experience seemed to open the Stabilizer's perspective of other principals and their knowledge and experience bases. The Stabilizer's bridging activity during the Institute was during informal discussions when he developed a trust of others' experience. His willingness to let go

and not always have the right answer developed the background needed to become more open to others' opinions when making decisions. This is a behavior which is key in reflective practice according to researchers such as Schon (1983) and Ostermann and Kottkamp (1993). His perspective was as follows:

The interactivity between people from different districts [was great]. What I found was that the people from Los Angeles who were attendees at Harvard were just as caring, just as understanding, just as concerned about the kids in their community. I think it broke down some barriers and opened some doors for communication. Getting to know the many different principals helped me to realize that we're all trying to do the best job we can within our environment...and the problems tend to be very universal. --The Stabilizer

LINKS DEVELOPED BY PRINCIPALS AT THEIR SITES

Once the principals return to their sites, how do they develop connections between their experiences with reflection at the Institute and their personal reflective behaviors? Each principal described different experiences and activities which bridged their two 'worlds' -- UCLA and their school sites.

Reflection on practice is a strategy which has been acclaimed for placing skilled educators in charge of their own professional development (Ostermann & Kottkamp, 1993). When we compared the Harvard Institute activities, which have helped connect the participants' Harvard experience with their practice, to the reflective activities in

which the principals involve themselves ‘back at the ranch’, Ostermann and Kottkamp’s perspective of placing leaders in charge of their own professional development rings true. All three principals of this study have consciously built in reflective activities brought from their summer “adventure.” Again, each administrator continues the legacy of the Harvard experience in his or her own practice with his/her own personal style.

Roland Barth argues that placing responsibility on principals for their own development is key to the Center (Barth, 1990). Each case study subject referred to his/her responsibility for connecting the Harvard learnings to the day-to-day practice. All three site administrators could easily describe activities in which they have become involved, since their summer endeavor, to become a more reflective and effective leader. The following chart shows the Institute linking activities and the school site linking activities. What is clear is the principals’ ownership of their site activities. Unlike the Institute activities which are “handed to” them, according to the Worker Bee, the site experiences are carved out of their busy schedules. Again, the Worker Bee says it well when she states, “We don’t stop often enough to reflect and what I have found is the only way to make it happen is to do it on a consistent basis.” After the Institute experience, each principal did take time to consciously incorporate reflective activities into his/her behaviors.

Just as the Eclectic enjoyed the social aspects of the Institute’s reflective activities, she also appreciated the comfort of the alumni activities. Perhaps this is the Eclectic’s way of avoiding the accountability of reflective decision making or personal experiential learning. While with others, she can, as she states, “learn from their

knowledge or from their mistakes.” The Eclectic also seemed to feel that the alumni activities refocus her:

Sometimes it’s easy to forget why we got into this business when you get sidetracked by teachers or parents. But I know there’s always something or someone from Harvard that will bring me back. I keep everything together over here so I can get it easily. --The Eclectic

Reflective practice does not come naturally for the Eclectic, but she feels the Principals’ Center has given her the safety net she needs to attempt reflective behaviors at her site.

In slight contrast to the Eclectic, the Worker Bee was already taking time to apply the many models of reflective learning which were occurring during the Institute to her own school site through reflective journal writing. She seemed ahead of the game when she returned to her school because she had already mapped out a plan as evidenced by her comments:

I wanted to do an experience at the beginning of the year that would replicate my Harvard experience somewhat... that would use the neat pieces we went through... I used several things that had come directly out of the experience. They went through a survival exercise, I took pieces from Loraine Monroe’s work, I used the metaphor of building your school’s foundation, I have a sign on my door that says, ‘Out learning’, and I gave my entire staff special journals... I wish they could have all been there with me. I want them to gain the confidence I have gained to

take a well-thought-out and researched idea and try it out. Then if and when it doesn't work, they can talk it out and re-adjust the plan. Now that's reflection in action! --The Worker Bee

The Stabilizer also began to become more open to new ideas -- more reflective about his relationships with colleagues. During the Institute, the Stabilizer's eyes were opened to other principals' situations and skills. He took opportunities to network and break down some of his pre-conceived ideas about administrators from other districts. Once back at the site, the Stabilizer utilized his connections to make informed decisions:

An immediate result for me was the value of having some connections and having some opportunity to interact with other districts. Prior to the Harvard, I wouldn't have had a clue where to have started in the LA hierarchy to get the kind of information that I really thought was critical when I was making a hiring decision. And presto, after my Harvard experience, I knew who to call regarding a teacher applicant. The staff and I could make a more informed choice. --The Stabilizer

The Stabilizer truly began to inform himself before making decisions after his Institute experience:

One thing that has really been a hold over from my summer experience is doing some beyond superficial reading. I've always been a reader of journals...but in terms of picking up serious professional books, especially those that had to do with learning theory or strategies...I had not done that. My reading had tended toward being more in the quick-fix variety

as opposed to the long-range nature. Now I try to reflect upon my pre-judgments and use research to guide my thoughts and actions more.

The principals' chosen activities are very similar between the Institute and site.

Begley (1990) discussed four dimensions of professional socialization:

- 1) internal processes(values, cognitive processes),
- 2) relationships (with superiors, peers & subordinates),
- 3) organizational and contextual factors, and
- 4) image of the role:

Begley asserts the need to examine these socialization arenas for principals in order to find appropriate professional and personal development modes. In the case of these three principals and their preferred reflective activities, all four dimensions of their socialization, particularly the organizational and contextual factors, seem to affect their choice of activities. The following table shows the reflective activities in which each principal purposefully involved himself/herself at the Institute and then at the sites.

Main Reflective Activities Occurring at Institute and School Site Cited for Creating Links between Principals' Institute Experiences and Site Practice		
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<u>PRINCIPAL</u>	<u>INSTITUTE</u>	<u>SITE</u>
The Eclectic	Collegiality, Networking	Alumni activity involvement
The Worker Bee	Journal writing	Modeling experience for staff
	Examining model of Institute	Journal writing
The Stabilizer	Breaking down barriers	Building connections
	Seeing universal problems	Going beyond superficial reading

REFLECTIVE BEHAVIORS INCORPORATED BY PRINCIPALS

Reflection is an "active process of exploration and discovery which often leads to very unexpected behavioral outcomes" (Boud, Keogh, and Walker 1985, p.8). Inherent in Boud and his colleagues' description of reflection is the assumption that the experience is a process which involves the learner in activity to create behavioral changes. From the three principals', their staffs', and their employers' points of view, it seems the process of incorporating reflection in experiential learning is paramount to the principals' personal development after they have returned from the Harvard/ACSA experience.

Throughout the principals' discussions about their reflective experiences and behaviors, three behavioral change themes continually emerged: 1) Release of control - involvement of others, 2) restructuring of time, and 3) restructuring decision-making - incorporating reflection.

Release of Control/Involving others

The principals' many referrals to their release of control and involving others seemed to be related to talking problems out more or bringing more people into the decision making process. Murphy and Hallinger (1985) assert that risk-taking occurs when trust is built and adults are placed in charge of their own decision making and learning. The structures of schools have not encouraged principals to bring others into their own learning and decision making process. In Brubaker and Simon's (1987) study of principals' perceptions of their role, the administrators perceived others as expecting

them to know all the answers. Therefore, they have not felt permission to release control and allow others into the decision making process.

So it is no wonder that allowing others into the process does not particularly come naturally to the Eclectic, who is perceived as a more controlling person by her teachers and herself. The Eclectic mentions her interest in talking things over with others when asked about her reflective practices. In the Eclectic's case, however, there are not very concrete references to specific situations or people. The Eclectic states many times that she appreciates talking to her colleagues at the alumni gatherings...

I looked forward to discussing my school situations with other principals who have similar issues. --The Eclectic

...but she does not go into specific examples of discussions. She also declares that she implemented a shared decision making model, but she does not come up so quickly with solid examples of how she implemented that model. This seems to be an area of personal growth which the Eclectic must consciously address.

In contrast to the Eclectic's style and mode of operation, empowerment seems to have become a theme for the Worker Bee. This administrator was described as a very supportive person. When she returned from the Institute, her teacher saw her develop structure which helped the school community to began to reflect upon what is important in schools:

When she realized that the development of a traditional community is key to the evolution of a good school, she began to pull more and more

people into her decision-making process. She allowed others to help her 'construct' the school community. --Mrs. V

For the Stabilizer, who is considered a personable, 'socially intelligent' person, this release of control began when he was placed in a situation in which he could not control or administer the entire school (because of its large size) he therefore began to work more with his support staff. He learned from his unexpected experience. He had always gotten along well with others, but he began to realize that he must also empower them because he couldn't do it all.

He also realized that staff supported big decisions better if he let them reflect upon the situation in a well-educated manner:

The Institute helped me realize that the teachers are bright people who deserve the opportunity to compare research and past experience in order to make a current decision and go with it. Their decision to let go of the multi-gradedness because of our student transience rate is a perfect example of [the teachers'] reflection.-- The Stabilizer

Restructuring of Time

Scholars such as Manasse (1985) and Kilbourn (1988) discuss the need for practicing administrators to have opportunities to think about, write about, and discuss their professional practice. Kilbourn (1988) asserts that there must be new value placed upon the dignity of principals' reflection and experiential learning. Kilbourn's argument seems to be making more sense to these principals who have attended the

ACSA/Harvard Principals' Center. The site leaders are beginning to shift their time priorities. All three principals are proud to explain that they have restructured their time. In fact, two out of the three principals refer to the need for consistency and structured reflection in their busy schedules.

The Eclectic refers to 'slowing down the clock' in order to have time to think things through. This principal described her day as busy and hectic. She loved "being in the thick of things." Yet she realized that she must take time to think things through. In order to gain uninterrupted reflection time, Eclectic goes off site to attend various professional growth activities such as the Principals' Center workshops conducted at UCLA. As the Eclectic says:

Sometimes it's difficult to be off site because that's when problems always seem to arise, but it is important for me to keep current. I make a point of attending [the workshops] as much for my emotional health as well as for the time it gives me to sort through things without being pulled in a million directions. --The Eclectic

It seems the Worker Bee is the most sophisticated when it comes to restructuring her time. This administrator took time to examine the Principals' Center model of learning and truly apply it to the situations back at her school. She took her Harvard experience seriously and wanted very much to replicate the model for her staff and community. The Worker Bee talks extensively about her "bible" (her journal) and her attempts at structuring time to focus the school community on student and adult learning:

I've realized that my number one job is to keep focused on the kids' learning. They say it's easy for a principal to get lost in the trees. I am trying to continue to refocus myself on the forest. It seems as long as I choose to focus on the students, the problems -- which are still there, believe me -- don't seem as insurmountable. Writing in my journal is my way of reflecting on the kids and how I can best help them . -- The Worker Bee

The Stabilizer also mentions the need to stop and think about his practice. He says that he began to try to structure consistent time to write his reflections, but since he is more of a "talker," he found it more effective to use a tape recorder in the car. The switch from written to verbal reflections helped the Stabilizer to keep up with his vow to structure time to revisit decisions on an ongoing basis. The staff was brought in on the Stabilizer's restructuring of time; he had them stop and review literature and "defend" their decisions to restructure a teaching program. The school had been involved with a multi-graded structure, which was a "hot, new reform." The Stabilizer's gut feeling was that it wasn't right for the students at this school. Instead of just stopping the program, the Stabilizer planned and facilitated an extensive literature review and discussion.

So much in education we jump right into reform. I want my staff to slow down and really understand the whys of what they are doing -- does it make sense for our kids? --The Stabilizer

The staff ultimately made a decision to phase the program out because they realized that their students moved in and out of the area too much to obtain the consistency needed for a multi-graded situation.

Restructuring decision-making - Incorporating reflection

The British Further Education Curriculum and Development Unit (1987) developed a model for reflective decision-making and practice which is supported by the ACSA/Harvard Principals' Center Institute's design. The model specifies that after a person experiences something (i.e.- acts upon a decision he made); organized, thoughtful activities (i.e.- reading related literature or writing in a journal) must occur in order for the person to learn from that experience (FEU, 1981, p.21 in Boud, Keogh, and Walker, 1985). The principals are consciously attempting to build in those organized activities for themselves and their staffs. Two principals have easily achieved this incorporation of reflective activities whereas one principal has not yet developed a truly reflective mode of operating.

The Eclectic was the first to attend the ACSA/Harvard Principals' Center Institute. She enjoys taking social risks, yet she has still not fully developed her reflective risk taking abilities. When her teacher informant was asked if he felt that the Eclectic's skills were waning because of time away from the Institute, he stated that he actually felt they were improving over the years:

She is finally willing to allow teacher facilitators opportunities to develop and follow through with instructional ideas more. It used to be that she wanted to make every little decision for us. Now she only

makes two thirds of them. I will say, she bit the bullet and took an unpopular stand with some teachers when [the decision] was going to be good for kids. --Mr. P

The Eclectic has gained a personal feeling of growth from her Principals' Center experience and her attempts at releasing control, restructuring time, and utilizing research, but what seems to be missing is organized reflection. This administrator is not as quickly able to verbalize specific examples of her reflection on practice. The personal feeling of growth has not seemed to have affected her professional behavior as profoundly as the other administrators.

The Worker Bee seems to be on the other end of the spectrum from the Eclectic when it comes to restructuring and organizing her decision making and reflection. This principal was able to verbalize recent situations in which her release of control, restructuring of time, and utilization of research has produced specific benefits for her personally and her school in general.

This opportunity, [the Institute experience], gave me the background and courage I needed to try some new instructional things. I've always had so many things running through my head, but now I have a better handle on how to implement them. --The Worker Bee

The Worker Bee attributes writing in her journal as a means for her to stay consistent. Perhaps the act of carving out time to write in her journal is a great factor in her highly developed reflective nature.

Where the Worker Bee utilizes the model of learning and the Eclectic incorporates the content of research from their Principals' Center experiences, the Stabilizer sees the need to expand his view through his own complete literature searches. The Stabilizer was transferred to a school which was involved with multi-gradedness. He was not sure it was the best thing for that population, but instead of just putting the "kibosh" on what had been started already, the Stabilizer enlisted the help of the central office in doing research with his staff. After a thorough investigation, his staff decided that now was not the time to implement multi-gradedness primarily because of a high transience rate. The Stabilizer partially attributes this willingness to stop and examine the facts to his Summer Institute experience.

The Institute experience has certainly affected all three principals' view of the importance of reflection on their practice -- all three principals report feelings of being more reflective and thoughtful in their jobs. Two of the three say they feel that their more reflective personal practice keeps the whole organization focused more on the students' needs.

Moreover, all three administrators relay feelings of confidence in their decision to attend the Principals' Center Summer Institute and their appreciation of the positive influence the adventure has had on their lives. The two female administrators, in fact, state that the experience was "life changing." When asked why it was life changing, both principals referred to their confidence level rising because the Center helped them realize they were not alone in their endeavor to improve education for many children.

PRINCIPALS' ADOPTION AND MAINTENANCE OF REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

Internal and external factors affected these three principals' adoption and maintenance of reflective practice. The principals' internal factors were related to their leadership traits and their adult learning readiness levels. The external factors focused on the leaders' conscious reflective behaviors. As a comparison, Leithwood and Stager (1986), in their study of effective principals, found similar factors present when looking at their sample principals' appropriation of positive leadership behaviors. This juxtaposition of research supports Barth's (1993) view that behavioral changes in principals occur only if the professionals are in charge of their own personal development.

The internal factors which made a difference in the principals' adoption and maintenance of their reflective practice were:

- Leadership style
- Level of need to control situations

The external factors which affected the level of adoption and maintenance of the principals' reflective behaviors were:

- Conscious practice of reflective behaviors supported by superiors and colleagues
- Networking with others
- Sharing reflections with others at site

According to Fischer and Kenny, there are at least three circumstances necessary for a person to build a skill. In the Principals' Center alumni's case, the skill being

developed is reflective practice. First, the adult needs to be ready to “learn and develop personally.” Second, the environment should, “provide a context that induces and supports performance of the behaviors that constitute the skill.” Third, the person “must practice the skill continually” Fischer and Kenny (1986, p. 62-63). This study seems to underscore Fischer and Kenny’s findings.

Leadership style

The principals’ teachers and superiors made many references to the types of leaders these administrators were. The traits of these three school CEOs seemed to have some bearing on the extent to which principals adopted and maintained reflective practices.

The Eclectic was a person who was energetic, easily distracted, social, and caring. This administrator, although she cares deeply for children, has probably had the hardest time adopting reflective behaviors. It seems that she leans toward social, busy activities. Perhaps the difficulty she has slowing down and focusing for long periods of time makes it hard for her to put a priority on stopping and pondering her actions as they relate to research and past experience.

The Worker Bee, in contrast, was considered hard-working, collaborative, reflective, and caring. This principal already had mastered some of the skills of reflection before attending the Institute. Therefore, her job was focused more on fine-tuning and maintenance of reflective behaviors.

Finally, the Stabilizer was intelligent, thoughtful, purposeful, and caring. This man’s greatest challenge was opening up to others and letting them into his realm of

thought. The Institute gave him the positive experience with others which seemed to spawn his willingness to open up to new people and situations.

Level of Need for Control

All three principals are caring, competent human beings. Therefore they wanted to create a positive environment for everyone involved. They had varying levels of needs related to collaboration with others and empowerment of others. The principal with the least amount of concern regarding control, the Worker Bee, seems to have been the most successful at maintaining reflective practices in her day-to-day life. The principal with the need to loosen control must consciously keep herself in balance with the help of decision making plans and staff input.

The Eclectic, a self-proclaimed “control seeker,” had a difficult time collaborating with her staff even when she consciously wanted to do so.

I always worry that I’ll be responsible for other people’s mistakes, so sometimes it’s easier to do it myself and get blamed for my own mistakes instead. -- The Eclectic

So when it comes to decision making, loosening control is a challenge for this administrator. She is, after the Institute, consciously trying to develop empowerment structures such as decision making models and grade level facilitators.

Collaboration comes naturally for the Worker Bee; therefore, reflective problem solving is enjoyable for her. Leithwood and Stager (1986) noted that reflective principals seem to derive more enjoyment from problem solving. The Worker Bee would be an example of their perspective.

Finally, the Stabilizer is willing to release control when dealing with situations within his own school. He works well at allowing his own teachers to take ownership of things. He is challenged slightly when it comes to loosening control of his personal relationships with other principals outside his district.

When I am working with my own people, I know them well enough to trust them with their decisions. The Institute helped me to realize that I needed to start trusting others who I didn't know that well. Their problems are not so different from ours and they might have better solutions. -- The Stabilizer

In all three principals' cases, they were ready to grow personally. The internal factors -- leadership style and need for control -- had been amenable to the adoption and maintenance of reflective behaviors. The Worker Bee, particularly, has been able to sharpen her reflective behaviors. The other two principals, also, have changed their behaviors toward a more reflective style since their Institute experience. Just as the two internal factors affected the reflective behavior of these administrators, the external factors also influenced the work of principals to varying degrees.

Conscious practice of reflective behaviors supported by superiors and colleagues

Since it is clear that support from the top (i.e., the superintendents, associate superintendents, etc.) for professional development is important, it was helpful that the superintendents and associates felt there were obvious advantages to sending these administrators to the Principals' Center. All three administrators have superintendents and associate superintendents who support and rely on good professional development for their principals. In one case, there is actually a budget item for the staff development

of administrators and board members. Thus, developing strong leadership through good professional development is supported by all three case study principals' central offices as evidenced by the following quotations from a superintendent and an assistant superintendent:

I feel that the Institute has been the best training that they had ever been through. Absolutely the best. Every single principal has come back absolutely charged. They come back and seem to have a less frantic sense of their practice. -- Dr. B

When you have limited dollars, it makes you a very critical consumer of the things you have your people get involved in. The Principals' Center is worth every penny. -- Mr. D

The presence of Fischer and Kenny's (1986) overarching theme of support and a breaking down of isolation for all the case study principals gives them a chance to focus on practicing their reflective activities. It seems that no matter which Institute activities affected the principals the most, the gestalt of the opportunity to become involved in this experience develops a supportive atmosphere which lasts far beyond the ten day summer occurrence.

Once back at their sites, the opportunity for principals to practice their skills occurs through their personal practices at the sites, opportunities to share with colleagues, and follow up Institute alumni meetings.

The principals' personal reflective activities vary. The Eclectic, who is a risk-taker and leans toward quick answers, seems to rely on the social, team building-type

activities to maintain her reflective behaviors. The Worker Bee, who is viewed as a hard working supportive leader, takes her experiences a step further by applying her learning to alternative situations. On the other hand, the Stabilizer who is seen as socially and academically intelligent, leans more toward introverted activities such as reading in-depth research and thinking reflectively.

In all three principals' cases, they have been more conscious about practicing reflection in their daily work. The Worker Bee is probably the best example of becoming a reflective practitioner. She has very consciously incorporated much of her Principals' Center learning into her school site work. Mezirow (1990) suggests that individuals make meaning of experience by interpretation. Thus, they utilize their interpretations of experiences to guide their decision making. This is what the Worker Bee seems to have mastered so well. In this 'hierarchy' of principals' implementation of reflective practice, I would say the Stabilizer would come next. From interviews and observations, it is apparent that he has also developed a substantial list of skills which help him incorporate reflection into his job. The Eclectic feels that her behavior has changed since her experience. The Eclectic's style before attending the Institute was not as reflective as the other two principals. Therefore, this administrator probably had more of a cognitive, behavioral change to make than the other two case studies had. Nevertheless, the Eclectic has consciously tried to reflect upon her practice through attendance at alumni gatherings and usage of Principals' Center literature.

The support from the top and from colleagues has helped them to continue their work to become more reflective about their practice.

Networking with others

All three principals referred extensively to the networking and team building which occurred through their Institute experience. Each principal also currently continues some sort of collegial networking on a consistent basis. Perhaps the networking develops an informal accountability to follow through on actions which were discussed among colleagues earlier or maybe just the safety net of knowing they are not alone helps these leaders feel more secure when trying something new in their experiential learning cycle.

The Eclectic continues attending Principals' Center alumni activities. She sees the activities as important in her mental health.

I find that time relaxing and stress reducing. I get uninterrupted time to talk with other principals who are going through the same things I am. It reminds me I am not alone. -- The Eclectic

The Worker Bee and the Stabilizer gain their collegial support through alumni activities sometimes. Their collegial support comes more through phone calls and notes. These two principals seem to seek advice from Institute colleagues on their school issues through targeted, purposeful phone calls rather than informal chats at alumni activities. Again, these two principals find reflective practice more comfortable than the Eclectic does.

The varying styles in gaining peer support seems to exemplify the differences in reflective behaviors among principals. Brookfield's (1986) perspective of adult learners

includes peer learning as a primary factor for successful learning. No matter how the administrators interact with their colleagues, they have the opportunity to gain coaching, assessment, and feedback which they might not receive otherwise. This safety net of support seems to be a large factor in the development of confidence in the administrators. They seem more willing to risk knowing there is someone to talk with about that risk.

Sharing reflections with others at site

Do these more confident administrators share their reflective practice with their staffs? All informants were able to give examples of the principals' reflective development. Depending on the principals' internal factors, their leadership styles and their adult learning readiness, the principals had incorporated and maintained reflective behaviors.

According to The Eclectic's teacher, her:

...style has changed over the years. It seems that she has realized that you've got to let others take ownership, you've got to let them feel part of a team. I think she is still working through the process of using the process -- taking it step-by-step. We spent one whole day developing a flow chart of decision-making at school. Everyone was included on the chain of command. --Mr. P

Mr. P's comments show that the Eclectic is opening up and beginning to bring her staff into her reflective process.

Since the Worker Bee is already comfortable with the reflective process, it shows in her interactions with the staff. The Worker Bee shares her reflective process readily with her staff:

Before she actually implements [a big change], she gets a lot of input from staff and parents. I don't see [the Worker Bee] as someone who just has an idea and charges ahead without feeling the waters and getting input from staff and parents.

-- Mrs. V

Finally, the Stabilizer has also opened up to the staff. His reflective style is becoming more open to "outsiders'" opinions:

Now, a lot of times at faculty meetings he will describe a situation that is facing him as well as the school and he will say, "Here is the situation. I need your input and then we need to ask some other districts what they're doing. What do you think?" He will take responses from all the teachers and then he will try along with us to come to some consensus. -

- Mrs. L

These three principals are attempting to practice the skill of reflective decision making in front of their staffs and communities. Each of the informants knew about their principals' experiences at the Institute and one principals' case there were many direct references to changes in her behaviors. Thus, the process of learning experientially seems to be occurring more obviously for these three administrators after

they have attended the Institute because of the internal and external factors present in their day-to-day lives.

Without these internal and external factors related to the principals' traits and behaviors (leadership style, level of need for control, conscious practice of reflection supported by superiors and colleagues, networking, and sharing with staffs), the probability that these principals' reflective behaviors would be adopted and/or maintained would be lowered. This assumption is supported by scholars such as Boud, Keogh, & Walker (1985) who assert that reflection turns typical everyday experiences into learning experiences. They stress the need for formal, attempted reflective behaviors in the development of effective principals and leaders.

This study suggests that there truly does seem to be a difference between basic reflection (just thinking about something reflectively) and reflective exercises. The process of incorporating reflection in experiential learning is paramount to the behavioral outcomes sought by educational reform theorists such as Schon (1987) and Osterman and Kottkamp (1994).

The complete reflective practice experience for these three principals seems to culminate in action and informed reconsideration of their entire experience. This study's results point toward some possibilities for behavioral change through professional development experiences which build a supportive context thorough which administrators might practice their craft in a less frantic, more reflective manner.

CHAPTER V -- IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

*"I know of no more encouraging fact
than the unquestionable ability of man
to elevate his life by conscious endeavors."
- Henry David Thoreau*

In this concluding chapter I examine the implications and limitations of my research efforts. Furthermore, I make recommendations for further research and practice in the area of reflective leadership by principals.

IMPLICATIONS

Discussions related to educational reform are flourishing in our nation. Many theorists and policy makers are attempting to develop systems which encourage the development of individuals who can work to transform our educational system into one which better serves our ever-changing student population.

The inquiry my co-researcher and I have conducted has further developed the case for an approach to change which focuses on individual educators' conscious endeavors in their *own* change processes. Thus, this research is about change... "change in the nature of school leadership [and school leaders] as required by the nature of future schools" (Leithwood, Begley, & Cousins, 1994).

Garmston & Wellman (1995) share an intriguing perspective of change as related to developing adaptive schools. They refer to a principal of Chaos theory -- the metaphor of the movement of a butterfly's wings. In many cases, small butterflies'

physical input has been found to affect large wind currents in our atmosphere. Garmston & Wellman's point is that even tiny inputs into dynamic systems can create major changes. In the case of our principals, the development of the leaders' reflective practice through their experiences at the ACSA/Harvard Principals' Center has affected their personal behaviors and attitudes which, in turn, has created modifications in the dynamic schools which they lead.

Often researchers such as Michael Fullen (1993) give us wonderful visions of schools of the future. This research begins to examine the practical day-to-day activities of principals that might help to make these visions reality. I see three main possible implications of reflective practice on principals' leadership -- instilling collaborative supervision, developing reflective teachers, and creating learning organizations.

Collaborative Supervision

I began this study with a sense that reflective practice is a skill which, when developed in principals, can make a difference in the daily work lives of those administrators. At the conclusion of this study, it has become apparent that not only has the principals' experience affected them personally, but it has also impacted the organizations in which they work -- their schools. This study became one which could have a lasting impression on the way in which our schools' leaders renew themselves and their schools.

Principals who choose to attend an institute such as the Principals' Center are inclined to be principals who are already considered good at what they do. In all likelihood they engage in processes of reflection on a subconscious level. However, the

Institute experience reportedly brings administrators' thoughts about their practice to a higher consciousness level. This, in turn, allows these leaders to evaluate their thoughts and behaviors so they may make informed choices about what they will and will not do to affect themselves and others within their organizations.

We exist in a world which is governed by relationships (Garmston & Wellman, 1995). With this in mind, our schools are striving to become self-renewing organizations which are "collaborative places where [people] care about one another, share common goals and values, and have the skills and knowledge to plan together, solve problems together, and fight passionately but gracefully for ideas to improve instruction" (Wheatley 1992, p.143). To develop such reflective relationships within our schools, leaders must find ways to personally develop their staffs' capacities to think and plan together.

The ACSA/Harvard Principals' Center Institute experience is one avenue through which principals can develop their professional capacities to facilitate reflection among their teachers. Because it seems that principals who attend the Principals' Center Institute begin sharing decision making more with their staffs, a natural progression would seem to be sharing responsibility for professional growth with teachers through the teacher supervision process. Instead of continuing the standard teacher evaluation model, reflective principals could instill a more collaborative, supportive, and thoughtful process which enables principals and teachers to work together in a reflective manner in order to improve student achievement. Tom McGreal (1992) shares insight into the beginnings of a

supervisory model which attends to the adult learning readiness of teachers and to the collaborative nature of the supervisory process. Reflective supervision of teachers, which is emphasized by Sergiovanni (1994), could be implemented by Principals' Center alumni who are personally learning to become more reflective in their own leadership role.

Developing reflective teachers

Reflective principals seem to encourage reflection in their staffs' behaviors as a result of their conscious reflection upon their personal actions. These principals, in turn, develop their teachers' reflective practice in three ways. They: 1) provide a supportive environment which encourages teachers to reflect upon their own practice, 2) use specific behaviors to facilitate reflective practice (i.e.- restructuring time for more reflection), and 3) make it possible for teachers to implement their ideas resulting from reflection (Reitzug & Burrello 1995, p.49).

Interestingly, the principals who returned from the Institute discussed categories of change in their behavior. Those categories of personal change for the principals relate directly to the administrators' facilitative behaviors cited by Reitzug and Burrello. The categories discussed by my case studies were:

- 1) release of control,
- 2) restructuring of time, and
- 3) utilizing research and models for decision-making.

Most of all, the principals refer to their Institute experience as a supportive one which positively affects their ability to practice reflective behaviors and thoughts. After directly experiencing this learning cycle of support and practice, the Worker Bee, in particular, has begun to establish the same atmosphere as the Institute for her teachers. Therefore, as principals become more reflective in their leadership, perhaps their teachers become more reflective in their teaching.

Creating learning organizations

The new view of leadership in learning organizations centers on subtler and more important tasks. In a learning organization, leaders are designers, stewards, and teachers. They are responsible for building organizations where people continually expand their capabilities to understand complexity, clarify vision, and improve shared mental models -- that is, they are responsible for learning (Senge, 1994, p.340).

One of Barth's (1994) main points in his discussions about the Principals' Center's success is that principals are given the tools (i.e.- practice with reflection) to become personally responsible for their own professional development. Once principals gain experience in building their own personal capacities, then hopefully they may begin to facilitate teachers' personal capacity building.

The myths of great leaders riding in on white horses to save the schools by mastering the forces of change and giving the powerless teachers a personal vision needs to be replaced by the concept of principals whose new work for the future is building

learning organizations by developing personal capacity for learning in the teachers (Fullan, 1993).

McCarthy (1992), referring to the redesigning of schools as learning organizations says:

This new model of organization necessitates new ways of doing things in schools and creates an initial period of tremendous role ambiguity and conflict. The empowerment of teachers creates conflicting expectations for behavior. Teachers are suddenly thrust from the relative isolation of their classrooms to the larger world of the school. There is much confusion about what decisions they can and should make. There is also great anxiety on their part about their ability to make them (p.3).

Principals who have experienced the Principals' Center and feel the support of their colleagues seem able to admit that they do not know it all; and thus, become lead learners in their organization. The Principals' Center Institute experience has given principals first hand experience in the feelings of letting go of control and risking. The three principals I examined show evidence that reflection has helped them to focus themselves and to become the less frantic leaders needed to lead the learning organizations of tomorrow. By modeling reflection in their daily actions, the principals can encourage the same behavior in their schools. Solving problems in an experiential, reflective manner has the potential to help organizations such as schools become more comfortable with the change which is inevitable (Senge, 1994).

LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

In a way, this study also fits the butterfly wing metaphor in that it was only a snapshot of three principals' experiences. However, it has given more evidence and credence to the need for leadership capacity development and maintenance in our ever-changing, diverse population of schools, students, and educators.

In order to address schools' constant change, it is paramount to continue the support and practice of reflective thinking and doing which will help principals instill collaborative supervision, develop reflective teachers, and create learning organizations.

One goal of this research was to give a picture of actual behaviors and activities reflective principals incorporate into their repertoire. An in-depth, purely ethnographic study of one Principals' Center alumnus who has successfully begun to develop his/her school as a learning organization might be a helpful tool for researchers and practitioners alike. This study, because it depends in large measure, on self-reports of principals and informants, is limited in its ability to describe actual impacts of reflection on practice. An in-depth investigation that included extensive observation of principals could complement nicely this study.

Another goal of this research was to examine the Institute's activities which seemed to help develop reflective practice in the principals who attend. At times, however, it was difficult to separate the principals' traits from their behaviors. It might be interesting to incorporate a Jungian view of each of the principals' personalities through the use of a trait typing instrument such as the MMPI to see how different personality types reflect differently. Incorporation of the MMPI in a subsequent study might also sift out matches between certain

principals' personality types and specific reflective activities which help develop and maintain reflection.

Finally, in the area of reflective practice development for principals, my co-researcher and I found that the Harvard/ACSA Principals' Center Institute has much potential for true behavioral change in administrators. Our study looked at principals who had already attended the Institute. Another interesting angle to this research would be to incorporate an examination of principals' behavior and thoughts *before* they attend the institute.

CONCLUSION

I personally grew as a principal by conducting this study. As I spoke to the administrators who have taken the time to develop their capacities not only as principals, but as human beings, I realized that schools as institutions have an enormous endeavor. Students come to us with a wide variety of backgrounds and needs. In order to address those backgrounds and needs, the schools' leaders' task is to, "design the learning process whereby people throughout the organization can deal productively with the critical issues they face, and develop their mastery in the learning disciplines"(Senge 1990, p.345). The changes which seem to be needed in education today must be made under leaders who are caring and competent.

This study helped me to realize that administrators can begin to develop their personal capacity to facilitate the development of learning organizations when they are given specific models of reflection and support for developing and practicing their own reflective behaviors. The Harvard/ACSA Principals' Center Institute is one model of experiential, reflective learning which has addressed the individual, human side of change in education.

EPILOGUE

This study is the culmination of a personal and professional journey with many benefits reaped by two public school administrators with two different “practitioner” perspectives. Obviously the journey, to some degree, concludes with the completion of the dissertation and the accomplishment of earning the Doctor of Education at the University of California, Los Angeles. However, the “means” to the end hold much more significance to my colleague and me and represents only a beginning. We embarked upon this project together as co-researchers examining a professional development strategy that heralds the importance of the individual as the center of change and promotes communication and collaboration as a means of enriching knowledge and broadening perspectives. It seemed almost mandatory that we embraced the project together as a joint venture. We are forever grateful to our chair and committee for the permission to “practice what we preach” -- a perfect top-down support for experimentation.

We two, Megan Scannell, principal of an elementary school in a suburban school district, and Sharon Dezutti an assistant superintendent in charge of personnel in the same district, became interested in the effectiveness of collaboration and collegial learning through staff development models during our studies in the doctoral program and because personally we are challenged daily in our positions to encourage and promote growth and change.

The specific topic of Reflective Practice as modeled in the ACSA/Harvard Principals’ Center held promise for each of us in our own professional lives. Although

we produced independent dissertations, we experienced first hand the “real life” merits and power of collaboration and personalization of learning. For an entire year, as we studied the topic, developed the proposal, explored the appropriate methodology, and discussed our progress and findings, we appreciated the benefits of our cumulative efforts. We provide one another personal help and encouragement, academic and emotional support, constructive feedback and criticism, and the competitive “will” to achieve our personal best.

We both experience the disadvantages of isolation and loneliness associated with our individual positions. While we do work in teams to accomplish district and site goals and objectives through the tasks and functions of our particular positions in the school district, we also suffer from the lack of time to converse professionally and build personal relationship among our colleagues which fosters trust, risk-taking, openness and creativity on the job. This joint venture, however, provided us the opportunity to value one another as a resource, partner, colleague and friend. There are great benefits gained by spending time together building healthy relationships that advance knowledge and theory. Reflective practice is a problem-solving technique that demands questioning current ways of thinking and acting to make way for change. It involves continuing analysis, conversation, and experimentation. Thus by the virtue of our collaborations on this project, we too, became reflective which provided a richer personal experience and, hopefully, academic product. Based on the findings in our two documents, it would be heresy to have worked totally independently in isolation. Thus our methodology and

approach matched the topic and mirrored the some of the positive impacts discussed in the findings.

As a result of our collaboration throughout this study, we have reevaluated our respective roles and impact in the organization and emphasized our commitment to reflection and collaboration as vehicles to change and improvement. Each person can and does make a difference in an organization. Therefore each person must assume the responsibility for his/her self-improvement and continuous search for better practices. The journey actually has just begun. It is now time for us to accept the challenge posed in the implications of this study. Linking research and practice is a collaborative venture requiring individual and collective responsibility and accountability. Thanks to our chair and dissertation committee a leg of the journey is completed, but the real work just begins!

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Section A: Principals' Center Experiences

1. How did you find out about the Principals' Center?
2. Why did you decide to apply for admission?
3. How did you make the experience a reality? How did you fund it? Did you take time off work or out of your vacation?
4. How did others view your decision to participate? Family? Peers? Superiors? Staff?
5. What were your expectations of the program as you entered?
Were those expectations realized? Surpassed? Unfulfilled?
6. Describe the format of the program. Curriculum? Structure of time? Interactions with others?
7. What did you enjoy most about the institute? least?
8. What did you find most difficult? most uncomfortable?
9. What activities or experiences would you consider models of reflective practice?
10. Which of those experiences were most applicable to your own practice? least applicable?
11. What, if anything, surprised you most about your experience at the Institute?
12. What would you cite as the two to three main benefits of your experience at the Institute?

Section B: Perception of Principal's Role and Reflective Practice Behaviors

13. What stands out for you in your school or professional life over the past few years?
What types of things have been important?

14. Tell me something about what your school or professional life is like right now?
What do you care about? Think about?
15. Please describe for me a somewhat typical working day.
16. How do you see yourself as a principal?
How was that vision of yourself formed?
What were the major influences on forming your working model as a principal?
17. Tell me about a recent difficult workplace decision that you've made.
How did you go about making that decision?
How did you manage gathering information, timelines, and special interest groups?
How did you handle the decision emotionally?
If you had the decision to make over again, what would you do the same or differently?
Was your decision-making strategy the one you usually use? If different, how and why?
Did you think back to any of the learning you achieved at the Principals' Center? If so, how and why?
18. Describe a powerful learning experience (personal or professional) which change you in some manner. How? Why?
19. What is your definition of reflective practice?
20. How do you engage in reflective practice?
21. Does reflection improve your performance as a principal?
If so, how? If not, why?
22. As a result of your own experiences at the institute how do you facilitate reflective practice? Yours? Others?

What does it look like?

Who is involved?

Under what circumstances does it happen?

When does it take place?

Section C: Back at the Site

23. What do you consider to be the key benefits of the Institute for you? Drawbacks?
24. What do you do differently now that you did not do prior to the Summer Institute experience?
25. How have the Institute activities influenced your beliefs, attitudes, and/or behaviors in your current role?
26. Have any of the Principals' Center experiences helped you make career decisions?
27. Have any of the Institute activities changed any of your perceptions of your role as a principal?
28. What kinds of innovations do you promote on your site?
Curriculum? Instruction? Conflict resolution? Other?
Who decides? Who is involved?
29. Have you designed staff development activities for your staff differently? How?
Why?
30. What about the Center's alumni activities hold your interest to continue participation? What do you feel you gain? What do you hope to gain?

Section D: Introspection

31. How would you describe yourself?

In what ways are you different today than in the past? Why?

32. Where do you see yourself five years from now? Ten?

Section E: Conclusion

33. Are there any questions that I should have asked you that I did not?

PRINCIPALS' CENTER INSTITUTE SAMPLES

A typical day's schedule:

6:00 am - 7:00 am	Optional Exercise
7:00 am - 8:30 am	Breakfast
8:30 am - 5:00 pm	Lectures, Group Meetings, Grade level meetings
5:00 pm - 7:00 pm	Dinner
7:00 pm - 9:00 pm	Lectures, Group Meetings
9:00 pm	Optional Study Groups, Networking

Sample researchers:

- Eva Baker - Director of the UCLA Center for the Study of Evaluation and Co-Director of the Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards and Student Testing
- Roland Barth - Harvard Senior Lecturer and founder of the Principals' Center at the Harvard Graduate School of Education
- Howard Gardner - Professor of Education and Co-Director of Harvard Project Zero. Acclaimed for his theory of multiple intelligences.
- Lorraine Monroe - Principal, Frederick Douglass Academy, New York City School District and former Director of the Center for Minority Achievement, Bank Street College
- Thomas W. Payzant - Superintendent at San Diego City Schools for 10 years.

Reflective Practice

Dear ACSA/Harvard Principals' Center Alumni,

Thank you in advance for taking time to respond to this questionnaire as it relates to you and your experiences in the Center. We, Sharon Dezutti and Megan Scannell, are educational doctoral students in the Graduate School of Education at UCLA. Also, we are both members of ACSA and work for the Palos Verdes Peninsula Unified School District as the chief personnel administrator and a principal of an elementary school respectively. We are embarking upon a study of effective inservice experiences for principals, such as the ACSA/Harvard Principals' Center, that allow for a great deal of collegial interaction, problem solving, sharing of expertise and peer support.

Many of the activities you experienced in the summer institute are models of "reflective practice," a means by which principals can develop a greater level of self-awareness about the nature and impact of their performance. Simply defined, "reflective practice" is a professional development strategy providing an integration of practice and theory, action and thought which develops an on-going collegial dialogue to help one become more skillful and affect change. In reflective practice, learning is cooperatively based. In the reflective mode, learning is a social process rather than an isolated experience. Professional growth, therefore, becomes something that happens inside us, something that happens because of what we do rather than what somebody does to us.

Obviously, by your continuing participation in the Alumni organization, you are committed to improving the quality of education and your own professional development abilities as a means toward that end. Your candid responses to the questionnaire will be beneficial in supporting and enhancing such professional development approaches to addressing the life-long learning needs of administrators.

Please take a moment to complete this questionnaire as it relates to you. Your responses in this survey will be kept confidential.



Background Information

1. Which grade levels are taught at your school? (Circle one):
K-5 K-6 K-2 3-6 6-8 7-8
7-9 10-12 9-12 Other (please specify) _____
2. How many students are currently enrolled at your school? (Circle one):
1-499 500-999 1000-1399 1400 and over
3. What year did you attend the ACSA/Harvard Principals' Center? (Circle one):
1990 1991 1992 1993 1994
Other (please specify) _____
4. How many years have you have been a principal? (Circle one):
3-5 years 6-8 years 9-11 years 12 or more years
5. What is your gender? (Circle one):
Female Male

Reflective Practice

6. During the Principals' Center, you experienced a variety of collaborative activities which encouraged you to reflect upon research and relate it to your own practice
 - a. Please describe one activity which you feel truly helped you to relate your experience to new knowledge you gained.
 - b. Do you feel this described activity has had any sustained effect upon your behavior now? (Circle one) : YES NO

[If you answered NO, skip to question number 7, otherwise please answer c.]

- c. How did the activity affect your current behavior?

7. During the Principals' Center, you had time to reflect upon your practice without the day-to-day pressures of managing your site. You read research, heard researchers describe their work, and talked with colleagues.
 - a. Once you returned to your site, have you planned time to reflect and analyze your own day-to-day practice? YES NO

[If you answered NO, skip to question number 8, otherwise please answer b.]

- b. If YES, please give an example of how you help yourself become more reflective?

8. Below are some ways principals report they have changed as a result of their experiences at summer institutes such as the Principals' Center Please check (✓) one or more that represent your personal change.

- share decisions more with staff (willing to ask for help);
- share feelings more with staff (willing to admit "not knowing it all!");
- created more effective "teams" at the site which discuss and reflect;
- developed a better personal sense of what is important, what is valued at the site;
- shifted actions from "power over" to "power to" ("power over" is controlling; "power to" is facilitative - to do, to accomplish, to help);
- initiated new shared leadership roles;
- enhanced personal commitment to improving quality control;
- increased greater personal understanding of, sensitivity to, and consideration of relevant stakeholders/groups for a given decision;
- initiated activities that increase feelings of belonging among staff, students, and parents;
- take more personal and professional risks;
- network with peers within my district;
- network with peers outside my district;
- maintain contact with colleagues from the institute;
- write regularly in a personal journal;
- write narratives of personal "stories";
- encourage staff to write personal journals or narratives;
- read more educational articles, journals, books
- accept the value of research - to increase one's understanding, not to prescribe practices;
- ask more questions;
- listen more attentively;
- view with more suspicion quick-fixes, sure-fire remedies, and one-best-way prescriptions for teaching/learning, supervising, and evaluating;

OTHER _____

[Please fill out the information below. Remember, all will be kept confidential.]

Name _____ School Address _____

Phone #s (optional) work _____ home _____

9. Are you willing to be contacted, as part of our research, for further discussion and interviewing (all information will be kept confidential)? YES NO

Thank you for sharing your time with us. ☺

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