REFLECTIVE PRACTICE: DEVELOPING HABITS OF MIND

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education
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ABSTRACT

In today’s fast paced school environment principals must know their intentions and form actions by considering these intentions. Reflective practice is the active process of considering ones thoughts to reason and test responses for a given situation. This study examines reflective practice among six selected principals and illuminates the nature of their reflective process and the conditions that prompts reflection. It also considers how individual attributes influence this process.

Reflective practice and related concepts such as action theory, praxis, problem solving and cognitive learning theory are examined in a review of the literature. These findings are incorporated into a dynamic conceptual framework to illustrate the working interaction of many factors in the reflective process. The reflective process itself is considered in terms of various phases; suggestion, problem, hypothesis, reasoning and testing. However, the purpose of the reflection, the reflector’s training, experience and values, and the timing of the reflection in relation to the issues being reflected upon, are shown to influence the nature and extent of the reflective process.

Since reflection is mainly a cognitive activity, it presents a number of methodological challenges requiring a variety of research methods. Participants are initially interviewed to find out about their educational philosophy, work orientation and perceptions about reflection. In other interviews participants reflect on vignettes and personal critical incidents. They are also observed in a staff meeting, student assembly and in an office session. Later, the same day, their think aloud responses about the researcher’s observations are collected.

The six participants identify reflection in a manner consistent with literature findings. Many participants tend to limit their comments to anticipatory and retrospective instances, and
give less attention to contemporaneous reflection. Findings not only reveal an abundance of all three reflective forms, they show that contemporaneous reflection is an important link between retrospective and anticipatory reflection.

Research findings illustrate how participants' reflection varies in purpose and quality. It also details the impact of the reflectors values, experience and training. Since knowledge not only entails facts and concepts but principles and affective detail, reflective practice is also seen as an ethical undertaking.
ACKNOWLEDGMENT

In 1995, at the midpoint of my administrative career, I began searching for a new professional challenge. After exploring many possibilities I eventually chose OISE / U T because of its renowned expertise in educational leadership. It was an opportunity to not only read the writings of various professors but to engage in their discussions and presentations. Indeed, OISE / U T has been a consolidating experience, personally and professionally.

Many people have shared in the development of this dissertation. I am extremely indebted to my supervisor, Professor Paul Begley. His patience and encouragement, especially in the early days of proposal development, made this work possible. Professor Begley's guidance, flexibility and timely advice also permitted me to complete this research far from metropolitan Toronto. I acknowledge too, my other committee members, Professors Jim Ryan and Ken Leithwood who not only helped shape this dissertation but constructively guided my academic formation.

I am grateful to the six participants who generously gave their time to this study. They were always willing to share themselves and to give their full attention to my inquiries. I am thankful for the trust and confidence they placed in my professional reputation. Teachers, parents and children in my school community also deserve credit for adjusting to disruptions caused by my study leaves. I also wish to recognize the Department of Education, my teachers' association and school board for their assistance and support, financial and otherwise.

I met many wonderful and caring people during my time at OISE / U T. Thank you to Professors Richard Townsend, John Davis, Marvin Zuker, Steve Lawton and Ed Hickcox for providing challenging course work and lively discussion. Friends of cohort 96, especially John Murrin and Rob Kelly, deserve special recognition. As a cohort we worked our way through many debates and interesting experiences.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Principals and other school leaders are faced with an important choice. On the one hand they can base their practice on the assumption that predetermined solutions exist for most of the problems they face in the form of research-based theories and techniques. On the other hand they can base their practice on the assumption that few of the problems they face lend themselves to predetermined solutions and resign themselves to the difficult task of having to create knowledge in use as they practice (Sergiovanni 1991: 3).

Given the above choices it would seem that principals are in an impossible situation as they attempt to navigate new directions or even steer the course. Existing maps may be outmoded or not applicable to shifting currents while the complete absence of direction may seem even more problematic and dangerous. Meanwhile, decisions have to be made and actions taken in an environment where principals can expect to be judged by their actions, regardless of whether their school communities believe that their work is mostly stable with predetermined solutions or mostly confusing requiring the development of in-use solutions. Yet, despite this seemingly impossible role, many men and women are not only surviving, but thriving as principals. Authors such as Leithwood, Begley & Cousins (1994) affirm the role of principals and maintain that as educational leaders they are pivotal in promoting school effectiveness and change.

Sergiovanni (1991) contends that the work of principals takes the form of a seemingly endless series of practice episodes made up of intentions, actions and realities (p.10). What to do then? This is the question. How do principals come to know and interpret their intentions and form actions in light of these intentions and their perceived realities? Does this happen by chance or is there some process at work? Over the past three decades some educational research has been attending to this topic. Though the concepts vary, for example, action theory (Argyris & Schon; 1973), praxis (Wilson; 1994) problem solving (Leithwood & Steinbach; 1995) and cognitive apprenticeships (Pristine & Legrand; 1991), many are within the realm of reflective practice.

Imel (1992) states that reflective practice is a process that links thought and action with reflection (unpaged). Many trends and factors have contributed to the prominence of reflective practice, especially postmodernist thinking. Hoy (1996) argues that in these postmodernist times "organizational science must become more refined, situational, coherent and useful" (p.369).
Consequently, theories and research should be driven by problems of practice.

The changing role of school administrators has also contributed to the importance of reflective practice. Barnett (1990) describes the principal’s role as a complex one where information must be retained and retrieved at a moment’s notice. He concludes that as the responsibilities of principals’ expand so does role complexity and the potential for information overload.

Stevenson (1993) maintains that the future role of administrators holds even more goal ambiguity and role conflict. Sergiovanni (1985) notes that the typical response of professionals to this dilemma has been to try harder to do better at using past rationales and techniques. He argues that basic knowledge perspectives need change before practices change enough to make a difference. Again reflective practice is seen as the route to this change.

The need for change itself has also contributed to the growth of reflective practice (Hannay & Bissegger 1993, Osterman & Kottkamp 1993, Fullan 1993, and Stoll & Fink 1996). Hannay & Bissegger point out that little has changed this century in how schools are governed. They continue to be organized and operated in the same manner despite growing emphasis on school-based and collaborative decision making. Many highly touted ideas have failed because they have assumed a “fix it” approach and have not found a practical format in practice (Osterman 1991).

Osterman (1991) carries the argument further and makes a case for reflective practice as an alternative approach to and conception of professional development. She asserts that the revitalization of educational practice requires that educators examine their own beliefs and practices to modify approaches to professional learning. This examination would also re-establish the link between the worlds of knowledge and practice (p.224). Osterman, like Senge (1990), believes that organizational change results from individuals changing themselves. Given the current financial and human resource limitations of many educational agencies, reflective practice may be a prudent means of future professional development.

Despite the increased status of reflective practice, McNiff (1995) presents the need for research to show the process of reflection-in-action. She states that much research literature emphasizes the need for reflection but is “impoverished in actual examples” (p.86). This itself is a
source of irony to McNiff since one aim of reflective practice is to close the gap between theory and practice. The intent of this research is to illuminate reflective practice and provide in-depth analysis of actual instances.

**Purpose and Research Questions**

The purpose of this study then is to examine the nature and extent of reflective practice among selected school administrators. More specifically the following questions are examined.

- **Question 1:** What is reflective practice?
- **Question 2:** What is the nature of reflective practice among selected school administrators?
- **Question 3:** On what basis do selected school administrators choose to reflect?
- **Question 4:** To what extent is reflective practice among selected school administrators a function of their experience?

These four questions are situated through the following detailed considerations.

**Question 1: What is reflective practice?** How does professional literature portray reflective practice? What elements of reflective practice are consistently identified through professional literature? How is reflective practice perceived by selected school administrators? How do these perceptions differ from how reflective practice is portrayed in professional literature?

**Question 2: What is the nature of reflective practice among selected school administrators?** Are there common patterns and processes in the reflective practices of administrators? Are there common elements to situations that possibly prompt reflective practice? Do administrators refine and redefine their understanding of problems and situations through reflection? What solutions are reasoned by administrators and are these solutions implemented? What issues are the subject of reflective practice?

**Question 3: On what basis do selected school administrators choose to reflect?** Is reflective practice more likely to occur with some issues and situations? When does reflective practice occur relative to issues requiring reflection? Do issues of policy and practice similarly command reflective practice?

**Question 4: To what extent is reflective practice among selected school administrators a function of their experience?** Is reflective practice affected by the administrator's values, training,
level of experience, gender and role responsibilities? Do these factors influence the kinds of information used by administrators in reflective practice? Do these attributes affect the frequency and focus of reflective practice?

**Study Design**

This study can be described as a naturalistic inquiry using the case study method. Six school principals with differing backgrounds representing various school configurations were each audio taped in eight interviews over a three month period using an open ended interview protocol. Interviews, about one hour in duration, were conducted to garner participant perceptions about reflective practice and to examine instances of reflection. The first interview revolved around participants’ understanding of reflective practice and perceptions of their current role and responsibilities. Next, participants were shadowed at a staff meeting, a student assembly and at office duties to collect data on actual instances of reflection-in-action. During each shadowing session I kept detailed notes and later collected their think aloud responses to my detailed observations. The think aloud responses formed the actual grist for analyzing reflection-in-action. Reflection on and for action was examined through interviews with participants about vignettes and their experiences.

Participant perceptions about reflective practice was descriptively analyzed using the literature review as a referent point. A comparative analysis of the data was then conducted to examine the temporal aspects of reflection and to consider the place of participants’ values, experience, training and background when reflecting. Finally, an interpretive analysis was developed to further illuminate the nature and extent of reflective practice among the six participants. Essentially the collection of this research data involved a five phase process though not necessarily in a prescribed order.

Phase 1: Conducted literature review and distributed letters of invitation by email and fax to potential participants. Followed up with phone inquiries to interested participants.

Phase 2: Initiated preliminary interviews to clarify study purpose, collect biographical information and participant perceptions about reflection.

Phase 3: Conducted three ninety minute shadowing sessions with each participant. After each session a think aloud protocol was used to record reflection-in-action.
Phase 4: Conducted two reflection-on-action interviews with each participant. The first was to discuss a vignette and the second was to discuss the participant’s reflection on a past situation.

Phase 5: Conducted two reflection-for-action interviews with each participant. The first was to discuss a vignette and the second was to investigate participants’ reflection for an upcoming situation.

Limitations

For participants, the timing of this study was during a period of widespread educational change and unrest. Their educational district was in the throes of reorganizing its schools from a religious basis to a geographical basis. About two thirds of the student population was expected to change schools at the start of the following year and about 10 percent of the schools were slated to close. There were daily media reports of parent and student protests and general dissatisfaction with the school board’s handling of the reorganization. For the participants, it was probably one of the most demanding challenges of their careers as they worked through this difficult time. Though it was not a typical year, it did provide many challenges and opportunities for participant reflection.

Given that this study adheres to a case study design, the findings rest largely on participants’ perspectives. Over 40 principals received a letter of invitation to be part of the study and the final selections were made from the 11 who replied in the affirmative. Some other principals replied that they would have liked to participate in the study but could not, because of work demands associated with the wider context of change. It might be argued that those who responded in the affirmative were favorably disposed toward reflective practice and regarded their participation as an opportunity to learn and reflect. Nevertheless, the nature and extent of reflective practice is examined through six participants with the full realization that their responses are a function of their beliefs and perspectives. The findings of this study can not be generalized beyond the context of these participants but it does identify elements of reflective practice common to all six.

Since I was instrumental in developing the research design, collecting data, and reporting the findings, this study is very much shaped by my values, training, experience and background. I hold a principal’s position and operate within a policy arena similar to the participants. Whether it
is through open ended interviews, writing observational notes for later think aloud responses, or in final writing, this study is influenced by my experiences and perspectives on policy and practice in educational administration.

Before starting the study I was professionally known to all participants through the area organization of schools and through professional development sessions that I presented to administrators. This helped me negotiate access to the participants and to foster trust and openness. As time passed it was apparent that this familiarity helped me further develop and nurture this trust, resulting in participants being even more honest and frank. However, at the same time it is possible that it may have inhibited participants from raising sensitive situations or exposing their thinking on matters that would have otherwise been private. Furthermore, participants may have been reluctant to share some aspects of their work considering that even after the research was completed, I would continue to be in a professional relationship with them.

Data collected through interviews, to an extent, may have been limited by participants' memory and accuracy in recalling events and situations. The data collected through the shadowing sessions may also have been affected in that my presence may have inhibited or altered participants' behaviour. Also, when my observations of the shadowed sessions were recalled for the participants, it may have been difficult for participants to distinguish their thoughts at the time of the action from their present thoughts about past action.

The methodology yielded a large amount of data requiring tolerance for ambiguity and sensitivity to the context of each participant's situation. Emergent categories and trends were developed so that information could be organized and reduced without compromising its essence. Despite my best efforts it is possible that some of the subtleties of reflective practice may not have been detected in the interviews or sufficiently emphasized in the analysis.

Significance of the Study

Despite the many potential benefits associated with reflective practice some cautions must be noted. Zeichner & Tabachnick (1991), Campbell (1996), McNiff (1995) and Bright (1996) express concerns about the quality of reflection itself. For example McNiff emphasizes a greater need for research to address subject, purpose and quality of reflection. Zeichner & Tabachnick complain that writers such as Schon do not have much to say about what ought to be reflected
about, the kinds of criteria that should come into play during the process of reflection or the
degree to which the institutional contexts of work should be critiqued (p.2). Campbell, on
another point, stipulates that the process of deep and genuine reflection alone does not necessarily
make decisions more ethical or moral. Bright (1996) too, identifies a number of reflective
practice queries exclaiming that it is negatively associated with time wasting and to those with a
whimsical, philosophical bent. Moreover, Bright’s main contention is that professional
acceptance of reflection in terms of content and process seems to be superficial. Paradoxically, he
warns that such a superficial approach tends to legitimize existing practices rather than change
them.

This study helps address concerns about impoverished literature on actual examples of
reflective practice by illuminating its nature, process and conditions that prompt its use and by
considering how individual attributes colour the process. It not only attempts to narrow the
reflective theory and practice gap, it addresses subject, purpose and quality.

It is also hoped that this study will assist principals in better linking their intentions and
actions by illustrating the need to explicitly examine and articulate both. The instances provided
through the six participants should facilitate other principals in evaluating their intentions and may
assist them in developing alternate perspectives and interventions. Other principals should be able
to better identify with many of the scenarios and reflections provided through the accounts of the
participants. This will not only affirm them in their work but will encourage them to reflect and
better articulate their decision making.

This study demonstrates the need for principals to examine the daily organization of their
work to find opportunity for reflection and to make it an integral part of this day. Given the
growing role ambiguity and conflict, principals will continue to be pressed for time to reflect, let
alone critique their reflections. This study should also support district office staff in examining the
degree to which reflection is a component of principals’ professional development and inservice
programs. Such a move would not only encourage principals to develop their use of reflection
but it could enable them to be more open to the critique of others and to change practices in view
of better rationales.

Chapter Organization
The study purpose, background, and research questions were presented in this chapter. The study design was also introduced in Chapter One. A more detailed explanation of this is presented in Chapter Three. The limitations and significance of this naturalistic inquiry are also considered.

In Chapter Two a review of the related literature on reflective practice is conducted. The origin of this field of knowledge is first examined. A conceptual framework is then established and the literature on reflective practice and its related concepts is presented through this framework. Specifically the ideas of John Dewey, Chris Argyris, Donald Schon and others are presented. The related concepts of praxis, problem solving and various cognitive perspectives are also developed within a context of reflective practice. Considerable attention is also given to the literature concerning values, their origins, typologies, and their use in decision making. The final section addresses reflective practice in educational leadership by describing various techniques of reflection and their application to valuation.

Chapter Three provides comprehensive methodological information for each of the four main research questions in addition to explanations of the interviewing, shadowing and think aloud procedures. Details are supplied about participant selection, data collection, organization and management. This chapter also provides a profile of each of the six participants.

Chapter Four presents the findings of the first round of interviews where I collected the perceptions of participants about reflection. Relevant details about the participants' role and responsibilities are revealed. This includes their perceptions about their role, work likes and dislikes, important aspects of their work, upcoming priorities and their preferred strategies for accomplishing their goals. The next section reports participants' views about reflection. A range of issues are covered including various definitions of reflection, descriptions of the reflective process, its prevalence, prompters, and the perceived relevance of participants' experience, background and training when reflecting. Participant commentary is also provided about how their reflective practice has evolved over time, when and where they reflect, the degree to which others are included in their reflective process, its benefits and the extent that participants critique their own reflective abilities.

The core of Chapter Five reports data that I collected about reflection-on-action through
two interviews with each participant using vignettes and critical incidents identified by participants. This chapter represents a shift from a theoretical understanding of reflection to an understanding embedded in practice. It is the application of Chapters Two and Four to actual instances of reflection for the purpose of identifying common patterns and processes in reflective practice. The vignettes also provide opportunity to examine elements of reflection as identified in the literature review. Critical incidents recalled by participants are not only analyzed in light of participants' reflective phases, but are further analyzed to determine issues and situations that prompt reflection. This chapter also considers other aspects of participants' reflections such as elements of surprise, critical events or decisions that influence outcomes, the extent to which perceptions change as the situation evolves and what participants might do differently if a similar situation arose.

The prevalence of reflection among participants is the focus of Chapter Six. This is primarily examined through the three shadowing and subsequent think aloud sessions that I conducted with each of the six participants. Perhaps what is most significant about this chapter is that it chronicles instances of reflection-in-action as participants “think on their feet” and it provides further evidence of situations that prompt reflection.

Chapter Seven is similar in style to Chapter Five however, it examines reflection-for-action using a vignette and participants' critical incidents. The temporal focus of participants’ reflection in Chapter Seven is future action. Participants are asked to respond to a situation faced by a fictitious principal preparing for a major shift in school policy. This vignette is also used to compare participants’ perceptions about reflections on issues of practice with issues of policy. Additionally, participants reflect on another situation that will require some future energy and attention.

Chapters Five, Six and Seven also consider the place of participants’ background, training, and experience in their reflections. Similarly, the extent to which values are used in reflection is examined. Leithwood & Steinbach's (1995) categories of values are used to report espoused values of participants in the preliminary interviews and in their vignette and critical incident reflections. The consistency of these findings is explored with evidence of values used in action, as indicated through think aloud responses.
The final chapter presents the major findings of the various strands of practical and theoretical evidence that has been developed throughout this dissertation. The implication of these findings for theory development and for the work of principals is discussed.
CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Brookfield (1990) insists that critically reflecting and questioning assumptions is not only difficult but psychologically explosive. He uses the analogy of a demolition expert to reiterate his point. Such an expert lays dynamite at key points and after the fuse ignites the foundation crumbles causing the entire structure to tumble. Brookfield claims that critically questioning key assumptions is analogous to laying out psychological charges. When these assumptions explode and the individual’s set ways of thinking and living disintegrate, the whole structure of the assumptive world crumbles.

Educators who foster such transformative learning are referred to by Brookfield (1990) as “psychological and cultural demolition experts” (p.178). He qualifies this point adding that demolition is not the same as random destruction, maintaining that “demolition requires training and sensitivity where charges are carefully laid, based on expert judgement on how structures can collapse on themselves” (p.179). He proclaims that educators must use similar care, judgement and sensitivity when helping people question their underlying structures and assumptions, ensuring that when the foundation is shaken that self esteem is left in tact. He concludes “engaging in critical thinking is not necessarily a joyful exercise, it is psychologically and politically dangerous, involving risk to one’s livelihood, social networks, and psychological stability” (p.179).

This literature review explores the concept of reflective practice and its related terms to consider its origins, nature, process, benefits and difficulties. Values literature too, is examined along with its special role in reflective practice. Also, numerous reflective strategies and their potential use by school principals are examined.

Reflective Practice Definitions

Van Gen (1996) asserts that most notions of reflective practice are based in “Dewey’s theoretical perspective on critical inquiry and how that relates to practice” (p.105). Dewey proclaims

Reflective thought is the “active” persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends (Dewey in Van Gen: 105).
Definitions appearing in literature of the nineties are usually derivatives of Dewey’s. For example, Loughran (1996) views reflection as

the purposeful, deliberate act of inquiry into one’s thoughts and actions through which a perceived problem is examined for order that a thoughtful, reasoned response might be tested out (p.21).

Loughran, citing Dewey (1933), further asserts that such a process involves five phases, suggestion, problem, hypothesis, reasoning and testing. Suggestions are action ideas or possibilities that come to minds of individuals as a puzzling situation arises creating the need to suspend judgement. As individuals come to see the puzzle as a whole, rather than as small parts they begin to better understand the situation’s perplexity and the problem. The suggestions are then reconsidered in terms of what can be done with a more adequate and refined sense of the problem. This is referred to as the hypothesis stage. Then through reasoning, ideas and experiences are linked to further expand suggestions. The hypothesized end result is tested to corroborate or negate the idea (p.5).

For example, a principal might be confronted with a situation where a student claims that a teacher on recess duty grabbed him and hurt his arm. Immediately a number of suggestions or action ideas might come to the principal’s mind. She could dismiss the child as a trouble maker, reprimand the teacher, have a meeting with the child’s parents and teacher, call child protection services or report the matter to the personnel office of the board. Once several action ideas are present, the principal is forced to reflect and examine the problem more closely. After some thought she might see the problem as how to investigate this complaint without jeopardizing the rights of the student or the teacher.

After considering all suggestions her guiding hypothesis for action is to refer the matter to child protection for investigation and to advise the teacher of this decision. Several factors might influence the principal’s reasoning for this action decision. Recently, child advocate groups have been lobbying for the investigation of such complaints by outside agencies. Board policy requires such complaints to be reported because to act otherwise would be perceived as an attempt to cover up the incident. Such allegations would also bring the principal’s reputation into question.

The rights of this child are also on the principal’s mind and if undue force was used then it
must be stopped. She believes that every child should be heard and child safety and security must be protected. This principal was involved in a similar incident several years ago with another teacher in another school. At that time the school board handled it. Although that teacher was vindicated, lingering doubts remained because it was an internal investigation. Now, clearer personnel policies are in place and the principal believes that she must act justly.

As the principal tests her action she notices that the teacher is distraught and needs more support. The mere idea of an investigation implies some wrong doing and guilt. Consequently, she advises the teacher to seek employee assistance and legal counsel through her teachers' union. She also advises the teacher to be proactive and to contact child protection before they call her. Meanwhile, she directs the teacher to have no communication with the child or the child's parents until the matter has been fully investigated. This is to reduce any risk that the school may be perceived as interfering with the investigation. However, the principal decides to plan a meeting for all parties once the investigation is concluded and a report is filed.

The five phases of reflection overlap considerably. Some, Loughran (1996) says, may be omitted or in expanded form, depending on the nature of the problem and timing of the reflection. In the cited example all five phases are expounded. The testing produces new information and sheds new light on the problem frame and hypothesis. As the principal reflects she realizes that she not only has to uphold the rights of the child but to provide more support for the teacher. This realization then perpetuates the reflective cycle, spawning even more action suggestions and eventual testing.

Peters (1991) recognizes that reflective practice involves critical thinking and learning, both of which are processes that can lead to significant self-development (p. 89). Hannay (1994) also emphasizes the processual nature of reflective practice when she states "it is a naturally occurring process through which people make sense of personal and professional activities" (p.3). Similar to Hannay, Barnett (1990) posits that reflection is the ability to bring past events to a conscious level, to make sense of them, and to determine appropriate ways to act in the future (p.67). Adding to the variety, Osterman (1991) regards reflective practice as a professional development process that goes beyond imparting knowledge to creating action change.

The included definitions express other commonalities, apart from being rooted in Dewey's

Reflective Models

During the past several decades the field of education has not only seen increased interest in reflective practice but the development of a plethora of reflective methods. Paradigmatically they contrast sharply, particularly in purpose and method. Van Manen (1977 and as cited in Reagan, Case, Case & Freiberg, 1993) offers a hierarchical model for understanding reflective practice. This prototype is consistent with many stage models of the 1970s such as Kholberg’s (as cited in Beck 1993) stages of adult development and Hodgkinson’s (1978) analytical model of values where hierarchical structures are used to graphically depict concepts. It is likely that if these models were developed today they would be represented differently using curves and overlapping circles. Van Manen’s model, characterized by a linear structure, identifies three distinct levels of reflectivity.

1) Effective application of skills and technical knowledge.
2) Reflection about the assumptions underlying specific classroom practices and their consequences.
3) Critical reflection, the questioning of morals, ethical and other types of normative criteria (pp. 265-66).

Over time, as teachers move through the three stages, their perspective of teaching tends to broaden while the examination of their experiences deepen.

Van Manen’s (1977 and as cited in Regan, Case, Case & Freiberg, 1993) levels parallel the career development stages of teachers as described by Huberman (1995) and Whitaker (1997). Teachers begin with the launching of a career, then stabilize and develop a mature commitment, accept new challenges and diversify, eventually to reach a professional plateau and then prepare for retirement. Beginning teachers who are forming a mature commitment parallel Van Manen’s
first stage while those teachers seeking a new challenge compare with the second stage. However, Van Manen’s stage three does not necessarily come to teachers who have plateaued or to those preparing for retirement. In some instances teachers at these career stages may be stagnant and disenchanted. Nevertheless, Loughran (1996) surmises that Van Manen’s levels of reflectivity do account for individual differences in reflective foci and approaches.

Grimmett (1989) identifies three variations of reflective practice in professional literature. Each perspective is sorted according to its purpose and method, clearly distinguishing divergent epistemologies. The first, *instrumentally mediated action*, characterizes approaches that tend to be positivist where technical problems can be tinkered and adjusted. Knowledge is used to technically direct practice. *Deliberating among competing ends* too, has elements of deciding among various lines of action. Grimmett emphasizes however, this type of reflection is more contextual, experientially based and collaborative. The third category, *reconstructing experience*, also tends to be personally and experientially rooted but is aimed at transforming practice through self enlightenment. This may come about through restructuring any combination of personal experience, the situational context, image of self as teacher or personal assumptions held about professional practice.

The reconstructionist perspective is at a higher level than practical control, which in turn is superordinate to the technical perspective. Technical control infers putting into practice theoretical findings to replicate practice, whereas practical control calls for the mediation of technical knowledge to further refine and inform practice, not simply to direct it. The reconstructionist perspective however, involves more than technical control and personalized technical knowledge. This perspective challenges the status quo by calling into question the individual’s beliefs and to reveal, critique and evaluate action. The reconstructionist perspective is perhaps the most abstract and elusive, yet enduring.

Van Manen (1977 and as cited in Reagan, Case, & Freiberg, 1993) infers that reflective growth is sequential and that one naturally moves through stages. There is also a suggestion that as one moves through the stages, it becomes no longer a function of meeting role expectations, but of carrying them out affably. Grimmett’s (1989) distinctions however, suggest that practitioners can operate at any reflective level depending on purpose and method. It is
conceivable that a practitioner may reconstruct assumptions about teaching for one situation, and for another, decide practice through information generated by consultants. Grimmett suggests that there is no best fit, rather a fit that depends on the purpose and method of reflection.

Louden (1989) also presents a comprehensive conceptual framework in his attempt to cut through the variety of ways for which reflection is used. The result is a grid outlining sixteen possible descriptions of reflection. The horizontal side consists of forms or methods of reflection while interests or goals of reflection are represented vertically. He considers the work of Habermas in generating four goals or interests of reflection. Habermas' empirical analytical-inquiry is equated with technical control, historical-hermeneutic inquiry with practical control through understanding and communication, and emancipation with critical inquiry. Louden further divides practical control into personal and professional interests to emphasize the personal meaning of situations and problem-solving for professional work.

The four methods or forms of reflection include introspection, replay and rehearsal, enquiry and spontaneity. Introspection, akin to contemplation or meditation, involves looking inward and thinking and feeling about an issue. The next form, replay and rehearsal, includes discourse on thinking about a past or future event. Enquiry however, involves action, discourse and thinking in a deliberate process of inquiry. The final form, spontaneity, does not involve conscious thinking but seizing the moment and making changes immediately.

Technical interests are described by Louden (1989) as empirical and analytical, mainly concerned with the fidelity of theory to practice. Personal interests connect the reflector's biography with experience. Problematic interests on the other hand are concerned with the resolution of problems of professional action. The final category, critical interest, refers to the questioning of thoughts and feelings otherwise taken for granted.

This model of Louden's (1989) is a comprehensive one in that any of the four methods can be employed for any of the four purposes. He says for example, that inquiry into action could have the end view of critiquing, or problem solving, or personal growth or fidelity to theory (p.264). He adds that one might serve a critical interest for example, through any of the four identified forms.

Loughran (1996) considers the temporal nature of reflection relative to the experience.
He subscribes to Dewey’s (1933) phases of reflection (suggestion, problem, hypothesis, reasoning and testing) advocating that the weighting of each stage depends on when the reflection occurs in relation to the pedagogical experience. Loughran advocates that reflection can occur before, during and after an event and believes that the ‘when’ of reflection influences the learning that might be drawn from experience. Consequently, he uses three distinct time elements, anticipatory, contemporaneous and retrospective that respectively correspond with reflection for, in and on action.

Similarly terms like “offline” and “online” are used by Kottkamp (1990) to distinguish reflection for and on action. Offline reflection occurs when there is analysis without immediacy for action and where there is possibly assistance from others. Contrary to offline, online reflection occurs during the event and is aimed at improving actions. Imel (1992) adds that with online reflection the practitioner must be simultaneously conscious of the event and of improving practice entailing online experimentation, a concept similar to Schon’s (1983) knowing-in-action.

Sergiovanni (1991) pursues the development of a reflective practice model to illustrate how knowledge is used in practice. His model has three critical and interrelated components, practice episodes, theories of practice and antecedents (p.10). For the larger context, practice episodes are influenced by theories of practice that he poetically calls “bundles of beliefs and assumptions . . .” about ones perceptions of how things work, consequently functioning as “mindscapes and platforms” (p.10). Antecedent conditions extend the context of reflective practice even further by considering one’s values and know how.

Sergiovanni acknowledges that the task of learning about one’s theories of practice is not an easy one because they exist at two levels, as espoused theories and as theories-in-use. Argyris & Schon (1974) and Schon (1983) first presented these concepts in an effort to explain learning loops, proposing that learning occurs through the detection and correction of error or when a mismatch occurs between intentions and results. Senge (1990) and Senge, Kleiner, Roberts, Ross & Smith (1994) also explore this idea under the umbrella of mental models, the discipline of being able to unmask one’s inner picture of the world and examine how it shapes individual action.

Conceptual Framework

Using the metaphor of a camera, works of writers discussed to this point are consolidated
in Figure 1.1, to present the many interconnected dimensions of reflective practice. Behind a camera lense various shutters work together to create and control an aperture. When this aperture is existent reflected light enters an otherwise light proof box making an image onto film. The size of the aperture is determined by the synergy of the shutters since each does its part to systematically open or close the camera box enabling rays of light to focus onto an action frame. The image of this action frame is influenced greatly by the amount of light. Too much light causes overexposure and a blurring of boundaries while too little light creates shadows and dullness. Expert photographers use this light effectively, to capture not only action but the very essence of humanity.

Reflective practice, originating within the camera’s aperture, occurs with the synergetic opening of its shutters. These shutters, perspectives, antecedents and timing determine the nature and extent of reflective practice through the activation, size and control of this aperture. Perspectives, as used by Grimmett (1989), do not connote deep psychological or philosophical conceptions, merely groupings that indicate similar epistemological commitments regarding the role and purpose of knowledge in the reflective process (p.23). Consequently, three perspectives and related purposes are identified, technical - directing practice, practical - informing practice and reconstructionist - transforming practice. For example, the purpose of reflection from a technical perspective is to direct practice. However, a practical perspective views reflection as informing practice by emphasizing the contextual basis. Meanwhile, the reconstructionist perspective of reflection attempts to transform practice.

The antecedents and timing shutters are variations of ideas presented earlier. Antecedents form and shape theories of practice and include such variables as one's values, training and experience. Timing, on the other hand, indicates when the reflection occurs in relation to the situation or event being reflected upon. Reflection can be retrospective, contemporaneous or anticipatory. These respectively correspond to the reflection-on-action, reflection-in-action and reflection-for-action.

Louden's (1989) methods of reflection are also relevant to this discussion. Realizing that reflection is not only cyclical but temporal, involving episodes of reflection and action, the process occurs through the four identified forms. Replay has a retrospective quality while
Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework for Reflective Practice
rehearsal has an anticipatory dimension. Introspection however, can occur across all three temporal dimensions. Although this is true of enquiry too, like spontaneity, it is more prevalent in contemporaneous reflection. It must be emphasized though, that these forms can be individual or collective, involving various degrees of collegiality and collaboration.

Meanwhile, to assist non expert photographers, there are many camera styles and types available in today’s markets with many built in features such as automatic focus and light adjustment. Newer models give photographers the opportunity to take excellent pictures although they may know very little about the process. Advancements in camera design have encouraged more people to use cameras, yet results still depend on the photographer, the purpose and the camera. The same can be said of reflective practice. Most people claim that they reflect at one time or another, quality though, ultimately depends on the person, purpose and process. Unfortunately, the process of developing reflected thought, unlike capturing reflected light has no automatic features or easy-to-use instructions.

Next, related stances and approaches toward reflective practice are examined using the three identified perspectives. This examination ranges from praxis to cognitive perspectives and although these concepts are distinct, linkages and commonalities become evident.

**Technical Control; Directing Practice**

Ashbaugh & Kasten (1993) believe that John Dewey’s reflective thinking consists of stating a doubt and systematically searching for resolutions, akin to a classical-decision making model operating in a scientific positivist paradigm. Willower (1994) holds a different interpretation of Dewey’s orientation insisting that his methods of inquiry are open to change and improvement.

The Deweyan conception of science thus stressed the qualities of tentativeness and self-correction. Even though results can be cumulative and understanding greatly increased with ongoing inquiry, regnant ideas can always be replaced by new, better warranted ones (p.7).

Willower, who regards John Dewey as the premier philosophic source of reflective methods, asserts that for Dewey, there is no area off limits to inquiry, including ethics and values. He states that Dewey regards the separation of ethics and values from the common problems of living as the source of many social ills. Willower adds: “Just as ethics must be lived, reflection is the process
that gives them life” (p. 8), interpreting this to mean that what is often called practice in educational administration is an ethical undertaking. For Dewey, a moral problem is like other problems, the right thing to do has to be reasoned out and the specifics of the issue at hand can not be ignored (p.8).

While Dewey’s position is often called pragmatic, Willower (1994) cautions about overgeneralizing this label. A theory of inquiry forms the centerpiece to Dewey’s pragmatic philosophy. He considers that much human behaviour is impulsive and habitual, unless the unexpected occurs. Then, impulse and habit are blocked and inquiry begins with the recognition of a problem. Action alternatives are thought through in what Dewey calls deliberation or reflection (p.6). Once a preference is selected, action is taken and evaluated for its consequences. Dewey believes that this “resolution leads to altered conditions and new problems requiring new reflection and appraisal” (as cited in Willower, p.7).

Two major principles of Dewey’s ethics are growth and reflection (as cited in Willower, 1994). Growth is used to mean the fullness and expansion of experience while reflection is regarded as equally good because it is considered a process that creates growth. Willower also maintains that Dewey’s reflective methods can be seen in the context of emotion and impulse (p.8). Dewey believes this to be so because reflection has to be an internal habit of mind if it is to play in every day moral choice. Character is what Dewey calls “this working interaction of habits” (as cited in Willower, p.8). A person of good character is one who possesses internal reflective habits and a developed sense of human possibilities.

Dewey (as cited in Loughran, 1996) further identifies three attitudes necessary in the development and use of reflection, open mindedness, whole heartedness and responsibility (p.4). Open mindedness is the ability to consider problems in different ways, to be open to new thoughts, to listen and ably concede when previous notions are wrong. Whole heartedness is typified as being thoroughly involved and enticed in thinking to create a flow of ideas and thoughts. This however, differs from what Dewey calls “streams of consciousness” (p.5). He argues that the former is active, careful and persistent while the latter is “idle and chaotic for silly folks and dullards” (p.5). Dewey’s third attitude, responsibility, is characterized by considering one’s actions, needing to know why, seeking meaning and knowing why something is worth
Practical Control; Informing Practice

Praxis

Bernstein (1971) advocates that the distinction between theory and practice, central in almost every Western writer, originates in Aristotle's notion of praxis. The Greek term praxis ordinarily means action or doing, but Aristotle believed that praxis encompassed a way of life open to free persons. Praxis for Aristotle, encompassed the sciences and arts and dealt with activities of ethical and political life. This contrasted sharply with the Greek concept theoria that referred to knowing for the sake of knowing. Aristotle, according to Bernstein, contended that praxis differed from theoria in that praxis is not merely concerned with knowing for the sake of knowing but with doing and living well.

Aristotle differentiated three sources of knowledge, theoria, techne and phronesis that respectively correspond to theoretical, technical and practical knowledge (Wilson, 1994). Phronesis, associated with situational and ethical know how, involves making choices that reflect specific values and beliefs. Many contemporary views of praxis remain faithful to Aristotle as elements of ethical know how and moral imperatives remain the focus. Wilson contends that praxis is essentially the critical consideration of the ends and means of practice and that praxis should be the fundamental process for constructing practice.

Praxis not only involves thought and action, but the critical evaluation of this thought and action. It focuses on the nature of reasoning and the way beliefs constrain and inspire decisions. Wilson (1994) asserts that all action and our understanding of it, is theory dependent and based on our notion of what the world is. He concludes that praxis must go beyond rationalizations that drive practice to reveal standards by which actions are defined. He explores this possibility through the work of Anthony Gidden (1979 and as cited in Wilson, 1994).

Gidden (1979 and as cited in Wilson, 1994) identifies three levels of psychology in human interactions, the unconscious, the practical consciousness and the discursive consciousness. The latter is synonymous with thinking that can be articulated. However, thinking is not limited to what can be articulated. Gidden argues this view through the practical consciousness that refers to tacit thinking. He claims that the practical conscious is linked to past thinking and is informed
by ideological common sense. More often than not, the practical conscious guides practice.

Consequently, Wilson argues that the role of praxis is to unveil ideologies, to reveal, critique and evaluate our assumptions. Wilson maintains that this is to be done as a community of inquirers to not only challenge our individual practices but our communal standards. Wilson contends

Thus the project of praxis is to make explicit and overt the standards, norms, values, beliefs . . . that form our educational practice. . . . We must constantly be willing to encounter ourselves (pp. 198, 200).

Action Learning

The action learning ideas of Argyris & Schon, presented over a number of works, concur with aspects of Dewey’s theory of inquiry. Argyris explores the connections between action and learning in Knowledge for Action (1993), a follow up to Action Science (1985). He writes “The essence of life is action. It is how we reveal ourselves to others and to ourselves” (1993, p.1).

Self-revelation carries much significance for the theories of Argyris & Schon because for many reasons self-revelation is difficult to detect. In other words, individuals do not easily pick up on the subtleties of their own behaviour. However, actionable knowledge forms the basis on which individuals create their world. It more than shapes practice. It is the viewing mechanism of the world (p.1).

Using notions not unlike Gidden’s levels of psychology (as cited in Wilson, 1994), Argyris & Schon (1974) explain many of their foundational ideas about action by describing theories of deliberate human action that reveal the holder’s ideas and assumptions about how things should and do work. These theories-of-action also serve to predict the holder’s behaviour. Argyris & Schon delineate two types of action theories, espoused theories and theories-in-use. Espoused theory reflects what a person says and holds at a conscious level. However, it may easily change in light of new information. Espoused theories, Argyris & Schon maintain, do not directly influence how one behaves. It is theory-in-use that governs actions, regardless of its compatibility with espoused theory. Theory-in-use includes assumptions about self, others, the situation and the connections among actions, consequences and the situation (p. 7).

Senge (1990) and Senge, Kleiner, Roberts, Ross & Smith (1994) in their discussion of mental models explore a similar idea. They contend that one’s inner picture of the world, is usually tacit, and exists at a subconscious level. Senge identifies the explication of mental models
as one of five disciplines essential to the development of learning organizations. Unless surfaced and examined, mental models remain unchanged.

Theory-in-use is so deeply ingrained in the holder’s consciousness, it can neither be easily articulated nor changed. Still, once a theory-in-use is articulated, the holder can make explicit what was otherwise tacitly known. Argyris & Schon (1974) state these theories develop slowly and solidly over long durations. They become so ingrained their change is described as “convulsive infrequent discontinuous eruptions initiated by dilemmas or conflicts considered intolerable” (p. 30). Sources of such dilemmas include

<table>
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<th>Source</th>
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<tr>
<td>Incongruity</td>
<td>elements of espoused theory conflict with theory-in-use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inconsistency</td>
<td>variables of theory-in-use become increasingly incompatible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness</td>
<td>variables become less achievable over time.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Values</td>
<td>holder dislikes the behavioural world the theory-in-use has helped create.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Testability</td>
<td>holder cannot confirm or disconfirm assumptions (pp. 20-30).</td>
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Perhaps one of the most common dilemma sources is testability. Theories-in-use, apart from being theory, are normative and value laden. Argyris & Schon (1974) recognize that testing norms and values is difficult, however, they advocate that it is a critical issue and one that needs attention. “Holders of theories-in-use should consider over time whether the values they indicate, are more or less internally consistent, more or less internally congruent and more or less effectively realized” (p.28). Argyris & Schon also caution about separating knowledge from values in theories-in-use. To them, this should not be done because one informs the other.

A fundamental reason Argyris & Schon (1974) regard espoused theories and theories-in-use with great importance is because these theories create behavioural worlds. Individuals act according to their theories-in-use though they may not explicitly know them. The work of Argyris & Schon assumes additional relevance when they examine theories-in-use in relation to individual learning. They expound their theories of learning with unassuming models of single and double looped learning, premised on the belief that learning occurs through the detection and correction of error or when there is a mismatch between intentions and results. Argyris & Schon also assert that learning occurs when such a match occurs for the first time.

Error correction occurs in two possible ways, by changing the behaviour or by changing
the underlying problem. The former is an instance of single loop learning while the latter represents double loop learning (1974, p.50). The work of Argyris (1982) also suggests that when individuals face double looped learning problems they tend to translate them into single loop ones. This begins with creating and using incorrect premises believed to be correct and concrete. Single loop thinking predisposes people to behave in a unilateral way, limiting reflection because action tends to be face saving. Argyris also identifies a societal tendency for people to reason and act in counterproductive ways when dealing with each other as individuals, groups or organizations.

Nevertheless, the challenge remains, since useful reflection is more probable in double loop action theory, how does one shift from a single loop mode? Regardless of method, Argyris & Schon (1974) stress the need for individuals to be able to construct models of theories-in-use. This process reveals assumptions and produces data that helps individuals gain insights into conditions under which their defensiveness and their theories-in-use inhibit and facilitate their growth and the growth of others (p.38). Individuals can also use this information to develop self improvement strategies. They recommend feedback and help too, from others, to discover theories-in-use and to generate new ones. Argyris & Schon also stress that individuals be free to reveal behaviour that is indicative of theories-in-use to themselves and to others.

Schon (1983) develops other aspects of action theories that explain personal theories as evidenced by an individual’s actions. He maintains that lasting behaviour changes are possible, only if accompanied with changes in personal theories-of-action. Schon advocates reflective practice as the viable means to do this. Consequently, he also regards reflective practice as a significant means to organizational change.

Schon (1983) emphasizes that the first step toward reflection is a well-identified problem. When we set the problem, we select what we treat as the ‘things’ of the situation, we set the boundaries of our attention to it, and we impose upon it a coherence which allows us to say what is wrong and in what directions the situation needs to be changed (p.40).

Framing the problem defines what counts and in this very framing, a means-end deliberation occurs invoking the framer’s ethics and values.

Schon (1983) also postulates that most of the knowledge that informs action is tacit and
that tacit knowing explains how humans frequently perform skilfully. Tacit knowledge is embedded in recognitions, judgements and skilful actions. Schon writes

Knowing-in-action refers to the sorts of know how we reveal in our intelligent action... The knowing is action... our descriptions of knowing-in-action are always constructions. They are always attempts to put into explicit symbolic form a kind of intelligence that begins by being tacit and spontaneous (1983, p.25).

Schon (1987) believes the idea of knowing-in-action becomes extended when it receives an unexpected surprise, a view remarkably similar to Dewey's. The surprise may be brushed aside or responded to reflectively in two possible ways.

We may reflect-on-action thinking back on what we have done or we may reflect in the midst of doing it. In an action present... we can still make a difference to the situation at hand - our thinking serves to reshape what we are doing while we are doing it... in cases like this we reflect-in-action (p.26).

He observes that practitioners may invent on-the-spot experimentations to develop new understandings, thereby suggesting a constructionist view of the practitioner’s reality. Schon asserts that perceptions, appreciations and beliefs are rooted in worlds of our own making and are accepted as reality. He states “When practitioners respond to indeterminate zones by holding reflective conversation, they remake part of their practice and reveal the usually tacit processes” (p. 35). This is not to suggest that theories-in-action are necessarily coherent or easily understood.

Key aspects of action learning may be summarized with three significant observations of Argyris (1993) on the links between action and learning.

1. There will always be a gap between our stored knowledge and the knowledge required to act effectively in a given situation.
2. Even after the gap has been relatively closed, it is unlikely that the action we design will be adequate.
3. Learning is not only required to act effectively, it is also necessary in order to codify effective action, so that it can be reliably repeated (p.3).

Reconstructionist - Transforming Practice

Cognitive Perspectives

Kompf & Bond (1995) rely on concepts of Piaget (1953), Kelly (1955) and Kuhn (1970) (as cited in Kompf & Bond) to present a cognitive perspective of reflection. Piaget emphasized
schema or mental structures derived from experience to produce uniform patterns of behaviour. Additional knowledge is either assimilated to extend existing schemata or accommodated by altering the schema. Kelly (as cited in Kompf & Bond, 1995) posited that individuals create a personal reality through constructs, the ordered categorizations of personal experiences for the purpose of successful anticipation of experience (p.23). Kompf & Bond regard schemata and constructs as parallel units and connect them with Kuhn’s notion of paradigms. Paradigms are otherwise known as mental devices that assist the focus and depth of an individual’s perspective. They help guide and organize thinking by confirming or disconfirming what is known and are replaced with more functional paradigms when disconfirmed.

Events and objects, according to Kompf & Bond (1995), activate and focus thought processes with the purpose of mentally anticipating, adapting or organizing. These events may range from important to less important, requiring immediate attention or deflection (p.28). Reflection may be with others or introverted, general or specific, to search existing schemata, constructs and paradigms to determine the degree of familiarity or anomaly. Familiarity usually translates into an assimilation of thought while anomaly yields accommodation. A further process of deliberation then occurs leading to action or inaction. When action is chosen its continuation ultimately depends on confirming or disconfirming conclusions.

Brown, Collins & Duguid (1989) theorize that cognitively, knowledge is contextually situated and a function of the activity, context and learner’s environment (p.32). They explore the interrelatedness of all three by considering novice, expert and just plain folks (JPFs), people who engage in everyday problem solving. Although the JPFs are categorized onto themselves, Brown, Collins & Duguid conclude that they share many similarities with experts.

Leithwood & Steinbach (1995) use cognitive theory to explore problem solving and the development of expertise among school principals and superintendents. They posit that cognitively, a problem exists “whenever there is a gap between where the solver is and where she or he wants to be, and the means for closing the gap is ambiguous” (p.9). Leithwood & Steinbach further refine this definition by distinguishing between routine and non routine problems and expert and nonexpert problem solvers. At times, the gap between where the solver is and wants to be, and the ambiguity to close this gap, may depend on the solver’s knowledge. What
may be a problem for one solver may not be for another. Therefore, Leithwood & Steinbach for purposes of clarity, regard problems as synonymous with situations requiring action.

Leithwood & Steinbach (1995) characterize expert problem solvers as possessing complex knowledge and skills, and being able to consistently apply them to achieve endorsed goals (p.13). Although the nature of administrative expertise is their primary focus, they do consider how this expertise develops. Citing another cognitive perspective, Anderson's Act (1983) (as cited in Leithwood & Steinbach), they describe three stages in developing cognitive skill - the declarative, the associative and the autonomous (p.13). Leithwood & Steinbach interpret these as benchmarks in a continuous process of growth. To move from the declarative to the autonomous requires additional declarative and procedural knowledge and the conversion of more propositional knowledge (facts, ideas, theories) to procedural knowledge (steps to take in problem solving). This results in propositional knowledge becoming a more useful guide to problem solving. Problem solving progress also increases as the solver's knowledge base becomes more integrated and connected, resulting in more efficient information organization and reduction. This too, increases the solver's ability to discern patterns and cause-effect relationships.

The findings of Leithwood & Steinbach (1995) support the importance of reflection and metacognition in developing expertise. Similarly, Short & Rinehart (as cited in Leithwood & Steinbach) contend that when knowledge and its use becomes the object of reflection, this knowledge can become increasingly interconnected and integrated with experiences allowing the holder to modify the knowledge and develop more advanced thinking. Consequently, Short & Rinehart exhort that reflection is instrumental to the development of expertise.

Leithwood & Steinbach (1995) also acknowledge the importance of social interactions in learning and in the development of expertise. The collaborative aspect of problem solving is explored through Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development. This zone is described as the distance between the problem solving developmental level of an individual and the potential developmental level in collaboration with more capable peers (p.86). Leithwood & Steinbach argue that Vygotsky's concept seems valuable in helping to understand why and under what conditions group problem solving by administrators and teachers contributes to long term growth.
Argyris & Schon’s (1974) concepts of single and double loop learning are utilized by Leithwood & Steinbach (1995) to emphasize that problem solving strategies alone are not enough to develop expertise. Administrators engaged in double loop learning not only initiate action to resolve a problem, they think about their thinking, managing, monitoring and evaluating their own cognitive and intellectual performance (p.295). Although this typifies metacognition, Leithwood & Steinbach acknowledge that this is a form of reconstructionist reflection. The learner engages in a “conversation” with the setting to better understand it and the assumptions underlying the problem solving activity (p.295). Indeed, Leithwood & Steinbach’s research has done much to illuminate the nature of problem solving among principals and to highlight the role of reflection in this process.

*Metaphorically Speaking*

Sergiovanni (1991) metaphorically presents his conceptions about the nature of practice and the relationship between practice and theoretical knowledge by casting administrators into three possible types, mystics, neats or scruffies. The mystics see administration as nonscience and maintain that theory and practice have little relevance to professional practice. Neats represent the other end of the continuum for their view that administration is an applied science where theory and research are superordinate and designed to prescribe practice. The moderates are otherwise known as scruffies. This brand of administrator holds the view that administration resembles a craft like science where professional practice is characterized by interacting reflection and action episodes (p.4). Theory and research are subordinate, designed to inform not prescribe practice. Sergiovanni (1991) concedes that mystics and neats are rare while scruffies constitute the norm. Scruffies are depicted by Sergiovanni as artisans who display attributes of dedication, experience, personal knowledge, sense of harmony, integration, intimate understanding, mastery of detail and wisdom. He credits these scruffie attributes to their use of reflective practice since reflective practice seeks to inform, not replace administrators’ intuitions (p.8).

This concludes a theoretical discussion of reflective practice stances and approaches. The literature review thus far, has presented a variety of reflective practice definitions and models. Works of Grimmett (1989), Van Manen (1977), Louden (1989) Loughran (1994) and Sergiovanni (1991) have been incorporated into a conceptual framework to produce a dynamic
and interconnected working model of reflective practice. A camera metaphor has also been deployed to show how the interrelation of perspectives, antecedents and practice episodes initiate, direct and focus reflective practice. Now the role of values in the antecedent's shutter is explored close up by defining values and considering various perspectives. Then the nature, sources, types and functions of values in educational leadership are examined.

Values in Leadership

The Valuation Connection

In *The Decline and Fall of Science in Educational Administration*, Thomas Greenfield (1986) states “The study of education is cast in a narrow mould. Its appeal stems from a science of administration whose experts claim that an objective view of the social world enables them to conduct value-free inquiry” (p.57). He argues against such a prospect calling for “...a conception recognizing that values bespeak the human condition and serve as springs to action both in everyday life and in administration” (p.57). Greenfield calls for a new science of administration, “a science with values and of values” (p.75). Though much has changed in the study of administration since that ground breaking stance, research on values in educational decision making remains limited.

Sergiovanni (1982) muses about the lack of values awareness in educational administration, stressing “theory and research have emphasized too much what leaders actually do and how they behave and not enough the more symbolic aspect of leadership - the meanings they communicate to others” (p.330). He goes on to state that leadership needs a strategic view that emphasizes principles of quality leadership. In later works Sergiovanni (1990a, 1990b) explains how and why values produce quality outcomes in terms of commitment and performance.

Foundational to Sergiovanni’s (1990a, 1990b) work is Burns’(1978) (as cited in Sergiovanni, (1990a, 1990b) theories of transactional and transformative leadership. Transactional leadership is concerned mostly with extrinsic motives and needs whereas transformative leadership deals with “higher psychological needs for esteem, autonomy, and then, with moral questions of goodness, righteousness, duty and obligation” (1990a, p.23).

Sergiovanni (1990a, 1990b) favours transformative leadership, arguing that leaders and followers are united in pursuit of higher level goals common to both. Transactional leadership is a
value oriented style to an extent, however, Sergiovanni (1990b) believes transformational leadership is “value-added” (p.3) asserting that it is effective because it provides latitude for the leaders and the led. It is practical, it enhances individual and organizational performance, and it responds to higher-order human needs that lead to “extraordinary commitment, performance and satisfaction” (1990b, p. 41). Views such as Sergiovanni’s accentuate purpose, clear expectations and values that are conscious and proactive rather than subconscious and incidental.

Beck (1993) believes that Dewey does not stress sufficiently the process of making moral choices in real situations in his reflective theory. Beck comments “we may reflect a great deal and still make a mistake in our valuing. What we approve ‘after reflection’ may not in fact be valuable” (p.2). McNiff (1995) expresses similar concern that self-reflection itself is not enough, it too must be critiqued, “otherwise it becomes self-indulgence; not so much a check on practice, as a revisiting of practice. . . . easily turned into affirmation if there is no criticism” (p.95).

Queries exist about what Bright (1996) labels as inefficient reflection, in instances where practitioners are receptive to reflection but restrict the depth and quality of information they use. He claims that efficient reflection, entails a genuine critical questioning orientation and a commitment to using both confirming and disconfirming information in determining action. Bright concludes that disconfirming information presents the need for more information since “quality of knowledge significantly influences the quality of planned action and its likelihood of producing desired results” (p. 168).

Hodgkinson (1997) recognizes the pressures on the psyche of administrators, yet advocates introspection. He observes that often administrators are so pressed that when time is found “it is more generally regarded as opportunity for well-earned egoistic self indulgence” (p.14). Hodgkinson (1995) argues to suggest that because one has reflected before making a decision, does not imply that the decision will be a good one. He asserts that one can reflect and then make a poor decision.

Values Defined

A review of literature produces many definitions of values, but despite variations most hold a common strand. Rogers (as cited in Kirschenbaum, 1973) refers to the notion of values as “the tendency of any living beings to show preference, in their actions, for one kind of object or
objectives rather than another” (p.77). Such a notion implies choice and foresight. Rokeach (as cited in Kirschenbaum, 1973) also builds choice and foresight into his perspective, describing values as

... a desirable end-state of existence or a desirable mode of behaviour. In a sense, values are the source and foundations of attitudes and behaviour toward specific events, people, or situations. A person can have thousands of attitudes but only a few values that transcend and dynamically determine these thousands of attitudes (p.67).

This statement, inclusive of Rogers’, goes further to exemplify how values are essential to human existence.

Patterns are also apparent among definitions used by educators. A pioneer of values inquiry, Hodgkinson (1995 and as cited in Evers & Lakomski, 1991) defined values as “some notion of the desirable, or preferred state of affairs, or to a condition which ought to be” (1995, p.196). This definition forms the basis of most educational studies and in fact appears as quoted in some.

Leithwood, Begley & Cousins (1994) too, address commonalities of values definitions when reviewing values research. They maintain that attributes of Hodgkinson’s definition are embedded in most values and leadership studies.

That is, a value

is an enduring belief about the desirability of some means; and once internalized, a value also becomes a standard or criterion for guiding one’s own actions and thought, for influencing the actions and thoughts of others, and for morally judging oneself and others (p.99).

Values Perspectives

Rogers (as cited in Kirschenbaum, 1973) examines the origins of human values by first observing infants. He asserts that infants have a flexible, changing valuing process, “organismically” (p.87) based. The origin of such values lies within the child. Using a sensory base, an infant prefers some things but experiences and rejects others. Rogers believes that this changes with time. He holds that “... in an attempt to gain or hold love, approval, esteem, the individual [child] relinquishes the locus of evaluation which was his in infancy and places it in others” (p.80). The child learns to distrust personal experiences, as the locus of control moves outside the child.
Rogers (as cited in Kirschenbaum, 1973) also believes that most adults usually operate in this manner. A majority of values are introjected from other individuals or groups, who are otherwise insignificant. Child like, the source of values evaluation rests with these outside sources. An imminent danger of introjected values is that when they are not related to personal experiences they are not open to testing, hence, adults may have contradictory values with no way of knowing which have more weight.

In contrast to the usual adult, Rogers (as cited in Kirschenbaum, 1973) sees the locus of evaluation firmly held within the mature person, as he or she becomes immersed in each experience, clarifying complex meanings and assimilating new and old intuitions. Both past and future are important components of the process.

Kirschenbaum (1973) also considers how values develop. He lists five major processes that enhance and enrich value formations, including feelings, thinking, communicating, choosing and acting (pp.105-6). The influences of various cognitive processes are identified such as Bloom's levels of thinking, critical thinking skills, logic and creative thinking. Value formation for Kirschenbaum evolves from freely selecting alternatives, after thoughtful consideration of consequences.

Stage theories of adult development are reviewed by Beck (1993), mainly using works of Kohlberg & Fowler. Kohlberg (as cited in Beck, 1993) for example, identifies six stages of moral development.

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<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Stage 1</td>
<td>Punishment and Obedience Orientation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stage 2</td>
<td>Individual Instrumental Purpose and Exchange</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stage 3</td>
<td>Mutual Interpersonal Expectations, Relationships and Conformity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stage 4</td>
<td>Social System and Conscience Maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 5</td>
<td>Prior Rights and Social Contract or Utility</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stage 6</td>
<td>Universal Ethical Principles (p.102)</td>
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Through time, adults pass through these stages and usually in this sequence. Few reach Stage Six and a minority reach Stage Five. Kohlberg clearly links ages and stages implying that older is more complete. Similarly, Fowler (as cited in Beck, 1993) develops a six-stage model linking age and faith development. This theory too, is sequential and infers that maturity evolves with age.

Besides developmental theories, Beck (1993) also illustrates how values universally
change as adults pass from early to late adulthood. For instance, in adolescence and early adulthood there is less dependence on a person’s original family and during adulthood, a “shift from expansive risk taking phase to an integrative, meaning-making phase” occurs, causing adults to reorganize, to reinterpret experience and to make the most of life (pp.125-26). Beck further advocates value changes that are not universal but common within subgroups of populations.

Over time, significant challenges have been mounted against early theories of moral development. Gilligan (1982), a student of Kohlberg, notes for example that his theory is grounded in traditional assumptions that fail to acknowledge feminist perspectives. She maintains that Kohlberg’s stage theory tends to consistently portray the moral development of women as deficient. This is so, she argues, because Kohlberg’s research strategies are based on the assumption that there are no gender differences in moral development. Gilligan, however, maintains that gender differences are substantive. She claims that the processes of women’s moral development focus on relationships and decisional impact while male development emphasizes competition and achievement. Consequently, Gilligan emphasizes an ethic of care as the highest level of moral development whereas Kohlberg stresses independence, separateness, autonomy and an ethic of justice.

Having discussed the nature and sources of values, the next section examines the role of values in educational decision making. This is accomplished by reviewing various approaches to values classification, value trends of the twentieth century and then by detailing specific research of the last two decades.

Values Classifications

Most studies about values and values decision making depend on conceptual frameworks that sort and categorize values. Perhaps the most prevalent of these is Hodgkinson’s (1995a). He creates a three fold hierarchical values paradigm. “Affective values of preference” (p.4) represent Type III, the lowest level, “rooted in our emotive structure and include any instinctual patterns” (p.4). Hodgkinson asserts that these values can be collectively sorted into the next level, IIIB, “which because of their quality of consensus, acquire a quasi-rational justification or cachet” (p.4). He adds that these Type IIIB values form a basis for political and social processes and entrench cultural conditioning. Type IIA values are placed above consensus because they are
considered “authentically rational in that they rely for their grouping or justification upon some form, however primitive, of utilitarian or cost benefit analysis” (p.4). The most controversial part of the hierarchy is Type I values, “essentially matters of faith, belief and will” (p.4).

Much has been written about Hodgkinson’s hierarchy, and not all complimentary. Evers & Lakomski (1991) for example, comment that application of the hierarchy seems clear cut, however, “making morally right decisions thus involves more that considering feelings, counting people, or calculating consequences” (p.106). Another concern leveled by Lakomski (1995) deals with epistemic difficulty in distinguishing between Type III and Type I values. She argues that there is no objective way to arbitrate between value types because they are “highly subjective preferences” (p.11).

Begley (1996) draws attention to the difficulties of identifying the motivational bases of values. He asserts that despite Hodgkinson’s (1991) claim that motivational bases are at the core of being, and that values held by individuals reflect these motivational bases, there can be important differences between the values articulated by a group or an individual and the values to which they are actually committed (p. 56). To explain the structure of values further, Begley uses a spherical graphic developed by Hodgkinson (1991). He peels each ring, as if an onion, to reveal the various layers of values. These rings include action, attitude, value, motive and self. The outer layer represents observable action and language (similar to data collected for this study). Attitudes, like behaviour, can also be predictive of values held at a deeper level and can often hold clues about the nature of these values. The values layer is what Begley describes as the locus for the specific values a person holds, no matter their reason.

The next layer of the onion, motive, holds the key to understanding the nature and function of values because it represents individual forces behind the use of a value. It is here that Hodgkinson’s (1995a) typology has relevance. Begley (1999b) contends that any one value may have a range of motives. It may be grounded in transrational values of principle, rational values of consequence or consensus and/or subrational values of preference. Finally at the centre of Begley’s sphere is self or the essence of the individual.

Begley (1999b) believes that values may be observable as attitudes and actions but their true intentions may be obscured. Not only can a value be held at different motivational levels,
individuals might deliberately or unknowingly convey one value while being committed to another. He therefore sees limited use in research that merely lists values without considering why these values are held. In any case Hodgkinson’s typology is preeminent in the study of value types.

Beck (1993) develops a universal set of values to conceptualize a value system. He creates five categories including Basic Human, Social and Political, Moral, Intermediate-range and Specific Values postulating that there are no absolute values, rather values are relative and weighted against each other. Beck believes that the pursuit of values is what makes life worthwhile. To this end he advocates teleological and deontological value perspectives. Some values may be an ends to achieving a goal or some good. Still, other values may be good or desirable in their action or duty. Therefore values may have means and/or ends qualities.

Another model is used by Ashbaugh & Kasten (1984). Trying to describe personal convictions used by principals when making difficult decisions Ashbaugh & Kasten derive personalistic, organizational and transcendent categories from Hodgkinson’s typology. The first category reflects generalizations about personal style, the second appears to be based on organizational norms, system concerns and professional ethos and finally, transcendent values are regarded as broadly based codes of behaviour (p.199).

Begley (1996, 1999) attempts to produce greater clarity and coherence about the nature and function of values in educational administration by linking values theory with theories of cognition. While noting the increasing trend of researchers, who use theories of human cognition as a better way of explaining expert leadership and its moral aspects, he proposes that since few values theories relate specifically to educational administration, the inclusion of cognitive perspectives on values in administration is justified. Although theorists do not agree on the exact nature of human cognition, Begley, referencing researchers such as Leithwood & Montgomery (1986) summarizes three basic components of information processing. These components include the executive, short-term memory and long-term memory.

Cognitive theory models are usually premised on the view that people can handle only a certain amount of information at a given time and are therefore selective about the things they think about, usually information about their goals. The executive, holding short and long term-
goals as well as general values and aspirations, screens all perceived information for relevance. Short term memory, also known as working memory, has limited processing capacity and helps make sense of information identified through the executive. This is achieved by searching through the unlimited storage of long-term memory for networks of information and schemata. Identified information is either matched with existing schemata or the existing schemata itself, may undergo modifications to fit new information.

Two distinct types of schemata, knowledge and procedural, are thought to occur within long-term memory. Knowledge schema entails facts, principles, concepts and related affective dispositions while procedural schema guides overt action. Superordinate procedural strategies are also thought to exist as a way to coordinate highly complex action.

Begley’s (1996) integrated model links Hodgkinson’s (1991) theory of values in administration to information processing theory. Type III values of personal preference and Type I values of principle parallel executive information processing. Begley contends that the executive acts as a filter for short and long-term goals and principles, and helps individuals recognize various inputs ranging from pleasure seeking desires to the highest ethics such as faith and justice. He summarizes that Type I and III values operate within the executive and form the nonrational bases of thought and action (p.419).

Type II values of consensus and consequences, according to Begley (1996), are associated with short and long-term memory. This is so because short-term memory is a link between the executive and long-term memory and long-term memory itself is where existing schemata resides. Rational elements of thought and action are believed to occur in short-term memory generally and in long-term memory particularly because of existing superordinate knowledge and procedural schemata. Long-term memory is also where new schemata develop as needed. Begley therefore contends that Type II rational values of consequence and consensus correlate well with the functions of short and long term memory.

**Values Conflict**

When the locus of control for values, according to Rogers (as cited in Kirschenbaum, 1973), shifts beyond the holder, conflict is inevitable. This thinking is based on the notion that values for the usual adult are introjected and potentially competing. Such values are rarely
experientially based or examined, and holders of such values, may not even be aware of competing concerns, or have a way of knowing which have more importance.

Leithwood, Begley & Cousins (1994) examine two types of values conflict experienced by principals. The first involves competing values in a solution process. For example, the principal may have to mediate differing values of several parties, with the principal possibly being one of them. A second source of values conflict is caused by dissonance between a principal’s actions and personal values. In these situations, when a principal becomes consciously aware of inconsistencies, the challenging task of sorting out dissonance begins. Otherwise, the principal’s values remain introjected, and the leader behaves in a threatened, insecure manner. Regardless of whether a principal holds mature or introjected values, values and value conflict are an inevitable part of decision making.

When Begley’s (1996) integrated model of values is applied to these types of conflicts the first type appears to result from competing knowledge or procedural schemata, either within one individual or among several (p.421). Another explanation is that relevant schemata for a given situation might be in contravention with other held schemata. This second source of values conflict, dissonance between actions and personal values, is explained through Begley’s model as the executive interfering with the carrying out of a procedural schema response to a linked knowledge schema (p.421).

**Values Trends**

Value themes of American educational leadership are examined by Beck & Murphy (1993) using metaphorical analysis. These authors, regarding metaphors as “revealers of meaning” (p.12), review the language of education to examine, decade by decade, trends and developments. Beck & Murphy create the following list of phrases to highlight a leadership emphasis of each decade.

1920s  Values Broker
1930s  Scientific Manager
1940s  Democratic Leader
1950s  Theory-Guided Administrator
1960s  Bureaucratic Executive
1970s  Humanistic Facilitator
1980s  Instructional Leader (p.202)
They maintain that the 1920s had a religious values orientation followed by a scientific management focus through the 1930s. While a wider social context became evident in the 1940s, the 1950s were noted for their focus on research. In the 1960s, a time of social revolt, uniformity and standardization became the thrust. Multiple principal roles became evident in the 1970s as schools became concerned with self-actualization and other humanistic concerns. This spilled over to the 1980s giving increased emphasis to effectiveness and accountability.

A retrospective view of the 1990s remains to be written. Beck & Murphy (1993) synthesize metaphorical themes of the past with societal realities of the 1990s to describe the future role of principals. For several reasons they anticipate the principal of the future to be seen as "educator and moral agent," (p.192). The theory movement has been questioned and attacked while the instructional role of administrators has gained prominence. Beck & Murphy also note that "a major initiative appears to be forming to address values in education and to recognize the moral dimensions of schooling in general and of the principalship in particular" (p.194).

Additionally, there is a growing acceptance that activities of principals are intertwined with ethical issues and the principalship is an instrument of social justice (p.194). Now, as a new millennium begins, this trend seems obvious, though prophetic at the time of writing.

**Values Research in Educational Leadership**

Beck & Murphy's (1993) postulation that a major initiative would form to address the issues of values in the principalship in particular is especially true, as evinced by a variety of studies on values and decision making. Ashbaugh & Kasten (1984) examine values orientations of practicing administrators by interviewing nine elementary and ten secondary principals from a Midwestern school district. These principals were interviewed about two or three difficult administrative decisions they had made. It was discovered that the majority of difficult decisions were staff related, followed by pupil, school-community and instruction. The authors categorized three sets of values used by principals to make decisions; personalistic, organizational and transcendent (p.199). As noted earlier, personalistic values are ideographic and are drawn from personal experience, organizational values appear to be based in system norms and professional conduct while transcendent values are neither personalistic nor organizational, but broadly based
on universal behaviour codes. It was the finding of Ashbaugh & Kasten that personalistic and organizational values, which respectively correspond to Hodgkinson’s Type I and II values, predominated in principal responses (p.201).

Principals were also asked about forces that shape the way they approach difficult decisions. Although many found this a difficult question they gave a variety of responses including, religion (5), educational training (4), school district philosophy (1), role models including parents and mentors (9), and personal life experiences (12) (p.202). However, most respondents added that their values set was a component of their total life experiences (p.206).

Begley (1988) used Hodgkinson’s model of values to investigate principals’ decision making on a computer issue. Fifteen elementary school principals were interviewed about the introduction of computers at their school. The interview data was analyzed for value statements and coded according to Hodgkinson’s value model. Begley discovered that 45 percent of the interview statements were values of consequence, 25 percent as values of consensus, 17 percent as values of preference and 14 percent as values of principle or ethics (p.4). Even though values of consequence and consensus were most frequent, Begley also found that five principals based their initial decision for innovation on values of principle (p.4). Lacking knowledge or technical skill, Type I values became the substitute. Over time values were seen to change too. For the two who began the innovation as a value of preference, they eventually replaced it with values of consequence and/or consequence. Similarly, two of those who began with values of principle later placed greater emphasis on values of consequence, showing that increased knowledge and experience can change values. Begley, regarded this centring action as indicative of people’s changing responses to innovation over time (p.7).

Other studies have produced similar results, the most recent in an international study by Begley and Johansson (1997). A value auditing activity (described in more detail in a later section of this review) was conducted with experienced school principals in Canada and Sweden. Participants prepared critical incidents related to their work and self analyzed them according to motivational bases manifested by their actions. These incidents were also analyzed by peers and later by researchers. The researchers also generated a second set of data through case situations. Begley & Johansson reported that rational values of consequence and consensus dominated the
decisions of administrators and that there was evidence of these values replacing Type I and III values.

Campbell-Evans (1991 and as cited in Leithwood, Begley & Cousins, 1994) was also concerned about the place of values in administrative decision making. Eight principals of small, urban Alberta school districts were interviewed for a total of six hours over three sessions. In the first session principals were interviewed about recent difficult decisions they made, the next part consisted of responding to different hypothetical situations and reviewing phase one themes and priorities. The third session involved determining principals’ orientation to their role, using a profile instrument. Emphasis was placed on interview discussions that were subsequently analysed according to Becks’ framework.

It was found that principals frequently referenced fifteen values in three of Beck’s five categories; basic human values, social and political values, and moral values, with greater emphasis on the first two (p.71). The social and political value of participating was prominent throughout the analyses. Principals wanted to be involved and wanted to involve others. Also, attaining strong emphasis was knowledge in the basic human values.

When asked to identify influences on their decision making six factors were identified. They listed three internal influences as, concern for students, effect of decision, and commitment of others to the decision (p.174). They also identified external influences of time, money and factual information.

Campbell-Evans (1991 and as cited in Leithwood, Begley & Cousins 1994) delved into use of values in situations of conflict. Here she found that when principals have conflict with external directives they initially comply but later deal with the conflict by changing or amending the directive for it to be more compatible (p.174). When internal factors are at play, such as not knowing how to act, principals are unclear about which values to use. Findings on situations of conflict suggest that principals’ use their values implicitly or otherwise, to filter information and attend to that which has meaning.

The final area of analysis by Campbell-Evans (1991 and as cited in Leithwood, Begley & Cousins 1994) concerned role orientation. Four orientations were identified using a Principal Profile developed by Leithwood & Montgomery (1986 and as cited in Campbell-Evans 1991).
These included, Administrator, Humanitarian, Program Manager and Problem Solver (p.175). It was realized that in the most represented orientation, Program Manager, ‘knowledge’, ‘responsibility’ and ‘participation’ were most valued, while Humanitarians valued ‘respect for others’ most (p.175). The author indeed felt there was a link between a principal’s orientation and dominant values. Hodgkinson’s consequences and consensus values are evident in Campbell-Evans study too. She maintains that attention principals pay to the effect of their decisions (consequences) and their preference for participation and commitment (consensus) illustrates this (p.176). Further, values of preference or principle motivated few principals.

Moorhead & Nediger (1991) conducted an ethnographic study to analyze influences of identified values on the activities and decisions of administrators. Principals were chosen based on peer and superordinate recommendations and the researchers’ personal knowledge of their abilities. Differences in principal behaviour were analyzed through motivating factors that caused the principal to act or not act in certain ways (p.8). Data showed that the four individuals undertook very different approaches to their responsibilities and these differences could be accounted for by differing principles, non moral values, moral values and educational beliefs (p.12). Moorhead & Nediger concluded “... the presence (or absence) of strong values or convictions accounted for the principals’ discretionary actions and enthusiasm (or foot dragging) for prescribed activities” (p.13). They also suggested that marked variations in the behaviour of the four principals, indicated that it may not matter which values are emphasized as long as there is compatibility between the principal’s values and those of the community and school system (p.170).

Two other studies of values in leadership expand and add to findings already noted, Leithwood & Stager (1989) and Leithwood & Steinbach (1991). Leithwood first studied administrative problem solving with Stager in 1989 and stumbled onto the influence of values on problem solving. Responses of twenty-two principals on simulated problems were taped, transcribed, coded, and content analyzed. The results were used to develop a model of problem-solving. In developing the model, Leithwood & Stager found that expert leaders were more explicit about principles and values used in their work, and used these principles as substitutes for knowledge when solving difficult problems (p.80).
Leithwood was further able to examine the influence of values in the Leithwood & Steinbach (1991) study (as cited in Leithwood, Begley & Cousins, 1994). The purpose of this 1991 study was to test findings of some earlier studies. Beck’s (1993 and as cited in Leithwood, Begley & Cousins, 1994) framework was fine tuned to include only relevant areas and to emphasize Hodgkinson’s Type II values. Table 2.1 presents the four categories of values and specific examples of each. The study was conducted similarly to the earlier study of Leithwood & Stager (1989 and as cited in Leithwood, Begley & Cousins, 1994) with a group of eleven expert principals. Results showed that Professional Values was the most common category of values with General Moral Values the least frequently cited (p.105). Basic Human Values and Social Political Values ranked second and third respectively (p.105). There was also consistency within the specific values cited including Specific Role Responsibility, Consequences (others), and Knowledge (p.105). General Responsibilities as Educator, Participation and Respect for Others, also received considerable mention (p.105).

Similar to the Leithwood & Stager (1989) study (as cited in Leithwood, Begley & Cousins, 1994), Leithwood & Steinbach, (1991) (as cited in Leithwood, Begley & Cousins, 1994), found that values emerge more frequently in principal responses to “least clear” as opposed to "most clear problems" (p.105). Leithwood, Begley & Cousins (1994) also hold that the differences between other studies and the Leithwood & Steinbach (1991) study (as cited in Leithwood, Begley & Cousins, 1994) are mainly due to differences in coding frameworks. Respondents in the Leithwood & Steinbach study frequently chose General Responsibilities and Consequences in Professional Values, and Consensus in Social and Political Values (pp.105-6). Similarly, values of consensus and consequence are evident in the other reviewed studies. More recently, others such as Leonard (1997) and Roche (1997) have considered different dimensions of values research (Begley; 1999b). Leonard for example, considers the personal and professional values of teachers and administrators within the various levels of a Canadian elementary school. She observed an elementary school for five weeks to consider first hand the values perspectives of the district, school and primary and junior teams of teachers. In addition to considering values perspectives within the various levels of the school organization, Leonard also
Table 2.1: A Classification of Values and Illustrative Statements (Leithwood, Begley & Cousins, 1994, p.103).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories of Values</th>
<th>Illustrative statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Set 1. Basic Human Values</strong></td>
<td>Staff is not forced to supervise dances by the Education Act...I would not force people to do this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Freedom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Happiness</td>
<td>Most people felt pretty good about those goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Knowledge</td>
<td>I would collect as much information about the probable suspects as possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Respect for others</td>
<td>In a blanket approach you could offend many fine teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Survival</td>
<td>I don’t think you can let an issue like this dominate a lot of time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Set 2. General Moral Values</strong></td>
<td>(Check) to indeed see if whether or not we have a problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Carefulness</td>
<td>Make sure that some people who are a little unsure of themselves also have an opportunity to speak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Fairness (or justice)</td>
<td>Their responsibility is to speak out when vandalism occurs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Set 3. Professional Values</strong></td>
<td>Your value system is interfering with the mandate that we have in education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* General Responsibility as Educator</td>
<td>Staff have to feel they are supported by the office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Specific Role Responsibility</td>
<td>Kids deserve a certain number of social events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Consequences...</td>
<td>There’s an impression that ... students aren’t under control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Consequences (other)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Set 4. Social and Political Values</strong></td>
<td>Involve groups such as Heads’ Council, Special Education, Student Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Participation</td>
<td>Allow people to get things off their chests-talk about the problems they perceive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Sharing</td>
<td>We (admin. team) have to be seen as being philosophically in tune</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Loyalty, Solidarity and Commitment</td>
<td>Let’s help each other (school and parent) deal with that child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Helping others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
examined variations in value orientations and conflicts as experienced by individuals.

Leonard (1997, 1999) explicated many variations in values orientations across and within perspectives although value conflicts were not as equally pronounced. While there were also differences between district and school espoused perspectives, Leonard, through her participatory observation, found basic core values to be not so different. She attributed lower incidents of values conflicts to fewer differences in core values as opposed to espoused values. Incongruencies that initially appeared in the analysis of espoused values were not as pronounced in the researcher’s observations of basic assumptions between and among the various organizational perspectives.

Roche (1997, 1999) conducted a study of an Australian group of Catholic school administrators and examined their responses to moral and ethical dilemmas. For the purpose of his study, four possible ethical responses were identified from a review of related literature: (1) avoidance, (2) suspended morality (3) creative insubordination, and (4) personal morality (p.256). Data was collected through the responses of five Catholic elementary school principals to four vignettes. As well, principals’ deliberations on recent and ethical dilemmas were collected through one retrospective and two semi-structured interviews. There was much evidence that indicated the use of the four ethical responses to dilemmas by the principals. Roche (1997, 1999) also found that types of dilemmas identified by principals to be consistent with literature reviews. Four of five principals reported that they encountered ethical dilemmas daily. He also found evidence that supported “personal morality as a significant basis of principals’ responses to moral and ethical dilemmas” (p.266).

This section on values in leadership can be summarized by referring back to Beck & Murphy’s (1993) postulation about the nineties. They felt that a major initiative would form to address the issues of values in education (p.194). This prediction proved to be true, as evinced by the review of varied studies on values and decision making completed in this section. Values tend to be derived from a composite of life experiences and can be broadly categorized as consensus or consequence. Principals often use values to filter information causing them to attend or to not attend to situations. It can be argued that values determine action and in fact, differing administrative orientations such as Humanitarian or Program Manager correlate with differing
values. Principals tend to rely on values in difficult situations, especially when there is insufficient knowledge. Expert and non expert principals differ in their use of values. The research cited, also shows that principals do not usually rely on values of preference, transcendence or moral rightness. In cases where principals initially use values of preference or principle, they eventually centre to consensus or consequence.

The third and final section of this review now moves into approaches and strategies for reflective practice. Over a dozen different approaches are presented with various emphases. Some are individual while others are collective and some aim to inform while others to transform practice. Regardless of emphasis, the activation and movement of the three shutters (perspectives, antecedents and practice episodes) outlined in the conceptual framework, shapes and directs them.

**Reflective Strategies**

How then, should values be incorporated into reflective practice? Willower (1996) postulates that a naturalistic approach to valuation offers the best ideas and methods to deal with moral problems. He maintains that this approach is concerned with “intentions, and outcomes, how thought-through applications of ideals workout in real situations” (p.14). Willower argues further, that genuine moral choice occurs in concrete situations and requires judgements about probable outcomes to each alternative.

Hoy (1996) in a view similar to Dewey, writes that administrators go through the same processes when making ethical judgements as they do to make rational decisions. These decisions require a reflective examination of choices and consequences, involving the formulation of hypotheses concerning consequences and valuation. In fact Hoy states that separating the two is foolhardy and impossible and warns that the separation of ethics from reflective strategies “promotes ritualism and mechanistic administration” (p.376).

Earlier discussion about Schon’s (1983) problem framing also illustrates this point. Clandinin & Connelly (1986) draw attention to Schon’s notion that a situation “talks back” and attunes the reader’s mind to the dynamics of the interplay between action and response in given situations (p.186). Schon also calls this “reflective conversation with the situation” and asserts that backtalk causes practitioners to reframe situations (p.163). Argyris, Putnam & Smith (1985)
observe this view as a shift from the old cliche of “think before you act” to “act and reflect on your actions.” Reframing involves valuation skills and the subsequent challenge of rationally reflecting on value-laden issues.

Osterman & Kottkamp (1993) regard reflective practice as a means of change where practitioners can discover what they already know, and discover new ways of doing things (p.66). They describe a reflective practitioner as an actor in a drama but also the critic who sits in the audience. Accurate sources of information are needed for this person to be both actor and critic. However, before leaping into the role of actor and critic, the stage must be properly set.

The case for a skilled facilitator is made by Osterman & Kottkamp (1993). An initial role of this facilitator is to establish an atmosphere of trust and openness where discussion of problems is not seen as a weakness. Participants must be confident that information revealed is not used against them and that confidentiality is respected. To repeat an earlier point, Osterman (1991) views reflective practice as a vehicle for professional development.

A credo for reflective practice is suggested by Osterman and Kottkamp (1993). This establishes parameters for all concerned.

1. Everyone needs professional growth opportunities.
2. All professionals want to improve.
3. All professionals can learn.
4. All professionals are capable of assuming responsibility for their own professional growth and development.
5. People need and want information about their own performance.
6. Collaboration enriches professional development (pp. 46-47).

They emphasize that the facilitator not only has to espouse this credo, but convince others by deed that it is possible. To model this credo, the facilitator must be confident and be able to accept challenges in a non defensive manner while being secure enough to make his or her own thinking public. The facilitator must show empathy and sensitivity.

Platforms

Initial reflective strategies should be non threatening, low keyed, invitational and oriented toward explicating espoused theory. Such strategies are often considered good initiators but if the findings are not linked to theories-in-use, no substantial change can be expected. Osterman & Kottkamp (1993) are proponents of writing and testing a platform of one’s espoused theory and
then comparing it with observable behaviour. This is an extensive work that involves developing a written piece expressing one’s stated beliefs, values, goals and occasionally, the assumptions that guide professional practice (p.67). It may be regarded as one’s philosophy of practice. Osterman & Kottkamp use this instrument as the centerpiece of a seminar course where the platform is then explored through role plays and other activities.

**Modelling Reflection**

Loughran (1996), in preservice work with student-teachers advocates that modelling reflection is an effective approach toward fostering reflection. This approach involves more than displaying pedagogical skills but revolves around making reflection evident. Loughran advocates three modelling approaches as suggested by Schon’s (1987). These are the *hall of mirrors, joint experimentation* and *follow me*.

Schon (1987) views each as ways of coaching reflection and reframing problem situations. In the hall of mirrors the mentor’s practice is an example of what the student is attempting to understand and aspire to. The student is given the opportunity to practice and reflect on being a learner in this practice situation. In joint experimentation the student is encouraged to take the lead in reflective inquiry with the mentor in an advisory role commenting only as needed. The follow me approach requires mentors to demonstrate and explicate their practice to better enable students to imitate them. Then by doing, students learn more about the context of problem and practice settings. Loughran (1996) agrees that all three are methods for coaching reflection and maintains that important aspects of each are required at different times, circumstances and situations to make explicit, reflective practice.

**Cognitive Apprenticeship**

Prestine & Le Grand (1991) advocate a *cognitive apprenticeship* approach in the training and development of school administrators postulating that knowledge is situated, a product of both the activity being undertaken and the context and culture where it is accomplished (p.68). Brown, Collins & Duguid’s (1989) perspectives about just plain folks (JPFs), who solve relevant problems in everyday life, is similar to this perspective. Prestine & Le Grand believe that the cognitive apprenticeship approach should focus on processes that experts use to handle complex tasks by externalizing the cognitive and metacognitive processes. Abstract knowledge is framed
in the context of practice to show how experts solve problems while self-correction and self-monitoring skills are developed in novice and expert problem solving contexts (p.62). They believe that learning should be active, social, authentic and grounded in a practical real world to accomplish this.

Various types of knowledge are developed through the cognitive apprenticeship including explicit, factual and theoretical knowledge. Prestine & Le Grand (1991) emphasize though, that these alone are not sufficient without strategic knowledge.

Teaching methods used in cognitive apprenticeship programs allow students to observe, engage and discover cognitive strategies needed to learn and integrate knowledge within the context of practice. Methodologies include modeling, coaching, scaffolding, articulation, reflection and exploration (p.70). Prestine & Le Grand identify the first three of these as the core of cognitive apprenticing, while the remainder develops problem solving strategies and learner autonomy.

The social aspect is also key to cognitive apprenticing since this aspect of learning deters passive learning in isolation. Prestine & Le Grand (1991) assert “The social nature of the environment encourages the development of cooperative, collaborative learning skills as well as awareness that knowledge, expertise and insight are not concentrated in any single person” (p.70). Prestine & Le Grand summarize their support for cognitive apprenticing by stating that if learning is regarded as a continuous life long activity than it is necessary to prepare administrators who are critical thinkers engaged in active, reflective processes.

DATA

Although many reflective practice techniques involve collaborative group strategies, Peters (1991) offers one reflective approach that practitioners might use independently. The acronym data conceptualizes a four-step process.

1. **Describe** the problem task, or incident that represents some critical aspect of practice needing examination and possible change.

2. **Analyze** the nature of what is described, including the assumptions that support the actions taken to solve the problem, task or incident.

3. **Theorize** about alternative ways to approach the problem, task or incident.
4. Act on the basis of the theory (p.93).

Peters’ contends that practitioners must be open to a scrutiny of beliefs, values and feelings that may be strongly held about which there is great sensitivity (p.95). He concludes by saying that reflective practice may not always be pleasant, but it is usually rewarding.

Critical Friend

Costa & Kallick (1993) advocate the establishment of a critical friend as one path to reflection. This critical friend provides feedback to an individual about a learning in the eyes of the learner. The learner first describes a practice and requests feedback with the critical friend by asking questions to understand the practice and clarify the context. Then the learner sets intended outcomes and the critical friend provides significant feedback. The critical friend continues to raise questions and critique the work helping the learner see different perspectives.

This process requires both participants to reflect and write. The learner writes about the conference process while the critical friend writes suggestions and advice for the learner. In this process the learner does not have to respond or make decisions, merely reflect on the feedback without having to defend. Costa & Kallick (1993) recommend this strategy between administrators who otherwise often find themselves isolated or too busy to reflect on their practice.

Peer-assisted Leadership (PAL)

PAL is a similar administrator program developed by Barnett (1990) from a research study of successful school principals conducted at Far West Laboratories. This year round program provides opportunities for principals to observe one another, discuss their observations and to gain new insights about administrative practice. Principals however, are first trained in shadowing and conducting reflective interviews. This method generates self-knowledge and peer support for personal and professional change.

Administrative Portfolio

Brown & Irby (1995) view the portfolio as a systematic process for enhancing leadership through reflective practice. Administrators decide to include items that focus on their individual accomplishments and on the significance of events in their professional development (p.84). Each item is accompanied by a reflection that shows the administrator’s experiences and ability to lead.
Examples would include meeting agendas, outlines and evaluations of staff development activities, letters of appreciation and many other types of written pieces.

**Journals**

McAlpine (1992) considers writing as a professional conversation, carried out in written form, to provide opportunity for question and concerns related to experiences. Descriptive, cathartic and reflective writing is used to relive feelings and emotions or to use these feelings and emotions to understand the impact of experience on practice.

**Case Records**

Case records are described by Silver (1986) as narratives written by professionals in crisp language using standard format. They contain “qualitative as well as impressionistic information, and they often reflect the thought processes of those charged with making a difference . . .” (p.162). Case records usually contain the facts at the outset, a plan of action and the results of the action.

Silver (1986) maintains that complexity and indeterminacy is what makes school leadership appropriate grist for professional skill and reflective practice. She puts forth a case for a registry of such cases so that each principal does not have constantly to rediscover the dynamics of school life. Among the key elements of case records, Silver stresses the identification of trigger events, school-based and self-based possible causes, goals of action, planned solution, results and further reflections. She states that it is common practice for other professions to have banks of case records.

**Case Studies**

In administrative preparation, case studies have a long history. Ashbaugh & Kasten (1993) describe case study as “a philosophical critique of practice in which deliberative action is derived from empirical and interpretive modes of inquiry”(p.158). Case studies are used to understand experiences, provide vicarious experience of familiar events and to provide occasion for double looped learning. Ashbaugh & Kasten maintain that in this use case studies help develop reflective practice and transform experience. They also emphasize how case studies encourage dialogue, or internal conversation as the reader tries to understand the case and make inferences.
Two Column Analyses

Perhaps the most noted technique of Argyris & Schon (1974) is their two-column technique. Individuals choose settings in which they are genuinely involved and then write about problem situations as a means to explicate their values, governing variables and strategies for action that seemed to decide their behaviour. Coombs (1997) used this technique in a study to examine how five administrators could explicate their understanding of problem situations. All participants gained an evolving understanding of their problem situation and reframed it to one that was multidimensional and detailed. Participants found evidence of their theories-in-use and were better able to separate their thoughts and feelings about the characters from the issues. They also gained an improved understanding of how their theories-in-use contributed to the difficulties of their situation. However, this did not suggest that future or similar situations would be handled differently, merely that participants could better articulate why they behaved as they did. They also suggested that engaging in this reflective process was a catalyst for trying to further resolve a situation they had otherwise considered closed.

Problem Based Learning (PBL)

Bridges & Hallinger’s (1995) problem based learning (PBL) model is grounded in the belief that learning involves both knowing and doing. In PBL prior knowledge is activated to incorporate new knowledge, opportunity is given to apply it and participants encode the new knowledge in the context of the practice setting (p.5). This approach seeks to meet a range of goals including familiarizing prospective principals with likely problems, developing skills to problem solve and carry out solutions, and developing an array of affective capacities.

Participants in PBL assume major responsibility for their learning and use processes that mirror their work setting. Project teams of five to seven are assigned and provided resources to work within set time frames over a couple of sessions to complete a project. Cooperative roles are assigned and members rotate their responsibilities. During these sessions the instructor acts as “an unobtrusive guide on the side” (p.9) raising and answering questions to engage participants.

PBL, Bridges & Hallinger (1995) argue, differs from case methods significantly. They organize the program around high impact problems where problems become the grist for new learning. PBL emphasizes lifelong learning, meeting and project-management skills, and problem-
relevant knowledge (p.14). Approaches to PBL also differ in that the problem determines the content. Case methods first introduce content and then provide problem applications. Bridges & Hallinger’s maxim is “first the problem, then the content” (p.8).

Scenario Analysis

Brookfield’s (1992) scenario analysis is an exercise that explores actions of various fictional characters, usually at a critical juncture in decision-making. Participants follow a four-step process.

1. Individually each person lists the assumptions that they think underlie the character’s choices and decisions.

2. In small groups these assumptions are presented and the most commonly ones identified.

3. Group members explore how the most common assumptions could be checked out by the characters for their accuracy.

4. Group members generate an alternative interpretation of the scenario that could explain the character’s behaviours, but that the learners judge would probably come as a surprise to those characters (pp.13-14).

Since this situation is hypothetical, it is non threatening, and yet it shows that theories-in-use can be exposed.

Other Simulations

Brookfield (1992) identifies many other exercises that explicate theories-in-use. In critical debate learners debate and support views that they personally disavow. After arguments have been made participants then consider the extent to which their original positions have been modified.

In crisis decision simulations participants are placed in hypothetical crises where immediate decisions are pressing. When the decision is complete participants are asked to reflect on the assumptions and reasoning that informed their choices.

Heroes and villains is a more popular choice of Brookfield’s (1992) simulations. In this game, participants identify people whom they regard as either exemplary or distressing and write descriptive detail about each. Next, participants form into groups of three where each person has
the opportunity to be storyteller, then detective. The detectives offer insights about the assumptions underlying the storyteller’s descriptions. Participants then take the assumptions and give instances to invalidate them. Brookfield believes that the activity brings uncovering assumptions “closer to the lived experience of the learners” (p. 14).

A final simulation suggested by Brookfield (1992) is critical incidents. This approach alerts participants to their values and assumptions. More specifically, it focuses on the identification and analysis of events remembered for their emotional significance (p. 18). However, participants draw on real life experiences to hear the insights concerning their assumptions from colleagues who have developed through the other group of simulations. Brookfield concludes that this exercise is the most engaging and risk taking of all these simulations.

**Value Audit**

This section concludes with a valuation tool originated by Hodgkinson (1991) but tested and developed by Begley & Johansson (1997), the value audit. The value audit is a reflective, contemplative effort that attempts to make conscious “one’s preferences, conditions and beliefs” (1991, p. 136). Although the audit can be applied to hypothetical situations, Hodgkinson prefers that it have a specific focus on a problem of praxis. The individual applies a range of questions corresponding to a three tier value typology of principles, consequences, consensus and preferences. Consideration of the questions and values is recommended before action. This helps the practitioner identify various value types, sources of value conflict and possible solution strategies.

Begley & Johansson (1997) used the audit in an international study that spanned several continents. Participants, all experienced administrators, prepared critical incidents and analyzed the motivational bases of their actions. The first phase involved self analysis, then peer analysis with discussion and thirdly, researcher analysis. Begley & Johansson used the value audit as an action research methodology, however its versatility supports its use in most of the reflection strategies previously discussed.

**Conclusion**

This literature review has been divided into three sections. The first explored literature
specific to reflective practice and synthesized various models and approaches into a conceptual framework. This framework was then used to examine fields related to reflective practice such as praxis and cognitive perspectives. The second section more closely examined values. Not only are values deliberately linked to reflective practice but they are considered the viewing lense through which administrators decide when to reflect or deflect in their daily work. The third and final section of this chapter honours the fidelity of theory to practice, a fundamental characteristic of reflective practice, by illustrating various reflective techniques and approaches. Many of these approaches are developed by authors whose ideas were expounded in the previous sections of this chapter.

The relationship between theory and practice has enjoyed renewed attention from theorists and practitioners with the need for more informed and reflective judgements about their work. Stevenson (1993) partly attributes this to the past lack of attention to problems of practice in theory driven scientific approaches to educational administration (p.9). This reflective practice trend, through means-ends deliberations, places greater emphasis on the how and the what of administration. But, despite the many possibilities of reflective practice much unearthing remains. For this reason academics and practitioners alike, must continue to develop and work together in a manner similar to theory and practice, each informing the other.
CHAPTER THREE
Methodology

This chapter presents details about procedures for participant selection, data collection and data management. Methodological concerns for a study of this nature are first presented. Then the methodology, including interview protocol detail, is presented for each research question. This chapter also provides particulars about each of the six participants.

Research Challenges

Researching a cognitive process such as reflective practice presents many unique challenges. Since reflective practice is mainly a mental activity, it seems that the most direct method would be to ask participants about their thinking. However, research that relies on this method is influenced by the very act of thinking about thinking. It is also conceivable that participants may espouse ideas inconsistent with their actions and not be aware of such a gap. Participant observation also has limited benefit given that reflection occurs mainly inside the mind. Additionally, the observation process, depending on its intrusiveness, may influence participants’ actions. Having participants talk about their experiences has its shortcomings too, because perceptions and memory tend to be selective and distorted with time (Ericsson & Simon, 1993). Stimulated recall using case studies, might be useful but only if cases are relevant to the biographies of participants.

It is apparent from the above that studying reflective practice through any single method is inadequate. Additionally, Lincoln & Guba (1985) contend that in naturalistic inquiry steps should be taken to validate findings against at least one other source adding that no single piece of information should be taken seriously unless it can be triangulated. Therefore, this design included six participants and strategically combined a number of complementary approaches. Participant perceptions about reflective practice were initially collected through interviews and compared with the literature review findings. Participants were shadowed in various work settings and later interviewed about their thinking at the time of observation. Case studies, on topics relevant to participants were used in stimulated recall sessions and participants’ reflections on experiences were also collected through interviews. Not only was there strength in this blended approach, it also addressed temporal aspects of reflection.
Designing a research process to study reflective practice that itself is not a reflective intervention is also challenging, if as Kompf & Bond (1996) contend, reflection is as common place to decision making as water is to fish (p.12). Designs for researching reflective practice tend to have an action research quality, in that they may not only model reflection but promote its further use. Although reflecting during interviews may be a welcomed part of action research, the difficulty remains for participants and researchers in case study to distinguish between existing insights and new ones that develop through the research process. Since I was sensitive to this issue during interviews, I routinely probed participants about awareness of their thoughts and feelings about particular issues before being interviewed, and the extent to which new insights developed through the interviews.

Another major challenge was to develop a research design to dialectically analyze and describe reflective practice and inherent components such as values. To do otherwise, to use an objective empirical approach, would have been a disservice to the study of reflective practice considering its growth has been partially attributed to a reaction to dichotomous thinking and technical rational approaches in educational administration. Therefore, this research qualitatively explored reflective practice through the voices of six principals using the pseudonyms of Cam, Paul, Roy, Beth, Jon and Kay. Every effort was taken to ensure these voices were heard in reporting the findings. Although the conceptual framework guided initial data analysis a grounded theory approach dominated, that is “theory that flows from data rather than preceding them . . . that posits multiple realities and makes transferability dependent on local contextual factors” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985: 204).

Participant Selection

I first wrote an assistant director of an eastern Canadian school board for permission to conduct this study within a city in their jurisdiction (Appendix A). After completing an application, providing a study abstract and answering several phone inquiries, permission was granted. The board needed clarification on the expected time commitment of principals, the nature of the vignettes used in the interviews, who would have access to the study and assurances of anonymity for participants. They also wanted a written report once the study was completed.

Next, to recruit six participants a letter of invitation (Appendix A) and explanation was
distributed to all school administrators within this city. This was an effort to recruit six who were at least at the midpoint of their careers, who varied in gender, training and administrative experience and who represented schools of different grade configurations. Since the literature (Huberman, 1995) suggests that mid career is a maturing period characterized by the acceptance of new challenges and diversification I anticipated that participants who were at least mid career would be a rich source of data.

Merriam (1988) calls this purposeful sampling. She states that since generalization in a statistical sense is not a goal of qualitative research, probabilistic sampling is not necessary or even justifiable. Merriam states that purposive or purposeful sampling is appropriate as long as one is not trying to ascertain ‘how much’ or ‘how often,’ but when one is trying to determine what occurs and what are the implications. She adds “purposive sampling is based on the assumption that one wants to discover, understand, gain insight; therefore one needs to select a sample from which one can learn the most” (p.48). I wanted to consider the place of background factors such as training, experience, gender and job description in reflective practice so I selected participants who varied in this regard. The study was limited to six participants and if more than this number expressed an interest, my plan was to group participants according to similar criteria (amount of experience, professional training, gender, grade configuration represented by their school) and randomly select one participant from each grouping.

Gall, Borg & Gall (1996) and Best & Kahn (1998) indicate a number of risks for participants in qualitative studies. For instance, participants might experience emotional difficulty as a result of expressing to the researcher, deeply held and perhaps controversial feelings. They might also be concerned about revealing personal information and having their privacy violated. Participants also run the risk of possibly appearing unfavorably in a final report or being deceived by the researcher about the actual purpose of the study. Consistent with the advise of qualitative research literature, I responded to these concerns by providing participants prior information about the goals of the research, how the data would be collected, what would occur throughout the data collection, the intended use of the data and who would have access to it. Participants were also assured that they would receive a report of the findings once the data was analyzed. All participants were satisfied with these assurances and there were no withdrawals.
In total, (43) principals received letters of invitation (Appendix A). Of the twenty-three who replied, eleven said that they would either like to be considered for the study or needed more information before committing. I contacted the eleven administrators in person and further explained the nature of the study and expected time commitments. Three felt that they could not commit the time and withdrew their names. Two others preferred not to participate because of their busy schedules but stated that they would volunteer if I could not get enough participants. The remaining six agreed to participate and since their biographies varied widely, I did not have to prevail upon the other two potential participants or recruit any further.

The Participants

Below is an introduction to the six voices presented throughout the findings. This is intended merely as a guide to sort them initially. Richer characterizations appear later, through their reflections on intentions and actions. Pseudonyms are used for all participants and in some cases, minor details are altered to better preserve their identities.

Cam

Cam, approaching fifty, is a seasoned principal with almost 25 years educational experience. About ten of these years have been in an administrative capacity with the last four being in his current position of principal. Cam holds Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Education and Master of Education (Curriculum and Instruction) degrees. He has also served in the military reserve as a high-ranking officer for the past twenty-five years.

Cam is in a kindergarten to grade eight school that has a student population of about 330. The school has one and a half administrative units, meaning the principal is a full time administrator and the assistant principal teaches half time. It has a staff of 25 teachers and four student assistants and is considered an inner city school serving an economically disadvantaged population. Cam has worked in this school for the past ten years. Although the school was established in the 1800s, it is slated for closure under the school board’s reorganization plan.

Paul

Unlike Cam, much of Paul’s experience was outside the city and with a board different from his current one. Paul is also approaching fifty and has 26 years educational experience. After several years of teaching, Paul moved to western Canada for three years and worked in the
oil fields. When he returned, he enrolled in a Master of Education (Educational Administration) program and from there returned to teaching. Of all participants, he has the most administrative experience having worked nineteen years in educational administration, three in his current position of principal. Paul holds Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Arts (Education) degrees, and a Master of Education (Educational Administration) degree. He has been at his current school for the past sixteen years and served as assistant principal for five years before becoming principal.

Paul’s school is currently a small junior high school offering grades seven to nine. The school underwent a major reconfiguration last year going from a junior and senior high to its current structure. This change was welcomed because it was feared that the school would be otherwise closed. Currently it has a student population of 225 and 11.5 teaching units including a one half administrative unit. This means that Paul carries a significant teaching load and the assistant principal has virtually no administrative time during the school day. This school is in a suburban working class area that is rapidly expanding. Under the board’s reconfiguration plans the student population will more than double resulting in more teaching units and administrative time.

_Roy_

Roy has passed his fiftieth birthday and has reached the twenty-seventh year of his career. He has worked at his current school for the last 12 years, seven as assistant principal and five as principal. He holds Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Education and Master of Education (Educational Administration) degrees. As well, he has done extensive graduate work toward a Master’s degree in theology.

His school is a community school that holds students from kindergarten to grade eight. The facility is nestled in the center of a rural community that has a strong community emphasis on education and student achievement. Under board restructuring plans the school is expected to accommodate grades kindergarten to six, while grades seven and eight students will be bussed to a nearby regional facility. Historically, this school was a Catholic school in a former denominational school system. It is located next to a Roman Catholic convent, church and presbytery. Presently it has a student population of 225 and a staff of 15 including two student assistants. Roy teaches half time and his assistant principal teaches full time as a junior high
homeroom teacher.

Beth

Beth is in her mid forties and has been teaching for about 25 years. However, this is Beth's first year in her current school and her first year as a principal. She has worked as assistant principal in three other schools and had her Master of Education (Administration) degree completed before beginning work as an assistant principal. She also holds Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Education degrees with most of her teaching experience at the junior high level.

Beth's school accommodates grades five to eight and has a student population of about 275. The school has a teaching staff of 16 including two student assistants. One administrative unit has been supplied to the school. However, Beth does some teaching to give the assistant principal some administrative time. This is also a former denominational school with deep parental attachment to the Roman Catholic community and neighbouring church and presbytery. The parental community has resisted the board's restructuring plan of making this a kindergarten to six school and changing the student catchment area.

Jon

Jon is currently principal of a high school that accommodates students from grades nine to twelve. He is in his early forties and has been an educator for the past 20 years. Jon is also unique to this study in that most of his experience has been acquired with another school board in a region far removed from the city. This is his first year at this school and with this school board. He has spent the last eight years in educational administration, five of these as a senior high school principal. Jon currently holds Bachelor of Science and Education degrees and a Master of Education (Educational Administration) degree.

Jon's school is in a suburban area and is the only high school in this region. It is a modern facility though sparsely resourced, with 375 students and a teaching staff of 23, including 1.5 units for administration. Jon does not have a teaching assignment but the assistant principal teaches half time. The school offers a complete senior high program along with many extra curricular activities. Under the board's restructuring plan this school will maintain its current grade structure but double its student enrollment. A major extension will be added to accommodate this change.
Kay

Kay, nearing 40, has worked 16 years in the education profession. The last six have been in administrative positions at three different schools. She is presently principal in a kindergarten to six school that has a student population of 180 and a teaching staff of nine. Kay teaches half time and does not have an assistant principal and is the only site-based administrator at her school. This is Kay's first year as principal and her first year at this school. She has a Bachelor of Education degree and two graduate degrees, Master of Education (Teaching and Learning) and Master of Arts (Christian Spirituality). She also pursued training at a technical institute before entering university and is an active member of an organization that promotes public speaking.

Kay's school is one of the smaller ones in the district. It is located in the center of an economically disadvantaged neighbourhood and in many ways is the focal point of the neighbourhood. Under the board's restructuring plan though, this school is being closed and the children are being rezoned to another school.

Data Sources

Information for this section is presented within the context of the research questions. Although there is methodological overlap between some questions, this means of presenting the methodology focuses on both the information needed to answer each question and how this information was developed.

To examine the nature of reflective practice among the participants I conducted multiple case studies of six principals through interviews and observation. Merriam (1988) defines case study as a holistic description and analysis of a phenomenon. As well, case studies tend to be "particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic relying on inductive reasoning in handling multiple data sources" (p.16). The end product is a rich, thick description that illuminates the reader's understanding of the phenomenon.

Most data collection occurred between May and early July 1999. However, one participant was not accessible for most of June and was interviewed several times in late August. Initially, I expected to collect most of my data throughout the participants' work day but most participants preferred to be interviewed outside the school day with some interviews happening as late as midnight. Most felt they were less hurried and had fewer interruptions at these
unconventional times. Participants also gave freely of their time during the first several weeks of their summer vacation.

Before interviewing, I conducted a pilot run of the questions on an assistant principal who works in the same school district as the six participants. I also conducted several observations of a principal not included in the study so I could develop a comfort level with this method before applying it to the participants. Their feedback was positive and few changes were made in the interview or observation procedure.

Literature Review

To determine what reflective practice is, I first conducted a review of professional literature on reflective practice and related topics such as praxis, problem solving and action learning. Next, I developed a conceptual framework based on the issues and themes in this literature review. The conceptual framework, which emphasized the working interactions of many factors in reflective practice, aided my analysis of related reflective practice approaches and strategies.

Interviews

Paton (1980, as cited in Merriam, 1988) posits “We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe . . . We cannot observe feelings, thoughts and intentions” (p.72). In another place Paton states “The purpose of the interview, then, is not to put things in someone else’s mind (for example, the interviewer’s perceived categories for organizing the world) but rather to access the perspective of the person being interviewed” (p.73). With this purpose in mind I began the interview process with an individual meeting with each participant to explain in detail the nature of the research and to answer any concerns. During the interview I also collected participants’ biographical information including their espoused beliefs, values, goals and work priorities (Appendix B). This biographical information was later considered when examining patterns and connections between interviews, observations and think aloud follow-up sessions. It also helped illuminate the nature of reflective practice, issues and problems that administrators reflect upon and the extent to which reflective practice is affected by individual attributes.

The initial interview was an important first step for developing rapport and trust with each
participant. The questions used were based on Osterman & Kottkamp’s (1993) platforms strategy. All six were responsive to the question format, talked freely and enjoyed the opportunity to share their views. I asked participants about their perceptions of reflection to find out how they described it, what caused them to reflect, when they reflected in relation to an event, the process they used, the kinds of information they included in their reflection and the place of their values, training and experience in reflection. I also wanted to explore their perceptions about the extent to which other people were included in their reflection whether through the reflective process, sharing reflective details or encouraging others to reflect. Questions also focused on their perceptions about the usefulness and prevalence of reflective practice among school principals.

After I started interviewing I added a new question about the extent that their own reflective practice had evolved over time. There were some incidental comments on this before I formally added the question. It proved to be an important point of discussion in light of Van Manen (1977) and Grimmett’s (1989) perspectives about the nature and purpose of reflective practice. Most interviews were about fifty minutes in duration and all were audio taped and transcribed. Transcripts were returned to participants for content verification.

In probing reflection-on-action I asked participants on two occasions to reflect on a situation with me. On the first occasion participants were asked to share their reflections by reading a vignette that I developed, and then by responding to a set of questions (Appendix C). The vignette, dealing with a fictitious principal’s response to her school board’s restructuring plans, was chosen because it was timely and relevant for all participants. Interview questions were sequenced to first generate vivid detail about the situation, the actions taken and the participants’ intentions. Participants were then asked to connect their biographies and work situation to the vignette.

On the second occasion participants were asked to recall a difficult situation that they had experienced in the last six months and to reflect on that situation with me (Appendix D). They did this by vividly recalling situational details, examining their intentions and actions, the extent to which their actions supported their intentions and considering their preparedness for this situation.

Reflection-for-action was examined through two other interviews with participants about
pending situations. I developed a vignette (Appendix E) about a policy for the provision of services to students with special needs because during the year this was a major issue in the participants' school district. Participants were asked to share their reflections on this vignette and to then respond to a set of open-ended questions. Interview questions focused on participants’ understanding of the problem, and the fictitious principal’s role, actions and intentions. Then participants were asked to connect their biographies to this story by suggesting how they would deal with the situation and by considering what they could learn from it. On the second occasion participants were asked to identify an anticipated situation and respond to a series of open-ended questions (Appendix F). Questions were sequenced to generate vivid detail about the situation, the actions to be taken and participants’ intentions. Participants were also asked to consider how their background, training and experience prepared them for such a situation.

Observations

I examined reflection-in-action by shadowing the six administrators during three 90 minute sessions. These sessions consisted of a staff meeting, a student assembly and office activity. Marshall & Rossman (1995) regard observation as a fundamental and critical method in all qualitative inquiry claiming that it explicates complex interactions in natural settings. They state that even for in-depth interview studies, “observation plays an important role as the researcher notes body language and affect in addition to the person’s words” (p.80). For each of these shadowing sessions I made copious notes about participants’ environment, conversations and actions. The notes were used later that same day to stimulate recall of the session as the participants talked about their thinking at the time of observation. This was done through an audio taped telephone interview. My initial plan was to interview participants immediately after the observation session but this was not feasible because most participants could not commit the time during the day, especially as the end of the school year neared. The audio taped telephone interviews too, were transcribed and returned to participants for verification.

Ericsson & Simon (1993) support the validity of verbal reporting based on their model of information processing. They point to evidence that suggests that recently acquired information is held in short term memory and is accurate and accessible in verbal reporting. Information in long term memory, unlike short term memory, must first be retrieved before being reported thus
increasing the chances of distortion and incompleteness (p.11). Stimulated recall reduces participant use of long term memory and related memory distortion.

The case for careful attention to participant instructions in think aloud protocols is also made by Ericsson & Simon (1993). Duncker (1924) and Claparede (1936) (as cited in Ericsson & Simon, 1993) emphasize that the main part of the instruction is usually very short such as “Try to think aloud. I guess you often do so when you are alone and working on a problem” (p. 80), and usually refers to a procedure already familiar to the participant. Complementary instruction often includes other requests such as the need for detail with requests such as “The chief thing is to talk aloud constantly . . ., for I want to get everything you happen to think of, no matter how irrelevant it may seem” (p. 81). Ericsson & Simon conclude that verbalizing under these circumstances would be quite simple and could elicit vocalized thoughts. Participants were therefore asked to think aloud using this protocol (Appendix G). Conducting these interviews by phone actually facilitated the collection of this type of data because it minimized the social context, and reduced the tendency for participants to justify their actions or to engage in conversation that otherwise detracted from the think aloud protocol.

**Data Collection Procedures**

Data collection began with a literature review that started two years prior to conducting the first interviews. However, once the University of Toronto approved the study and an ethical review was completed, participant recruitment started. It took several weeks to disseminate information and to finalize the six participants. I also had several alternate participants in case any of the six were not able to complete the study.

To organize data collection I contacted each participant by telephone and arranged an initial meeting. When this meeting was concluded the next appointment was scheduled and this process was repeated until all sessions were completed. I deliberately avoided scheduling too far in advance so as not to overwhelm participants, and to be able to accommodate unexpected changes to their busy schedules. This approach was effective because the interviews were held at the convenience of participants, it engendered much cooperation and there were few changes to agreed times. However, it also required much flexibility, tentativeness and patience on my part.

My original plan was to conduct observations after the initial interview and the two
reflection-on-action interviews. However, the end of the school year was fast approaching and scheduling observations became even more urgent when the school board permitted schools that were restructuring to dismiss their students a week early. I adjusted my plans by beginning the observations after only two interviews. I had flexibility with the interview schedule but the observations had to be conducted while school was in session. Fortunately, this plan worked very well. The participants’ hectic pace provided more opportunity to arrange three observation sessions because in the closing weeks of the school year all participants held staff meetings and student assemblies and their offices were also busier than usual. I was able to accommodate participants who preferred to conduct the remaining interviews after the school year ended.

Data collection was usually sequenced for each of the six participants in the following way.

1. Initial interview clarifying study details and to find out about the participant’s educational philosophy, work orientation and perceptions about reflection.

2. Reflection-on-action interview using a vignette about a fictitious principal whose school was restructured.

3. Office observation followed by a think aloud telephone interview.

4. Staff meeting observation followed by a think aloud telephone interview.

5. Student assembly observation followed by a think aloud telephone interview.

6. Reflection-on-action interview using a personal experience identified by the participant.

7. Reflection-for-action interview using a vignette about a fictitious principal who has to deal with a special services policy matter.

8. Reflection-for-action about an upcoming situation or circumstance that involves the participant.

Forty-eight interviews were conducted in all, but because participants determined their own schedules, participants were at various stages of this sequence at any given time.

Data Organization

Data collected through the literature review, interviews and observations produced several reams of information. To ensure its essence was reported, data was organized in a number of
ways. First, data from the initial interviews was coded to develop rich descriptions of the participants. These codes focused on participants’ career plans, self characterizations, image consciousness, work responsibilities, job likes and dislikes, preferred working strategies, relevant experience and training, role perceptions and work priorities. Participants’ views about reflection were also coded using various headings. These focused on their definitions of reflection, prompts for reflection, timing of reflection, the reflective process, significance of experience and training in reflection, when and where reflection occurs, who is included in the reflective process, the evolving quality of reflection, sharing reflections and espoused values used in reflection.

The conceptual framework presented in Figure 1.1 is used to organize data findings for participants’ retrospective and anticipatory reflection, Chapters Five and Seven respectively. Each chapter collectively reports participants’ reflections on a relevant vignette and a series of participant reflections using incidents identified by the participants. Responses, whether about the vignette or a personal experience, are examined by first applying Dewey’s five phases of reflection. The analysis then continues by further analyzing participants’ reflective process through the three shutters in the conceptual framework.

The data reported on contemporaneous reflection was organized differently although still guided by the conceptual framework. This helped illustrate how the suggestion, problem and hypothesis phases of reflection differed from reasoning and testing. The think aloud commentary collected in response to my observations during the shadowing sessions was not about a single event and could not possibly provide a complete reflective process for any one problem or situation. Consequently, the analysis focused on identifying when participants were trying to better understand a situation compared to when they were reasoning and testing a response to a situation.

To do this I organized all think aloud transcripts into three columns. First I paraphrased my observations in the center column. Then participants’ think aloud commentary was paraphrased and reported as either suggestion/problem/hypothesis formation in the first column or as reasoning/testing in the third column. Think aloud data was anchored to my observation notes by reporting the commentary in the appropriate column next to the referenced observation. Where possible, I report think aloud commentary in the first person. Table 6.1 is an example of
how this data is organized using an excerpt from Paul’s student assembly. Furthermore, Appendices H to M contain organized data of an observation for each participant.

**Data Management**

Marshall & Rossman (1995) describe five modes of data analysis, organizing the data; generating categories, themes and patterns; testing the emergent hypotheses against the data; searching for alternative explanations of the data; and writing the report (p.113). They emphasize that each stage of data analysis represents data reduction and interpretation. All interviews were audio taped, transcribed and organized using a physical filing system. The physical filing system was used to store hard copies of information including coded transcripts and field notes. Transcripts were also entered into *Ethnograph v5.04*, a computer software program designed for the analysis of text based data. Seidel (1998), the creator of Ethnograph, contends that qualitative analysis almost always involves the processes of noticing, collecting and thinking about things of interest (p.E13). Yet he believes that qualitative data analysis is far more complex than what any software program can do. Seidel regards Ethnograph merely as a means to advance the analytic process. Consequently, this software was used as an analytical tool to help compile, organize and manipulate data by importing and numbering the transcripts, coding specific segments and then sorting and analyzing the various codes.

I found Ethnograph 5.04 to be a very useful tool in generating and analyzing coded data. A grounded approach was used to identify and determine codes that represented various categories, themes and patterns. Many of these codes are presented as they arise in the presentation of the data. Although the review of the literature helped establish initial categories, this phase of the research was not limited to a specific reflective theory. Some findings supported elements of existing theory while other findings contribute to the development of new theory.
CHAPTER FOUR
Reflective Practice; Practitioner Perspectives

This chapter begins by providing more detail about the participants to further develop their character and to provide a wider context for their espoused perspectives. This information reports how the participants perceive themselves and their work. Data collected under the following categories is used, career plans, self characterization, image consciousness, important aspects of work, job likes and dislikes, preferred strategies, relevant experience and training, role perceptions, work priorities and most important aspects of work.

Then data from the initial interview is reported, providing rich descriptions of reflective practice as portrayed by the participants. Data was coded under headings such as definitions of reflection, prompts for reflection, timing of reflection, the reflective process, significance of experience and training in reflection, when and where reflection occurs, who is included in the reflective process, the evolving quality of reflection, sharing reflections and espoused values used in reflection. The first section describes the uniqueness of each participant by individually describing him or her. Whereas the remainder of the chapter presents collective opinion about reflective practice.

The Principals

Beth (Grades 5 - 8)

Beth describes herself as an organized person who likes to be prepared, “one who likes to have everything organized.” She takes pride in her perseverance and in the belief that she has something to offer to her position. A companion to her penchant for organization is a pronounced sense of accountability, which she claims sometimes causes her to be seen as a “taskmaster.” Yet, she acknowledges that being accountable is hard work especially when she expects from others the same standard she sets for herself.

Beth also views herself as an avid learner and thrives on learning opportunities associated with her work. “I think I learn something new every day. . . . You die a little and you rise a little every day . . .” She says that one never stops learning. Retirement is in close proximity for Beth, and she finds this annoying. She says that it was never of interest to her but “this year it has smacked me in the face and I have said I only have this amount of time and I hate that!”
put a positive spin on this dreary thought she suggests that maybe she could return to university and learn more.

Beth maintains that setting a positive tone is critical to her work. To do this she advocates expanding the school culture to bring forward its positive aspects. She feels that presently her school culture is “deep but dominated by a small segment of the population.” A lot of her work she claims, has been “to spread this out, this school belongs to a lot more people, and we have to think of a lot more people.” Nevertheless, she sees her responsibility as bringing initiatives forward, to acknowledge concerns and to ask “what are we doing and how are we doing that?” She also contends that explaining to parents and the community all those good things about their school and how the school supports families in educating their children are important. Beth insists that parents must belong and feel wanted, and that their culture and climate typify this.

Beth considers herself familiar with the prescribed curriculum of her school. She enjoys working with adolescents and has an extensive background in teaching. When she accepted her current position, she was most enthusiastic about the opportunity “to really get into curriculum.” In her previous school she felt that inroads had been made towards the collaborative development of curriculum. Looking back at this year though, she concedes that being new and trying to bring initiatives creates resistance. She claims to have been often “blind sided,” no matter how astutely she has been on top of things. She also believes that her lack of experience in administration left her unprepared for many difficult issues throughout the year. Beth thought this was especially apparent in her dealings with School Council. (This is further explored in Beth’s critical incident in Chapter Five).

Beth advocates grade level meeting as one way of addressing curriculum issues. Doing this she says, provides an understanding of where teachers are with curriculum grades and resources. She adds that it also provides a thorough understanding of the subjects they teach and the degree to which instruction matches the students. For example, Beth reiterates “there are accommodations and adaptations needed but we have a responsibility to help every one of them [students] to learn to the best of their ability.”

Being relatively inexperienced in administration and in her first principalship, Beth concedes that she has to further develop her understanding of what her work is. She emphasizes
that she needs support from others and places heavy emphasis on listening to people’s story, adding that this can provide a lot of insight as to where others are coming from. Her present year was described as “one of those years where I wondered what do I want to do.” In fact, she frequently considered moving on, returning to full time teaching and resigning from administration.

At the time of the interview Beth’s most pressing work priorities were associated with the restructuring of her school. School grade configurations were changing and this meant a significant change in her enrollment catchment area. Being perceived by the parent community as not being supportive of the school was also a big challenge that concerned Beth. She felt the boundary changes created many community factions and being supportive to all parents was difficult for her. Another outstanding challenge was to ensure that the school was adequately staffed and resourced to maintain programs like instrumental and choral music. The community, in the past, has supplied many additional resources to the school.

**Cam (Grades K - 8)**

Cam appears to be a very precise, tidy and meticulous man who expresses a great deal of satisfaction with his work and his lot in life. He enjoys working with children and regards himself as a very successful administrator. Cam is excited about the prospect of organizing and establishing one more school before retiring.

Cam regards his military reservist experiences as an invaluable source of personal and professional development. He muses about the chain of command in the reserves and the requirement of immediate compliance to orders, adding that this type of leadership is about moving mechanics versus the principalship that is about moving people. Throughout his reservist career he has attended many training sessions in navigational mathematics and science and in leadership. In a commander role he has assumed much responsibility and has handled people under stressful circumstances. Through this he has learned to deal with adversity, observed others in command and experienced first hand how to effectively delegate.

Cam has also formed many views about human nature through these experiences commenting “there are weak people, strong people, there are people who need one type of talk and there are people who need another type of talk.” He summarizes the importance of reservist
life by saying that the experiences have exposed him to a variety of people within Canada and beyond, adding "this has taught me a lot of talents and structural ability . . . I felt, nothing prepared me for administration better than that kind of thing."

Cam is a detailed planner and believes that getting students to achieve is his greatest priority, "this and good positive instruction." However, Cam adds that many peripheral things have to be done to achieve that, "Staff morale, atmosphere within the school, good communication between myself and the kids, the parents, the staff, keeping on top of things by being proactive . . ." He asserts that when these peripherals are in place, he can provide a structured environment where "instructional time is pretty sacred." Consequently, Cam sees many small tasks to be largely important because they contribute to his greatest priority, student achievement.

When further probed about how he approached the peripherals, Cam emphasized the intuitive and contextual nature of his work.

Some things I guess you do intuitively, you recognize maybe it is a little bit of experience, maybe a little bit of common sense. You recognize something that is important simply by the nature of it . . . I prioritize as much as I can . . . I enjoy having teams within the school all of whom are contributing to the ultimate being of the school . . . I'm not sure that there is much preparation for how you read your own particular situation, I probably would do it differently in another school, in another group of players, parents, teachers and kids.

In Cam's discussions about his responsibility to plan and provide structure, he indicates that he "really gets upset" with himself when things do not go well. He works on finding out what has to be done so improvements can be made. This is partly attributed to the fact that Cam believes that most things go as planned and when they do not, he holds himself personally responsible. Cam adds however, that he is not so egotistical as to think that his way is always the best, claiming that he can take the advice others adding, "excluding other people's ideas can lead to big mistakes."

Another frustrating aspect of work for Cam is the endless paper work and administrivia, "things of a repetitive paper nature that needlessly consumes time." Cam insists that the principals' role either has to change or new ways have to be found for doing what seems important or else "to perform the paper work, to rationalize what we are doing, we may have less
and less time to actually do what we should be doing.” Commenting on the last few years, Cam observes that there has been a significant downloading of paperwork and demands for paperwork from all levels of education.

In the final part of the first interview Cam was asked to speak about his work priorities for the remaining several months of the school year. Issues associated with the closing of school were most pressing. For Cam, finishing the year with dignity was important and to do it in a way that students, parents and teachers felt that the “doors were not being locked and the keys thrown away.” Maintaining a positive attitude throughout the school, providing structure and proactively managing the move to another school were all preeminent. Cam also emphasized that it was important that parents and students be informed about the details for the next year to reduce stress and pressure associated with moving to another school.

Jon (Grades 9 - 12)

Before working in his present school, Jon was principal of a much larger high school in a more prosperous region. Though his current school has less financial and human resources and fewer links to district office, Jon believes that he has equivalent responsibilities. Being new to the educational district has also presented its challenges. This year, he notes, he has been grappling with a lack of structure at his school and a lack of contact with the board. Jon misses opportunities to communicate with colleagues whether through formal meetings or even at coffee breaks during principal gatherings.

Despite the difficulties of the present situation, Jon credits his experiences as very helpful to becoming established in his new position. In a past school he worked with a principal who was extremely organized but was not necessarily as open to staff input. Jon is committed to remaining in his current position and expects things to improve as he works toward more organization and greater staff input.

Organizing and planning are very important to Jon. He likes to collaboratively involve stakeholders in decision making and views past successes not necessarily as his, but as the success of everybody. Although Jon is trying to involve staff in decision making and to organize the school better, he admits that he has to be patient because the staff is comfortable with existing arrangements. For example, he would like to see staff becoming more involved in after school
activities and taking more initiative in issues beyond their immediate teaching duties. He is reluctant to force change because he believes it has less chance of support when perceived as “the principal’s regulations and rules.”

Jon uses the analogy of a juggler to describe his many duties illustrating that he has five to seven important things in progress at any given time saying “you end up giving an hour at this, twenty minutes at this, fifteen minutes at this, you know with demands coming on me all the time.” Having experienced something less than a stellar year, Jon is looking forward to next year and focuses much of his planning and organization on the long term. He hopes that an increased student population will mean increased staffing levels, improved facilities and will generate more administrative time for the assistant principal. In the year ahead he expects to see himself in more of a leadership role compared with his present situation where he feels constrained by the day to day demands of running the school.

When asked to look ahead at the remaining weeks of school Jon felt that he was behind schedule when it came to student course registrations and schedule development. He was expecting more than seventy-five new students to transfer in because of the district’s reorganization plan and he was expecting to be heavily involved in the recruitment of ten new teachers arising from staff additions and transfers. Meanwhile, final exams and an awards assembly for the current year had to be completed and he was still hopeful that the teachers’ handbook would be ready for the start of the next year.

Kay (Grades K - 6)

Kay is a young, enthusiastic administrator who is having a rewarding first year as an elementary school principal. She enjoys the hard work and believes that every person in her school is “intrinsically good and has something worthwhile and beneficial to offer to society, to creation and to each other.” She shares this exuberance and enjoys working with teachers and encourages them to try new things and bring new initiatives to the school such as a student self esteem program, school improvement and a School Council. Kay reiterates “we are all connected and we work well when we draw on each other’s strengths, wisdom and experiences.”

In describing her work, Kay states that the most important part of work “is to be an effective curriculum and instructional leader so that optimum teaching and learning is taking
place." According to Kay motivating staff and parents best accomplishes this so they take ownership of initiatives and see how it improves things. Communication through newsletters, parent meetings, inservice and after school workshops are often how she "sells some of these initiatives."

Working with children, and making a difference for these children is also critical to Kay's work. She devotes much energy to conflict mediation and resolution and this year has given special attention to an anti-bullying campaign among the student population. Kay wants a positive rapport with the children and hopes they see her as somebody who has an important role in their school. She sees herself as one of their advocates, whatever their background or history, and does not want children to fear a visit to the office.

Life long learning is very much a personal theme for Kay. Kay believes that every experience, positive or negative, "always leads to opportunity for growth." She thinks that "it is important to continually be learning and growing as an administrator, just as an individual in society." Kay accomplishes this through reading, dialoguing with colleagues, thinking about experiences and learning and growing. In fact quoting Socrates, she stresses "The unexamined life is not worth living" so you have got to always, I think, take every opportunity to grow."

Kay actively seeks a balance between her professional and private life. She realizes that time demands and role expectations of being principal can be excessive but states that she "gives what she can on the job site, and when I am off the job site I do have recreation, I have leisure, I have silence, I have a balanced lifestyle." She admits however that it was not always this way.

Although Kay exhibits a positive approach to her work and life, she expresses disdain for the endless tasks in administration that do not require much of oneself. She contends, that when paper work for example is not done, and no opportunities to dialogue and sit with the person requesting it is not provided, misunderstandings and hard feelings occur. Kay reports that she has had positive opinion from staff this year in this school. She believes this originates from her appreciating and valuing them and recognizing that they have something worthwhile to offer. In turn, staff is offering their services and is willing to take on more things.

When I asked Kay to comment on any relevant training, the first thing that came to light was her spiritual training which she says is connected to her "being." Kay claims that no matter
what her station in life she would work toward finding the positive and good in people. Having completed a Master of Arts degree in Christian Spirituality has made her more acutely aware that this is one value that she sees in people and that this belief continues to develop. Surprisingly, there are times when Kay would like to change professions and perhaps work in another area of education such as at the district level. Sometimes she wonders if she should “just be a classroom teacher and probably leave administration.” Kay has even thought about working in education half-time and doing something associated with her training in Christian Spirituality.

Paul (Grades 7 - 9)

Paul is nearing the end of his professional career with just three years before retirement. He enjoys his work and regards teaching as one of the greatest professions because of the “wonderful great satisfaction in helping people.” Paul regards the current period of educational reform as “exciting, filled with potential and possibilities and a good opportunity to do things and to develop things.” Despite Paul’s optimism for the future, the perceived lack of vision at the district and provincial level concerns him. He contends that many initiatives are happening but are disjointed and not followed through to completion. At the time of interviewing Paul was considering applying for district office positions believing that he could make a difference at this level.

Paul places strong emphasis on the need for students to obtain an education, to commit to their work and to display respect in their dealings with others. He attempts to model these beliefs whenever the opportunity presents itself. He also emphasizes the need for parents to commit to their responsibility and to help build a collaborative school community. Working visibly and cooperatively with all educational partners is important to Paul. He says that he places much effort into listening to people and making sure that parents, students and teachers have an appreciation of each others viewpoints.

When asked about relevant background and training many interesting points were noted. Paul has strong ties to a Christian religious upbringing. He claims that although formal religion has had a lesser impact in his adult life, many of his present day values such as “respect for people” can be attributed to these early religious influences.

Paul left the teaching profession at an earlier point in his career spending several years
working in various labour jobs across Canada. He credits this experience with helping define himself and what he wanted in life. When he decided to return to teaching, he next completed a Master of Education program. He regarded the master’s program as “a wonderful time with my colleagues to really reflect on teaching and realizing that education is so big...” Overall Paul describes himself as a sensitive individual who has benefited from many life experiences and opportunities.

Paul puts a lot of emphasis on reflection and believes it is necessary for personal growth. “For me life has to be a reflection to help you grow, you have got to reflect on what you are doing, whether it is right or wrong.” He further claims that a person’s reflections are so strongly shaped by values and that reflecting on values too, is important. Paul says “all my values are reflected on, my religious values, my spiritual values and particularly my value for people.”

Like many participants, Paul expresses a strong dislike for the “mindless administrivia” associated with his work. He observes that although much of this work is necessary, it severely encroaches on his time, and suggests that principals need more secretarial time if they are to do their work effectively. Contrasting his intended and unintended day, he comments that many of his days are consumed by unintended demands causing many of his intended goals to be deferred.

When asked to outline work priorities for the remainder of the school year Paul felt that his situation was different from many other principals in the district, having gone through a school reconfiguration a year earlier than most. Apart from concerns associated with increased student enrollment, Paul felt that many start up problems of the current year had been resolved. He expected that in the next year the staff would work toward developing strategies to deal with incomplete school and homework, improving language arts outcomes, and handling school discipline consistently. To support these initiatives, Paul intends to be visible “whether it is through supervision or teaching, being available to parents, available to meet with teachers, to think things through and to work visibly with other people.”

Roy (Grades K - 8)

Roy could be described as a quiet, unassuming individual who has learned much in his 27 years in education. Similar to the other five he enjoys working directly with children. He claims that he does not have an authoritative presence and in fact when he had to hire an assistant
principal several years ago, he recommended a candidate whom he felt had the authoritativeness to make up for what he did not have.

Roy views himself as an eclectic thinker and says that he agreed to be included in this study because he likes “to be driven to think.” He appears to be open minded and tries to suspend his beliefs and thoughts when considering different perspectives. Roy contends that many good ideas rest with other people and he claims that being a listener is important. Roy believes that to be an effective listener one must also be a flexible thinker. He usually seeks consensus or compromise on contentious issues. He described one disagreement at a staff meeting where he waited six months before the staff was ready to move forward on the issue. Roy says there is no real point in “pushing something to the point of saying it is going my way whether you like it or not.”

Roy’s career is a varied one in that it also includes many years of high school teaching. He came to his present school as an assistant principal and worked with an experienced principal. Roy reminisces in detail about how the principal and he would sit at the end of each day to review the happenings of that day. This was an extremely positive learning experience for Roy, though he felt this principal’s style was not necessarily his.

Roy has extensive formal theological training through the Toronto School of Theology. He explains how this experience has contributed to his thoughtful nature. Each year for about a week he would attend a spiritual retreat where he was trained to reflect on spiritual concerns, what he was doing in everyday life, and then to relate this to making his life better. Roy said that this helped make him a better thinker and developed his ability to reflect. He also expresses concern for those who never have the opportunity to “draw back for extended periods of time and just stop and look at what you are doing, and where are you going, and how you are doing it.”

This year Roy has experienced many difficulties associated with educational reform, perhaps the most glaring being the removal of church authority from schools. While Roy believes that the public education system still promotes the spiritual dimension of students, he finds it difficult to promote a spiritual dimension without a denominational context. Roy also perceives a trend toward more centralized decision making, noting that the ministry of education is directly controlling the educational agenda, with school boards merely “toeing the line.” He claims that
even in cases where various levels of bureaucracy seek opinion “it seems they are just extending a courtesy and they are really not a whole lot concerned about the people who are out there in the field.” In some ways Roy laments the loss of the former set up where his board had more say in developing and implementing initiatives. He feels that the present board, having been formed from six boards has regressed to where “they are spending years now getting back to a point that the previous board had reached before dissolution, and I think that is too bad for education.”

The district plan to restructure Roy’s school is also causing him concern. Roy does not agree with redirecting the older students to a nearby community to create efficiencies in organization. However, the board has decided to go with changes. At the time of interviewing Roy was wondering should he stay at his present school and work on the kindergarten to six transition or should he take on another school before the end of his career.

Summary of Participants

The preceding profiles present individuals with unique perspectives about their lives and their work. Throughout the profiles many commonalities also appear. Perhaps the most striking is the genuine commitment participants have to the students and people with whom they work. All participants show tremendous empathy and respect for students and staff alike. They also stress the wider community of school, as every participant comments on the importance of parents. Many participants say that one of the most enjoyable parts of their day is being around the children and working with them.

All participants believe that one of their most important roles is to, as Kay states, “provide effective, instructional and curriculum leadership so that optimum teaching and learning is taking place.” From an instructional leadership perspective, many participants expressed concerns about aspects of administrative work that interfered with their instructional role. Most participants commented that this was a taxing year for administrivia, paper work and report writing. Although participants related much of the administrivia to the district’s restructuring plan, some participants saw no future easing in this trend.

Participants placed considerable emphasis on being life long learners, open minded and collaborative. They emphasized using consensus building strategies for developing and bringing school wide initiatives forward. Many made comments to the effect that if staffs see an idea
merely as the principal’s, then staff commitment can be expected to be low. Others went as far to say that if staff did not support initiatives then there is no point in trying to move forward with them.

Another trend evident among participants was a high degree of image consciousness and related efforts to deliberately cultivate these images. Jon for example, likes to give the impression that his school is “open for business and let’s get to it and let’s do a good job” while Kay states, “one goal for me this year is to be visible.” Jon adds, “I try to be around the school as much as I can.” Many participants view this personable style of leadership and being positively perceived as part of their effectiveness. For example Cam states, “if you get the person the wrong way and their back is up against a new initiative, it doesn’t matter what I do, it really doesn’t.” All participants believe visibility about the school, not only generates a positive leadership image, but it is also a good way of finding out what goes on.

One final theme evident among all administrators was their drive for structure and organization in their schools. Cam and Roy articulate this strongly. All participants however, believe structure and routine to be prerequisites to a positive teaching and learning environment. One of the biggest inhibitors of structure for participants in the past year has been the impending reorganization of their school district.

There were varying degrees of job satisfaction expressed by all participants. All but Beth seemed generally pleased with their career points and accomplishments of the past year. When asked to look ahead to the remainder of the year and beyond many identified tasks associated with year end activities and challenges for the next school year associated with the district’s restructuring plan.

Practitioner Perspectives

Some Field Definitions

I initiated discussions about reflective practice by asking participants first to share their understanding of the idea. There is remarkable definition similarity among participants and between their comments and findings of the literature review. Kay describes reflection with a series of verbs such as “rethink, mull over, probe, ponder and pick apart,” to ask “what if?, why?, how come?, and what about?” in an effort to “come to grips with a situation.” Beth, Jon and Roy
approach their definitions by asking a sequence of questions, similar to “Where are we?, What are the possibilities?, How are we going to get there?” Beth, Cam and Roy respectively emphasize pausing, taking time to stop, collecting their thoughts, putting things on hold, and giving more thought before or after situations. All three emphasize reflection as being able to cut through everyday tasks to ask this sequence of questions. Roy remarks, “So I see reflection as that before action, considering it and putting it in place, but then the other way I see it is after having done something being asked to go back. . . .”

Jon believes that reflection is mired into common everyday thought and action adding that reflection is constantly occurring even as he responded to my question. However, Jon adds that reflection becomes more deliberate when silent thought is given to ideas, plans and goals. Paul offers another view about reflection. He believes that reflection should impact what he does, by better motivating him to think through past ways and by helping him “improve and move on.”

Paul also makes a clear distinction between the personal and professional domains of reflection. He asserts that in his personal life he reflects about how he interacts with others, the quality of his friendships, his spiritual beliefs and his overall well being. In his professional life he reflects about his work effectiveness, the clarity of his vision, how he motivates people and his responsiveness to the needs of others. Paul stresses that although these domains are distinct there must be consistency between the two. Reflection is how he considers his personal and professional life and the extent to which they are attuned.

**Reflective Timing**

Most definitions offered by participants emphasize reflection before or after action, not during action. Paul for example describes reflection as “past thinking through” and Beth says it is asking “what can we do to make things better down the road?” Cam stresses the element of planning in his reflection and contends that reflection is mostly about what needs to be put into action. Roy and Jon do however, refer to the contemporaneous nature of reflection. Roy asserts that one function of reflection is to put things on hold to give more time for thought and Jon adds that reflection is always happening, suggesting in instances of reflection-in-action.

Although most participants say they do not reflect-in-action, there was evidence to suggest otherwise. Cam for example states, “I am not quite sure if I reflect on present events, I
am probably reflecting on some instances just intuitively, as you are doing something.” Later in the same conversation he reveals, “I could be in a conversation and say, now this isn’t going well and I shouldn’t have started this.” Although Cam may not realize it, this is an example of thinking in action. Other evidence that I later report (Chapter 6) shows that much reflection-in-action does indeed occur.

**Including Others in Reflection**

All but Beth, suggest that reflection is a solitary process. Jon, in fact, calls it “silent thought” and Paul even emphasizes the need to write down his thoughts. Paul, many times throughout the data collection session, jotted phrases and ideas down before responding to my questions. I also observed Jon making jot notes during the case study and shadowing sessions.

Beth, on the other hand, needs a partner to reflect, stating that she needs to hear herself, think by talking over ideas with others and by listening to other perspectives on these ideas. She adds that reflection is more than analyzing or taking things apart. It is also about making change. Beth acknowledges that she tends to write more about positive events such as a student curriculum assembly and things that turn out well. She usually put these written reflections in a folder to be retrieved when similar events reoccur.

**Reflective Prompts**

The group of six gave consistent responses to circumstances and events that prompt reflection. Usual suggestions include, unanticipated events, critical events, conflict, interpersonal tensions, crisis events, extremely positive or negative happenings, and events that directly affect the participants’ personal welfare. Although most participants, especially Jon, say that they reflect about everything, there were individual differences. Beth was more inclined to state that she reflects when negative outcomes occur, especially unexpected ones. She also names other prompters such as ‘interpersonal conflict’ and ‘personal life changes’ such as illness. Cam, with a strong planning orientation, is prompted to reflect when anything that impacts the school’s effectiveness and achievement arises. This ranges from the management of a crisis to accommodating individual student learning needs. Similar to Beth, the unexpected, especially in the form of a crisis, is an immediate prompter.

Kay contends that an extreme experience sets her into a reflective mode, “... extremely
positive experiences or really negative experiences cause me to reflect most frequently, and the
general run of the mill experiences that I have, I don't find that I reflect as frequently on these.”
Additionally, she observes that she reflects on matters that have a significant personal impact.
Roy is prompted into a reflective mode when he receives an adverse reaction to his decisions or
actions. Jon also identifies personal criticism as a prompter acknowledging that this kind of
reflection “sticks with you or hurts something . . . it probably hangs on a little bit longer than the
positive things that go on.” Roy also identifies concerns related to change as an initiator of
reflection.

Paul, compared with the other five, identifies more clearly, interpersonal conflict as his
reflective trigger. He expresses concern about situations where there is “hurt in relationships”
especially if he perceives himself to be the cause of the hurt. Paul further states that when he
perceives a gap between the personal and professional dimensions of his life he is prompted to
reflect. For example, as a teacher if he feels that the respect that he displays for students is not
comparable to the respect that he has for his son then change is needed.

When and Where?

Another aspect of reflection that yielded interesting findings was when and where
participants reflect. Most participants adamantly state that most of their reflection occurs outside
their school day. A closer look suggests that this was the case for reflection on and for action but
evidence presented later (Chapter 6) shows that much reflection constantly occurs within their
school day. Still, during the initial interviews participants tended to limit their responses to
reflection on and for action.

Beth claims that there is no time for reflection from the time she enters school in the
morning until the last event is finished after 5:00 p.m. Outside that, she contends she could reflect
anywhere. Jokingly she states that it is not always quietly with “candle light, a journal and those
sorts of things.” She describes how sometimes at night she cannot sleep or could wake up about
a particular thing.

Cam has a cabin outside the city and keeps a picture of a wintery view of it near his desk.
He claims that is where most of his reflection occurs, because to reflect he contends, “one needs
to be physically or mentally, preferably both, away from the situation.” Cam believes that he can
not reflect while things are going on because of reactionary tendencies to do something before thinking things through.

Jon, who believes that we reflect all the time, asserts that there is no best time to reflect. He holds the belief that it depends on the issue and the degree to which deep or uninterrupted thought is needed. Reflection could occur for Jon anywhere or at anytime, from the staff room to the evening drive home. Jon adds that he finds it useful to form mental images of how things could be, when reflecting.

Kay places the most emphasis on the need for solitude when reflecting. She usually sets time aside at the end of her day or sometimes at the start. Reflection could also occur when doing leisure activities such as gardening or exercising. Paul, on the other hand, enjoys the opportunity to reflect at conferences and professional development seminars. He observes that he has opportunity to think and talk with colleagues in an environment where he is not directing the activity. Attending professional development sessions also enables him to see his work in a different light when he returns to school.

Roy vividly describes why reflection is difficult at school by detailing the start of a normal day. "The first minutes in the morning there could be ten decisions, all of varying levels of concern and every person who comes to you, that's their major problem right now." During a later shadowing session (Chapter 6) I observed first hand, this start to his typical day. He finds the evening time best for his reflection when he is "just sitting down and everything is quiet." Roy adds though "I don't sit down and say well I'm going to think about how things are going now." For Roy, reflection comes to him when circumstances are right, it is not something he schedules.

Roy, also like Paul, comments on the reflective importance of collegial gatherings. He says that when he is with other principals he is constantly "running things by them, you are snatching a minute here and there. What do you think of this or what did you do about that?" Roy contends these kinds of questions automatically prompt a level of reflectiveness.

**Reflective Processes**

Questions to participants about their reflective process produces many detailed and intricate comments. In planning for the interview, I expected that participants would find it challenging to articulate this aspect of reflection, that I would need to probe with other questions.
To my surprise, participants needed little prompting, provided elaborate answers and did not hesitate in indicating that they are not only aware of their tendency to reflect but also exactly how they do it.

*Visualizing the Situation*

Beth begins reflection-on-action by first creating a mental picture of the event. She includes as much detail as possible, such as where people were located, what they said, and even their body gestures. Next, she gives thought to what happened, and why it happened in this way. Beth acknowledges that she plays these questions repeatedly to herself, "just like a tape recorder." She questions not only how things could have been done differently but also how she could be a better support to others. Beth deems the setting, conversations, feelings and emotions all to be important elements of reflection. Once Beth feels that she has analyzed the event she considers next, what has to be done and more specifically, what her role is to be. Beth remarks "then I will practice in my head how I am going to go at this, when I am going to have to do this . . . and what is going to be done."

Jon views himself as a visual reflector. When he reflects, he develops detail to imagine how things could be. For example, in reflecting about how the school could better recognize student achievement he visualizes students receiving awards on stage before a full house. He imagines where various officials are sitting, a neat table full of plaques and awards, and loud applause from peers as students receive awards. Once Jon has developed a clear image, he then focuses on details to determine the existing gap and what needs to be done to close it.

Kay, similar to Beth, emphasizes recalling vividly, situational detail including the conversations and the feelings of those involved. Kay begins reflection by recounting detail such as the conversational atmosphere, the color of clothing that individuals wear and their facial expressions. Recounting physical characteristics then brings to light the conversation, which in turn causes Kay to think about how she felt during different parts of the conversation. "I will probably say I felt intimidated there, or I felt a great sense of peace there, I felt guilty there, I felt intimidated and insecure when such a person said that part in the conversation." Kay not only thinks about the conversation and related feelings. She also tries to delve into why she experiences these feelings, particularly the negative ones. She claims that usually she is attentive
to her feelings and for the most part “can attribute them to a cause.”

*Processing the Situation*

Roy posits that when reflecting on specific situations, his first step is to try to understand better what is happening, “Do I have the facts straight . . . or am I exaggerating something?” Next he tries to discuss the situation with other persons to be certain that he has considered it from all angles and that his interpretation is accurate. Then he develops a course of action that considers who he has to talk to and in what order. Roy also explains that reviewing how he has handled similar experiences is helpful in this process. Next, the reflection moves to taking a course of action. During this part of the process a key issue for Roy is to determine how to fairly take a stand without judging others.

Despite the methodical appearance of Roy’s reflective process, Roy expounds that he does not consciously follow a reflective process, saying “okay, I’m not sitting there saying stage one, I have to analyze, I think that is what happened (laughter) now God I hope I got that straight and this is what really happened!” Roy also asserts that broadly speaking, his reflection embraces “Where are we? What have we done? What are the possibilities?” in a less structured manner.

Paul’s description of his reflective process is similar to other participants in that he mentally uses a series of questions to work through an issue. However, he offers a different perspective about tracking his ideas during reflection. Paul earlier emphasized the need to write about key elements and points when in a reflective mode. He vocalizes the belief that his writing not only keeps him focused during reflection but more importantly, these key ideas are still available and accessible to his memory when he is not longer in a reflective mode. Paul stresses that reflection comes at different times such as late at night or at conferences, and being able to take good notes in these times is important. Paul contends that reflection requires a particular mind set and thought levels that go beyond the ordinary. Writing during times of reflection makes extraordinary thought accessible in the ordinary of everyday work.

Cam focuses much of his reflective process on future events. He poses the following questions in rapid fire order. “What has to be accomplished? Who is doing what? Is the plan effective? Is necessary communication in place? Is some other information needed? Does everybody understand? Does anything else need to be put in place?” Cam claims that sometimes
he reflects mentally but usually reflects better "on paper." Consequently, he commits many of these questions to paper and finds that he needs to have concrete evidence of planning. He declares that he needs to look at his schemata to decide if everything is included, otherwise "I tend to miss things in my head."

When I asked Cam about how he reflects on past events he first replied that he always takes responsibility for his mistakes. When something does not go as planned he remarks that he always goes back over the event to find "What is missing there? What did I do wrong? What isn't explained properly? Who didn't I include?" Cam reiterates that he is methodical and when things do not work out as planned, his main reflective goal is "... to figure out how it could be bettered. Who do I need to see to make that change?"

When to Include Others

Beth earlier mentioned that she finds it necessary to include others in her reflection and she explains this point in this part of the interview. Beth surmises that if she has someone to talk to at the end of the day she would do better at reflecting. Beth explains that to reflect, "I like to hear it out loud, what I really am thinking . . . . Sometimes that person can sum it up for me and bring it into perspective, and I feel yes, this is exactly what I am thinking." Although Beth has confidants in her life, they are usually outside her school setting.

Other participants too, begin their reflection as a solitary activity and include others only after they have worked through the initial stages. Cam declares that he initially reflects by himself to develop a "broad spectrum" of what he thinks the issues are. After this, he seeks opinion from others. For example, he credits the assistant principal as "another set of eyes and another perception of how things are going."

Other participants allude to having one or two trusted friends, usually not associated directly to their work environment. These trusted friends, who provide a listening ear, could be a family member, spouse, close personal friend or mentor. Cam remarks that he has no hesitation in considering other people's ideas because he can develop "tunnel vision" on some issues. Paul too, acknowledges the importance of his assistant principal and calls him "co-principal." Roy is also another, who first works things through to consider a problem and to anticipate possible reactions. Then he confers with another trusted person such as his assistant principal. In
fact, Roy recognizes his building caretaker as a wise sounding board. Roy says that he is the longest serving employee in the school, always has a good sense of what is going on and can offer a different perspective.

Kay contends that once the solitary part of her reflection is complete she is then ready to include others in the process. She explains that sometimes discussing and conversing with other individuals help her, but other times “they are not able to dialogue or go into a reflection with me so, I can’t pursue it.” Kay, like Roy, finds that reflection has to be solitary first and only then can she reach out to include others in the process.

**Improving Decisions Through Reflection**

Given that participants express clear views on what constitutes reflection and the processes they employ, I extended the discussion by soliciting their opinions about whether reflection leads to better decisions. For a variety of reasons they gave a resounding “yes.” Beth claims that she gets herself in more trouble when she acts without “taking it all in and thinking about it.” She contends that many people misread her when she has to decide in a rush because she is not able to make decisions “on her feet.” Consequently, she tends to rethink and backtrack on rushed decisions. She adds that unfortunately reflection can also be seen as “indecisiveness” or “wissy washy.” Rarely, Beth claims, does she “speak off the top of her head,” unless it is to a trusted person.

Paul says that he is big on showing how he arrives at decisions. He comments that reflective practice must be used to decide and reiterates that if reflection is not used to improve action, than it is time wasted. Roy’s response summarizes the views of others when he adds “the decision that I ultimately make may not be the best decision, . . . but at least I can go back and say I thought it through, and it was the best thing that I could come up with at the time.”

**Encouraging Others to Reflect**

Participants not only believe that reflection leads to better decisions but all claim to use various strategies to get others to reflect. Jon declares, “I have been known to plant a seed, just lay an idea or to give you some thing to put thought behind this and get back to me. . . .” Cam describes a number of staff initiatives to prompt a collective review or anticipation of things. He, for example, gives advance notice of discussion topics and prearranges groups within staff
meetings to ensure that each group has a good mix of ideas, attitudes and perceptions.

Kay tries to encourage others to be reflective but says she has to be respectful of where people are coming from. She states, she has the “authority and autonomy” to prompt others to reflect, but would be careful because “there are boundaries and that it wouldn’t be probably correct to take such an approach with say my boss.” However, to a new teacher she might say “think about this matter or situation tonight and maybe we will discuss it tomorrow and see what you might do next time.”

Most participants say they avoid using the term “reflection” because to many it is a foreign word. When prompting others, the participants speak of it as “having a discussion.” Roy mentions, “I don’t know if we ever send each other off saying, go and think about this.” Kay illustrates this point by adding “If I say think about, mull over, ask yourself, what have you learned, what would you do differently the next time, I think some of these synonyms will help them to further clarify what I mean by reflect.”

**Evolving Quality of Reflection**

A final topic of discussion in the initial interview concerned participant perception about how the quality of their reflection has evolved over time. This topic was not in my original round of questions and I stumbled onto it through Kay’s insightful comments.

Kay holds the belief that the quality of her reflection has found more depth and breath over time. She notes that in the early stages of her career, reflection would take the format where she would be simply recalling events, their circumstances and probably at verbatim what happened. Now she contends that she delves more, to go beyond the “what” to the “why,” theorizing that the why gives her more insight and understanding about others and herself. She says, “I don’t think I had that depth in the beginning.” These comments spurred me to find out how the others felt.

Paul claims that with experience, the purpose of his reflection has broadened considerably. In his formative years Paul reveals, “... it was probably reflecting but really in a negative sense, in the sense of trying to look good and not being relaxed in what I was doing.” Today, for Paul, reflection is more about listening and being attentive to others, to help motivate people and to develop ideas. Paul claims that today he also reflects about his reflections pondering “Am I using
it enough? Is it impacting? Is it making a difference?"

In a similar way Cam describes reflection in his beginning years as "worry and torment," mainly because he felt that when things did not go as planned it was a reflection on himself. He suggests that now he has gotten over taking things personally and regards reflection today as a generally positive exercise. Cam states too, that reflection comes to him more naturally, not a chore or a task that has to be done. He asserts that reflection will occur for him when he is away from the immediacy of his work and he is in a setting such as his country cabin.

Beth contends that more exposure to different situations and "getting gray" has made her reflections more open and more focused on human elements and less on accountability. However, she acknowledges that she sometimes waivers between the two, when she tries to focus more on human issues. Beth also voices the belief that she reflects more that she has in the past and that some of this reflection is actually about how and why she reflects. She asks of herself, "Why are you reflecting (laughing)? How are you reflecting? Sometimes I just walk away and not do that. I know if someone got inside my brain they would say she's a lunatic . . . (laughing)." Beth remarks that with time she has learned more about herself, and this she adds, has helped her reflect even better.

Jon believes as he gets more experience and more knowledge of various situations, the better he can handle conflict. Jon contends that knowledge from experience is obtained by deliberately relating present situations to past events. He postulates that the more he does this, the more likely he is to keep on doing it, and the more likely he is to handle future conflicts better.

When Roy discussed the quality of his reflection, he referred to when he was an assistant principal and about how he learned a great deal by having a reflective session with the principal at the end of most days. Roy said that over time he essentially operated on her ways and things went fine. Nevertheless, after she retired and he became principal, through reflection, he came to the conscious realization that he was not satisfied with emulating a style that was not necessarily his. Roy contends that he was also able to develop his own approach by moving away from past approaches and "thinking more and more about things and trying to find answers in more detail." He shared the comment, "I think what I have done over time is more consultation and tried to think things out in more detail before I run it by anyone." As a caution Roy also adds, "The
problem is if you become the thinker in detail, you want to do it all the time and in a lot of cases you are wasting your time...you find yourself thinking about the most foolish old stuff...

I asked Roy if he has considered the effectiveness of his ability to reflect and as his response unfolded he seemed astounded that he had not previously considered this question. Within moments, this astonishment turned to excitement as he considered the possibilities, “...it would be interesting to try to think that out (pause) and if I had a list of skills, (pause) that to my own eyes, and say well (pause) do you use this, this and this (pause), and really I would be able to trace it back to that, but I’ve never consciously thought about it.” Roy continued to wonder about how well he was reflecting and if indeed he should have other skills. Roy claims that through reflection, he has evolved to the leader that he is today. If the astonishment expressed toward the end of the interview was any indication, his evolution will continue.

**Importance of Training and Experience**

Earlier in the interview I asked participants to identify their relevant experience and training. Later, I extended this discussion and asked how this experience and training was useful in their reflection. Initially, most participants downplayed the usefulness of professional training. A closer examination of commentary about training reveals that its importance is often overshadowed by the importance of experiences. For example, Jon’s diplomas are prominently displayed on the wall behind his desk but when I asked him about the importance of them he said that they were not really that important, “a lot of it is learning on the job and mentoring.” However, after the interview was over and the tape stopped, he indicated that he wanted to go back to the training question. With his permission I turned on the tape, then he added that he has acquired much technical know-how through his training. An example he cited, was his knowledge of school law. Jon claims that his training in this area shapes his responses when liability concerns arise. He further illustrates the importance of his training in student evaluation, program development and human resource management. Jon contends that his training has been especially helpful in developing technical know-how needed in his work.

Cam states that his training has positively shaped his reflection. Interestingly, Cam counters that some of his best training has been professional development since completing his Master of Curriculum degree. He acknowledges that his Master’s degree has well prepared him
for classroom issues. However, since becoming an administrator, he has had to seek more specific training in areas such as technology. As earlier mentioned, Cam specifically credits his reservist training as especially useful to his work.

Beth claims that she learned much from the first year she worked in administration. Often, she thinks back to the experiences of that year when facing new and similar situations. She comments that in other schools her administrative partners were not as inclined to reflect but were willing to take time to hear her out. Despite Beth’s experience as an assistant principal, she feels that she was not adequately prepared for the principal position she finds herself in this year. She wishes that she had more experiences to include in her reflections.

Cam asserts that “unless you have no pulse,” personal experiences “have got to prepare you better to reflect.” He believes that he has learned a great deal from his experiences and deliberately “brings them to bear on the present and on the future.” Cam stresses the need to tap into the “collective wisdom” of principals. He calls collective wisdom “not something learned in a course necessarily,” but things learned through “living your principalship, through living with diverse personalities and abilities.” Cam is adamant that all administrators have something to share and since the opportunities to do it are scarce, sharing usually happens incidentally.

Jon and Roy state similar views. Jon says when a situation arises he consciously considers how he has handled past situations, either positively or negatively. In times of decision making, he claims, knowledge and experience come together. Roy emphasizes not only reviewing his own experience but trying to tap into the experiences of other principals. He claims that as experience accumulates, “you kind of trust your experience of the past more, and your analysis of it.”

Prevalence Among Colleagues

Participants believe that reflection is prevalent among colleagues. Roy wonders how one could be a principal without doing a lot of thinking, when away from the work. He says there are “always nagging problems and nagging concerns and there are nagging agendas for change and improvement and movement . . .” However, he maintains that principals may not be conscious of how much reflection goes on and adds that they may not be able to identify actual instances. Paul concurs adding that the important issue is not whether principals reflect but what they do with their reflections. If reflection is to be useful, according to Paul, it should prompt and direct
subsequent action.

Beth is not convinced that reflection is as evident among principals. Commenting on what she observes at various administrator functions, Beth observes “I don’t know if people really spend a lot of time thoroughly reflecting on the kinds of things that they do and why they do them.” Cam feels that many reflect but the degree to which they reflect and the manner in which they do it, varies. He also observes that some principals move from one year to the next without ever revisiting their experiences. Interestingly, Cam points to a need for principals to reflect collectively because “... everybody is doing things similarly but differently.” He concludes that for administrators, reflection in some kind of a directed collaborative format would solve “a whole bunch of unnecessary individual reflective time, to which you would not get the same results.”

**Espoused Values**

In the initial interview I asked participants to talk about their values and their place in reflection. This area of questioning produced the widest range of reactions in all data collected. Participants like Roy, talked effortlessly about their values, their origins and how they use them daily. Others, like Jon found this to be a very difficult topic, stating for instance, that he was not sure about these questions and did not know if his answers were of any use to me. Despite a slow start to values discussion I noticed in later interviews that participants including Jon, needed less time to think about values questions and offered more detailed replies. It appears that the more participants talked about values the better they became at doing it.

Participants’ espoused values were coded using Leithwood & Steinbach’s (1991) classification scheme. This scheme was derived from revisions to their earlier research and identifies sixteen values across four categories (Table 2.1). These values classifications were not actually presented to participants but were used to organize, sort and analyze participants’ responses. Although espoused values of participants are more similar than dissimilar, discussion warrants individual analysis of each participant because in Chapter 5, 6 and 7, participant’s espoused values are reexamined in relation to values used in action.

**Beth**

Beth once commented “people would say that I am warm and fuzzy and then there are others who look at me and say that I am a task master.” Perhaps it should come as no surprise
then, that the same tension is evident in her espoused values. Within the basic human values set, Beth frequently refers to knowledge, respect and survival, the latter being most prominent. There were many illustrative statements of survival such as, "I try not to blind side people, but I get blind sided all the time," "I guess I have to take the knocks and work it out," "you are open for condemnation in this job," "There are some battles that you are better off, just leaving alone," "Does anybody really care?" These statements were often made in response to difficult events that Beth faced throughout this first year as principal.

Within the basic human values set, Beth also emphasizes the need to respect and support people. She highlights the people centeredness of her work and the emphasis on taking time to hear the human story. Beth contends that she values the children, their parents, and the people who work in school and tries to bring a more human element to her responsibilities.

Beth's expressed respect for others is consistent with her espoused social and political values. Her emphasis on working with people to set a positive tone for the school is evident in a number of comments. She states "we will certainly be working on immediately developing a culture and a climate that says we want all of you [parents ] to feel that you belong here." Participation is also an important espoused belief. Again, when talking about parents she posits, "I am not witholding things from them you know, they find it very easy to call and that kind of thing." Beth too, believes that it is critical that she help others whether it be getting curriculum guides for teachers or supporting the learning needs of a child. In commenting on students she contends "we have a responsibility to help every one of them to learn to the best of their ability."

The previous comment also typifies many of Beth's espoused professional values. She contends that a program has to be offered to all children so they can learn and be prepared for the world, adding that in today's world it is an economic necessity. In terms of accountability Beth insists that what teachers do must match exactly what they are suppose to be doing. Beth contends that teachers are supposed to have a very thorough understanding of curriculum guides, the subjects they teach and be able to meet the instructional needs of their students. She is adamant that within a curriculum structure all aspects of the child have to be developed, "we are not just here for Music, we have to bring forward our Math, our Language Arts, and our Art."

Returning to the opening sentence where Beth says she may be warm and fuzzy to some
and a task master to others, her espoused values help explain why people form different views of her. It may also help explain why she does not consistently find satisfaction in her work and why many issues are a struggle. Her professional and basic human values appear to be so polarized that one set is achieved at the expense of the other. Beth’s pursuit of professional values may be driven to the extent that it clashes with her basic human values. On the other hand, as earlier stated, when she attends to basic human values, her professional values may seem unfulfilled. Consequently, Beth is left feeling that she needs to learn more about the nature of her work and find a better balance between these values sets. This clash could also help explain her many references to survival values.

Cam

The espoused values of Cam tend to represent all four sets with greater emphasis on professional and social and political values. Cam emphasizes respect in the basic human values set and carefulness most often in the general moral values set. In a specific comment about respect and leadership Cam asserts “you have to make people feel that they are the change agents, not those being pushed around by ourselves. I find that’s a pretty difficult, sensitive role that you are in.” Cam claims that he works at this in a personable way, and without placing “parents in the role of a child.”

Given, that Cam considers himself meticulous, his emphasis on the value of carefulness comes as no surprise. This is illustrated when he states, “If I plan for things well, if I involve the right people, if I can get the right atmosphere for an event to occur, then it will go the way that I think it should.” He adds that when things do not go as planned he goes back over them to see what he missed and to prevent it from happening again. Cam claims, that many things go on in school and “being prepared and having a plan is the better way to go.” He maintains that he has contingencies for most crises.

Within professional values, Cam highlights a number of points that could be considered within general responsibilities as educator. Similar to Beth, he emphasizes accountability but offers a much different definition. Cam describes accountability as believing that he and his staff are working in the best interests of the students and community, and at the same time feeling happy and successful about these efforts. Accountability for Cam is personal, it is about how he
feels about happenings within school. For example, he contends that he does not worry too much about his school's performance on Canadian Cognitive Ability Tests or Canadian Tests of Basic Skills because for him, accountability is about progress that happens within school. Cam reiterates that he is working with a disadvantaged community and although standardized results are far below district standards he is satisfied when the staff is working in the best interests of students and that they are making progress.

Related to professional responsibilities, Cam comments frequently about specific role responsibilities. His views on this are best summed up when he shares, "I always perceived that my role was to get in the classroom with teachers, getting the best out of their practices, making kids achieve. That is the best part of my day." Providing structure is also an important aspect of Cam's professional values. Cam posits that it is his responsibility to provide structure for good teaching and learning. Adamant about this, he voices, "I have to provide what I call a bottom line, in other words there are certain things and lines that you would never cross with me because they become show stoppers!" Cam stresses that he proactively approaches his responsibilities and tries to anticipate and respond to impediments that interfere with the smooth running of school.

Cam's personable emphasis is also indicative of his emphasis on social and political values. He believes helping others to be important, whether it is acting as a facilitator, a listener or even as an advisor. Recognizing again that many children's parents are at an economic disadvantage, Cam often feels that he has to advocate for children and their parents when they are in conflict with the school. He contends that to have the most positive learning environment, parents, students and all stakeholders must be involved. Cam remarks, "I value making sure that everybody has what they need, to do what they do best in an environment that is conducive to it [learning]." Consequently, Cam summarizes "Getting people involved is probably one of the bigger things that I try to do and that's a priority, getting the right person for the right job, getting the right student on track by having the right approach."

Also, within social and political values Cam makes frequent references to sharing. In looking forward to the remaining few years of his career and the challenge of starting another school he talks about the opportunity to build a new staff by pulling together their experiences, backgrounds, personalities and abilities. Cam observes that everybody has something to share
with everyone else, "it is just that we do not take the time to do it." He confidently believes that in the final school of his career that he will pull together a staff to make things work. In typical Cam fashion he concludes, "if it doesn't work it will be because myself and the people in the next five years haven't worked together."

**Jon**

As mentioned in the opening to this section, Jon did not articulate many comments in discussion about his espoused values. When I asked him specifically to comment on his values his initial response, after a lengthy pause was "Give it [the question] to me again!" After I explained my questions further, he raised happiness, (within the *basic human values* set) but otherwise spoke mainly about *professional and social and political values*. In commenting about happiness, Jon asserts that he would like for "people to be happy to be associated with this school." He claims that for the most part people identify with the school, but recently a number of students slated to transfer in, for September, have lobbied to go elsewhere. He asks "why is it that they want to go to another school?" Jon firmly believes that students should proudly wear the school jacket and "be happy with nobody on anybody's case." Likewise, he wants teachers to be comfortable and to enjoy working at this school. Within *basic human values*, Jon also feels that the school must have a friendly environment where people know they are safe.

Under *professional values*, Jon briefly refers to being organized, having a plan laid out and giving the impression of organization. He emphasizes creating a standard where all students perform to their individual level of excellence. Jon's comments, within the realm of *social and political values*, are more frequent. He places emphasis on participation and feels that there is a need for greater staff participation and involvement. To this end, he feels that he has to try to create an environment where teachers want to participate in matters beyond their immediate responsibilities. Sharing too, is important for Jon. He contends that the school community is not used to having a say in the running of the school and that this is a new approach for them. Jon is working toward sharing decision making with students, parents and community leaders alike, adding, "I don't leave anybody out."

**Kay**

Kay concisely and effortlessly explicates her espoused values. Two sets dominate Kay's
discussion, basic human and social political values. She also clearly articulates professional values. Within basic human values, Kay gives much credence to happiness. She feels that to work in education, requires that you give a lot of yourself and that you enjoy the work. Kay tries to find the positive and good in people and consciously seeks contentment and happiness in her private life. She exclaims, “I enjoy getting up in the morning and give God thanks at night that I have a job.” The pursuit of knowledge is another of Kay’s significant basic human values. She enjoys bringing new initiatives to her staff and is committed to learning from her experiences. She finds it important to grow and learn and to help others do the same.

Kay emphasizes the need for respect in all her dealings with others, especially children. She states, “Every child in the school, basically is a good person, intrinsically good and is loved.” Kay adds “Some of the initiatives we are doing, is to make kids feel good about themselves, not to bully each other and so on.” When commenting on staff she notes that some are more energetic, some are more industrious but even the ones hard to reach, have strengths and something good and positive to offer. Kay expresses similar views about parents and is pleased with their response. She reports that one parent confided to her, “I [parent] feel welcomed here, I feel good, I feel like you [Kay] don’t look down on the poor people, you appreciate the poor people too.”

Within social and political values Kay stresses the importance of helping others. For example, as an instructional leader Kay tries to be visible and present in teachers’ classrooms, to teach and observe with them. She views herself as enabling staff on new initiatives, school improvement and school council issues. Facilitating contacts between staff and district or staff and parents is another example of how Kay carries out her helper role. Kay contends, “No one woman or man is an island, so we can’t work in isolation.”

When discussing professional values, Kay talks most about her general educational and specific role responsibilities. Curriculum and instruction foci are evident, as well as a willingness to support staff on new initiatives, school discipline, conflict mediation, teacher development and other responsibilities. For the most part, Kay claims she tries to keep abreast of current pedagogy and instruction and also to develop herself professionally.

Paul
The quality of human relationship tends to be a common theme for Paul, and accompanying this is his emphasis on basic human values. Within this set, respect is Paul’s most frequently referenced espoused value. Paul contends that his respect for people is an enduring one that has increased with time. He comments that when he left the teaching profession at an earlier point he believed, although he did not realize it at the time, that he was “better” than less educated people. As he worked at carpentry, sales, and oil rigs he says he met many wonderful people and learned the importance of treating people, regardless of whom they are, with respect. Paul says that today, more than ever, that value guides him in his dealing with parents, staff and students alike. He stresses that part of his role responsibility is to ensure that there be respect between individuals within school, whether that be a student and teacher or a parent and teacher.

Happiness is another espoused value of Paul, not only for himself but for all with whom he is associated. Paul emphasizes positive relationships as a source of happiness and counters that when there is hurt in a relationship it must be addressed. It is Paul’s contention that they must value and respect every student.

Professional values too, receive strong emphasis from Paul. When I asked him about the most important aspects of his job he emphasized to ensure that students are heard and valued and that the best possible things are done for them. Paul declares that for him, what is important is to know that the school has made a difference and that it has helped students further their education and their lives. This Paul says, is accomplished through collaborative and community building by motivating people to work, being visible and being available and working cooperatively with all stakeholders. It is also apparent that many of Paul’s professional values correspond with social and political values.

Roy

Of all participants, Roy speaks the most about his espoused values and even elaborates on some values conflicts. His espoused values transcend all four sets with almost equal emphasis on all but general moral values. Roy describes his work as satisfying and said that at the time of interviewing things were “busy but enjoyable.” He contends that life at his present school has been extremely good, yet challenging. Roy places much importance on knowledge and being aware of differing views of the world around him.
Central to Roy’s basic human values are honesty and respect. Roy contends that he tries to listen honestly to everybody’s views regardless “socioeconomic, educational level or who the kid is or where the kid is from.” Expanding on his respect for students, Roy explains, “I can not stand anybody treating a person without respect . . . I always demand and push for here is respect and I think you never treat anybody as something below you, whether you are talking about a student or a parent.”

Within social and political values Roy stresses participation and sharing, contending that one of his major responsibilities is to be “a facilitator between the parents, the teachers, myself, the students, let’s try to move things along cooperatively as much as possible.” Roy summarizes, “I like the team, the consensus approach, . . . quite often it usually ends up in compromise.” When giving examples or helping others and sharing, Roy proudly highlights many school initiatives. “We have a lot of charitable efforts here, we have a foster child, we collect for a number of things and we are all of the time talking to children about care for your neighbour, concern for neighbour . . . .”

At the time of interviewing, loyalty values were causing personal conflict for Roy. As the school council recommended the school remain a kindergarten to grade eight structure the school board was moving ahead with plans to reconfigure it to a kindergarten to grade six school. Roy after giving this issue much thought, firmly supports the kindergarten to eight arrangement and opposes the changes. The school council is aware of his stance. However, Roy feels that he can not be publicly oppose the school board, his employer. Roy reports “there were several times my values and beliefs were telling me to stand up and say no. . . . but the reality is that I am in the world with a family, I am in the world with a job with the board, I am working with other people that don’t believe exactly the way I do.”

Roy argues that he knows his beliefs and values and would not compromise them to the extent “where I can’t live morally with it.” He shares “My father lived, and it’s on his tombstone, ‘to thine own self be true’ and that is my motto and that is what I go by.” Roy, in the end, accepts his silence, not only because of a greater loyalty to his employer, but because he believes that he does not hold the full answer. There are, he claims, other realities and other players with different beliefs and values. He concludes, “I work on meeting people every day that have
different outlooks on things, I work in a community where people have some different beliefs on the way things should be.”

Espoused Value Summary

An overview of espoused values reveals that generally most of the six participants emphasize in descending order from most to least important, basic human, social and political, professional and general moral values. Within basic human values respect received overwhelming support and was the single most identified espoused value. Happiness, for self or for others, also received attention in this set particularly by Kay, Paul and Roy. The value of participation received most priority in the social and political values set. Participants who espoused social and political values also tended to identify with basic human values strongly. Within the professional values set, they gave most attention to general and specific role responsibilities. Although participants articulated some consequence values, they usually made these statements as an explanation of their role responsibilities. Of Leithwood & Steinbach’s (1991) sixteen values, fairness and courage received little acknowledgment by participants.

Some anomalies were evident throughout the analysis. Despite the tumultuous environment that participants found themselves in at the time of interviewing, Beth was the only participant to identify survival values strongly. The carefulness value was highlighted mostly by Cam, who contends that this value is part of his meticulous nature and penchant for planning. Another anomaly arises from Roy’s loyalty value conflict. To sort this conflict out Roy explicitly considered his values and beliefs, their origins and deliberately factored them into his reflections.

Conclusion

This concludes analysis of data collected through the first interview with participants however, in Chapters Five, Six and Seven many of these findings of this chapter are reexamined. In the next chapter participants’ reflection-on-action is analyzed more closely through data collected in two other interviews. Participants were asked to reflect on a vignette and a past critical incident. Both of these reflections-on-action are examined through the conceptual framework developed in Chapter Two.
CHAPTER FIVE

Retrospective Reflection; Some Instances

This chapter reports details about participants’ reflections-on-action using the results of two interviews with each participant. In one interview, participants were presented a vignette (Appendix C) about a fictitious principal, June Dwyer. Then they were asked to reflect on her situation using a series of guided questions. I asked participants in the other interview (Appendix D) to reflect on a personal experience that happened within the last six months.

During interviewing, I gave participants considerable latitude to comment as they wished. If their commentary covered particular topics, I avoided asking questions that participants might have otherwise considered redundant. Prepared questions served as my guide, to ensure that essential ground was covered. Questions were also arranged so as not to impose a reflective process on participants. I often took the participants’ lead and followed their comments. Phases of reflection, as depicted in the conceptual framework, are used to collectively organize and synthesize the six participants’ responses.

June Dwyer Vignette

The vignette presented to participants is about a principal, June, who is embroiled in a controversy surrounding the school board’s plan to reorganize her school. June attends a press conference held by the board only to discover that they are reconfiguring her school from a K-9 school to a K-6 school. Grace Green, the council chair, is dismayed and expects the school council to oppose the plan. June does not know what to do, she contacts her director, but at the same time wants to be supportive of the school council.

I prepared a vignette of this nature because similar situations were unfolding for many principals in the participants’ city. During the time of data collection, media pressure and scrutiny on the school system was intense. Not only did participants hear daily media accounts about confrontations between school councils and the board, some like Kay, experienced the situation first hand. Others knew about the turmoil being experienced by colleagues. This vignette however, was prepared before participant selection, and any similarities between the vignette and participants’ situations were purely coincidental.

Participant commentary on this vignette is next presented through the reflective phases as
depicted in the reflective aperture of the conceptual framework (Figures 1.1).

**Suggestion**

As participants read the vignette many suggestions formed. These are ideas or possibilities for action that immediately come to mind as individuals notice a situation that has to be attended to or dealt with. Suggestions arise from a sense that something is awry, and suggestions require further thought. Otherwise, the ideas become as Dewey (1933) says “idle speculation and fantasies (p.106).” Unless ideas are used to guide new observations, they are of little use. Consequently, individuals can respond to suggestions by brushing them aside or by involving a process to think about the suggestions further and ultimately to decide what to do.

Participants usually took about five minutes after reading and reviewing the vignette before talking. Interestingly, there was much agreement about suggestions. Some were related to June being taken by surprise over the reconfiguration. After all, as many noted, this was the final report of a three phase process. Participants felt that June needed to increase her knowledge about what was unfolding. This entailed finding out what was going behind the closed doors of the decision makers at the school board. Another area noted by participants dealt with the director’s remark about the report being “interconnected and complex.” Many felt June had to find out the likelihood of the board making changes to this plan. Next, the timing of the school council meeting seemed to trigger concern. Many participants thought it unusual that June was heading into such a tempestuous meeting and believed that she had to get a lot more planning and ground work in place. It also occurred to participants that June had to better focus on preventing the situation from deteriorating any further.

**Problem**

Participants’ description of June’s problem usually revolved around the timeworn expression about “having to walk a fine line.” Although there are variations of this idea, participants consistently describe June’s problem as finding a way to work with both groups, the board and council. Beth states that the council expects June to be more than a liaison between the board and council. The council wants her to go to bat for them no matter what the circumstances. Yet the director has already reminded her that she is an employee of the board and therefore must work within set parameters.
Kay contends that June obviously has allegiance to “her boss, her school board.” She feels that June is left with the difficult task of sorting out this allegiance while in a state of shock. Kay adds that June knows that the board expects her to facilitate a process and go ahead with the change, though an angry school council does not support it.

Roy asserts that June has to figure out where she fits as a member of the school council, now that the director has reminded her that she is an employee of the board. Roy concludes, “Her essential problem is ‘what do I do now?’ I know what the school board wants me to do, I know what the school council wants me to do, and I am not free enough to do perhaps what I should do.” Roy infers that June’s problem is further complicated because in the end she may not be able to follow the decision that she feels is best.

Jon, who believes that June has no choice but “to carry the line, to carry the message from the board,” highlights the political dimension of June’s problem. The political problem becomes how to do this without June jeopardizing her position or role. Jon expects that June “will politicize with the school council” since it is a political body and not one that employs her. Meanwhile, he acknowledges that the conflict is now in the public domain and June can not publicly oppose the board. To do this, he says, would be insubordination.

Paul and Cam’s views about June’s problem concur with the opinions of the others. Yet they add some different perspectives. Paul says again that a large part of June’s problem is not being a part of the decision making process and not having any insight into what the reform might mean for her school. He wonders whether June chose not to get involved, was she intentionally left out or was she genuinely unaware of what was coming.

Cam’s understanding of the problem focuses more on how to contain the fall out of the school council meeting and “... how to maintain some kind of order and calm and gather information.” He argues that there is a way to deal with crises and a manner in dealing with people. Cam notes however, that the council chair has decided “Whoops, this is bad we better tell people and get something going!” before studying the decision. He also postulates that the director is compounding June’s situation by offering support while “holding a club over her head.” Cam feels that June is ill prepared for this situation and is fast losing her professional credibility.

Hypothesis
In the hypothetical phase of reflection, suggestions for action are reconsidered as guiding ideas develop. During this phase, suggestions and problem framing are transformed into a main idea for action, and later become the reasoning focus. However, the development of a hypothesis is contingent on clarity of suggestions and the problem.

Three themes were evident when participants consolidated their suggestions and sense of the problem into an overarching hypothesis for action. Jon and Roy focus on June’s need to clarify the role of the school council. Jon feels that June is trying to be too accommodating with the council and does not realize the extent to which this council is “confrontational and aggressive.” He also asserts that the council has much energy and enthusiasm and June has to better direct it. Jon feels therefore, that June has to adjust her relationship with the school council by becoming less accommodating and by better focusing their efforts.

Roy further comments on the lack of a solid rapport between June and her council. It seems that they get along well in good times, he says, but the lack of a professional relationship is not able to sustain them through this difficult time. June, he adds, has been showing perhaps too much support for her council and now can not pull back without the council feeling betrayed.

A second theme is evident in the comments of Cam and Kay. They focus on the board’s decision making process, one that excludes June. She is apparently not in the decision making loop. Yet they add she has to deal with the fallout of board decisions. Both Cam and Kay zero in on how removed June is from the decision making and how uninformed she is in dealing with what was about to come. They conclude that June must become part of the process.

June’s naivety is the third theme that caught the attention of many participants like Beth and Paul. Beth maintains that June is probably an honest person with little experience who has “no idea of what she was getting in to.” Cam holds a similar view, speculating that June is probably an inexperienced principal with a vocal parent group. He adds that if this is the case, “some of the responsibility of this fiasco has to rest with the board, in placing this person in an untenable situation for which she is not prepared.” Both postulate that June must get advice from experienced principals.

Kay is amazed that June did not see the “writing on the wall” regarding the proposed changes to Seashore School. Paul figures that June was comfortable in not cluing into what was
going on around her, choosing not to consider the big picture of board reorganization because she felt that changes would not come to her school. In essence June must become more aware of the many dimensions to this situation.

To more specifically examine participants’ hypotheses for June’s actions they were asked about the advice they would offer June at various junctures in the vignette. These intervals included the press conference, the phone call to the director and the council meeting. Despite the variety of responses the three previously discussed themes are consistently evident.

Advice After Press Conference

All participants expressed concern and empathy for June and described her situation as threatening. Many stated that she was in for a rough ride and suggested that she start preparing. Meanwhile, Kay and others felt that the announcement at the press conference should not have surprised June and believed that she has to do better at becoming attuned to the situation. They suggest that she should develop an understanding of how things happened up to this point and start anticipating what comes next.

Roy would tell June that she has her work cut out but he would emphasize to her that she has to start looking at the positives. He would encourage her to view the reconfiguration as a personal opportunity to respond to a new challenge and create a new school. Roy would also caution June not to get caught up in the negative aspects of this decision. Still, he feels June should explore the rationale for the reconfiguration and find the logic in it.

Kay offers advice similar to Roy’s, saying that she would say to June “Change is never easy, but I think you need to look at the positive, look at the silver lining in the announcement.” For the children, Kay suggests, this might mean better facilities, better programs, extra curricular activities, less busing and so on. Kay adds that she would encourage June to empathize and support her council but also to challenge them to an extent, to consider the possibilities.

Paul’s advice to June after the press conference is that she contact the director for feedback and direction on the upcoming school council meeting. He contends that June should find out why the board did not give her warning about the school changes. He feels that if the board purposely left her out of the decision making she should question the director. On the other hand, if she should have known more, she has to apologize to the school council for not keeping
them informed. June's next move then, according to Paul, is to start getting information out about the basis for this decision.

Roy's advice for June focuses mainly on her work with the school council. He believes that June needs to be much clearer about her role and what she can and can not state publicly. Similar to Kay, he adds that June also has to realize that many parents will resist change because things have been comfortable for a long time. Nevertheless, she has to realize that the decisions are probably in the best interest of the school and as an employee "if you value your position and you value your future and you value your job and everything else, think about it [what June says] before you say it."

Cam offers advice to June on a number of fronts. First, he suggests June delay a public meeting of the school council because she is not prepared with the information that they are going to need. He believes that June should sit with the council, to decide what information they need and how it can be collected. Cam suggests this approach because it would prevent the council chair from deciding that this is a bad decision before they think it through, and it would also give the council some tasks and responsibility for getting a response started.

Once June has these steps in motion Cam would urge her to contact the director for support and direction. He feels that it is important that she keep the director informed because of the potential for this to generate public reaction. Cam asserts that by going to the director, June can reduce hysteria and work cooperatively on a solution. Overall, Cam feels that delaying a public meeting, involving the council in information gathering and consulting the director would be constructive and in the best interests of the entire school community.

Advice After Call to Director

Advice for June after her call to the director is consistent among all participants except Beth. Jon's comments probably typify the views of most when he says "you'd best support what the director is saying there and take him up on his offer of coming down and let him meet." Kay adds that although June needs to be loyal to her employer, she also needs to be visible with her school council. She suggests June should try to get the council to follow diplomatic channels available to them when get their message out.

Other participants repeat the need for June to calm the waters, and as Paul says "June,
don’t tie yourself all up in knots and stress yourself out, (laughter) life goes on!” Cam contends that if June feels that she is getting only heavy handed support from the director then she should get together with a couple of experienced principals and say “I am out of my depth here, what do you think I should do?” Otherwise, Cam restates that June has to delay the public meeting with the school council. He believes she has to draft a letter to parents advising them of the developments, but more importantly that the council is preparing a response.

Roy says he would caution June about the mixed messages in the director’s statements. The director, he mentions, offers good advice about bringing the council around to talk about the necessity of change, and he seems genuine in offering to come to a meeting. However, Roy warns that June better note what the director is saying when he states “you have a responsibility to steer this in a constructive manner.” Roy remarks “'constructive manner’ means steer it to what the board has decided. There is no construction going on here, the building [plan] is built and you sell the building.”

Roy says he could also point out to June that if she is to survive beyond this event she must maintain the confidence of the council. This he says can be done, not by belittling the director’s position, but by relaying council’s discontent and by communicating the board’s rationale for the change. He would also remind June that she has to make it clear to council that she is an employee of the board and is therefore limited in what she can state publicly.

The director’s comments are even more suspect to Beth. She prefaces advice for June by eschewing “not that I want to be malicious against the director” then counters that he is so removed from the situation that he does not realize the difficulty that June faces. Beth says she would tell June that “central” is where central office is and that nothing “constructive is going to happen at this meeting.” Beth claims, “I think I would have to say ‘June sit down dear, let’s get into the real world!’” and once again cautions “June dear, get yourself ready.”

Advice for School Council Meeting

A greater variety of opinion is evident in the advice offered to June in the final juncture of the vignette. All participants regard June’s situation after the council meeting with less optimism because as Cam sighs “It is pretty far down the path.” Most participants felt there was much June could have done to head off this situation, including canceling the meeting, but now that matters
are gone this far their advice can only be directed at damage control.

Cam advises that June, now more that ever, make it crystal clear to the council what her role is and the extent to which she can support their efforts. He believes that she must try to bring the council under control to meet with the director. In other words, Cam says that June has to go back to the drawing board and regain control. He observes “the council is initiating chaos or it is not strong enough to withstand the chaos in the parent population.”

Beth’s advice to June is now more about survival. First, she acknowledges that she would tell June to forget about steering the course, “you can forget about being the captain of the ship because you are one of the mess hands. . . .” Beth would also point out to June that the council thinks they are running this process, not the director. From there Beth would emphasize to June that she needs to sit with other principals who have been “around the block” and listen attentively to what they have to say. Otherwise, Beth concludes June is on her own and into crisis management, where she is about to find out whom she can trust and whom she can not.

Jon is of the view that not much can be done to sort out what has happened, “the wheels are in motion.” He suggests that June has “got to play it out but don’t get wrapped up into it.” He contends that June should act cautiously and repeats “she can’t be a mover and shaker with this particular process.” In fact he advises June to limit further involvement with the council.

Kay credits June for remaining silent at the end of the vignette and advises her to remain silent for a while longer. She says that she would ask June to call another meeting of the council and discuss acceptable ways for the council to express its views and concerns. Kay would also have June emphasize to the council that if they are to be heard they must follow necessary protocol. She maintains that she would further advise June to start thinking about the change and to challenge the council at least to hear the rationale for the board’s plan.

Roy’s advice, consistent with his focus for the other two junctures, is about June’s role with the council. He says that he would tell June that the council is not really that sympathetic to her position as an employee of the board. Therefore, Roy thinks she should not get dragged into the council maneuvers. Roy says he would tell June “it’s too political for you to be in the middle of and if parents want to take action, there is little you can do to stop it.” Meanwhile, he would caution June about what council actions she should be associated with or “puts her name on.”
Reasoning

During reflection, suggestions form from observations and inferences and become the basis for problem framing. Gradually, suggestions and the problem frame itself become modified and expanded into a hypothesis for action. As the hypothesis solidifies, it is further reasoned or mentally elaborated, to consider actions and the consequences of these actions.

This process was quite evident in the thinking of participants as I examined reasoning phases of their reflective practice. I asked participants about June's intentions, the basis for their advice to June, their confidence in handling such a situation, similar experiences and June’s values and intentions. I pursued these aspects of participant reasoning to illuminate the extent to which reflective practice varies with each participant’s own situation.

June's Intentions

Participants commented frequently that they could only make guesses about June’s intentions because the vignette was sketchy. For example, Cam had other questions about the board’s rationale for reconfiguring Seashore School and how the school fared in phase one and two of the plan. Jon credits June with trying to bring influence to the school council, although the council would not hear her out. Beth remarks that June is trying to walk that fine line while trying to be seen as supportive of the parents. Beth believes that June knows that her credibility and job are at stake and that she can not get “caught” on either side. June, she notes, does not want to be seen as the “hand maiden of the school board” or to be closely aligned with parents.

Roy figures June wants Seashore School’s grade configuration to remain as is and knowing that this is how the council feels, she had no reason to disagree with the council. However, after the press release, June was left to find a way to uphold the board position although she agreed with her school council. On another note, Paul voices the view that June may have avoided taking sides by deliberately not being informed and not knowing the possibilities. He says if she portrays the view to the board and council, “I didn’t know anything, I didn’t suspect, nobody told me that my school was going to be affected . . .” then she can avoid taking any position.

Before leaving the discussion of the vignette, I asked participants to comment on the final sentence about June becoming silent thinking about what to do. Kay sees it as a physical
indication of reflection, "that she is tugged, she is being pulled in different ways." Kay adds she "is mulling things over and trying to come to grips with what is right here." Beth concurs with this point adding she is probably thinking about what can we do now, "I need to give them information and I need to let the board know as much as possible." Beth adds, the silence of June is also to let the council know that ultimately she is an employee of the board. Cam says June's silence at this point may be about what could be done, after the fact. More than likely Cam adds, "she is thinking about herself, her professional career . . . this is gone completely out of control."

**June's Values**

Participants identify many values that seem to be shaping June's reasoning, perhaps the most dominant being survival. Cam asserts, "I think June is in a survival mode. I don't think that she has had an opportunity to reflect or to think about any of the things as to the impact from a K - 9 to a K - 6." Many feel that because she is in survival mode she is not able to reason beyond the crisis of this situation to consider the wider implications of the board’s recommendations and to develop actions to deal with them.

June’s specific role responsibilities too, plays a dominant role in her reasoning, as all participants acknowledge that she takes her duties as an employee seriously. Beth remarks, "June really does have a belief that I am an employee of this board. I do have a responsibility." This value is supported by another, loyalty. Kay explains, "I would say that she is loyal to her employer, her director, if not she would have never taken that route [calling the director], she would have taken on a crusade with the council and did as she pleased."

However, Roy like others, suggests that mixed loyalties to the council and board affects June’s reasoning. Roy thinks that June could have said to the director, "I am sorry director, I've got to speak my mind on this and I know you are saying that I am an employee but watch me!" Still, Roy adds, she values the say of the school board and realizes that she has to support that decision, at the risk of lacking loyalty to her school and council. Roy feels that probably in the end "her own values as a person and her beliefs may have (pause), probably she sold those a little short there."

Kay and Beth recognize that June’s desire to help others, impacts her reasoning. Beth says that June seems to want to help the council but other factors limit what she can do. Kay
observes that she probably went to the school council meeting to try to discuss the change and to work with the council. Nevertheless, she was unsuccessful.

Values of consequence also dominated perceptions that participants held about June’s values. For example, June’s mixed loyalties, according to participants, were eventually resolved by their potential consequence to herself and to others. June would have found herself in far more difficulty with the board if she had defied her director. She also would have been less effective in advocating the concerns and views of the council to the board if she openly questioned the director. Paul notes too, that the director would have been less effective in responding to the council if June had discredited or publicly under minded him.

Participants’ Similar Experiences

The relevance of this vignette to participants was very apparent in their comments about their similar experiences. At the risk of being tautological, I purposefully chose this story because of the ongoing restructuring issues in the participants’ school board, at the time of data collection. Paul reports that he went through a restructuring process a year before. All other participants were in the midst of restructuring at the time of interviewing. The school board slated Kay and Cam’s schools for closure and they rezoned all students to other schools. Meanwhile, the schools of the other three participants were not closing but were restructuring, resulting in major changes to student catchment areas.

Beth identifies strongly with June and says “I could tell you that I am June,” adding that she too was at a similar press conference and the school council told her they wanted to meet immediately after the board’s press release. Beth says that she had a personal dilemma about meeting. Her day was already long and hectic, but she feared that if she did not meet the council they would see her as a board puppet. Eventually she agreed to copy material for the school council meeting but says she was too exhausted to meet the same night. Beth claims that she also had to be silent at times. She tried to explain her position to the council, about how she was there to help, but that she was not going to speak out about the board especially without studying the full report. She felt snubbed by the council because they were looking for something more sensational.

Cam felt that he was in a boat similar to June’s, although the outcomes were much
different. He recalls being at a board press conference where one principal found out that her school was not being closed but switched with another school, to accommodate student catchment areas better. However, Cam notes many differences in how the board announced his school closure. He felt that his school council had lots of information leading up to the decision and although the council was disappointed they were not surprised. Cam also felt that his council did a good job speaking as one voice and keeping the school community informed. Cam was also appreciative that the board called principals whose schools were closing into an in-camera session about an hour before the press release, to be told the news. Although he was appreciative of this forewarning, in retrospect he felt that they should have also included council chairpersons.

Cam believes that his school council, although new, was well formed and consisted of people "willing to listen first," whereas June's council appears to have personalities who react on a personal level. He suggests that his council was willing to consider that this decision might be good for some reasons, whereas the council chair of Seashore "thinks it is a bad thing right off the bat and that person is jumping the gun without being thoughtful and giving other people a chance to talk it through."

Jon says he has not experienced a situation as difficult as this vignette although there were times when others saw him as a messenger for the board. Jon feels that most times principals use the school council to lobby the board for improvements and upgrades. For example, at the time of interviewing Jon received a call from the local member of the provincial legislature inquiring about why plant renovations had not already started at his school. Jon was able to direct these concerns to the council chair who in turn would contact the board. Jon too, has found himself in a position where he has to defend the director and the board. Meanwhile, Jon concedes that sometimes, as in June's case, we overstate the problem and require a lot of unnecessary energy. He says "Sometimes you just have to bite the bullet on some of this stuff and if it is going to happen, let it happen."

Kay feels that her initial problem was like June's but her situation unfolded much differently. Kay says she helped her school council identify and work through an appeal procedure. In the end the appeal was unsuccessful but Kay says she was able to work with the parents and maintain her integrity with the board. However, Kay notes that her school council
was not as adamant as the one in June’s school. Kay reports that her council also tried to “bargain” for a K - 3 school in light of the closure. In the end Kay felt that although there was residual anger among the parents they accepted the board’s plan.

Paul felt that his situation differed considerably from June’s, partly because the board restructured his school one year before school restructuring became a city wide issue. He declares that as he worked through the consultation he advised parents up-front that the facility could close. Paul also took the position that his school should reconfigure in light of declining enrollment because as enrollment declined so did his ability to offer a competitive senior high program. Paul felt that with restructuring, his high school students would receive a better program elsewhere and the school would be better suited to offering a more specialized junior high program to a larger population.

Paul began discussions of this nature at least a year before the board finalized its decision. He admits, at times he disagreed with the board but when this happened he would not publicly go against them. He preferred to make his views known privately and directly to board personnel and to lobby outside the public domain. Paul says that parents and staff were generally happy with the outcomes of the consultation process because the declining school population meant that the school could no longer compete with other junior and senior high school programs. His school became a larger junior high with an improved program and all their high school students were transferred to other city schools.

Finally Roy, he sees his current situation to be very similar to June’s. Roy found out through the board’s press release that they were reconfiguring his school from a K - 8 to a K - 6 school within two years. Roy concludes that the restructuring has been a messy affair and he knows “a number of councils that have been down to the edge of this.” Occasionally he speculates, some principals have backed away from their councils and said to them “go out on your own from here.” This, he says has resulted in splinter groups breaking away from councils creating even more havoc for principals.

Another key difference that Roy sees between his and June’s situation relates to their roles with the school council. Roy states that it was never his role to go back to the director about the council’s position on reconfiguration at anytime. He claims, “this was done as council through
the chairperson.” Roy felt that this process eliminated much conflict for him because it was always the council going back in a clear and rationale way, stating why they wanted to remain a K-8 school. According to Roy they handled all correspondence similarly, under the signature of the chairperson.

*Participant Confidence*

Considering the advice that participants offered June and the degree to which many participants endured similar situations, I asked them about how confident they would feel if they were placed in June’s situation. Not surprising, Beth suggests that she probably would fare no better than June. She feels that June has a school council out of control and a board that is offering little constructive support. Beth feels that she is would probably be no more effective than June. Jon on the other hand, surmises that June is not in a pleasant situation but feels that he could work through it. He says that he “would have to come clean with the council and say, look I am an employee of the board . . . my strongest allegiance is with the board.” Kay qualifies her confidence confirming she would not know how she felt last year but feels that she is now more prepared, having gone through a situation very similar and having talked with many colleagues in the same situation.

Paul and Cam declare that they feel very confident about handling a situation similar to June’s. Paul says he would have never approached a council meeting without having his homework done. He states that June should first have discussions and debate with Grace Green, and support a council meeting only when Grace is ready. Paul remarks that he would not take sides in the controversy and would take the role of facilitating board and council discussion.

Cam asserts that he would not mind calling somebody at the board and saying that he needs help and that if help is not forthcoming “these are the repercussions.” He expounds that this would be his direction based on other board dealings where in his opinion, senior board staff has not responded well. Cam concludes, that senior staff may have the final word, but just because they are senior board staff this is not to suggest they know what is best. Therefore he states “I think it is my responsibility to let them know that I think they are doing something wrong, as it affects my school.”

This summarizes participant commentary on their reasoning about the hypothesis.
Although this section is lengthy, it is valuable in that the reader moves beyond suggestion, problem and hypothesis which are about understanding the situation, to reasoning or deciding action based on this understanding. Interestingly, as participants reason action they sometimes revisit earlier phases of their reflection. Next, the final phase of participants’ reflection, testing, is considered through their comments about June’s actions, the consistency between her intentions and actions, and suggested courses of action offered by participants.

**Testing**

Testing is overt or imaginative action to corroborate or verify the overriding suggestion or hypothesis. It is an extension of reasoning and perhaps the conclusion to a number of interconnected phases. Hypotheses can be confirmed or discounted through testing and when testing discounts a hypothesis, it usually results in a revisiting of any or all phases of the reflective process, especially the suggestion phase. Participants identify many actions taken by June. In this section these are examined along with participants ideas about what June could do.

*June’s Actions*

Some key actions identified by June include expressing shock at the news release in the press conference, contacting the director next morning, and trying to explain her role at the council meeting. Many participants believe that June’s actions portray her desire to be loyal. Otherwise, they say she would not have contacted the director or attended the council meeting. By contacting the director she conveyed the council’s discontent. At the same time her understanding of the problem altered once the director made his expectations clear to her. Roy says now she is left wondering how to work with the council as they try to figure their way through this. He concludes June is about to find out about different definitions of consultation between board, council and herself. Roy too, surmises that once June realized the level of discontent she saw her role as informing the director. Still, when she tries to relay the feelings of the council “she is reminded by the director that it is not for her to question the decision of the board, it’s for her to support the decision.”

After considerable discussion of June’s problem, participants were asked what they would do if they were in this situation. Participants say they would avoid holding a meeting, emphasize the need for council to be proactive, express their discontent to the director for his handling of the
situation and keep the parent community informed about council efforts to respond to the restructuring proposal.

Cam, like many, notes that he would not have had a full council meeting open to the public, one day after the press release. Instead, he says he would have met with council members to discuss the impact of the announcement and to work out what the council needed to do before meeting with the full parent community. He adds that there would also be considerable discussion of the councils’ role to represent parents and to communicate information.

Cam notes that he would also arrange a meeting between the board and council representatives to try to gather as much information as possible. Meanwhile, he would advise the parent community about the council’s efforts to plan a response. In essence, Cam says he would try to slow down the process. On another front, Cam envisions some intense discussion with the board. He says he would refuse to “accept the ball” the next morning and ask the director about “how he expects him to be a school principal and deal with my population if I am the last one to know something?”

Roy says that since the restructuring plan is in a consultation stage he would be more open than June in his response to the council and in his approach the director. He concludes that he would challenge the director’s notion that he has a responsibility to steer the process in a constructive manner and question him more about what this and the consultation stage truly means. Meanwhile, he would continue helping the council make its case to the board, again assuming it truly was a consultation process. Roy concludes once the board says this is our final decision, then he would have to back off and support it.

Although Paul thinks that holding a council meeting so soon after the press release was not a wise decision he says that he understands how it could happen. Before attending such a meeting he would reflect about why he had not prepared the council for such a possibility. Once at the meeting, Paul suggests that he would not take sides but would try to acknowledge the discontent and deal with the facts. He voices the view that he would not support angry and insulting behaviour, “We may have differences, we may disagree, but don’t get into the exchange of he’s [director] a liar. . . . I am not ready to mediate or chair a brawl. We are human beings, we do care, we do have feelings, let’s deal with the issue.”
Reflective Summary

To summarize the reflective process, I asked participants what June could learn from this vignette and what they would learn from a colleague such as June. The former is presented followed by the latter.

Beth repeats that June has to more fully understand her role in relation to the school council and together both have to understand the board’s role. Kay emphasizes that June has to be patient and stresses that “Rome wasn’t built in a day.” She says they need processes to work things through and that issues this complex can not be resolved hastily. According to Roy, June also has to realize that her actions can not be fueled by protest and nastiness that normally surface in these kinds of situations. Kay adds that June should give herself time to think and reflect, “to be able to be visionary and look at what is best in this situation in the long term for students, parents and yourself professionally.”

Paul holds to the belief that June arguing she did not know what was going to happen is difficult to accept. In essence, he claims that June needs to be in tune with what is going on and not to be so “laid back.” Otherwise, June should realize that she does not have to take a position all the time and be mindful that she should not feel that she has to win or lose.

Roy identifies several points when considering what June could take away from this situation. First, he posits, June must realize that her freedom as a principal is limited despite all the rhetoric about site based management and the need for more parental involvement in education. Roy remarks that June has to realize that she is an employee of the board and she is there to carry out the decisions and policies of the board. Roy concludes that June is going to have to take a good look at her relationship with the council and ask, “Why am I now in this position that people are this adamant with me, this angry at me and what did I do wrong in this process?” He concludes that if June could sort this out, than maybe when a similar situation occurs “she has the benefit of having worked through this one.”

Cam counters that June needs to learn the importance of being proactive and keeping things calm. He feels that June needs to acknowledge the restructuring concerns of the community but more importantly what is being done to work with the board on this matter. June, he says, is proceeding too quickly and needs to focus more attention on the school council chair
to "understand her preferences and prejudices better." Cam vocalizes the thought that June "should have recognized that this is a bomb, and you don't take the bomb into a loaded building with emotional people who don't have enough information."

When Cam was asked about what he would learn from this story he replied "I think I have learned it. Be as proactive as you can in your job, don't be afraid of the director in that if you know you have a situation..." Cam says there are times when principals disagree with senior staff and if they are "worth their salt" they should say "... I think you are making a mistake and here is the reason why ... this is the consequence you are going to see." One of the biggest things that Cam says he would learn from this story is to speak up, because even though board personnel happen to be senior, "they are capable of making the same stupid mistakes as everybody else."

It may seem odd to Cam, but Jon feels that June really has not made any mistakes as such or made any glowing errors. Jon observes that June tried to make her point about her role but the council would not accept it. The only advice Jon suggests is that June find out the rationale for the board decision and communicate it more often. Beth and Jon say that June’s vignette teaches them to go cautiously. Political events according to Beth usually mean a rough ride. Jon says "Don't jump into something and just don't get too involved in the process until you have at least seen where this may lead you to."

Kay and Paul, when asked what they might learn from this situation, say this vignette reminds them about difficulties associated with change. Kay says first that this story shows how difficult change is, especially when people are comfortable and complacent. However, she feels that part of a principal’s work, in a gentle way, is to nudge people and challenge them. Kay says this vignette also illustrates that in most work places people have their "own turf to try to protect."

Paul concludes this vignette gets him to focus on what he can do to "effect or affect change." For Paul, change is an inevitable part of life, but what one does about change makes a difference. Paul says to help people deal with change, he has to keep them in the know, provide information and creatively generate and share ideas. Paul says as a principal finding out what people do not want is easy. However, the challenge is to find what they do want, and to work
toward this.

The remaining section of this chapter examines the reflective process employed by each participant on a critical incident. I asked participants at least one day in advance to think of a challenging situation involving one or more persons that they experienced within the last six months, and advised that this incident would be the subject of the interview. Questions that I used to guide the discussion appear in Appendix D.

**Retrospective Critical Incidents**

Participants, when asked to recall a recent critical issue, identified a variety. These include inadequate teacher performance, illegal student drug possession, negative media coverage of a sports team, a behaviourally disruptive student, staff computer access rights and school bus discipline. The names of characters and some other details have been altered so as not to compromise participants’ confidentiality. However, I have made every effort to respect the integrity of their stories. I will now detail the critical incidents and participants’ subsequent reflective analysis.

**Teacher Performance**

Cam identifies a scenario that started with the opening of the new school year and worsened throughout the year. He hired a replacement art teacher, Mavis Mayo. To Cam, Mavis, seemed quite knowledgeable, was well recommended and was able to get programs started promptly. However, things soured quickly. This interview took place on the last day of school and immediately after this interview Cam had to mediate yet another complaint. This time it was a parent complaining about his child’s art mark. Cam states “this is a situation I just want over, I don’t wish to pursue this any longer than necessary.”

**Suggestion**

In the first weeks of school Cam noticed that things were not going well for Mavis. She had to send primary students back to their classrooms in the second week of school because she could not handle so many in the art room. Later, Cam noticed Mavis was putting some older children out of class because of their “behaviour.” Things worsened to the point that Cam realized Mavis had no student evaluation plan in place. Cam acknowledges that even after the first week of school she seemed to be “biting off more that she could chew.” He had to do
something about her “lack of preparedness, classroom management, staff relationships, program organization and her lack of foresight.”

Problem

Cam concludes that the essence of this problem is Mavis’ lack of classroom management skills. This, he says, may have stemmed from her poor planning and inability to recognize concerns unless they were pointed out to her. Cam illustrates that Mavis’ relationships with staff were strained because she would for example, arrive late for class and supervision duty, frequently complain to teachers about their students, change her art schedule without sufficient notice and send children back to their home room during the home room teacher’s preparation period. Cam says “So she lost the little things first and then the big things came after that.”

Cam feels that a serious school disruption during the year compounded this problem. Lightning caused extensive electrical damage and resulted in students being temporarily moved to several other schools for several months until repairs were exacted. While they moved, the art program was delivered “on the fly” but Mavis could not adequately plan and prepare. Cam contends that she is a wonderful artist but just does not possess the common sense to deal with children. He concludes “so it became a developing situation throughout the entire year, a lot of time spent on that teacher!”

Before Mavis was hired Cam sought references from two of her most recent schools, and the references were positive. He concluded Mavis either had a different year last year or people were saying “great artist” but avoiding the more important details about the day to day grinding of teaching.

Hypothesis

Early in the school year Cam had several conversations with Mavis about her program and initiatives. “To be fair,” he said, “her intentions were good, but her program delivery over the year was just not from the same person.” Cam explains there was “a fair amount of talk and not a lot of action.”

Cam first thought that this was a teacher who had experience and past success but was in a new situation where she could not “find her feet.” She was willing to accept help but unfortunately she had “no well of ideas” and lacked the ability to learn. However, Cam also
believed that many other factors, complicated Mavis’ problems such as school restructuring and the disruption caused by building damages. She was also replacing a teacher who had been successful in this position for the past ten years. Cam decided that he would help her with program delivery over the course of the year.

Reasoning

Many factors come into play as Cam reasoned action to resolve problems associated with Mavis. Because it was a year long concern Cam’s reasoning continuously evolved. When Cam perceived Mavis’ situation to be more serious than he initially thought, he felt the best approach would be to help her improve classroom management skills. This would involve demonstrating and discussing good teaching, and working through how she could solve difficult situations without putting children out of class. Cam also thought he could help Mavis build rapport with staff by pointing out to her how she was “burning bridges” by doing things like sending students back to their home room too early or when teachers were having a preparation period.

After the school had received structural damage and students relocated to other schools Cam felt that Mavis would need a lot of detailed direction about schedules, classroom locations and material supplies. Cam figured that the disruption would also require close monitoring and support for Mavis. Cam thought at this time too that he should get some program advice from the district program specialist about Mavis’ curriculum. He felt that the program director could advise Mavis on the learning outcomes and methodologies, and share her expertise with Mavis. Cam figured by doing this, he would get a second appraisal of the situation and that his actions would be in tandem with the program specialist, should the board have to be involved at some later point.

When I asked Cam about other experiences similar to this situation, he confirmed that in past years other replacement teachers lacked ability. However, he rebuts, “As soon as I found out the person was not really able to do it, he was on a ship and I would have him put ashore, and told him to find his way home.” He did not take this action with Mavis because “it wasn’t a normal kind of year and I credited too many other factors as being part and parcel of it.”

Cam was also asked about his values and principles here. It seems basic human and professional values tended to guide his actions. He remarks that everyone needs help and schools
would be more effective if this help were provided. Cam believes that Mavis and her program directly impacted every student so he was not only trying to help Mavis, but the entire school. He understood that some good things were accomplished in the art program but felt that Mavis approached it in the wrong way, "by shouting, getting angry and trying to show students who was the boss." Cam believed that he had to support Mavis, deal with her fairly, yet he also had to consider students and staff and how her actions impacted them.

In hindsight Cam feels that his specific role responsibilities were not carried out to the extent that they should have been. He observes that he should have been more aware of how critical this situation could become and that he should have tried other steps such as a more formal performance appraisal. Cam contends, "I will beat myself up for a long time over that."

Testing

Cam details many specific efforts that he took to work with Mavis. At first Cam helped her "stick handle" through the opening weeks of school. Cam reports "we [administration] had her in [to the office] a number of times to explain how important it was to have staff side with her." Cam reveals that he explained to her repeatedly the problems of sending students out of class, dismissing early and assuming that other teachers would look after her students when she had a problem. He also sat in on a number of her classes and provided immediate suggestions and feedback. Cam invited the program specialist to the school and had her work with Mavis.

At the end of the first student reporting period, Cam concluded that Mavis would also need help in evaluating student progress. He thought this could be remedied by having her organize a plan book and routinely record information from a variety of student performance sources. He felt otherwise, she was reporting by memory, although she did not know the names of all students.

When the building was damaged, Cam reports that he and the assistant principal worked with Mavis in detail, to sort out how to set up classes. At the end of the second term Cam found that he had to work extra close with Mavis because of an upcoming art show that was intended to show case student work. Mavis, according to Cam, felt that the success of the show hinged on student work, "in other words her reputation would be reflected in their performance." Cam reminded Mavis that the priority was the day to day art program and getting rave reviews about
student work was not a priority. Cam had to insist that all primary and elementary children's work be included in the show, not only the best pieces as Mavis wanted.

Mavis, according to Cam, was always appreciative of his advice and suggestions and kept saying that this kind of situation never happened to her before. Cam notes there were times he told Mavis that he was very angry and upset and her response was usually one of surprise and puzzlement. The art show was a success and many parent accolades about the art work followed. Cam concludes that Mavis failed to see though, that she was not hired as an artist but as a teacher with artistic ability.

Cam reports that at the beginning of the year he was “leaning backwards” and trying to help Mavis get on her feet, but regrettably Mavis did not show any improvement. Cam felt that he got better at monitoring and supporting her and heading off potential problems. Still, as time went on, this situation became more irritable for Cam. Yet, Cam insists that he continued to work professionally with Mavis, even though his energies could have been used elsewhere.

Cam states that if he had his time back he would have brought in the program specialist sooner, to observe Mavis’s classroom more formally and to help Mavis develop her instructional abilities. Cam emphasizes “there was no doubt about her professional knowledge. Concern lay with her ability to function as a teacher.”

Over the year Cam’s actions gradually shifted from supporting, encouraging and facilitating to monitoring and observing Mavis’ work in anticipation of the next problem. This action shift occurred as Cam’s understanding of the problem shifted. With time, he was able to conclude that many of Mavis’ problems were not about “getting on her feet in a new school,” rather her weak teaching skills and inability to learn and develop new ones.

Summary

As away of summary I asked Cam what he learned from this story. Cam declares that he should have acted earlier in the year and began a formal evaluation process. Unfortunately he adds “I credited too many other factors as being part and parcel of it.” Cam also mentions that he will examine more closely, references for teacher applicants. He suggests that resumes and interviews are not all they appear to be, and in future he will more methodically investigate previous performance of applicants. Cam also reports that this whole incident causes him to look
at how students are being evaluated in the classroom, especially in specialist areas like music and physical education.

Before wrapping up the interview I asked Cam to what extent he was aware of the thoughts and feelings that he expressed in the interview, as the situation evolved. Cam emphatically states he was aware of them long before the interview because "it has been one of those aggravations and potential disasters that is always in the back of your mind." He concludes "It has been on simmer all year!" adding that he has talked this through with his assistant principal, each using the other to bounce off ideas about how they might respond.

**Media Mayhem**

Beth relates a scenario where *The Compass*, a local newspaper, pulled a story it had prepared on her school’s basketball team. Beth believes that the media accessed the coach, players and parents under the pretense of writing about the team’s fortitude. However, she felt that the event was an opportunity for those opposed to the school board’s restructuring plan to criticize the director and trustees.

*Suggestion*

This story takes place in May, at a time when Beth was involved in many other year end issues. She received a request through the gym teacher for *The Compass* to do an article on the basketball team’s upcoming trip. Beth trusted the gym teacher and felt that he could look after it. In any case, she discussed the nature and content of the article with the teacher, about how it would highlight the team’s accomplishments including its upcoming trip to a national tourney in Quebec City. Beth and the teacher agreed that this article was a good idea because it was the last performance for the team. Under the restructuring plan, the school was no longer offering the grade seven and eight program and the existing grade seven and eights were being dispersed to other schools.

Several persons arrived from the paper the next day to interview some players and parents and to take some photographs. No sooner had they left when the gym teacher was knocking on Beth’s door urgently needing to see her. The gym teacher conveyed the opinion that he felt the article was going to “do a number on the board.” Consistent with Dewey’s (1933) theory, a number of action possibilities came to Beth, increasing her need to reflect. Her early suggestions
for action varied and focused on finding out more information about the article and its purpose, stopping publication of the article, informing the director, and figuring out how to deal with the fall out of this situation. The analysis that follows shows how Beth continues to reflect and better attune to the problem so that a response might be reasoned and tested.

Problem

Beth explains that when she put everything else on hold, things came together telling her that there was another side to this situation. She began wondering about how much the gym teacher really knew and whether he was "playing the parents" or encouraging this story, until things got out of hand. Beth wondered who was really behind this newspaper story and what their motives were. Beth’s problem was a complicated issue. She had to decide what to do about an article that was probably compiled under false pretenses. Related to this, she had to deal with those responsible for the article in a school community that would welcome an article critical of the board.

Hypothesis

Beth’s comments indicate that this situation was forming for several days without her actually attending to suggestions. Once the gym teacher approached her after the newspaper interviews it was as though all suggestions formed into a hypothesis at once. Beth knew it had been a controversial year with much acrimony between the parents and board. It would come as no surprise to Beth that parents would use every opportunity to cast dispersions on the board. As Beth put together the details of the story, she felt that some parents were using the school and more specifically the team, to criticize the board’s restructuring plan. She was convinced that it was an attempt to malign the board’s restructuring plan. Although she believed that only a few parents closely aligned with the team orchestrated this event, Beth believed the article would have the full support of the school council and parent community. Beth also felt that the printing of this article would put her in direct conflict with her employer and compromise her position and reputation. To do nothing, would have resulted in this article being printed with Beth’s implied support. For Beth, there was no other choice but to stop the publication of this article.

Reasoning

Beth’s values and principles were a driving force in the reasoning phase of her reflection.
She shares the thought, "It was wrong, we were falsely led into the article and I just wasn't going to do that no matter what the cost was going to be." Other evidence suggests the strong influence of Hodgkinson's (1978) Type 1 values of principle in her thinking. Beth expounds, "Well to me it is really important, I guess, to stay the course in what you believe in, I believe in every one of these children." At another point she adds "Some may say you are only getting your back up, but for me it was saying this is what I believe in ."

There is also much evidence of her general moral values. Beth argues that it took much courage for her to say to the editor that things had to be up front and that she was not getting involved in anything underhanded. Meanwhile, she wanted to convey a message to parents that she had to do what was best for the children, and having them used in this manner was not in their interests. Equally important to Beth, was to model the message to children that it is often hard to stand up for your beliefs, that it is much easier to say "I really didn't know that was going on." Beth concludes it just got to a point where she said, "No, I am sorry we are not having children politically involved in this particular thing, it's wrong."

Beth's sense of loyalty was equally compelling as she reasoned possible action. She felt the board entrusted her with specific responsibilities in her capacity as principal. She felt that she was representing the school board's interests too, and figured that she deserved to be reprimanded if she contributed to the school community revolting against the board.

Beth's willingness to trust others including the gym teacher, newspaper reporter, editor, council chair and parents further shapes her reasoning. She contends that if she were not so trusting this situation would never have happened. As the story began, she concedes that too much trust was placed in others, but as the story developed she offered less trust, especially for the council chair. Beth felt that the chair was trying to work around her to get the story printed and when these efforts failed he wanted to place the blame on her.

When asked about her confidence to handle this situation, Beth says she lacked confidence but adds, "It is the same thing with many things that I do when I really think about them, it [running the article] was wrong . . . the cost to me was a high cost because it was very, very emotional, very, very stressful and very, very difficult." Put differently, Beth's strong commitment to her values, motivated her to press ahead though she feared the outcomes.
When I asked Beth about relevant background, training and experience that helped her through this, she stayed with the values discussion. Beth believes that since the beginning of time, since her earthly origin, “right was right and wrong was wrong, you could never make wrong right.” She claims it is a characteristic well rooted into her family and upbringing and not one to be found in a university course.

During Beth’s Master’s studies she read much of Tom Greenfield’s (1986) work. She claims to be a supporter of Greenfield and declares, “you are not just there as a rational human being, you bring every bit of you to this craft, my whole personal and professional experience, everything that has made me.” When Beth completed her Masters, she remembered a colleague saying to her “you have the theory, now you are ready to mesh theory and practice.” Beth summarizes “I get energy from this [Greenfield] and say yes this is what I believe in.”

Although Beth’s career has spanned nearly three decades, she has never encountered such an adversarial group. Beth prides herself on her empathetic, positive rapport with parents, even those “disgruntled and dissatisfied about school.” She adds that in other schools she has enjoyed the opportunity to meet with them and discuss their concerns. Beth has always felt that she had a very good way of working with people, getting them to calm down and see another side of the story. Disappointedly, Beth relates that this has not been the situation for the current year. Here, Beth reports, the parent view is “We control whatever goes on here, you just do what we want you to do, and in fact that has been said to me that you are here, hired by us and you better damn well do what we want done.”

Testing

This critical incident unfolded over a period of three weeks and in this time Beth took a number of actions with the benefit of seeing their results. I earlier stated in the suggestion discussion that this situation crept up on Beth, but once she clued into it, she realized that many things happened within a short time.

Beth’s actions began with further probing the gym teacher to frame the problem better and to get a better sense of his involvement. This probing revealed that the gym teacher did have a rapport with this parent and that they had talked about getting an article in The Compass. However, Beth held onto the belief that the gym teacher did not intend for the story to have a
political twist.

Beth later made a call to the editor to confirm the intent of the story and to withdraw the school's participation in the article. By now Beth had clearly decided that the school would not lend its name to the article but she decided to think about it over night at the editor’s request, to respect his position and to give the matter more thought. In the interim, Beth called the director for two reasons. The first was to find out if she had the authority to withdraw from the article and secondly to start bringing him into the situation and preparing him for possible fall out.

Beth carefully relates this part of the story saying that her call with the director was brief. She asked him if she had the authority to withdraw from the article and once he offered his opinion she ended the call. The carefulness with which she relates this seems important to her because she emphasizes that the director never told her to pull the story. Beth may have avoided asking the director if she should pull the story or she may have hurried the call so he would not tell her to withdraw her participation. Then Beth could state to her critics that withdrawing from the story was a school based decision, not one made at the board level. Nevertheless, if the director had told her to pull the story it would have antagonized the council even more, because of their disdain for him. Furthermore, they would have seen Beth as the “hand maiden” of the board.

After talking with the director she again conferred with the assistant principal and gym teacher before calling the editor with her final decision. Now her mind began to move to the editor’s warning about serious ramifications. Beth wanted to address the matter with students but her assistant principal and gym teacher persuaded her not to because everything was quiet for a few days and talking to them might unnecessarily stir things up.

Beth regretted not going with her hunch because students and parents erupted when they found out through the grapevine that she stopped the story. The team’s planned departure for Quebec City compounded the situation. The parents and team players would be away for five days and Beth was sure she would be the focus of their discussions. Beth decided to distribute a letter personally addressed to all parents stating her position on the matter. She says she found this hard to do because she did not want to place the parents who initiated the newspaper article in a difficult spot either.
There was a sentence in the letter, Beth reports, about how going with the story would have a negative impact on our school and employer and that it would overshadow the successes of the team. This raised the school council’s ire particularly the part about having a negative impact on the employer.

When the council chair demanded that she attend a school council meeting the following week and discuss this with parents and the reporter, she declined. Meanwhile, she contacted the director to further advise him of what was unfolding. Beth did agree to meet with the council chair and this turned out to be a stormy exchange.

Beth felt that she was a lightning rod for all the animosities that the council held toward the board and director. She felt that she made some progress in the discussion but the next day he faxed her a demand to be at the meeting and to “get on with it.” This fax annoyed Beth. She wrote back saying she had already spoked to parents on the matter through her letter and “you have your meeting and ‘get on with it.'” Beth declares that it was not characteristic of her to be “nasty,” but admits she felt so hurt by how this man treated her. Meanwhile, she felt she had done wrong, “it nagged at me knowing that I got down to his level.”

There was no closure to this story other than the council held its meeting and chastised Beth in her absence. Other issues related to year end ceremonies and celebrations came up and the council moved on, not necessarily forgetting the incident. Throughout the entire story, Beth felt that it was her role to protect the interests of the students, and this she feels she did. Though she lacked confidence and did not know how it would conclude, she felt it was a stand that she had to take. She told the council that no matter “how hard, how emotional, how distraught” they were about restructuring, they had no right to try to destroy her, which is what she thinks they tried to do. If Beth had her time back, she says the only thing she would have done differently was not write that comment on her fax to the council chair, “I would still keep that professional thing about it.”

**Summary**

When I asked Beth what she would do differently another time she said that she would have a closer look at the letter that she sent out, especially the comment about, “harmful to her employer.” This situation, she adds, has given her confidence and reinforces the importance of
carrying out her responsibilities without interference and being “under anyone’s thumb.” She prefers to work amicably but realizes that some groups can get boisterous and try to get what they want at any cost, “and if it means destroying your career that you have worked hard to get then so be it.”

Beth’s response to the final interview question about how aware she was aware of her thoughts and feelings on this critical incident before the interview, reveals that she has given the matter much previous thought. Even though she would reconsider the letter, she reviewed this situation in her mind often before finalizing her actions. As for other aspects of the story she frequently asks herself, “What could you have done differently? What could you do there?” as she relieves it. She concludes that when the dust settles she wants to know that she has done the best thing for the children, not necessarily the “nicest” things.

**Computer Access Rights**

Jon explains a situation that was festering for a long time. However, once his energies were put into it, the matter seemed to be resolved quickly. In Jon’s school three teachers had administrative rights to the school’s network setup. They were Bob, the learning resources teacher, Rick, the technology teacher and Fred, the keyboarding teacher. Normally, only one person has network rights and these rights give that person access to the full network system. The person with network access usually assigns various levels of access to others, depending on need. For example, the assistant principal might need access to teachers’ personal data sheets for payroll purposes. Jon reports that access rights was a perennial concern for the past few years, though this is his first year in this position.

**Suggestion**

Jon notes that in February, after the end of first term student reporting, Rick complained to him that he was not able to complete some student technology outcomes because of system problems. Rick explained that he made changes to the system setup but when he went to class the same old problems reoccurred. A few days later Fred reported that students were not able to do any keyboarding that particular day because students could not access their programs. Jon knew it was time for action when Bob reported that he had resolved a keyboarding access problem. However, Rick had recreated the problem by reverting things.
A number of suggestions or action ideas occurred to Jon. He thought about leaving the situation alone, initiating efforts to improve technology, facilitating discussion between the three teachers and even assigning one teacher with full network administrator rights. According to Dewey (1933), if Jon had just one action idea and no other possibilities for action came to his mind, he probably would have acted without any reflection. However, when several action possibilities came to mind reflection became possible.

*Problem*

Jon has two computer rooms in his school, one substandard to the other. The more current one is adjacent to the resource center and under the supervision of Bob, the resource teacher. The other is a regular classroom with twelve work stations not networked. Rick routinely brings his technology students to the resource center for computer classes because they network these computers and are more reliable. Although the resource center computers are more reliable, these too are considered outdated and in need of upgrading.

Historically, it is common for several teachers at Roy’s school to have network access rights. When they installed the network several years ago, several staff members showed an interest in working the system. Although the staff had little computer expertise at the time, Bob has since attended inservices and developed his knowledge of the system.

Jon reports that Bob and Rick did not routinely communicate with each other. He says it was not that they disagreed, it was more that their communications were limited. Meanwhile, Jon points out that his own knowledge of computer networking is limited and that he depends on both for advice. Bob felt that he alone should be the network administrator and Rick felt that he too, should have network access rights. Neither expressed their views to the other. Jon felt that instructional delivery was suffering and realized that this issue was beginning to cause division and tension among all staff, as most teachers had an opinion on it.

*Hypothesis*

Jon felt that Bob, Rick and Fred were indirectly asking him to get involved and sort out network access rights. Jon felt that undefined network access rights was interfering with the delivery of technology courses to students and causing unnecessary staff divisions and tensions. He believed that if only one person had full network access, many other issues would be resolved.
Reasoning

Jon considered the problem as a personnel issue. He felt it had to be addressed and he was confident about his ability to do it. Jon felt that he would exert pressure as needed, to have only one network administrator. However, he believed that if he developed a process for the meeting no further pressure would be needed. Jon believed that when a person comes to him with a problem than this person probably has solutions in mind too. Given that he did not consider himself a computer expert his strategy was to facilitate a discussion between the teachers who were more knowledgeable.

Jon handled a situation similar to this about five years ago in another school. Then however, Jon suggests, the staff was not as supportive of technology, mainly because his network administrator did not interact with staff in the same manner that Bob does. Jon felt the past situation was more difficult than his present one. Then he conferred with district office and other schools before deciding that there would be only one network administrator. However, he had to work on getting the network administrator to loosen his control and give other staff some flexibility. Whereas in his present situation it was a matter of reining in access and consolidating the authority of the network administrator.

Jon contends that he worked toward designating Bob as the sole network administrator because it was part and parcel of his duties as learning resources teacher. Bob works with all staff and students in developing library and technology resources while Rick’s efforts are more narrowly focused on technology education courses.

A number of values and beliefs guide Jon’s decision to designate Bob as the network administrator with professional values having the strongest influence. He felt that it was his duty to deal with this matter though the previous principal did not address. Jon was most concerned that it was impacting classroom instruction and students were suffering most of the consequences. Meanwhile, Jon believed that all parties recognized there was a problem and they were looking for somebody to bring everybody together. This of course was his responsibility.

Jon also considered the consequences for the staff if this issue remained unresolved. He noticed that more staff members were becoming aware of the problem and offering their opinions. Jon feared that this issue would cause divisiveness and lower morale if left unattended. Jon
wanted to approach a solution in a way that would leave people’s dignity in tact. He suggests that he wanted everybody to feel that their problems were legitimate and that he appreciated their efforts to identify concerns. Jon wanted to be supportive of each staff member, while letting them know the school needed one network administrator, not three. He also wanted to convey the message that no matter who was designated as network administrator, this person would have to be attentive to the concerns of all staff and assist as needed.

I asked Jon his opinion about why this problem was not addressed in other years and he offered a few possibilities. He speculated, that the reason might be financially based, or that the past principal might have thought it was a matter for the teachers to resolve. Jon speculated further by adding that there may have been more pressing priorities to be dealt with or maybe the past principal did not see it as a problem at all. For Jon however, when teachers are not getting course requirements covered or it negatively impacts another course, he felt responsible for doing something about it.

*Testing*

Jon conferred with the assistant principal on this situation. Since the assistant principal was also new to the school, he had to find out more about the origins of the problem. Therefore, Jon spoke at length to Bob, Rick and Fred. He then called a meeting with the expected outcome of having Bob named as the network administrator. Jon stresses that there were no animosities between these three, it was just that there was limited communication between them. Jon believed his job was “to bring it all together.” He called the meeting and paraphrased what they had individually said to him. They surprised him in their agreement with most of what he said and in their empathy for each other’s positions.

As the meeting progressed, Jon found that designating a network administrator was not at all the problem. All three supported this idea and agreed that Bob should be the network administrator. Jon was left wondering what then was the problem. The discussion continued and Jon said “I was all ears to try and listen to what they had to say.” Jon acknowledged that he was there as a leader, not as a computer expert. Jon discovered some technical deficiencies were at the root of the problem and “they convinced me that we needed these particular cards and chips.”

Fortunately, Jon had some funding sources and asked the three to come up with a plan.
Rick even agreed to get some price quotations for video cards and Fred got some printer prices. Jon was not able to meet all their demands but he was able to reach on most of them. He was able to set up a process to address the concerns of the three and they eventually agreed on an implementation plan. Since that meeting Jon states that he has been able to “stay out of it” while Bob, Rick and Fred work on the network with Bob as the network administrator. Jon concludes “Most of the conflict was resolved and the parties went off satisfied that the problem was addressed.”

Summary

Jon concludes that he did not know that he could have solved this problem with some video cards and an extra printer. Perhaps this may be attributed to what Dewey (1933) would describe as an inadequate hypothesis. Jon could see that there was disagreement about who should have network access. He lacked technological expertise and he felt that more communication was needed between the staff using the technology. As Jon directed his actions toward his hypothesis, that Bob needed to be the only one with network rights, other aspects of his reflection (suggestion, problem, reasoning and testing) continued to develop. This helped him reconsider his hypothesis and form a new one, that is, upgrades to the network system would allow it to function better and reduce staff tensions. Jon eventually resolved the problem to everybody’s satisfaction despite starting with an ineffective hypothesis.

As for future lessons, Jon has learned that people are not comfortable going face to face to solve problems, they would rather have somebody bring them together and help them through it. This he says is how department heads for example can provide teacher based leadership in high schools. Jon claims that he was aware of his thoughts about this incident long before discussing them with me and that he gained no new insights from our discussions.

Drug Possession

Paul describes an incident where two students brought to his attention that other students were in possession of marijuana. Drug possession and trafficking were ongoing concerns for Paul and he was determined to identify those responsible and to make the school drug free. This critical incident occurred over a two week span, near the end of the school year about two weeks prior to the interview.
Suggestion

As with most reflections, a number of factors come together to generate suggestions. Paul had concerns that Albert and Kevin on occasion, had drugs in their possession for their private use and to sell to others. There were previous tips, but he was never able to turn up solid proof. Just one day ago he received a tip from a parent about some street activity outside the school involving other students. When he followed up that tip, Paul uncovered enough evidence to call the police, who in turn charged another student with possession. Most students knew about what happened and saw uniformed police officers in the school and a marked car on the school parking lot. Paul expected that the next few days would be quiet and that this incident would be a warning to others thinking about bringing drugs onto school property. However, at lunch time two student informants came to his office to report privately that when they were in their classroom they saw Leo selling drugs to Albert and Kevin.

At first Paul was annoyed thinking that he was fighting a losing battle. These boys, he felt, were not at all deterred by the events of last day. He also felt that he had to act, and act quickly. He wanted to nab the three while they were still in possession of the drugs. However he did not want to panic the whole school, or jeopardize the personal safety of the two informants.

Problem

Paul felt that despite the best efforts of the school community some students were bringing illegal drugs to school for the purpose of trafficking. He felt it was destructive to the school environment and that the problem was worsening. While Paul was most concerned about innocent students being exposed to the drug scene he was also mindful of getting help for those possessing and trafficking drugs.

Hypothesis

Paul felt that something had to be done about the students who were using and bringing illegal drugs into the school. Paul decided to call the boys to his office immediately and confront them about what he had heard. In this case he believed that he had to act quickly before the boys had a chance to fabricate a story or dispose of the drugs. He also regarded this as an opportunity to find out more about the extent of drug use among students.

Reasoning
Many of Paul's actions were based on his **basic human and general moral values**. Paul argues that his intent in this situation was "not to punish, my intent was to make change with some accountability." He felt that drug users were doing grave harm to themselves and believed that it would lead to more dangerous things as they got older. Paul contends that his actions were in the long term aimed at protecting these two informants, though they found it hard to understand this. Paul said it was a problem that involved everyone. He contends that if no one takes a stand now it will be too late when there is a drug overdose or criminal activity related to drugs. By confronting Leo, Kevin and Albert, Paul argues, the school in the long run will be a safer place for everyone, including the informants.

Paul emphasized too, that courage is needed to address this problem. He reiterated to the parents of the informants that they did the right thing by coming forward with their information. Paul highlights the need to work together and adds that it was not easy for him to confront this issue, stating, "my car tonight could be damaged, many things could happen, my family could be threatened." Ultimately Paul took action because "this is a problem for all of us, the boys included." Paul believed drug use among teenagers was a terrible tragedy and believed strongly that it had to be addressed.

Apart from Paul's values of principle he also believed that he has a professional duty to address drug use. Paul asserts that "no student in this building will make [threats] or interfere with the security of another student . . . I refuse to have students run this building with fear." Paul argues that drug use prevails when drug users instill the school environment with fear and silence. He is adamant that the school community must dig in its heels and face drug use head on.

When I asked Paul about significant background, training and experience that helped him work through this situation he responded that his "perspectives of life . . . perspective of teaching and my concern for human beings . . ." was the most useful. Paul said that he is not judgmental about drug users adding that in the three years that he was away from teaching he met people from different lifestyles where drug use was common. He observes "They were wonderful people and what they needed was not someone who condemned them, someone who would listen and care." Paul suggests that you must be more concerned about the person, and not the drug use because ultimately "you can not force people to quit drugs, they must decide for themselves."
Paul says he takes the same approach in dealing with students because his efforts are not about getting "a pound of flesh" but getting help for the student.

Regarding training, Paul cites the importance of his knowledge about legal matters such as The Young Offenders Act. He has attended inservice on legal issues and dealt with other matters involving police and social workers. Paul also calls Child Protection Services, local police and district office when there is a problem with interpreting legislation. Despite Paul’s concern for following protocol he adds that he is more concerned about curbing drug activity in the school than ensuring a case holds up in court.

In commenting about relevant experience, Paul remarks that in his long career this was the first time a person actually handed over drugs. However, it was not the first time he had to handle the security or safety of a student for reporting something. Paul shares that he generally takes the same approach in these cases. First, he emphasizes to the student making the disclosure, how silence and intimidation allows the behaviour to continue and then he takes steps to monitor the safety of the student. These may include warning the reported person about the consequences of retaliating which could include school expulsion or transfer, monitoring day to day concerns with parents and contacting police if any intimidation occurs outside school. Paul says he aims his response at developing the trust of the person who makes the report and “facing head on” the person who might retaliate.

Paul summarizes his background, training and experience by saying “There is no more important thing in the life of a teacher as a human being then to be a human being.” He further states that you can never go wrong by doing your best to help someone and even if you do err, “err on the side of love and concern and reaching out to people.”

**Testing**

When Paul called Kevin and Albert to the office and they angrily denied the drug accusations. Next, Paul called in the two informants while Kevin and Albert were present. This was an action that Paul would defend many times in the weeks ahead. The informants revealed that Kevin and Albert got their drugs from a third boy Leo. Eventually Kevin and Albert admitted to getting drugs from Leo. Paul then called Leo to the office and surprisingly Leo disclosed all details and admitted that he sold marijuana to the boys. Leo also provided other details about
drug users in the school.

From there, Paul called the police as well as the parents of the three boys. Paul said that in the interim he spoke to Leo about his life and what he was doing. Meanwhile, the two informants returned to Paul’s office wanting to go home because they were afraid for their safety and did not want to stay in school. Paul tried to contact their parents to explain what was happening but he could not reach them. Eventually the police arrived and took statements from the boys, with their parents present. Two of three parents accepted their son’s guilt but a third vehemently denied anything.

After the police finished their business, the boys went home with their parents. Paul contacted district office to make sure he handled the matter appropriately. He said that everything was fine with the school board and the three students would be suspended for the remainder of the school year. However, they would be permitted to write final exams.

The next day the situation took another turn when the parents of the two informants called and visited the school to complain about Paul’s move to reveal their identity to the boys. The parents felt it was unnecessary for Paul to do this, and as a result he put their safety at risk. He countered that the parents should commend the two for their actions. He assured the parents that school protection would be provided and their concerns would be taken seriously.

Paul felt that the best way to respond to the informants’ safety concerns was by developing their trust and monitoring their safety. He advised the two to report to him if they were harassed. Paul also had follow up conversations with Kevin, Albert and Leo about the consequences of intimidating either of them. He also advised the parents of the two about their recourse to call the police if necessary.

About a week later the staff also grilled Paul at the monthly staff meeting (Chapter Six) for disclosing the identities of the informants. Paul defended his action again, by saying the boys already knew who reported them because these two informants were the only other two in the classroom at the time of the incident. This, according to Paul seemed to have worked. Within a few days there were no other complaints and the three boys were suspended for the remainder of the year. Two of the boys accepted counseling and overall Paul felt that he highlighted to all students, the seriousness of the school drug issue.
Summary

Like so many reflections, the reflector’s values dominate this story. Here it was mainly values of principle. Paul was determined to challenge drug use in his school because of the adverse consequences to drug users and to the whole school community. Paul was able to identify three drug users, unfortunately at the expense of two informants. Although Paul felt that the three boys already knew who reported them and that the informants should be commended for their courage, many others disagreed with his decision to identify them. In hindsight Paul admits that he could have been less hasty in bringing the two informants into his office when the boys first denied the accusations. Yet, he does not think he could have avoided the boys knowing who reported them. Paul felt that if he had pressured the boys more they might have admitted their involvement without him bringing in the informants.

When I asked Paul, “What have you learned from this situation?” Paul responded that the incident was never about winning at catching drug users. He said, “It’s about change, it’s about life.” Stated differently, Paul felt that many students who use drugs need help and counseling and he wanted to give them this opportunity before their lives became even more problematic.

Paul asserts that his thoughts on this critical incident developed over a period of time during and after the critical incident. He felt there was no new discovery made in our interview other than it helped him recall a lot of the details again. In fact, out of the 48 interviews that I conducted, this was the longest. Paul spoke passionately about this topic and related it in minute detail.

Bus Behaviour

Kay’s critical incident occurred over the school year and is about the problems and progress associated with a bus driver handling his bus route. Dave, the driver, had considerable driving experience with public transit where most of his riders were adults. Now he found himself driving children between five and eleven years of age. What began as a rough start eventually turned around with the driver enjoying his bus run and getting along better with the children.

Suggestion

Kay began September as a first time principal in a small school that had only one bus run. As assistant principal in another school, she was responsible for busing. She reports that at that
school one afternoon a child got off the bus near his home, the driver moved forward thinking he was clear of the bus. Unfortunately, the driver was mistaken, and the boy was accidentally killed on his neighbourhood street. This incident remains indelibly with Kay and has made her very sensitive to any bus concerns.

Dave was driving for about two weeks in September when concerns started to emerge. Kay noticed that the complaints were about conflicts between the driver and students, not among students, which is what she would expect. She also noticed that Dave complained mostly about the older students who happened to live in the same subsidized housing area.

It occurred to Kay that Dave wanted her to solve the problem and that he was not accepting any responsibility for the situation. Furthermore, when she followed up by speaking to students that Dave identified, she found that they were not happy about the way he was treating them. The students wanted Kay to talk to him about his behaviour! Kay started to feel that Dave was not being fair to the older children and that “he was not giving them a chance.” Something had to be done.

Problem

About mid September Kay began to encounter difficulties with some of her bus students. The bus driver complained about the unruliness of the students. According to Kay he felt they were “cantankerous, saucy, mouthy, could not sit down, some in particular he spoke very, very negatively about.” Kay reveals the students in turn were saying the driver did not care, “He shouted and said words like shut up, sit down and so on.”

Ironically, Kay noted that for the most part students were collaborative and could get along with each other, but not with Dave. Kay also concluded that he was not willing to take any initiative, “he basically didn’t seem proactive in any way, basically this is your problem, these are your students, solve it.” Meanwhile, Kay counters “the students wanted me to speak to his bus driver and make him kinder.”

For Kay the consequences for this problem extended well beyond bus safety. In practical terms Kay found that busing, although there was only one route, was taking up a lot of her day. The driver frequently reported incidents, Kay felt that she had to confirm these reports by speaking to the students, who in turn revealed their unhappiness with the way the driver was
treat them. Also, she found that the bused children were arriving unhappy in the morning and this had the potential of upsetting their entire day. Despite Kay's efforts to talk to the students, their parents and Dave, the matter was not getting resolved.

_Hypothesis_

Kay felt that she had a legitimate bus concern and if she did not resolve it, more dire consequences would follow. She believed that her students were not being treated fairly by Dave, that they were already disadvantaged by their social conditions and they were being "kept down, " or oppressed by the driver. Kay harbored some anger toward Dave for handling the children in this manner and believed that if he gave the older students the opportunity, they would cooperate and be good role models for the younger children and their peers.

After a couple of weeks of complaints and escalating tensions Kay decided a bus monitor program was needed. This program consisted of training older students to assist the driver with loading and unloading the bus, general conduct while the bus was moving and with any other safety issues. Under this program the driver is still responsible for the bus and bus monitors take direction from the driver.

Kay felt that she should ride the bus too, to get a first hand account of what was going on. She wanted to understand the problem better, "what the students were doing, were they acting up, were they out of their seats, were they popping up and down. . . ." While on the bus Kay also noted seating patterns, how the driver greeted the children, how he spoke to them especially when they were getting off the bus. Kay reveals too that where she was new to the school that she wanted to see where they lived and what kind of housing they lived in.

_Reasoning_

A number of factors figure prominently in Kay's reasoning. The memory of a previous bus tragedy highlighted the potential for a bus injury. Kay felt that if students were not cooperative with the driver and if his rapport were not positive with them, then there was a greater risk that something might happen. Last year, in the other school Kay started a bus monitoring program with parent volunteers and junior high students as bus monitors. Kay oversaw the implementation of this program, attended the training, supervised its implementation, developed volunteer schedules and followed up on problems.
In her previous school the provincial police were closely involved with this program. One officer was assigned to the program and he had considerable experience with bus monitor programs in many other schools. Kay found this officer to be eager, enthusiastic and cooperative and was pleased to be able to list his help for her present school. Once she had his help, she was confident that she would resolve this matter.

Besides Kay's previous involvement with establishing a bus monitoring program, Kay has extensive involvement in working with bus drivers who lacked what she called “people skills.” Kay mentions that she has spoken to drivers in other situations when they were not addressing children nicely and saying things like “shut up!” She also had experience dealing with drivers when they behaved inappropriately, perhaps smoking on the bus or in one case carrying a dog on the bus. Kay concludes “these experiences with bus drivers have made me more cautious and alert and confident in this situation.”

Aside from the value of carefulness Kay’s actions were guided mostly by her basic human values. Despite some things Dave said about students, Kay felt they were good students. She reports Dave said “a lot of them were no good and wouldn’t amount to anything, they shouldn’t be allowed on the bus, they should be suspended from school and so on.” She counters the children were “victims of circumstances and maybe they learned the behaviour they were exhibiting.” However, Kay advocates self discipline and strongly contends that students can and must be responsible for their actions. She felt that a training program would be an important avenue to reach this goal.

Kay believed it was equally important to get to know the driver and get a better understanding of his viewpoint. She knew that he did not understand the economic plight of these children but she also realized that he was a parent and a grandparent. Kay decided to delve into some of his positive points and to try to find ways for Dave to develop some comradery with the children.

In reference to her training, Kay explains that her educational training has obviously helped her “know the rules and regulations of bus safety, what is expected of bus companies and so on.” She also credits training received through a public speaking organization that promotes public speaking and assertiveness, as being helpful. This training, Kay reveals, has helped her deal
with people in a skillful and tactful way, no matter how intimidating the situation.

Test

Kay first responded to bus concerns by taking complaints from Dave and following up with an interview with the student involved. This strategy continued for several weeks yet, the problem escalated. Kay made some parent contact as well and still the problem worsened. Kay then decided a bus monitor program was the best route to follow, though her present situation was much different from the circumstances of last year. Now she had to rely on ten to twelve year old students to serve as monitors. Some of these were not in good favor with Dave who had no experience with school aged children. Kay also states that in this situation she was responding as a principal and as a result had more responsibility for the outcome.

As Kay completed details of the bus monitoring program, she rode the afternoon bus run about every two weeks. She continued to do this even as the bus monitoring program took effect. This proved to be a very useful measure for Kay because it helped her figure out seating arrangements and the best way to organize and schedule monitors, even those whose behaviour was not exemplary. Dave also observed that behaviour was always better when Kay was on the bus. Kay acknowledged this and reminded Dave that this is how it could be even when she was not on the bus.

Another reason riding the bus was a positive step for Kay was that it enabled her to develop a rapport with the driver. She reports that “Once he saw I was riding the bus and I had initiated a course and so on, I found him a lot more positive.” Although Kay at first was angry about Dave not giving the children a fair chance, this anger turned into “cordial friendliness on the way home from the bus drives.” She said Dave chatted about his family and work and she got to know him in a different light. Kay noticed that he would report that “such and such is doing a really good job . . . or can you speak to such and such and remind them about the rules.” Simultaneously, she noticed that the children were now calling him Dave and saying nice things about him. Kay concludes “our relationship became less formal and more informal.”

As the bus monitor program developed, Kay consciously scheduled some of the more difficult students as monitors and this brought about positive changes in their behaviour, as she expected. These student improvements also extended to the school day including playtime. The
bus monitors enjoyed their responsibility and if they misbehaved in school they were reminded that they were role models and must display good behaviour throughout the entire school day. Kay notes that this reasoning worked and despite set backs the children tried their best and wanted to do well.

Kay concludes that she was very grateful for the many positive changes that occurred through this situation. She states that it reaffirms her belief that “If I have faith and courage then they [students] generally wouldn’t let me down, that they would come forward.”

Summary

Dewey (1933) emphasizes that any one phase of reflection can inform the other phases, thereby improving the whole reflective process. In this critical incident, the testing phase of Kay’s reflection was instructive and beneficial to her. As Kay’s understanding of the problem started to develop, suggestions formed into a hypothesis. However, it was not until she began testing her hypothesis that other dimensions of the problem became clearer and other suggestions formed. More specifically, by riding the bus she had a better picture of how the children interacted with the driver and each other. Perhaps one of the most significant developments that occurred through testing was the new perspective she developed about the driver. Kay’s reasoning before riding the bus was mostly about what she had to do to help the children, but as she tested her ideas she found that part of the solution lay in helping the driver. In the end, she applied the same values of care and respect to her treatment of the driver as she did to the children, taking a two pronged approach to the problem.

Kay shares that throughout the year she reflected often about why she initially felt anger toward the driver. She concluded that it was because she felt he was not giving the children a chance and that this was another driver with “poor people skills and poor practices.” Kay asserts that if she could have done anything different it would have been to start riding the bus after the first few complaints, rather than waiting for the problem to escalate as it did. Kay also emphasizes that she would have given more recognition to students who take responsibility for their actions and become good role models for their peers and younger students. She recognizes too, that she must give opportunity to children who probably appear to be problems and give them opportunity to show leadership and develop responsibility. Kay concludes that she was
aware of her thoughts and feelings on this situation and often pondered about it at night or at the end of the day. She observed many positive changes throughout the critical incident and was well in tune with what she was thinking and feeling.

**Student Misconduct**

This, the final of six reflections-on-action using critical incidents identified by participants, is a story that ends in failure, at least in Roy’s opinion. Like many other critical incidents, this one started in September and in this case continued for many months. This is a story about Eddie, a grade eight student who has spent his entire school career at Roy’s school. In fact, Roy vividly remembers when Eddie started out as a pleasant kindergarten boy full of promise. Now Eddie is a troubled adolescent returning to school after summer holidays. Roy described him as “totally out of control.” He had been in some difficulty in other years but nothing compared with this year. Roy felt Eddie settled in somewhat in the first two months, but after that things worsened. Despite Roy’s best efforts, he could not contain Eddie or stymie his misconduct.

**Suggestion**

In September Roy felt that Eddie’s behaviour had deteriorated and although Eddie had presented behavioural concerns in other years Roy contended that he had gotten worse. By November, Roy had surmised that Eddie’s behaviour had escalated to the point where he was spending more time out of class and teachers were referring him to the office more frequently. By December it was no longer a case of Eddie’s academics suffering, he had become vulgar, and unpredictable, making many staff and students uncomfortable. As Eddie’s situation deteriorated Roy considers whether the school should continue to accommodate Eddie, seek counseling and other services from outside agencies, continue efforts to include Eddie’s parents and/or request the board to expel Eddie.

**Problem**

At the start of the school year Eddie occasionally got out of hand but usually a call to home settled things down. With some home contact things did improve for the first two months of school, but the threat of calling home no longer had any impact. By the end of September though, Roy discovered that Eddie’s parents separated over the summer and Eddie was spending week days with his mother and weekends with his father. Eddie’s mother was also finding him to
be difficult at home. He came and went as he pleased and was rude and insulting towards her.

Roy’s school is unaccustomed to students being disruptive to this extent. The last case as severe as Eddie was about six years ago. Predictably, Roy shares, staff wanted instant action. Roy felt they did not understand what he was trying to accomplish, they merely wanted to be rid of the problem.

**Hypothesis**

Despite many obstacles Roy felt it was his duty to keep Eddie in school “at all costs.” Roy was convinced that if the school could persevere through this rough time, Eddie would eventually “straighten out and get back to where he was.” Roy further postulated that if Eddie was expelled or moved to another school, things would get much worse for him.

**Reasoning**

Although many factors shape Roy’s reasoning once again values figure prominently in this reflection. Roy’s compassion and advocacy for Eddie appears to be rooted in his *basic human values*. Roy believed that Eddie had the right to have, “the best effort of everybody to try to get him back to where he should be and not just due process in the legal sense, but due process in the moral and ethical sense.” According to Roy this was Eddie’s school and community and to pluck him out unnecessarily was unfair. He believed Eddie had the right to stay if it were at all possible. Roy also claims that Eddie also had a right to helping parents, not to be a victim of their marriage breakup. He was convinced that “he [Eddie] was just a grade eight young fellow that just needed help.”

Roy was not as concerned about Eddie disrupting instruction because he felt that he could personally remedy this. To Roy, that was just a matter of sending Eddie to the office for however long necessary. This started as a class for Eddie, then an hour or two, to a full morning or afternoon in the office and finally to out of school suspensions. However, Roy felt that despite his ability to control instructional disruptions, he could not remedy the safety risk that Eddie posed to others. “Unfortunately,” Roy states “Eddie was monstrous in his defiance and in his assault on other people, verbal and physical.” He tried to delay legal due process as much as necessary but when concerns arose about somebody getting physically hurt, Roy felt he had to “write the proper letters and run through the process.” Roy surmised “It is nice to have moral beliefs, but if it is not
working, legal due process must take precedence.”

When discussing background, training and experience Roy repeats often that he had very little experience dealing with a student of this severity. He credits however, the former principal for “schooling him in administration.” Roy asserts that she was very capable and confident in handling discipline matters and this she shared with him. He remarks, “If there was a discipline problem . . . she always found that time and said come on down to the office, there is a situation.” Roy concludes that she never missed an opportunity to work together and “she was exactly the same way in terms of exhausting every possible thing before it came to suspensions.” Roy confirms that he has tried to emulate her disciplinary approach and in his twelve years at this school there have been only two suspensions, Eddie being the second one. Until this case happened, Roy viewed suspensions as a failure in handling discipline. Now he regards suspensions not as failure, but as another necessary step in handling disciplinary matters with due process.

*Testing*

Roy wanted to set up a counseling referral for Eddie but this was unsuccessful because as Roy reports, “The mother said ‘he has his own counselor.’” During the autumn months there were frequent calls, letters and suspensions but the mother did not think he needed a counseling referral from school. Roy sadly voiced “he was a real nice young fellow and it was my feeling that he was being a victim of a home situation.” He believed that it was his role to try to get everybody, including teachers and parents, to work through this to “get him straightened out . . . to maintain him here, to try and get him back to where he was.” In January the situation came to an abrupt end. Eddie assaulted a classmate and the school board reassigned him to another school. This was to prevent him from being in the same class with the boy he assaulted.

Roy remarks that Eddie “was never a young fellow who was totally manageable” but things came apart when his parents separated. Unfortunately, Roy felt that his ability to respond to Eddie’s behaviour was limited. Eddie’s father and mother were not working together in Eddie’s interests. Additionally, the school atmosphere worked against Eddie because the peaceful atmosphere contrasted sharply with his extreme behaviour. Many staff were not used to this kind of defiance and wanted to be “rid of the problem.” Roy observed that throughout this
year, many teachers were impatient with his efforts to deal with Eddie. Roy sensed they wanted Eddie moved to another school or expelled because he had caused so much trouble and showed no signs of improving. Many staff members were pleased with the school board’s decision to reassign Eddie.

Eddie’s behaviour was disconcerting to his classmates too. Roy said the situation took a lot of time because “you had to watch, you were fearful that something would happen, so we were having extra supervision.” During September as the situation unfolded Eddie was handled according to the school’s discipline policy. That is, consequences for his actions became progressively more serious with each incident. It started with a home contact and referral to the office. By November, Eddie’s consequences escalated to out of school suspensions, each longer than the previous one.

At this point Roy knew that unless the cycle of repeat suspensions stopped, it was only a matter of time before Eddie was out of school. Roy and his staff had meetings with the mother and with the father separately but not with both together. Throughout October, Roy felt that Eddie’s mother had lost control of him but felt that his father still had some influence. In early November Roy and his staff again met with Eddie’s father. Roy comments that normally a meeting with the father produced improvements in Eddie for atleast several weeks, but this time the improvements lasted only for a day or two. Roy observes that when it came to the point that working through the father was not having any impact, “I knew then, there was no alternative.”

Roy’s efforts switched to involving district office in the process and making sure proper documentation was in place. This included several meetings with the educational psychologist and the mother. Consultations continued with the educational psychologist and guidance counselor until January when Eddie assaulted another student, Joey. Roy reports that given everything that happened “we recommended strongly that he [Joey’s father] write a letter to the director requesting that the child [Eddie] be moved out of school.”

Roy conveys his great relief with this decision saying, “look, we have tried everything, I just can’t think of anything else to do.” Roy too, contacted district office, wrote the proper letters and moved the process forward. By February, Eddie was relocated to another school. When asked about Eddie’s progress since being moved, Roy revealed that he is now living with
his mother and is continually in trouble with the police. They have even brought him home in handcuffs.

Summary

Roy accepts that despite his best efforts many aspects of this critical incident remain unresolved. He sees only trouble in Eddie’s future because nothing was fixed for him. Roy agrees “It was fixed for this school and the other youngster who was threatened but absolutely nothing was fixed for him.” Roy initially believed that if this problem would get resolved, no matter how bad it seemed to get. This situation has now taught him to be alert for situations beyond easy fixing.

Roy also credits the assistant principal’s disciplinary approach with helping “hammer out some of the softness in my own approach.” Roy says next time around he would follow a more due process approach “not that he would lose his sense of compassion.” He has learned that “These are situations that demand a bit more strict, legalistic disciplinarian type of approach.”

When I asked about the extent that he was aware of his thoughts and feelings as expressed in the interview, Roy gave a lengthy response. He teased out his reflection from ethical and legal viewpoints. Roy says he initially handled the incident at an ethical level. However, from a professional level he reflected to ensure protocol was being followed. When the police became involved in the assault investigation and when the school board reviewed Eddie’s file, Roy was confident that documentation was in place and that proper protocol was followed.

One thing Roy discovered through our interview was the point when he realized that Eddie’s problems were not going to be solved at the school level. Roy realized through our interview that he came to this discovery in later November when it occurred to him that the father no longer had any control. From that point on, Roy paid closer attention to moving the process forward in a legal sense. Before this, he approached Eddie’s situation mainly as an ethical problem.

When Roy looks back on the situation, he feels he waited too long before pursuing the legal route. He says “I would have moved earlier and more forcefully.” Roy also emphasizes that he would have promoted the counseling more vigorously and he would have insisted on meeting Eddie’s father and mother together, despite their personal differences.
Roy maintains that once Eddie was transferred to another school, accepting that he was
gone was difficult. Even at the recent graduation (Chapter Six assembly think aloud) Roy
wondered if there was a "missing link" in this situation. Roy truly believed it was unfortunate that
Eddie was not there, "I could almost see him out there [in the audience] wishing that he could
have been there that night too, (pause) unfortunately he couldn't be and that is strange."
Interestingly, Roy viewed this interview as another opportunity to revisit this critical situation to
find that "missing link."

Conclusion
Throughout this chapter I have attempted to provide actual instances of reflective practice
using the conceptual framework developed in Chapter Three. All participants reflected on a
critical incident involving a fictitious principal named June Dwyer. Though the story was
fictitious, all participants viewed her situation as realistic and quite aptly reflected on it using the
benefit of their experience, training and values. Each participant, in another interview, identified a
critical incident and reflected on it. Again, I applied the conceptual framework to analyze and
synthesize their reflective practice.

Thus far, analysis of participants' reflections on critical incidents illustrates the
interconnectedness of each reflective phase. Developments in one phase influence other phases.
As well, the emphasis given to each phase varies among participants. Most participants reported
that they gave their critical incident much thought before discussing it with me. For the most part,
many felt they did not make any new discoveries about the critical incident during our interview.

The next chapter considers contemporaneous reflection or reflection-in-action. The
structure of the analysis will vary from this chapter because the data does not present the
complete reflective process for each event. It will be about analyzing snap shots in time as
detected through think aloud responses to my observations of their actions. However, the format
of Chapter Seven, anticipatory reflection or reflection-for-action, will be similar to this chapter.
Again, I will ask participants to identify critical incidents that will require their action.
Furthermore, all six will be asked to respond to a fictitious critical incident involving a principal
who needs to decide action.
CHAPTER SIX
Contemporaneous Reflection; Thinking on Your Feet

Part of the data collection for this chapter involved shadowing each participant in three settings. These were as they worked in their office, during a staff meeting and at a public student assembly. These situations were chosen because of their variety and varying degrees of immediacy for decision making. I expected that the immediacy for decision making and action in an office setting would be less demanding than at a public assembly. I also expected that the need for immediate decisions would be greatest at a staff meeting.

During observation sessions I kept notes detailing participants’ comments and actions. The notes also contained many contextual details that were later used to generate think aloud participant commentary. In a usual data collection session I stayed within visual and auditory proximity of the participant and made notes on my note pad. Proximity ranged from sitting in an adjoining office to walking at a distance from the participant. After each observation session I reviewed my notes and added other details that I recalled, but never had time to record at the time of observation. On the same day, I audio taped a telephone call with the participant. In this call I read back my observations in segments that covered intervals of about five minutes. Then I paused and collected the participant’s think aloud commentary for each segment. Telephone interviews, including the oral reporting of my observations, were later transcribed and returned to participants for verification. Participants expressed no concerns with the content or accuracy of the transcripts.

A challenge to analyzing data collected through this process was the massive amount of detail it produced. Since the data did not provide a complete reflective process for any one problem situation, it appeared random and chaotic at first glance. This was not so for Chapter Five nor will it be for Chapter Seven because each interview in these chapters is about a solitary situation. However, by referring to the conceptual framework developed in the literature review, I was able devise a means to organize and collate the data.

Identifying differences among the five stages of reflection without having the full context of the reflective process is difficult. However, the literature makes a distinction between the suggestion/problem/hypothesis phases of reflection and the reasoning/testing phases. The former
focuses on understanding the problem situation while the latter dwells on action in consideration of this problem understanding. Consequently, I organized the transcripts into three columns. Table 6.1 is an example of data organized from an excerpt of Paul’s student assembly. My observations are paraphrased in the shaded middle column while Paul’s think aloud commentary is paraphrased as either suggestion/problem/hypothesis in the first column or as reasoning/testing in the third column. Think aloud data is anchored to my observation notes by reporting Paul’s commentary in the appropriate column next to the referenced observation. Where possible, I report think aloud commentary in the first person.

Furthermore, Appendices H to M contain organized data of an observation for each participant. There is no one reason why I included these specific observations, other than to provide two examples of office, staff meeting and student assembly sessions. These six also tend to be referenced more frequently in data analysis because of their illustrative qualities. Therefore, by providing them in an appendix format, the reader has the option of delving more deeply into the commentary of this chapter.

In the sections that follow, participant’s reflection-in-action is examined during all three events. First, an overview of the three situations is provided. An analysis follows this about the extent to which the participant reflected during the suggestion/problem/hypothesis phases, and the reasoning/testing phases. Next, I consider the extent to which participants anticipated happenings. As well, I examine the degree to which they explained their reasoning/testing. Similar to Chapter Five, I further consider the place of participants’ values, training and experience in their reflections. Finally, I examine the extent that participants were aware of their own thinking and self during the observation periods. Information presented in this chapter is especially pertinent to this study because the findings of this chapter tend to be based on participants’ theories-in-use. Whereas espoused theory tends to be the basis for findings in Chapters Five and Seven.

**Cam**

**Overview**

**Office**

Cam’s shadowing sessions take place over a two-week period in June. The first session
Table 6.1: Data Excerpt, Based on Paul’s Student Assembly and Subsequent Think Aloud.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggest./Problem/Hypothesis</th>
<th>Researcher’s Notes</th>
<th>Reasoning/Testing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The failure rate and the number of students doing summer school</td>
<td>Paul explains that various awards and scholarships will be distributed in November.</td>
<td>Now I can really emphasize the purpose for this assembly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is too high.</td>
<td>However, report cards will indicate any awards. Paul reviews what is included in</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Summer school could put</td>
<td>the report card (letters, next year’s information, book lists notices from other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>some of them back on track.</td>
<td>schools).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paul asks Hal, Nick and Brian to calm themselves and listen.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>He adds that reports indicate pass/fail. Those who fail have three choices, promoted</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>without certificate, repeat or summer school. Necessary applications will be included</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>in the report cards.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Paul states that some want to be put ahead to the next grade but this will be useless</td>
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<td></td>
<td>if they lacked the skills to work. His voice becomes louder as he says “this is your</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>life, it is going to be difficult if you are not successful in school.” Paul says a</td>
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<td></td>
<td>very large number need summer school and others need to wake up. He adds that if they</td>
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<td></td>
<td>can’t afford it, to contact the school for help.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This is the most serious, important message that I want to get across. Many students</td>
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<td>have had a great successful year but I need to reach the others too.</td>
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<td>I don’t want to be angry or confrontational or to lecture, but this has to be said. I</td>
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<td>want them to wake up. I am telling myself don’t get angry. I am trying to keep a balance</td>
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<td>and make sure I reach everybody.</td>
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was the office observation followed by the student assembly and then the staff meeting. The office shadowing began quietly at 7:50 a.m. on a Monday morning. It was a drizzly morning with fog hanging around the city. Cam was down to the last three weeks before his school closed. He was focused on the many remaining tasks. During the weekend he had been at his cabin so when he arrived Monday he was organized with physical and mental lists of what needed to be done. He wanted to complete many tasks before things became too busy. Over the weekend he had prepared a weekly staff circular and wanted this in teachers’ mail boxes before they arrived. He also wanted to tour the building to ensure that everything was okay. This meant making sure all sections of the building were heated and scheduled cleaning was finished.

Also, on Cam’s mind was getting the staff together to practice singing a selection they planned for the closing assembly. Throughout all this, Cam remained constantly on the move. The rapidity of his movement gave him a strong presence because he appeared to be in so many places at once, all the time interacting with staff and students. He reported through his think aloud that he purposely does this each morning to get a pulse on the day and to set a positive, upbeat tone.

As an illustration of Cam’s meticulousness that I alluded to in Chapter Four, his watch was set to beep at 8:45 a.m. When this happened, he would go to the general office to prepare and deliver morning announcements. Once Cam announced the messages his morning took a different focus. By now he had talked with most staff and students, surveyed the building and got the day off to a positive start. Then he took some time to regroup, examine his schedule and review his priorities for the remainder of the day. He was also proactive in limiting the number of interruptions and distractions for the next while to complete work that required more concentration. This was work of a planning nature.

During that time his secretary screened most calls and inquiries. There seemed to be good communication between both. Although many things remained unspoken, she knew his routine and patterns. For example, during an interval when he was not taking phone calls she silently placed a message on his desk to call a neighbouring principal. Once he read the message he tried to telephone this principal immediately. Although she was aware that he was not taking calls she knew he would contact this person when he had the message.
Assembly (Appendix H)

For most participants the second shadowing session was usually a staff meeting. However, the school was permitted to dismiss students one week early to give staff more time to prepare the final closing. Cam decided to hold his staff meeting after students were dismissed. This meant that the closing assembly was held before the final staff meeting.

Cam’s student assembly was a joyful event that went off exactly as planned. It was the final public event for a school that had been in operation for more than one hundred years. The program consisted of choral performances by the primary, elementary and junior high choirs with a staff finale. The performances were sprinkled with the distribution of student souvenir buttons too, and certificates of appreciation to long-standing volunteers.

Cam worked in close partnership with Rob, his assistant principal, in overseeing the ceremonies. The timing of the program was planned to the minute and it seemed to go off without any problems. Despite the routine nature of the assembly, Cam’s think aloud provides a glimpse into the energy a principal spends monitoring and directing a public function such as this. His intent was to have an assembly that was both a celebration and a reflection. Cam constantly promoted this tone and ensured that the program was moving efficiently to reduce delays and restlessness. All the while, safety associated with public gatherings, such as orderly movement, seating and evacuation routines and control of disruptions was upper most on his mind. Cam’s commentary depicted his ability to observe all aspects of the assembly, not just the formal program.

Staff Meeting

Cam’s staff meeting was held at the start of the last week of school, after all students were dismissed. Once again it had been held after a weekend, in this case a long weekend. Cam and Rob, the assistant principal, had prepared a detailed plan of what needed to be done in the next four days. The purpose of the meeting was to communicate this plan and to ensure that everybody understood it. He reported that the meeting was very different from most staff meetings because it was mainly about communicating this plan, acknowledging there was not much room for input.

During the meeting, discussion was about packing and moving procedures, labeling
belongings, distribution of property once the school closed, student records and other year end administrativia. On each of these issues Cam and Rob had detailed instructions in place and only in a few instances were these instructions altered. Cam showed patience and an indepth knowledge of various details as he fielded questions from staff, until there were no more.

Beyond communicating clear guidelines Cam wanted to develop comradery and morale. He recognized that many staff members had mixed emotions about dismantling their classrooms and distributing the spoils to other schools. He saw the meeting as a time to bring everybody together, and seek agreement on an established plan. At the end of the week a staff social was planned and he expected the staff would have the satisfaction of knowing their job was completed and done well. Throughout the meeting Cam communicated clear work expectations but also structured time for extended lunches and opportunities for staff to support and help one another.

Analysis

Many interesting patterns emerge in the data depicting Cam’s thinking. At first glance Cam appeared to place most emphasis on reasoning/testing and tended to be action oriented in his thinking. In the office observation the need to be present and visible among staff and students was constantly evident. At the assembly Cam’s efforts were mainly focused on establishing an appropriate atmosphere and keeping the program flowing. Cam’s intent during the staff meeting was to communicate a process that staff uniformly heard. Within these three situations he took many actions to support these goals.

However, as the data is examined more closely, it becomes apparent that Cam’s actions were very much rooted into the suggestion/problem/hypothesis stages of reflection. Cam’s think aloud on the office session shows that he wanted to get a head start on the day and plan his time wisely. He assumed that the pace for the day would be extremely busy. In the same way he wanted to keep the assembly flowing quickly because he knew the students would become restless if they became bored or tired. Likewise, he felt that he had to inspire teamwork among his staff if their last week was to be productive and pleasant.

What was unique about Cam’s reflection-in-action was that much of his thinking was in relation to what he anticipated. Cam said in Chapter Four that his reflection was mostly about what needed to be put in place, in other words, reflection-for-action. Not only does this seem to
be the case for Cam, it reduces his need to reflect-in-action since most of his
suggestion/problem/hypothesis thinking confirms what he already knows. Consequently, most of
Cam’s thinking during the shadowing sessions is to monitor the actioning of his plans, not to
develop plans.

During the student assembly, Cam’s suggestion/problem/hypothesis thinking about student
behaviour showed consistency. He commented that praise worked best for students and that they
live up to expectations. As students got restless, he provided coaching by standing in their view
and modeling how to listen. When they again became restless before the staff choral performance,
Cam did not become annoyed. He understood that the delay in getting the singing started was the
cause of the restlessness. Even at dismissal he noted that students were a little more chatty than
usual but he associated it with a change in routine.

There were moments albeit few, when unexpected things happened to prompt Cam to
reflect-in-action. In the office session when the secretary advised him that a new student transfer
was expected for September, he first appeared not to respond. Then he asked the secretary for
more detail about the request. Upon receiving the details, Cam felt there were indications that the
student might have special needs. Knowing that his secretary was reliable and professional, he
asked her to find out more information. As another example, Cam responded immediately to the
boy who arrived at school without medication to control his behaviour. He was familiar with the
boy because the boy received a midday dosage at school. When this problem arose it became top
priority for Cam because he knew that the boy, staff and entire school would have an unpleasant
day if medication was not given. Other than these few incidents there was little evidence of
suggestions for unexpected problems occurring to Cam during the shadowing sessions.

During the office session it is interesting to note how often issues around the custodian
surface. Cam hypothesized that the custodian lacked initiative and felt that he had to pay close
attention to the custodian’s work. Cam checked the waxed floor and building temperatures. He
made a note to call the board about the cleaning schedule. Toward the end of the observation
session, he specifically told the custodian to call the burner mechanic, not the director of
maintenance. It is also interesting to note that the custodian attended the staff meeting where
Cam instructed staff to direct requests for custodian help to the office. Cam’s guiding hypothesis
again was that the custodian needed organizational help.

Cam's experiences played a significant role in his reflection. In the office session his experience with others such as the custodian, secretary and specific teachers were factored into his testing. Cam knew that if he was not present in the corridor that students would behave differently. He also felt that he had to minimize distractions to his work once the day settled down. At the staff meeting Cam felt that he had to deliver a consistent message to all staff. Furthermore, he realized the potential for discord if he did not attend to staff morale and team work. At the assembly he knew the ingredients for its success and even commented on the need to deter certain parents from talking by standing next to them. When a student made a whooping cheer, Cam responded quickly before this behaviour escalated and detracted from the assembly. Also during the assembly an adult reported to Cam that she smelled smoke. In the think aloud he said, "I have experience with school fires." He thoroughly checked it out, though he believed it was tobacco smoke drifting in from a parent smoking outside in the courtyard.

Cam's values figure prominently throughout his think aloud on these sessions. In Chapter Four when I reported on the espoused values of participants Cam emphasized all four sets as identified in Table 2.1. He placed most emphasis on professional values and social and political values. Cam also referenced respect in basic human values and carefulness in general moral values. Think aloud data produced much evidence that supported Cams espoused values.

The student assembly provided an example of Cam's respect for others. He displayed a genuine concern and empathy for the children and knew ahead of time that it would be lengthy for them. When they became restless, he understood their discontent and worked at keeping them on task by encouraging them. Throughout all three shadowing sessions Cam was always positive. His ability to direct student behaviour, whether it was through eye contact, a hand gesture or praise was always respectful. The students showed no fear of him and responded very well to his praises.

I earlier reported Cam's meticulous nature and his precision for planning. Again this was verified in the shadowing session. His emphasis on carefulness was often evident. For example, in the staff meeting, concerns arose several times about the dumpster. He was mindful that sensitive or confidential material thrown in the dumpster could end in the wrong hands and even
cause a media fiasco. Cam repeated to staff several times that confidential materials to be disposed, first had to be shredded.

Cam’s social and political values were evident throughout the staff meeting. Although his main goal was to present a plan that he and the assistant principal had already developed, he tried to generate staff loyalty, solidarity and commitment by holding the meeting at the start of the last week. Much physical work had to be completed by staff at a time when temperaments could be testy. However, Cam successfully pulled everybody together and motivated them to work toward completing very defined jobs. He welcomed staff opinion and did address concerns related to the plan. For example, issues about computers being lab or classroom based, a name change for the new school and distribution of religious icons were thoroughly debated.

Cam also used the staff meeting to emphasize sharing and helping others. He remarked that each staff member could easily pack an individual area, but that the challenge lay in packing up the entire school. He was able to communicate an interconnected plan that went beyond teachers’ individual areas to show how they could help each other. He clearly communicated that as teachers finished their own work areas they were expected to help others. He even encouraged staff to bring in their older sons and daughters to help with the physical labour. Cam explained that the school could not afford to pay the teenagers money but could provide snacks and lunches for them.

Perhaps the most dominant group of values evident in Cam’s think aloud was his professional values. Cam showed a strong sense of duty and responsibility. Two of the shadowing sessions were at the start of a week. On both occasions he arrived at the school with a lot of advanced thought and planning in place. In Chapter Four when I first profiled Cam, he reported his most immediate responsibilities were to finish the year, close the school with dignity and maintain a positive atmosphere to the finish. His think aloud was also illustrative of this and showed the effort and energy that he directed to these outcomes. Cam realized too that most staff would be finished after the final week. Anything left undone after that would probably be his responsibility. Although he was hopeful that most things would be completed by the end of the week, he did build some extra time into his plan for crisis management.

Several issues arose in the office session that also illustrated how Cam regarded the
consequences of decisions. He was concerned that some students may arrive before duty began. Apart from the liability of having children unsupervised, Cam wanted to be sure they were being looked after so he personally went to the duty area. In another example when the student arrived without his medication Cam immediately thought about where this was heading, if he did not take corrective action. So he administered the medication himself, according to district policy. Also, during the staff meeting, procedures for returning building keys concerned Cam. He knew that the security of the building would be in disarray if procedures for returning door and filing cabinet keys for all staff were not explained.

Summary

The shadowing session followed by Cam’s think aloud explicated many details about Cam’s reflection. It showed how he anticipated most situations and that his responses were usually thoughtful and explained. The data also showed the large extent to which Cam was aware of detail that surrounded him. Yet, Cam’s think aloud commentary revealed few instances of Cam monitoring himself or his affective thinking. This is not to suggest that he did not self monitor or gauge his affective thoughts. However, he did not comment on this aspect of his reflection during data collection.

Paul

Overview

Office (Appendix I)

The office visit was the first of three shadowing sessions with Paul. As with other participants, I arranged the observation for early in the morning, and in this case on a Friday. I was already situated in the general office when he arrived. Paul’s assistant principal was away for a few days so he was covering most administrative responsibilities. He arrived later than expected because a staff member was late in calling him at home to request a substitute. The shadowing started at 8:00 a.m. and it was a bustle of activity from then on. My original plan was to observe Paul until about 9:30 a.m. With Paul’s on the spot consent I stayed an additional hour to observe closure to a series of events that were unfolding.

When Paul arrived at school his priority was to speak to the secretary so that they were mutually up to speed on the day ahead of them. Paul took time to casually speak to other persons
he met in the office and staff room areas. Coffee seemed to be a preference for many and a fresh supply was on hand. Throughout what appeared to be a relaxing interval, Paul constantly scanned and observed, always on the alert for the unexpected. For example, an external examiner was conducting an international achievement test. This alerted Paul to making sure keys were sorted and a room change notice was posted. Later, he also made a point of dropping in on the exam to ensure students were cooperating with the examiner.

Paul spent considerable time weaving throughout the building making contact with many students. He routinely went around several times making sure corridors and classrooms were unlocked and that students were settling in for the day. Apart from posting messages on teachers’ email, Paul also decided to repeat them on the public address system. He viewed this as a good way to promote community and school spirit.

After Paul greeted most staff and students and had the school day under way he turned his attention to a parent tip that he received earlier in the morning. While he was doing an outside walk before classes, a parent advised him that he saw a student exchanging what appeared to be drugs with somebody on the street corner. Paul felt the time was not right to deal with this when the disclosure was made, but he knew he would investigate it when things settled down. Paul had concerns about drug activity in the school and had dealt with a major incident several days before. (This incident is expounded in Paul’s reflection-on-action in Chapter Five.)

Once Paul had the student in his office, he used elements of surprise and shock to confront him. The student admitted to possessing a marijuana like substance and handed it over to Paul. At this point Paul had three priorities. He wanted to see what else he could find out about other school drug activity from this student. Paul additionally wanted to keep the school atmosphere calm and unalarming. Thirdly, Paul wanted to help this boy and his family deal with this drug issue.

Paul contacted the police and it took about thirty minutes for an officer to arrive. He was pleased with the officer’s approach and demeanor with the boy. So he agreed to let her initiate phone contact with home. The boy’s mother arrived within minutes. Paul was sensitive to helping her deal with this stressful news. After the police officer arrived Paul felt that it was now a police matter. However, he felt compelled to remain involved and to make sure the student and
mother understood the full extent of this situation. Once Paul was satisfied that the mother was settled and the boy's rights were respected, he provided all three a quiet place to continue their discussion away from his office.

While in the midst of this situation, Paul noted that a classroom teacher had sent another student to the general office. However, the student returned to class at the start of the next period, before speaking to administration. When Paul was finished with the police situation, he immediately called that student back to the office to address why he was sent out of class and why he left the office without authorization.

*Staff Meeting*

The staff meeting was held the week following the previously described drug incident and two weeks following the one described in Paul's reflection-on-action in Chapter Five. Paul correctly expected that this would be a contentious agenda item. The meeting was one of the last for the year and at a time when teachers had a heavy workload. Paul wanted to set a positive tone. The staff discussed and decided many year end issues by following a formal agenda. There was an equal mixture of serious debate and light banter between staff and administration. For many items, Paul's efforts successfully focused on developing consensus.

Paul emphasized the importance of naming the school's beliefs. He talked considerably about a position paper that he was preparing and how this would be available to new staff and parents. Paul also affirmed the role of teachers in carrying out the school mission.

When discussion arose on drug related suspensions, he anticipated most staff would not agree with his decision to identify the students who informed on those suspended. The staff candidly expressed their displeasure and Paul accepted their criticism. He explained the rationale for his action on two points. Not only could the suspended students easily figure out who reported them, but all students have to be encouraged to speak up when a wrong is done. This was the last issue for the staff meeting and the meeting ended with staff agreeing to monitor any complaints of intimidating or threatening behaviour against the informants.

*Assembly*

The student assembly was held on the morning of the last day of the school year. They had already dismissed students for a week because of restructuring work. However, staff had
spent the entire week together finalizing year end details. About 9:00 a.m. Paul used the public address system to call all students to the gym. Although it was the end of the year, Paul had a somber tone. He was very concerned about the low achievement levels of many junior high students (Table 6.1 is an excerpt from this session).

Paul mainly wanted to use the assembly to deliver a strong message about the dire consequences of inadequate achievement. He began by acknowledging the students and teachers that were moving on. He wished them well. In consultation with the assistant principal, Paul had planned to deliver a concise message aimed specifically at students who did not apply themselves throughout the year. He spoke about the importance of education and a summer school option for some. He was passionate and animated about these matters as he pleaded with students to take schooling more seriously. Once he finished, he realized that he had spoken on some assistant principal’s issues.

The assistant principal concluded the assembly and gave directions for students to report to their classes where teachers would distribute report cards. After most students left the gym, Paul and the assistant principal reviewed the assembly. Paul expressed a great deal of frustration about getting students to take schooling seriously and applying themselves consistently. He talked further about some things they might do at the start of the next year.

Analysis

Paul’s suggestion/problem/hypothesis commentary offers insights and explanations of how he perceives his work. Although he did not place the same emphasis on planning as Cam, he does showed a keen alertness to his work environment and an equally keen ability to respond. During the assembly for instance, he expected that students would be responsive to his address. Still, as he realized some were not, he adjusted his actions by pausing, making more eye contact and raising his voice to make his points more effectively.

There was ample evidence to confirm that many things unfolded as Paul expected. During the office session Paul felt that with some effort on his part, the school day would get off to a positive start and that the tone would be upbeat. In the staff meeting he expected to garner consensus on most issues and he did. He also expected disagreement over his handling of the students who reported drug activity. It was probably no coincidence that he chose this as one of
the last items on the agenda, when time was limited and much good will was already evident.

Paul, throughout his think aloud, focused mostly on suggestion/problem/hypothesis thinking. During the office session he, seemingly relaxed, was monitoring and responding constantly. Similar to Cam, his first round of activities led up to the commencement of classes. Once things settled down, Paul began attending to fewer issues but in more depth. He was equally proactive in all three observation sessions. During the office observation for example, he wanted transfer letters out to head off parent anxiety and distressing calls. In the staff meeting, as another example, he began with a reading about being a part of change. Paul talked about informing new staff about the school’s mission and beliefs. In the year end assembly Paul and the assistant principal predetermined who would be saying what. Even when Paul departed from this plan, both he and the assistant readjusted to avoid repetition.

There were times when Paul became aware of things but chose to respond to them later. In other words there were time gaps between suggestion/problem/hypothesis and reasoning/testing reflection phases. For example, apart from the obvious delay in responding to the parent drug tip he noticed another student had been sent to the office while he was attending to the police matter. He also noticed that this student left without being interviewed. Paul responded to this later when timing was more appropriate.

Feelings such as empathy were evident in Paul’s reasoning/testing thinking. He spoke convincingly and in detail on most matters. In the office session he was energetic and cheerful to the extent of sparking enthusiasm in others, including students. Despite his concern about the prevalence of drugs he was equally concerned about getting help for the boy and making sure he took time to speak with the boy’s mother. During the student assembly he revealed sternness and intensity when making several points. He regarded his message as very serious and yet was frustrated that he was not reaching those who needed to hear it.

Although Paul’s reasoning/testing think aloud responses were patterned and thoughtful, he rarely references his training and experience throughout his think aloud commentary. This could be because the think aloud procedure did not encourage participants to think beyond the immediate and present. Another possible explanation was that experience and training were so embedded in his actions that they were implicit. The only noticeable exception to this was in
Paul’s office think aloud. It appears that Paul’s response to the parent tip about a student accepting drugs may have been fueled by other drug incidents and his exposure to drug users while working in western Canada many years ago.

In contrast to Paul’s lack of reference to his experience and training, his think aloud provided an abundance of evidence to illustrate the influence of values in his reflection. When espoused values were described in Chapter Four, Paul’s commentary highlighted basic human values. He consistently emphasized respect and quality human relationships. In all three think alouds these themes appeared.

In the first observation when Paul arrived, the atmosphere of the office changed immediately. It became more upbeat and energetic. Paul greeted everybody and within a few short minutes people who were quietly going about their work were now talking to each other. He greeted students and asked individuals questions that showed he knew a great deal about their families and backgrounds. There were many other specific examples of Paul’s respect for others. During the office session, Paul’s handling of the drug tip was motivated in large part by his basic human values. First he was concerned about the damages that drug use inflicts on students and the school culture. Yet, when he apprehended an offender part of his response focused on counseling the boy and ensuring that his rights were protected. He also provided initial support to the boy’s mother when she arrived at school.

When Paul was dissatisfied with the actions of others, he handled these with respect. When he realized that the secretary had not mailed out the letters, Paul firmly but respectfully told her that it had to be done that day. She accepted his point and agreed to work on it immediately. When Paul raised his voice at students sauntering in the corridor and even when he called several into the office, he said it was out of respect. In conversation with these students he constantly reiterated his concern that they were not using their time wisely.

During the staff meeting Paul acknowledged the efforts of may staff members. Teachers openly spoke their minds and Paul acknowledged their views. When one teacher requested that a student be suspended, Paul felt that this was totally inappropriate. However, Paul responded to the teacher politely and deferred the discussion to another time and place. Again, Paul’s response was far from dismissive.
Many previously cited examples equally illustrate Paul’s *general moral values*. When he was dealing with the boy in possession of drugs, Paul’s think aloud commentary specifically identified values of carefulness, courage and justice. He was mindful that procedures were being followed and the boy’s rights were protected. He also knew he was taking on a controversial issue by confronting this situation. However, Paul on a number of occasions spoke about the need to break the silence and deal with issues like drug use head on. This value was equally highlighted in staff discussion when Paul defended his decision to name the informants in the first drug issue.

Paul promoted fairness and carefulness on a number of other points in the staff meeting. The student orientation was explained in detail to make sure students and parents developed a positive first impression. Parent and student rights to exam rereads and appeals were upheld. He also took care to emphasize fair and just student evaluation methods.

*Professional values* espoused by Paul in Chapter Four, again were well supported in his think aloud. He stated in Chapter Four that for him it was important to know that school had made a difference in the lives of students and that the best possible things were done for them. The staff meeting think aloud produced evidence of how Paul tried to maintain a student focus for all discussions on issues ranging from sports days to the school’s mission statement.

In the latter part of Paul’s think aloud on the student assembly (Table 6.1), Paul appeared to grapple with his professional values. He questioned how much of a difference the school was actually making, given the number of students who did not perform acceptably. Paul faced a dilemma because on the one hand too many were just not interested in school and remain unconcerned. Meanwhile, Paul wanted to awaken these students to the idea that life was going to be difficult if they were not successful in school. Consequently, he was left with many doubts and wondered what could be done differently in the next school year.

The fourth set of values, *social and political*, were most evident in Paul’s think aloud on the staff meeting. The meeting was designed to involve staff and to share ideas on a number of year end and long term issues. Paul’s typical pattern was to raise an item according to the agenda and to then allow staff to speak for and against the issue. After they debated the issue, Paul tended to summarize the discussion and make a recommendation. Then objections to the
recommendations were addressed. Eventually Paul would lead the staff to a decision in a process that not only gave everybody a say, but created a commitment to a common view. There were times when some disagreed with Paul’s recommendations, but in the end they accepted them.

Before concluding the analysis of Paul’s reflection-in-action one final area to note was the extent to which Paul thought about his thinking and feelings throughout the think aloud sessions. Paul appeared to routinely monitor himself throughout the various sessions. As he delved into the parent tip about drugs, he was conscious of handling it without alarming others. He remained calm and worked on other things as he waited for the police officer to come. When the mother arrived he felt that he had to project calmness and a matter of fact approach to help her even though this was all very stressful to him.

During the staff meeting, Paul was conscious about setting a positive tone. He knew that when he started the meeting his mind was preoccupied with teacher workloads and schedules. However, Paul put these thoughts aside. Constantly throughout the staff meeting he monitored his mood and the mood of staff members. Paul’s affective awareness was especially evident in the student assembly (Table 6.1). He gauged his sternness and intensity because it was how he wanted to make his point. At the same time he did not want to appear angry or confrontational and kept telling himself, not to get angry. After he turned the microphone over to the assistant principal, he gave more thought to his struggle to balance his message and feelings. After the assembly ended he was aware that he was more upbeat and positive when visiting around to classrooms to individually wish many students a happy summer. This, like many incidents also illustrated Paul’s ability to keep moving from one event to the next even when a complete shift in emotion was required.

**Summary**

Shadowing Paul was an intriguing experience. The observations took many twists and turns with the office session being the most interesting. Paul came across as a dynamic leader who did make a difference in the lives of students as he worked with staff to promote academic growth. Paul’s values were very evident and clearly important to him as he interacted with students and adults alike. The extent of his awareness of what went on in his school was also evident in his think aloud.
Overview

The sequence of shadowing sessions for Jon varied from the usual routine mainly because of scheduling difficulties. Jon, being a high school principal, operated on a schedule very differently from the other participants. A formal exam period replaced regular classes during the last three weeks of the school year. I was not able to complete an office observation of him before a staff meeting. However, Jon suggested that I attend the staff meeting and arrange an office observation for later. I agreed, though I was concerned that the staff might think I was there to observe them and not Jon. Teachers in other schools had already noted me shadowing their principal in different situations and might not be as concerned about me sitting in on a staff meeting. Jon gave me an opportunity to explain the nature of the research to the staff. In the end, my attendance at the staff meeting did not seem to be an issue and the staff did not appear to be inhibited by my presence.

I was able to observe Jon conducting a staff meeting on the first day of June and in an awards assembly the following week. The sequence of this was effective because many planning details for the award’s assembly were completed at the staff meeting. The third observation of Jon, the office session, was conducted several days after the assembly, during the exam period. This observation period also proved to be productive because Jon faced less interruptions and was able to probe deeper into some office work.

Staff Meeting (Appendix J)

Jon’s staff meeting was scheduled toward the end of the instructional year. It was a hot afternoon and it was my first observation of a participant conducting a staff meeting. He began the meeting by routinely presenting the agenda, making light snacks available and giving staff some idea of the meeting duration. Throughout the early part of the meeting he had difficulty generating responses and input from staff on many issues. He was very disappointed about this and did not know whether to interpret it as apathy or satisfaction with his proposals. Despite his concern, Jon remained undeterred and pressed ahead with the agenda. He viewed the lack of staff participation as part of a year-long trend.

Jon was disappointed with the assistant principal’s orientation plan for the prospective
grade nines who were to visit the next day. He felt the plan lacked substance, so he mentally noted this as another thing to be worked on next year. In fact, that was one reason that some items were on the agenda. Jon felt that they had inadequately handled some things over the year and he was determined to have things run smoother in the next year. The annual awards presentation of November past was a good example. Jon, being in his first year at this school, could not get a sense of how the awards distribution was suppose to go. When the time rolled around, he found the documentation for awards vague. He ended up putting some things together based on the recollections of staff. This time round, it was his intent to finalize many decisions to ensure that they would be more planned and organized for the next distribution of awards in November.

Before Jon got to the discussion of nominees for various awards an unexpected and vociferous debate arose over the current effectiveness of the school library. One teacher raised the topic but then dropped it because discussion got into report cards. However, another teacher later revisited the issue positing that the library was not accessible to staff and students. Jon was reluctant to get into it at this meeting because he felt teachers sending students to the library without supervision caused many problems. Another major concern Jon struggled with was that he was not using the full library staff allotment in this capacity. Consequently, the learning resources teacher was teaching courses outside his assigned area.

Many staff members, including the learning resource teacher, entered the discussion. Jon was uncertain about how far to let the debate go. On one hand he sensed support for increasing library time for the resource teacher. Yet, others opposed this because it would ultimately mean larger classes. The provision of technology was also part of the discussion. Some felt that the learning resource teacher should focus more on technology while others felt it was best he concentrated on library services. In the end, the discussion came to a close with no clear agreement. However, the staff had now awakened and was more vocal. (Elements of this issue were espoused in Jon’s reflection-on-action in Chapter Five.)

Finally the staff arrived to the main topic, deciding winners for the various year end awards. Jon again tried to get staff to take ownership of these decisions and to avoid making them himself. Progress was slow with many student names tossed about for various awards.
More awards and potential winners kept getting raised but no agreement was being reached. Eventually, the guidance counselor suggested a process where the staff would start eliminating names, until a few were left for each award. Then they could take a vote.

Jon was delighted with this suggestion and so was much of the staff. Jon’s think aloud revealed that he was indeed trying to “stir the pot” and provoke staff ideas and reactions. The guidance counselor’s suggestion worked well and before long the staff had agreed on most school wide awards. The meeting ended abruptly. Jon thanked everybody for their patience and stated that their decisions would be announced at the student assembly.

Assembly

In planning the awards assembly Jon was mindful that this was the first one of this nature for students. His goal was to make a good first start and make improvements with each successive year. They held the assembly early in the morning before recess break. All students were called to the gym by home room, beginning with grade nine. After classes arrived and were seated in the gym, teachers tended to carry an empty chair to the back of the gym and sit.

Another teacher emceed the morning and this gave Jon the flexibility to move around and to keep things moving. The start was delayed because Ken, the assistant principal, was still in his office. Jon was annoyed about this but quietly went and got him. Jon had strategically placed himself at the beginning of the program to establish an upbeat tone and reiterate standards of excellence. However, he felt the student response was flat and again he pressed on hoping things would get better.

Jon’s think aloud also highlighted tensions with the actions of various staff members. In general he preferred that the staff was not sitting in the back of the gym so distantly removed from the students. On several occasions he felt Ken could have been better prepared. Jon was disappointed with the gym teacher’s handling of the sports awards. He was uncomfortable about how the band awards were presented. When the hockey coach spoke, Jon felt his choice of words should have been more carefully chosen. Toward the end, Jon did not approve of the teacher moderator for the student council endorsing the vice president as president in the next year. However, Jon felt that in the end, as he expected, the assembly was a good first start.

Office
As stated in the introduction to this section, final exams were under way when I conducted Jon's office observation. Many year end activities were cluing up. As well, Jon was initiating plans for the September start up. One of the most important tasks on his mind was finalizing the master instructional schedule. His day began at a much slower pace. When he arrived at 7:40 a.m., he milled about the general office for a few minutes, while waiting for his own office to be vacuumed. During that time he checked for mail, wrote a message to the guidance counselor and chatted informally with other teachers who were now arriving.

Jon described the early morning as "dead time" when he could get much done. Within minutes he was contemplating staffing, reviewing the progress of the schedule and heading off to the gym to review the administration of exams. Jon revealed in his think aloud that he did not agree with assembly style exams but he had not yet been able to convince staff to do otherwise. Once in the gym, he wondered what could be done about announcements that were otherwise an interruption to students. He immediately took measures to get a microphone.

After Jon returned to the office he dwelled more on scheduling. He discussed a number of scheduling concerns with the guidance counselor. Jon also monitored the assistant principal's efforts to track students absent from exams. In a rare scene, Jon was able to spend the next fifteen minutes uninterrupted, as he studied the master schedule. His think aloud showed that he was nearly ready to print a copy.

Meanwhile, most other office interaction for the session was either with the custodian or the secretary. Jon wanted planning in place for September so he delegated work to the custodian. Much of this was about room designations and ensuring that there was drapery, student desks and furniture in various rooms. Although Jon had a similar reliance on the secretary, he noted the need to routinely check things over and to make sure publicly distributed materials were of a good quality.

Toward the end of the observation, one incident interrupted Jon's thinking. It was when he noticed several students through his office window, smoking outside near the main entrance. He immediately responded to this and ordered the students to cease and move on. Apparently, during the year it was a priority to curb smoking on school property. Otherwise, Jon shared "this is exam week, a rare chance for quiet concentration."
Analysis

Jon’s think aloud usually exemplified suggestion/problem/hypothesis thinking. During the staff meeting and student awards he was especially alert to how things were unfolding. In these situations, Jon was initiating some new practices that significantly impacted the entire school community. One of Jon’s aims, in his first year at this school, was to better recognize student achievement and excellence. Jon had circulated a written proposal to the staff before the meeting and he did not get much response. He correctly anticipated that generating staff opinion in the meeting would be difficult. Meanwhile, he had definite proposals ready and was determined to involve staff in the selection of students for various awards.

Think aloud reasoning/testing occurred frequently throughout the staff meeting. The data depicted Jon as adjusting his actions as discussions unfold. He slowly began the meeting with some general discussion, all the while trying to be proactive at raising staff and student expectations. He tended to withhold his views and spoke neutrally on many issues. The exception was when one teacher objected to inserting year end comments on student reports. Jon strategically countered this and spoke in favor of year end comments because he felt that this teacher could negatively sway the view of others.

Jon proceeded very cautiously during the library debate because he knew that the school’s full allocation for learning resources was not being used in this way. On the one hand some staff argued that they should make their library woes a public issue through the school council. Yet, Jon felt part of the problem was that teacher did not take responsibility for their students while in the library. Furthermore, teachers could not agree on how to share the library resources. Jon’s reasoning/testing indicated that he let teachers have their say and when they made some productive suggestions he latched onto them to direct the debate. Jon’s reasoning/testing also showed patience and restraint through this discussion. He let teachers have their say and avoided reacting to opinions that he privately found objectionable. All the while, valuable time was ticking away.

Similar patience was evident in his approach to the selection of students for the awards. He asked staff for ideas on how to decide various winners and when they made none, he promoted his written proposal. Although, Jon knew it was not the most efficient approach, his
aim was to get the process moving. Frustrated by the lack of progress, the guidance counselor offered another approach. Jon with staff consent, quickly switched gears and used it. His reasoning/testing at this point showed that chaos and slow progress were his allies. Many things had to be decided in the meeting and a lot of work was still outstanding. He was able to motivate the staff to start producing. He noted that toward the end, that consensus was coming easier and that a number of things played into his cards.

Jon’s think aloud during the award’s ceremony showed that his reflective thinking was mainly focused on how the events unfolded in relation to what was planned. Occasionally he gave reasoning/testing detail about how his actions helped reinforce the way the program was suppose to unfold. For example, to set expectations and to prompt students to applaud he spoke first on the program.

Meanwhile, Jon’s suggestion/problem/hypothesis commentary indicated that he felt the assembly was a good first start. He noted many details to be improved for the next year. As an example, when the first awards were presented Jon realized that he should have had the students stand to be acknowledged. In fact, Jon’s think aloud was filled with at least twelve recommendations on how the awards assembly could be improved next time around. Toward the end of the session, he stated in his think aloud that at his last school he formally made notes on the assembly and kept them together in a binder for future reference. One can expect that his reflection on this assembly will be the next installment to this binder.

In contrast to the awards assembly, Jon’s think aloud on the office session was mainly oriented to suggestion/problem/hypothesis thinking. Jon noted in his commentary that the exam period was a rare time for quiet concentration. He spent longer intervals at given tasks and chose when to move from one task to the next. For example, after he first arrived in the morning he engaged in some friendly talk with those around the general office. He then met privately with a teacher who requested to see him. From there Jon did a tour of the exam hall, stayed around for about five minutes and then decided to go back to the office and work on the master schedule. Despite some minor distractions, Jon remained focused on the schedule for about the next twenty minutes. Eventually Jon left this task to pursue other planning issues with the custodian and then the secretary.
In Jon’s think aloud there was much evidence to illustrate how his thinking was influenced by other experiences. His assessment of his current situation was relative to how things were at his last school. It was apparent in each of Jon’s think alouds that he felt things were much better in his former school. In the staff meeting think aloud, staff apathy disappointed Jon. His handling of the library debate was influenced by what he experienced elsewhere and the whole model for the awards assembly was based on the practices of his past school.

As the student assembly unfolded, Jon assessed it in comparison to how things should go, according to his experience. His commentary about keeping a binder of awards speeches and comments shows the extent to which he tries to build on the past. Finally, in the office session, Jon referred to how the pace of his work was behind where he would normally be in other years. When a teacher suggested she might not order a prescribed student text, Jon was immediately reminded of a teacher in a past school who was “flipping out” because he could not get the text. In the office session Jon also remarked how they held exams in his past school in classrooms. However, in his current school they converted the gym to an exam hall for the exam period. Other less important procedural things of the past were also considered. Jon observed that in his past school, they posted routine staff announcements in the staff room. However, that was ineffective for his present school because few teachers used the staff room.

Jon’s desire to reculture many aspects of his school transcended his work and typified his values. In Chapter Four Jon’s espoused values were predominantly grouped into two sets, professional values and social and political values, with the latter being most prominent. Data collected through my observations and Jon’s subsequent think aloud showed Jon’s actions to be very consistent with his espoused beliefs. In Chapter Four he emphasized the need to be organized and planned. His think aloud highlighted his distress with the lack of planning for events such as awards assemblies. Even in the staff meeting his disappointment with Ken’s presentation on the student orientation was difficult for him to conceal.

Jon was perhaps most guided by the need to involve his staff and increase their participation in decision making. His commentary suggested they seemed comfortable with the status quo and were not that interested in assuming more involvement or decision making authority. Consequently, Jon’s reasoning/testing during the staff meeting was about countering
staff apathy and inaction. He ably anticipated their reactions to various suggestions but patiently countered their indecision with incremental changes. With time, he was confident that things would change. But for now, he was prepared to work with the way things were.

It also seems that the impetus for the awards assembly was rooted in Jon’s push for academic excellence. He could have easily avoided the hassle of this event and gone merely with the November awards for the senior graduates. However, Jon felt that this was an important event. He accepted the challenge of enlisting staff support and developing student interest and respect for these awards. When he got a flat response from staff on various suggestions, he remained undaunted and persisted. At the assembly Jon was just as persistent. In the beginning students applauded only lightly, and did not seem to understand the prominence of some awards. However, Jon remained confident, believing that with time the awards would have more stature and that this assembly would be an annual event. Meanwhile, he realized that many staff and student hurdles had to be overcome. He felt that eventually a collaborative culture would develop in this school community.

Summary

Throughout all three sessions Jon struggled with getting staff to take more ownership of school initiatives. He perceived large differences between his existing staff and the group he worked with at his last school. Consequently, Jon’s experience was a major influence on the vision he tried to develop. As a result, Jon showed patience and regard for his present situation and carefully selected issues to address. Through it all he remained hopeful that positive change would come.

Jon’s actions emphasized his political and social values and his professional values. This may have been prompted by his perception that the need for participation, loyalty, sharing and team building might be so wanting at his school, that they became priority. What was also interesting about Jon’s shadowing session was that though he found it hard to espouse his values in the preliminary interview, they consistently appeared in all three sessions.

Beth

Overview

Office
Beth’s office observation was the first of the eighteen shadowing sessions that I conducted. Even though I was familiar with the work of principals, I never expected the hectic pace of that morning. Like most principals, Beth’s first hour was a bustle of activity as she tried to get many things under way for the day and week. The observation session was held on a Monday which might have also contributed to the fast start.

Over the previous weekend Beth was involved in several school functions that consumed much time. Consequently, she was not as prepared for this Monday as she wanted. Beth explained that on a normal Monday she would have a staff news circular ready. This week she was also preparing a parent newsletter. Furthermore, an exam she was administering to her class in the first period was not collated or stapled.

Beth arrived at 7:45 a.m. expecting to distribute newsletter report forms to teachers. These were used to collect information for the upcoming parent newsletter. Beth felt that many teachers avoided making submissions to the parent newsletter. However, this form helped streamline the process and provided more accountability. When Beth arrived, two teachers dropped by her office looking for these forms. Beth could not locate the form and eventually asked the teachers to use a blank sheet. After they left, she turned on her computer to print off another copy.

Meanwhile, the general office area was getting busier and noisier as teachers arrived. Between trying to print a form and get some class things ready, Beth frequently went to her door and to the adjoining general office to greet teachers and staff. The teacher moderator for the student council came to her office to discuss the possibility of a year end student dance. Beth wanted to accommodate the request because she had been encouraging the student council to take some initiative all year. Yet, with only several weeks of school remaining, the calendar was full. Beth also had safety concerns about student behaviour at dances.

After meeting with the student council moderator, Beth next went in the hallways and music room. She knew that if she stayed in the office she would be kept busy and would not be able to circulate and greet students. In Beth’s walkabout, she spoke to many students and circulated newsletter report forms to teachers who needed reminders. After Beth circulated through each floor, she returned to her office and made some phone calls.
A lengthy call was made to the educational psychologist. Beth expected this to be a brief call because usually the psychologist could not be easily reached. Normally she would leave a message on his voice manager and speak to him later. To Beth's surprise, he answered in person. Although the call was lengthy, they sorted many issues. Beth's think aloud revealed that she was becoming agitated. Although she had no difficulty with the psychologist, her thoughts were distracted and elsewhere. She had not closed her office door, the call was usurping valuable time and a teacher was waiting outside her office door. Meanwhile, the general office was even noisier and busier.

Once Beth finished the call she talked to the waiting teacher and then went to the assistant principal's office to discuss setting up a meeting with another school. From there Beth returned to the corridors, this time more forcefully directing tardy students to leave their lockers and go to class. When she returned to the general office, she reviewed some matters with the secretary and began preparing the morning announcements.

During announcements, Beth's think aloud revealed a continued level of frustration. She confirmed that she must "sound like a stuck record on some of these messages," thinking that the teachers who submitted these messages should do something else to get them across. In morning messages Beth also grouped some messages as staff announcements because the weekly circular was not prepared.

After Beth finished announcements, she left instructions with the secretary to check on several things. Beth then headed off to class to administer her exam. She appeared more at ease when she entered the class and talked to students about the exam and the importance of working hard. Beth asked the class about several absent students, fielded some general questions and complimented several students on various things. She then distributed the test and reminded students they had to be silent. Once students settled into the exam Beth reviewed her calendar.

**Staff Meeting (Appendix K)**

The second observation of Beth was about a week after I conducted the office visit. The meeting was scheduled to start an hour later that usual because of other on going meetings. Aside from the late start, it was a warm afternoon with only two busy weeks left in the year. The agenda was full with many year end topics such as the sports day, year end awards and report
cards. Beth began the meeting by reading a short reflection that emphasized the need to remain positive. In her think aloud she shared that the staff needed the reading because things were so rushed and out of control. In fact, several times Beth described in her staff meeting think aloud the extent that she was irritated and rushed.

Student report cards and cumulative folders were first discussed. Beth emphasized the responsibility of teachers to complete them in detail. Problems with the last two reporting periods were reviewed and suggested improvements were sought. From there, discussion moved to the upcoming music concert. Although Beth turned the discussion over to the music teacher, she was mindful that the music teacher tended to have a free reign in organizing these events. Beth was concerned that the music teacher’s decisions tended to favor the music program first and the school second. Various teachers raised a number of concerns arising from past concerts. They were thoroughly discussed and recommendations were put in place.

The next item, the year end award’s ceremony, received equally detailed debate. Beth was very concerned that these events might not go off smoothly and that there would not be enough seating for all visitors. She had put admission ticket control measures in place but she felt they were not being enforced. Still with public events, the art show discussion was next. Beth promoted this function because she wanted to highlight the broader element of the school’s curriculum. By this point in the meeting Beth described herself as on “automatic pilot.” She revisited the demands placed on staff time and commented that they needed many of these events to help students and community accept school restructuring and to move on.

Perhaps the most irritating part of the staff meeting for Beth, was sports day discussion. Her frustration with the gym teacher became apparent as the details of the day were explained. First off, Beth was not sure that the gym teacher would be at the meeting, so she had asked another teacher on the planning committee to update the staff. However, the gym teacher arrived late and was able to speak on the matter.

Beth felt that planning was lacking and the day might be a “free for all.” After a protracted discussion they sorted out many planning gaps and details. When the discussion was just about concluded, the gym teacher introduced another problem. He had inadvertently arranged the events for a day when he was scheduled to be at one of his other schools. Despite
Beth's feelings of being overwhelmed, she maintained her composure and helped the staff agree on another date when the gym teacher was scheduled to be at the school.

By now the staff was getting restless, though several other timely items remained on the agenda. Beth felt that she was not able to process much more when a teacher asked about the grade eight festivities. Beth believed that this comment originated with their discontent over her earlier decision not to set aside any special celebrations for the grade eight classes. She again stood firm on the matter and again gave her rationale about why the year end celebrations could not single out any particular class.

Before discussion wound down, Beth provided staff some details about class sizes and room locations for the following year. Some staff requested more details about the numbers and the rationale for some building alterations. At this point, there were other items to be raised. However, Beth briefly mentioned them knowing the staff was exhausted. Before adjourning, one teacher asked Beth what teachers had to attend open house. Here, Beth's think aloud indicated that she felt this teacher was testing her because she had privately discussed this with him before the meeting.

After the meeting was adjourned and staff dismissed, Beth felt that she had not given much credit and attention to the social committee for its efforts to organize a year end function. Beth had forgotten to include it on the agenda and provided little time for them to speak at the end. As everybody disbursed, she tried to talk to individuals on the social committee but was not able to see them in time. She felt badly about this and wished she had been more proactive on the matter.

Assembly

Beth's year end assembly was held in the evening just before the students' last day of classes. It was a long and protracted event consisting of a liturgy, distribution of awards and a reception with snacks. The entire event ran from 7:30 p.m. to midnight. However, my shadowing session consisted of only the awards section, although I attended the full event. Unlike the routine protocol, Beth and I agreed ahead of time to collect her think aloud the next day once all students were dismissed and she was more rested.

Despite Beth's initial worry and concern about how this event might go, she was very
pleased with how things turned out. The award’s celebration consisted of grade level awards for
grades five to eight with special recognition to individual students who received other awards.
Various other presentations and speeches were also incorporated into the ceremonies.

Throughout the evening Jerry, the assistant principal, emceed. Beth felt that despite
several errors, Jerry did a very good job keeping the audience settled and having everything
organized and on track. However, when errors were made, she became tense and feared audience
reaction. For instance, Jerry announced at the start that they would begin with the school song.
He had been so immersed in looking over his notes he did not realize the song was already
completed. Jerry apologized for the error in a light-hearted way and the audience laughed loudly.
Jerry did not seem too worried. However, Beth’s think aloud showed her concern that the
audience might be making fun of him.

As this was unfolding, Beth was sitting in the back writing and reviewing her notes.
However, Jerry called on her to present class packages of diplomas and awards to home room
teachers for presentation. All the while, her tension and uncertainty seemed visible through her
facial gestures and animated movement. As the grade five classes were called, Beth perceived an
immediate blunder when she noticed many students from low income areas were not present. She
realized immediately that she should have arranged bus transportation for them. What she felt to
be most ironic was that these students who needed this ceremony the most, were the very ones
overlooked. This realization made her feel terrible. Similar thoughts came to her mind when the
junior high awards were presented. Here she noted extreme variations in student attire. Although
Beth felt some were rebelling against the school uniform, she believed that some students from
low income areas probably did not have a special outfit and felt too awkward to attend. She again
noted irony, observing that some of these absent students were to receive awards for perfect
school attendance.

After they distributed the grade level awards, Beth returned to her seat in the back and
continued working on her notes. The school band performed a melody and received a lengthy
ovation. All the while Beth’s thoughts were on the undue emphasis and prestige the band
receives and on preparing a text for what she would say later in the program. Distribution of
many special awards followed the band performance. Beth was annoyed that the gym teacher was
not there to give out the athletic awards. She also noticed that few special awards went to students who transferred in during the past year.

Beth’s on going conflict with the counsel chair was also evident in her think aloud. At one point when they called upon him to present some grade eight awards, Beth’s thoughts were about how he liked public attention. When he made his closing address as counsel chair, Beth reported in her think aloud that she felt “agitated, irate and angry.” She believed that although the evening was about bringing closure to a difficult year, the chair reopened many wounds and created even more anger and bitterness.

Meanwhile, Beth was appreciative of the valedictorian’s speech and the closing remarks of the president of the parent teachers association. In particular, Beth noted the president’s tone was softer and graceful. Beth realized too, that her own remarks might be similar to the president’s but felt that it was too late to make changes. When Beth spoke toward the end of the ceremony, she tried to put a positive tone on a difficult year, emphasizing that it was time to move on. All the while though, Beth doubted that the audience was hearing her message, and believed that most did not like what she had to say. As the ceremonies ended and the audience began moving to the reception, Beth’s think aloud showed tremendous relief that it was over and that all went well.

Analysis

Throughout Chapter Four Beth described her year as a difficult one and reported that she considered leaving administration, to return full time to classroom teaching. She felt this was an especially difficult year because of the school council’s agenda. (Beth’s reflection-on-action in Chapter Five provides some background to school council issues.) As a result she did not feel appreciated by the school community. The shadowing sessions were also conducted during the last three weeks of school when Beth’s schedule was extremely busy. Like many of the staff she felt exhausted, yet seemed to be pushing herself to do more. Even at the start of the staff meeting Beth felt a need to slow down and focus because things were “out of control.” This context appeared to overshadow much of her think aloud commentary throughout all three observations, especially at the award’s ceremony. Given the stressful year that she was experiencing, Beth did not display much optimism throughout the shadowing sessions and seemed surprised when things
went well.

Beth tended to offer most commentary within suggestion/problem/hypothesis thinking. Yet, there was much evidence of reasoning/testing think aloud. When commentary occurred in reasoning/testing it was not so much a repeat of what I reported to her through my observations. It tended to further describe her reasoning for action in light of what was identified in her suggestion/problem/hypothesis thinking. For example, in my observation I report to Beth that a teacher visited her office to discuss a year end student dance. In the suggestion/problem/hypothesis phase of Beth’s think aloud, Beth was mindful of the already crowded calendar and the immature behaviour of some students at dances. However, as I reported in my notes, she told the teacher she would add the request to the year end list. In her reasoning for action she elaborated to say that all year she had been trying to get the student council to take some initiative. When this happens she does not want to deter them. Most detail that Beth identifies in suggestion/problem/hypothesis is usually anticipatory and provides the wider context of many situations. For example, in the staff meeting discussion about the report card process, Beth’s think aloud revealed that the student report card was an on going issue. This was the third time the staff had addressed it during the year. Beth considered in her think aloud that with each running, the process had become more streamlined and less difficult.

Yet, many unexpected happenings occurred throughout Beth’s observations. In an odd way Beth was prepared for this and when “something else happens,” she interprets it in the context of her difficult year. A good example of this was the sports day discussion in the staff meeting. Beth expected that the gym teacher and committee would have a thorough plan to present but the plan had many gaps. Once they tightened the itinerary, Beth was astounded to find out that it was scheduled for a day when the gym teacher was not at their school. However, as in most cases her stress level first rose, then she regrouped and facilitated a solution in light of a new problem frame.

In the award’s assembly there were other instances of this. Beth seemed very anxious about the whole event especially with regard to having enough seating for everyone. When errors occurred throughout the evening, her anxiety level went higher, again premised on the belief that
she was facing a critical audience who did not want to hear what she had to say.

Beth’s responses as evidenced in suggestion/problem/hypothesis thinking were always explained and thorough. She was always able to provide a richness to her reasoning/testing thinking. Rarely did she act without a thoughtful, reasoned approach. The awards assembly again provides a good example. Before the assembly she was unable to complete her address to the students and parents. Although it probably added to her stress level, Beth decided to make notes throughout the evening as she got a feel for what was happening. This way she was able to “speak from the heart” and hopefully avoid echoing comments already stated by other speakers.

Beth also brought experiences to her reflection. Often throughout her reflection she referenced what experience had taught her. In the opening thoughts of her office session there were examples of how she created an expectation that teachers complete newsletter reports for the parent newsletter by using a form. She talked about ongoing efforts to get the student council to show initiative. Beth shared that she needs to break out of some past practices of her school and find out what other schools were doing. Her respect for the intuition of the custodian was based on her experience and the advice of others. The futility she expressed in repeating public address announcements was based on the past ineffectiveness of such methods. Finally, an observation about unseasonably warm spring temperatures causing students unrest was premised on her knowledge of other years.

The foundational role of Beth’s values was equally visible throughout her think aloud. As reported in Chapter Four, Beth espoused basic human values as her guiding principles followed closely by social and political values and then professional values. Although there was much evidence to support all three it appeared that Beth places more emphasis on professional values. In the opening of the office session Beth was rushing about and did not feel as prepared for the day as she would have liked. Her staff circular was not completed and planning for the parent newsletter was behind schedule. Meanwhile, she had to make several contacts, set up some meetings for later in the day and get ready to administer an exam in the first period. Throughout this she stopped to talk to teachers, greeted them at her door and stopped what she was doing to listen when they came into her office. Additionally, she did several walkabouts before the start of classes, warmly greeting many students on an individual basis. Beth conceded that her
walkabouts also brought out the task mistress in her. She firmly spoke to students and directed them away from their lockers to the classrooms. Meanwhile, she was out and about, partly because she did not want to be perceived as somebody sitting behind a desk on the phone or at the computer all day.

Beth's professional values were most apparent in her think aloud on the staff meeting. This may have been attributed to the agenda and issues that were covered during the meeting. In any case the agenda was lengthy and showed that much planning had been done and that the final few weeks of school were going to be onerous. Beth showed evidence of her work ethic and the expectations she had for others. She was annoyed by inadequate planning and believed that some teachers were trying to avoid their responsibilities. At the end of the meeting, year end social plans were an after thought despite evidence of much planning by the social committee.

Finally, in the third observation session, social and political values dominated Beth's perspective. She regarded the whole assembly as an opportunity to bring closure to a difficult year and to help parents and students move onto a new beginning. Beth appeared overly sensitive to what the audience might be thinking and constantly wondered how they were receiving things.

Beth expressed deep regret about overlooking bus transportation for less fortunate students. She also acknowledged that lax student attire regulations might have deterred some from coming. When they distributed special awards, she noticed that few recipients were students that transferred in during the last year. She felt that the selection process did not favor them because these students were not as well known to the teachers as students who spend the last four years at this school.

In Chapter Four, I reported Beth's frequent reference to the value of survival. Again this value permeated all three shadowing sessions especially throughout the award's assembly and staff meeting. She began the staff meeting thinking things were out of control. Beth was irritated that some teachers thought she had time to key in data for student reports. During discussion of the award's assembly she wondered if all the planning would come unraveled. Beth became completely over topped when the gym teacher revealed that he inadvertently set the sports day for a day when he was not scheduled to be at the school.

During the award's assembly, Beth appeared worried that things would go terribly wrong.
As she tried to prepare some final remarks, she dreaded what the council chair might say. Meanwhile, the chair delivered a message consistent with what she expected. Beth, in her turn, felt she had to try to mend some of the hurt. All the while, she seemed to be part of an event that was totally out of her control and likely to take many twists and turns throughout the evening. In the end however, it ran smoothly and was received graciously by parents.

Of all participants, Beth commented the most about her affective state. This may be because her emotions and feelings ran so deeply. Beth acknowledged her agitation often and was even conscious of how her facial gestures and body movement confirmed this. She was equally cheerful and joyful during positive interactions. When she talked individually to students and teachers, she smiled and listened attentively. Often during the awards ceremony she showed her approval with applause and nodding.

Beth’s high level of self awareness enabled her to monitor her actions as situations unfolded. When she hurried students away from their lockers to start their day, she knew she was demanding. Although she was frustrated about having to go to class with so many other things to do, she did it with continence. In the staff meeting when she felt some teachers were testing her she became irritated. Realizing that she was probably showing it, she adjusted her response and moved on. Even toward the end of the awards ceremony, Beth was able to set aside her anger over the council chair’s message and deliver a message pleasantly, although she remained suspect of her audience. This act like many, typified Beth’s ability to put her best foot forward even when she felt anxious and unappreciated. She believed what she was doing the right thing.

Summary

Throughout shadowing sessions Beth continued to show a high level of anxiety and agitation. In some ways her reflection-in-action contributed to this, by making her worries and concerns more explicit. She displayed a tremendous capacity for work in planning year end events when many other principals would have omitted some events in light of a mounting year end workload. Furthermore, Beth as espoused in Chapters Three and Four, expects others to have this drive for work. The same value tensions identified in Chapter Four persisted throughout all three observation sessions. While she was respectful of others, she was mindful of her responsibilities and wanted to do things better which each successive attempt. Consequently,
survival values pervaded throughout much of Beth’s think aloud.

Roy

Overview

Staff Meeting

The sequence of shadowing sessions for Roy varied from the usual sequence, mainly because I was not able to complete an office session before observing him in a staff meeting. Earlier, I expressed concern when scheduling Jon’s sessions. At that time his staff was not familiar with me observing throughout the school. However, the staff did not seem inhibited by my presence and it turned out to be a non issue. The same held true for Roy’s staff. Data collection was productive and insightful. Additionally, Roy’s meeting was held in their spacious resource center and this enabled me to discretely sit out of plain view. Some staff even commented at the finish that they forgot about me being there.

Roy’s staff meeting focused on many year end activities and went as planned. He revealed to me prior to the meeting that his home life was hectic at the time of data collection because an immediate family member was in hospital. Discussion on many agenda items was routine for Roy because he had been at the school for so many years. Yet, Roy showed patience in giving people their say and working through a consensus process. Roy relayed in his think aloud that he did not mind changing past practices if the reasons for these changes were sound.

Roy’s think aloud also highlighted his sensitivity to the subtle interplay between staff members. All was not what it seemed to be. For example, one teacher was upset that students were not being dismissed a week early because of board restructuring. Roy explained that their school was not eligible because they were not closing or reconfiguring by September. This teacher asked loudly about other schools that were closing. Another teacher chimed in with the names of about fifteen other schools that were dismissing early. Roy summarized in his think aloud that the first teacher was not interested in the names of these schools but just wanted to get others stirred up. He also noted that he could count on the second teacher to have information. In the think aloud Roy passed it off lightly saying that these were standard roles for these two.

On another occasion Myra objected to the format of the closing student assembly. Roy was alerted to a possible undercurrent in the objection. The teacher who planned last year’s
assembly had left early so her views could not be heard. While Roy thought that the complaint might be legitimate, he wondered if something else was bothering Myra. The staff meeting ended sooner than anticipated, although they covered the full agenda. Afterwards, only a few teachers left immediately. Many, including Roy, stayed around and talked informally for about another fifteen minutes.

*Office (Appendix L)*

The office observation, my second think aloud session with Roy, was conducted several days after the staff meeting. That morning was especially busy for Roy because his immediate family member remained hospitalized. Consequently, his home routine was busier than usual. When he arrived at school, I was positioned in the general office. A discipline situation was already in progress in the assistant principal's office. He immediately dropped off his book bag, quickly greeted those present and went into the assistant principal's office. A short while later five students emerged but Roy and Vera, the assistant principal, remained to discuss the matter further.

Like most principals, Roy next did a school walkabout attending to many matters along the way. Some were planned while others were prompted as he walked about. Roy devoted most of his walkabout time to talking and interacting with teachers. He conferred with the assistant principal on another disciplinary matter, spoke to the custodian and checked to see that students were behaving as expected.

Once classes began, Roy quickly returned to his office to complete some nomination papers for staff vacancies. Roy and the assistant principal had held interviews the previous day and reached final decisions. However, Roy decided to wait one more day before completing the forms in case he or the assistant had last minute thoughts. Despite Roy's best efforts to complete the forms, many other things distracted and interrupted him.

At one point the kindergarten teacher asked him to come to their diploma practice since Roy was going to be giving the children their diplomas at the parent assembly. He thought this would take him away from completing the nomination forms for a few minutes. However, as soon as he saw the set up for diplomas he knew there would be problems. The regular kindergarten teacher was off work and an inexperienced substitute was organizing the ceremony.
When Roy noticed that they were practicing with one diploma he had concerns. The teacher would call a child’s name, this child would step forward, accept the diploma and then give the diploma back to the teacher. Roy immediately surmised that this was what they would do at the parent assembly.

Roy asked the student assistant assigned to a kindergarten child with challenging needs to immediately make up some extra diplomas. She quickly produced ten. Sure enough, when the teacher started the rehearsal with Roy distributing the ten diplomas, the children first accepted their diplomas and then wanted Roy to take them back. Eventually he was able to convince the children to hold on to their diplomas. However, he felt the children needed more practice before they had the routine right.

Roy noted that even after the additional diplomas were used the challenging needs child refused to keep her’s. Roy accepted her diploma without fuss and never tried to convince her to keep it. He concluded that once she had an idea of how to do it, changing her mind would be very difficult. He also noted that the child’s parents would not appreciate any problems at the assembly, because they did not want their child singled out or treated any differently than the others. Roy noted this for his later attention remembering a similar problem arose at the Christmas concert where the audience thought she was “cute.”

Once Roy returned to his office, he had to deal with an elementary student sent out of class by his teacher. Although Roy spent some time working with this boy, he was left wondering why the boy’s behaviour had recently changed. He pursued several ideas but did not form any explanations.

Recess time came and went and Roy still did not have the nomination forms completed. He eventually closed his office door and refocused his efforts on the forms. Roy reported in his think aloud that he was clear about the rationale for these nominations, but it was a matter of getting it on paper. There were no other interruptions and he did complete the forms. Roy then turned his attention to planning for the sports day.

**Assembly**

Roy’s student assembly was held on the student’s second last day of school. It was an event that included all grade four to eight children and their parents. This was an annual
ceremony where student diplomas and awards were distributed and special recognition was given to the graduating grade eight class. The assembly began with an address by Roy. He mostly acknowledged the contributions of many who helped make the year a success. Roy gave special recognition to their town mayor and provincial legislature representative for helping the school council appeal the school board’s restructuring plans.

Student awards were distributed to each successive grade, beginning with grade four. Some received recognition for special awards such as public speaking and science fair placements. Generally, the audience enjoyed the event and seemed appreciative of students’ hard work.

When errors occurred throughout the program Roy calmly corrected them on the spot. As an example, after Roy announced the grade five science award, he realized that he overlooked the grade four science award. He immediately announced the error and called the grade four student back to the stage to collect her award. At another point an award was given to a grade seven student who did a project with a partner. However, both the student and the partner arrived to the stage for their plaques. Roy responded by asking the audience to wait a moment until they got the second plaque ready. After a short delay things were back on track. Most times Vera, the assistant principal, pointed out these oversights to Roy. When something came to light, he usually paused, covered the microphone and quietly spoke to her. Roy remained alert to her cues throughout the evening as he emceed.

Despite the effective communication between Roy and the assistant principal, Vera’s public remarks at the end of the ceremony surprised Roy. The grade eight students presented the assistant principal a bouquet of flowers to show their appreciation of her as their teacher. When she thanked the students, she made a direct reference to a difficult student who transferred out after Christmas. (The circumstances of this situation were described in Roy’s reflection-on-action in Chapter Five.) Although Roy agreed with what Vera was saying, he did not think making veiled comments about the boy at this assembly was appropriate.

Analysis

Many patterns emerge as this think aloud is examined. It is important to note that Roy has been at this school for twelve years and has detailed knowledge of the inner workings of the school. During the office session he was looking after many things from confirming a packing slip
to setting up a hot dog order for the sports day. In the staff meeting, discussions on the various agenda items were equally detailed. For example, Roy’s knowledge of the student assembly extended to knowing the specifics of how the grade eights marched to the stage. When he dropped in on the kindergarten rehearsal, he knew in an instant that the routine needed a lot of work.

Much of Roy’s think aloud commentary was about making explicit his suggestion/problem/hypothesis thinking that formed the basis of his reasoning/testing. I described Roy in Chapter Four as “a quiet unassuming individual who has learned much in his 27 years in education.” In the shadowing sessions Roy observed more than the obvious and frequently incorporated these observations into his actions. One of the best examples of this was in the staff meeting when one teacher raised the issue of other schools closing a week early. The second teacher started riddling off the names of the other schools that had permission to close as the first teacher vehemently protested. In my observation the teachers’ outspokenness seemed to overpower Roy leaving him speechless. Still, his think aloud showed that he saw it as part of a continuing pattern for these two teachers. In fact he deliberately chose not to respond or to take either of them credibly.

Roy seemed to face a constant stream of activity moving from one event to the next. However, his actions were usually imbedded in well developed suggestion/problem/hypothesis thinking. During the office observation for example, a boy was waiting to see him. In a flash, Roy used many details when deciding how to handle him. His hypothesis was that when something changed in this boy’s life, things started to fall apart. Roy was searching for clues for what might have changed. He helped the boy do some of his Math work in the hope that something would come out in their casual conversation. Roy directly asked the boy some questions about his home life and later checked with the boy’s teacher to see if she was aware of anything. Roy felt he did not accomplish much with the boy, mainly because he still had not figured out the exact nature of the problem.

Roy’s actions were not only thoughtful, but equally subtle. In the staff meeting when student support plans were discussed, Roy’s think aloud showed that he was pleased with how the discussion was going. Later when they were debating the closing assembly for students, Roy
had to “step lightly” because of a concern that one teacher might be undermining the efforts of another teacher who left earlier. In the first instance Roy protracted the discussion and encouraged everybody to speak. The opposite occurred in the second instance. Although the pacing of the meeting was ahead of schedule Roy limited debate because the discussion was getting dragged out.

Roy’s keen sense of suggestion/problem/hypothesis thinking also helps him observe the patterned life of his school. This was evident in staff discussions about a date for the sports day. Roy initiated the topic, suggested a date and then let it go around the table several times for discussion. In the end, the staff came back to Roy’s original suggestion. Roy revealed in his think aloud that even though “it is the same old rigmarole each year,” the process has to be worked through.

Roy was very effective at bringing other school experiences to present situations. During the office session Roy decided to set up a meeting with the parents of one child who scraped the face of another, because of other incidents with this child. When preparing a sports day letter, he asked the secretary to pull last year’s file. His analysis of using one diploma for the kindergarten practice was based on his knowledge of other years. When discussing year end duties of teachers he noted that the policy book developed a few years earlier was not as sacred as it used to be. In his commentary on the awards assembly he stated that he always began with a “state of the union” address. Often he commented “This is standard. It is done this way every year.”

In all observations and think aloud sessions Roy consistently remained calm and thoughtful. He was not rushed in his conversations and found humor in many situations. As issues arose, he remained receptive to resolving them, showing no anxiety or impatience. Roy also took time to pause throughout his work even when pressed for time. For example, he did not complete teacher nomination forms immediately after the interviews so he and the assistant could think about their decisions overnight. After students left the assistant principal’s office, Roy and Vera stayed to review their handling of the matter. When he spoke to the boy sent to his office, he went back to the classroom to hear how the teacher’s views matched his.

In the staff meeting Roy demonstrated that he could set aside his ideas to hear what others were thinking. This was evident for example in the staff discussion about how best to organize
Another good example of this was in Roy’s effort to hear the valedictorian’s speech at awards night. He was especially appreciative of how Katie could blend serious points with some fun and humor. Even at the end, when Roy felt the assistant principal’s remarks were unnecessary, his concern was more about the timing of her remarks and not the content.

I earlier reported that of all participants, Roy elaborated most on value conflicts. It comes as no surprise that his think aloud was imbued with issues related to his values. One such value conflict surfaced in the staff meeting. Roy updated the staff on the school council’s latest efforts to appeal the school board’s decision to reconfigure the school. He tabled a letter prepared by the council for the board. However, he did not discuss the letter and its content, merely noting it as an item of fact or interest. Roy’s think aloud showed that there was no discussion because when the decision was open to input they had their say. “Now that the board has made a decision,” he added in his think aloud, “we have to live with it.” Yet, his dissatisfaction with restructuring was even more evident at the awards assembly. In his opening remarks he thanked the school council and even singled out the town mayor and member of the provincial legislature for their support in addressing school restructuring. In doing so, Roy left no doubt with the audience that he disagreed with board plans to restructure his school. However, he said it without being publicly critical of his employer.

Roy also emphasized that the focus of the school council was educating the whole child. His reasoning/testing revealed that he deliberately made this comment because he believed consideration of the whole child seemed to have been lost in the reorganization. Referring to Chapter Four, Roy asserted that spiritual and faith development was being overlooked in public education. Later in the assembly when the grade eights received their awards, some students received certificates for their work as church readers and for being members of the altar guild at the neighbouring church. To some observers, these awards might have seemed out of place for a public school. Although many practices that recognized the Roman Catholic tradition had all but disappeared, this one remained. Roy, in fact, acknowledged that it was a vestige of their denominational past. Perhaps this was because he believed that public schools should acknowledge spiritual aspects of students.
Summary

Roy's think aloud commentary is consistent with views he espoused in Chapter Four. Although he has a quiet manner, he has a strong presence in the school. Roy earlier acknowledged in Chapter Four that life had been good to him in his school. He seemed to be very much aware of this through his daily interactions with children and adults alike. Twelve years at this school had also given him the detailed knowledge to develop and maintain many positive working relationships. Perhaps one of the most striking features of Roy's think aloud was its depth and interconnectedness.

Overview

The sequence that I followed when shadowing Kay was to observe her in an office situation, a staff meeting and then at an assembly. The early closure of her school and Kay's busy schedule precipitated this pattern. The office and staff meeting observations were within two consecutive days, followed by the assembly about two weeks later.

Similar to the shadowing of Jon, this sequence actually enhanced the quality of data collected. Some aspects of Kay's office session were a follow up to a school council meeting held the previous night. In the staff meeting, aspects of the ceremonies were finalized and more detailed planning was completed. The third observation of Kay was at one of these closing events. Consequently, I was able to shadow Kay as she lead the development, planning and implementation of ceremonies for the final closing of her school.

Office

Kay arrived at her school before 8:00 a.m. Not only was there a school council meeting the night before, the school sports day had been held the previous day. Kay, like many, was tired. However, this fatigue was not evident as she scurried about in her morning walkabouts talking with many parents, students and staff. These walkabouts were a time for Kay to assist students with getting settled in for their day and to follow up on various issues with staff. She visited many classrooms asking students how they enjoyed yesterday's sports day. The responses were very favorable. Kay also discussed their ribbons and awards individually, remembering many student achievements from the previous day.
Like all participants, the busy pace lead up to the ringing of the bell to start classes. At 8:45 a.m. Kay returned to the general office to find it filled with students having various requests. She redirected most to their classrooms and began preparing morning messages. A short while later she delivered the messages on the public address system. Aside from many routine year end messages Kay also mentioned a program that highlighted courteous and polite student behaviour would be extended throughout June. She concluded her announcements with her signature message “Have a good day and help someone have a good day.”

Once morning messages were completed and the school was quieter, Kay went to a primary classroom and discreetly asked a boy to come to her office. This was to follow up on a behavioural incident from the sports day. Kay quietly and calmly conversed with the boy asking him questions that focused on how he felt and how he might respond in a future situation. After the conversation she escorted the boy back to his class and returned to her office.

Aside from having many busy year end activities, the closing of the school was creating other unexpected work. Her regular secretary and custodian were reassigned to other schools and replaced by less senior people the previous day. Kay found that she had to go over many details and routines with both new people, though only a few weeks remained in the school year. Kay tried to be helpful, especially to the secretary. Besides these staff changes, a substitute teacher also needed clarification on some routines. Throughout this, Kay had many office tasks to do. There were many phone calls to make as a follow up to the previous night’s school council meeting. Additionally, year end evaluation reports needed to be completed on two student assistants. She intermittently completed these tasks as she attended to many other issues.

Kay later brought a second boy to her office because of a display of inappropriate behaviour at yesterday’s sports day. She empathized with the boy about being teased but clearly expressed her disapproval of how he reacted. Similar to the approach she took with the first boy, Kay acknowledged his anger and focused on some practical strategies for handling similar situations.

After the second boy was escorted back to class, several staff members individually dropped by her office. Although I was not privy to their conversations Kay’s think aloud highlighted their need for reassurance and affirmation. Kay stopped what she was doing and took
about five minutes with each of them. Each person seemed to leave more relaxed then when they arrived. While Kay was talking to the second adult another person came along. Seeing that Kay was busy, she said that she would return later. My office observation of Kay ended as she was responding to a school council suggestion to prepare a volunteer sign up sheet for the closing celebrations.

*Staff Meeting (Appendix M)*

I returned to Kay's school the next day for the staff meeting. The meeting was scheduled to start about a half hour after they dismissed students. Kay called staff together through the public address system and reminded them to bring previously circulated materials. The agenda was very lengthy and concerned mostly year end functions such as student awards, year end celebrations and scheduling changes. Kay had snacks arranged and the meeting got under way promptly.

Kay's meeting agenda and role were similar to Roy's. Her think aloud indicated that her energies were focused on monitoring and minimizing tension between various staff members. In particular, Kay acted as a go between for two teachers, Lynn and Kim. Early in the staff meeting none of this was apparent to me, but it became so as things developed. Many times Kay's think aloud showed that she tried to make both feel equally important. On one issue she had even thought about going to Kim before the meeting to ask her to be more flexible. She ultimately decided against this, thinking it could be dangerous because it might show favoritism.

Kay factored other staff feelings into her actions. Don passed a light-hearted remark about Dave, a former principal. Yet, Kay considered it differently knowing the two did not always see "eye to eye." Kay was also anxious about what Don might say about board trustees in the closing celebrations. Although Kay knew how Don felt, she asserted that if the trustees came to the ceremony they were to be respected.

During the planning discussion, Kay made numerous attempts to have the staff take ownership of the celebration, being cognizant that she was only in her position for one year. Kay wanted the ceremony to reflect the history and tastes of the school community. She was pleased with many staff suggestions and managed to incorporate them into the closing program. These included setting aside a room for memorabilia, establishing a guest book, inviting former teachers
and asking some guests to speak. Kay was disappointed that more of the staff did not volunteer to speak.

About half of the staff meeting was devoted to sorting out closing celebration details. Before getting into other items Kay announced that the board had approved the closing of their school one week early for students. She felt this would lift staff spirits and energize them as they discussed other year end things. The year end awards assembly was being discussed as several teachers arrived late. Kay felt they were excessively late and believed they caused unnecessary chatter when they arrived. Kay specifically asked one of them to speak at the closing ceremonies. However, this teacher declined saying that she was not a public speaker and that the event was too emotional.

Toward the end of the meeting Kay handled many items by having other teachers speak to various issues. Lynn raised resource center matters and Don spoke about year end social plans. Kay’s rationale for this was to avoid hogging the meeting and to share responsibilities. Before the meeting ended, a last minute scheduling snag with the science fair became evident. Lynn, who was responsible for the choir had a practice scheduled for Friday morning, at the same time when Kim was setting up science projects. Kay thwarted any possible tension between Lynn and Kim with a compromise. The staff meeting ended on a positive note and many teachers stayed around to talk after it was over.

Assembly

Kay’s assembly most resembled Cam’s. It was a celebration of the school’s history and an acknowledgment that the end had come. The assembly was held on a hot summer’s evening in a crowded gym. Although I arrived early, I never saw Kay until the event started. Kay later reported to me that she had forgotten that I was observing the session until, toward the end, she saw me sitting in the audience. This was perhaps an indication of how focused she was on the events of the evening.

Kay promptly opened the ceremonies by acknowledging stresses of school reform and by emphasizing the need for parents to embrace change and to be part of it. The school council chair next spoke, commending the staff for developing such a caring school. She also praised students for their academic success.
Kay’s uneasiness about what Don might say surfaced when his turn came to speak. His first remark was a comment about the building being closed by people who had never even visited it. Kay felt that this was inappropriate and also believed that he spoke much longer than necessary. She added that when he told a lengthy joke, the audience had long figured it out before he got to the punch line.

The next part of the program contained several musical performances. Kay felt proud of her students and their teacher as they stood in blue and white uniforms singing appropriate songs such as Accentuate the Positive and New Beginnings. Meanwhile, Kay’s mind was racing ahead to what school would be like for them next year. Several groups of students then spoke and shared their school experiences. They were followed by a parent whose four children went through the school. Kay was appreciative of these people taking time to speak, but sometimes she found it difficult to hear and understand them.

Perhaps the highlight of the program was when Dave, the retired principal spoke. Kay found him to be witty and insightful. As he spoke, Kay thought about his difficult year learning to retire. Kay believed that if she were not the type to give Dave an open door to return, there would have been problems. Kay’s think aloud showed that she was thankful that she could share the limelight with him. His speech was warmly received as was the prose he had written for the official program.

Once Dave finished, the choir performed two more pieces. Kay was again impressed with the selections. She was equally glad to see flowers presented by the students to Lynn afterwards. As this was unfolding Kay’s mind wandered ahead in time again. This time she was thinking about how the music resources of her school would be disbursed once they closed.

Kay went to the stage after the flower presentation was completed. She wondered if she went too soon, thereby encroaching on Lynn’s territory. Despite her apprehension, Kay confidently thanked the audience and was privately relieved that the evening was a success. She kept her closing comments brief believing that everybody was tired and thirsty. Kay also reported that her thank you comments were intentionally general. She was concerned that if she specifically thanked people she might offend those not named. Kay concluded the formal part of the evening by encouraging everybody to stay for the refreshments that were arranged on tables in
the center area of the gym.

Many students and parents stayed until 11:00 p.m. Given the lateness of the evening I suggested to Kay, that we complete the think aloud next day. However, Kay preferred to do it later that same night because it would help her unwind. Consequently, we completed the follow up telephone interview after midnight.

Analysis

Kay anticipated most events that occurred during the office observations. Analysis of her think aloud illustrated the extent to which she was aware of her actions and their consequences. Not only did the data emphasize extensive suggestion/problem/hypothesis thinking but also reasoning/testing activity in light of it. Perhaps more frequently than any other participant, Kay’s think aloud was focused on her actions. During the office session Kay was very helpful to students and parents as she interacted with them and helped them prepare for classes. Kay began the office session intending to follow up from the sports day and school council meeting. After morning announcements, Kay first revisited several sports day disciplinary matters. Her think aloud about her handling of the new custodian and secretary was also insightful. On the one hand Kay was annoyed about personnel changes so late in the year. Yet, she went out of her way to be helpful to both, showing patience and forbearance in explaining school routines. It seemed that most staff were accustomed to Kay’s patience and understanding as indicated by the teachers who dropped in her office to discuss personal matters. Never did Kay rush them or show a lack of concern.

During the staff meeting, events were less anticipated by Kay. However, she used her suggestion/problem/hypothesis thinking to generate reasoning and testing. There were about twelve teachers at the meeting and all the while Kay’s maneuvers were influenced by tensions between several of them. As comments were made, Kay constantly interpreted their context in light of who was saying them. Many times Kay’s interventions were about minimizing friction between various staff members. Although she could not predict when tensions would rise she usually responded by offering a compromise, encouraging others not involved to share their ideas or by limiting debate.

The school closing celebration was a much more controlled event. However, Kay
expressed a lot more anxiety about this event in her think aloud. Although a planned program was in place, she was not sure of how it would go. She realized that celebrating the school's history would be difficult for parents, as it closed. She also knew that parents and staff were not appreciative of board trustees who made this decision. Consequently, the closing ceremony was happy and sad with a mixture of friends and foes.

Kay’s think aloud focused mainly on how the program was unfolding in relation to having things move smoothly, making sure speakers were heard, the audience was not overcome with heat, there was going to be enough food and that the children were at their best. Most things went as expected although Kay was disappointed that many speakers were difficult to hear. She was especially impressed with various choir performances.

There was less evidence of reasoning/testing in the closing celebration mainly because Kay had a lesser role, once events started. There were times when she checked her clock or signaled for students to slow their speech, but for the most part she was an observer like the audience. Kay’s think aloud showed reasoning/testing mostly when things did not go as expected. As an example, the security alarm went off while a parent was speaking. Kay promptly left her seat in the audience, went to the security panel and defaulted the alarm. She quietly returned to her seat and was not prompted to move until Dave made a funny remark about her in his address. Kay was tempted to go to the microphone and respond, but decided against this.

Kay’s mind drifted off from the events at several points too. These were usually at times when she was savoring the moment. For example, when the choir performed, Kay’s thoughts, although music related, wondered elsewhere. She was thinking about how the children would enjoy their new music teacher. On another occasion she was wondering about how they would divide out the music resources of the school. When the retired principal spoke, Kay thought of how she had helped him deal with retirement over the year. Kay was the only participant to report occasions when her thoughts were elsewhere.

Many facets of Kay’s training emerged in her think aloud. In Chapters Three and Four Kay acknowledged the importance of a Master of Arts in Christian Spirituality. Kay frequently offered counseling and advice to others throughout the three observations. This was most apparent in the office session. Parents, students and teachers came to her to be heard and to
receive advice. Occasionally, Kay helped them on matters pertaining to their private lives.

Kay had extensive public speaking training. A large portion of her think aloud on the
closing ceremony was about the quality of public speaking. For example, she commented on the
ineffectiveness of Don’s address but felt appreciation for the public speaking talent that the
counsel chair developed over the year. Kay was disappointed with the quick pace of some
primary children who spoke, even though she helped them prepare and practice their speeches.
She was disappointed that one parent had left it too late before practicing her child. Numerous
times she commented that the content of various speakers was probably good but that she could
not hear it. Meanwhile, Kay was very impressed with Dave’s address. Even at the staff meeting,
Kay exerted considerable effort to encourage other teachers to speak at the ceremonies, believing
that “if you are in this profession [teaching], you must overcome the fear of speaking.”

I reported in Chapter Four that Kay effortlessly explicated her espoused values with two
sets dominating, basic human values and social political values. The same was evident
throughout the three shadowing sessions. She showed tremendous regard and respect for every
person, whether it be a student or an adult. In the office session Kay began her day helping
students put things away, relaying messages and talking to parents. She did this cheerfully and
was available to anybody needing assistance. Kay was especially polite and generous with the
new custodian and secretary. She asked the student assistant to help the substitute teacher with a
special program that promoted manners and courtesy among students.

Also in the staff meeting Kay made many efforts to generate staff input and to give staff a
say in the various events. Meanwhile, she managed various tensions in the interest of staff
solidarity and commitment. The entire focus of the closing celebration was to continue
community loyalty and sharing long after the school was gone. Kay went to great lengths to bring
the school’s history to life and to bring parents together to celebrate this history. Again Kay
showed enthusiasm and turned what could have been a sad occasion into an uplifting one.

In Chapter Four Kay emphasized respect in all her dealings with others, especially
children. Although this was apparent in all three sessions it was most evident in her handling of
the disciplinary matters in the office session. Kay firmly held the two boys accountable for their
actions. However, her discussions also focused on how to help them handle future situations.
Kay showed equal regard for adults especially in the staff meeting. Although she was conscious of the negativism among some staff members, it did not deter her. For instance, she felt that Don would partly use his opportunity to speak at the closing ceremonies to make remarks about board trustees, and he did. When he later signed up to help with refreshments Kay felt he was using it as an opportunity to do the least amount of work. In any case, she could put aside her thoughts and dealt with Don positively and fairly.

At another point in the staff meeting, the staff wondered if parents and students would come to the final celebrations. Theresa remarked that if they advertised the free hat and photo, everybody would come. Kay found this remark sarcastic and believed parents would not only come, that they would cherish this night. Once again she would not allow Theresa's negativity to dampen her own enthusiasm. The ongoing tension between Lynn and Kim provided another good example. Kay not only tried to manage this to get things done, but she ensured that one was not praised at the expense of the other. Often Kay looked for the good in both their ideas and used this to find common ground. In many ways Kay enabled Lynn and Kim respectfully to work together.

Throughout the three observation periods Kay appeared to be very much aware of her thoughts and feelings, as indicated in her reasoning/testing commentary. This awareness was not only evident in her efforts to understand situations but in detailed analysis that accompanied her actions. On several occasions she deliberately altered her thoughts. Once, during a quiet spell in the office session a group of students noisily moved past her office. Kay's first thoughts were about what I might think of this, so she left her desk and went in the hall to observe them. Then, as her think aloud revealed, she told herself to forget this idea because “there had to be noise when children were doing what they were suppose to do.” In the same session she completed two student assistant evaluations. Her think aloud showed that she was telling herself that as difficult as it was, not to compare the first with the second.

Kay, throughout all three sessions, often expressed affective thoughts. She felt the joy of meeting the children in the morning and the tension between staff in the staff meeting. Kay frequently referred to feelings such as ‘annoyed,’ ‘perturbed,’ ‘disappointed,’ ‘appreciative,’ ‘relieved,’ ‘thankful,’ and ‘relaxed.’ These feelings were usually a part of her
suggestion/problem/hypothesis thinking and occurred consistently in all three think alouds.

Summary
Kay's signature closing to her morning announcements, "Have a good day and help someone else have a good day!" succinctly summarizes her think aloud. It illustrates the human focus of her work and responsibilities. She is very much aware of human subtleties and realizes that she touches many lives in a typical day. Although Kay accepts that humanity has its flaws, she remains an optimist. Kay believes that she must lead by positive example and find the good in every situation.

Conclusion
This chapter has illuminated many aspects of reflection, particularly reflection-in-action. During the preliminary interviews many participants paid minimal attention to reflection-in-action. However, evidence of this chapter shows that reflection-in-action is a frequent and sustained activity for all six participants.

Despite some variations, think aloud data collected from participants during office sessions showed a storm of mental activity. Much of it was self directed although prompted by events and situations in which participants found themselves. Reflection-in-action during staff meetings was more focused and on fewer issues. Participants showed an ability to effectively gauge staff rapport and climate as they attempted to develop consensus on various issues.

Think aloud data from student assemblies, when compared with the other two settings, generally showed less evidence of reflection-in-action. This was perhaps because the student assemblies were so planned and controlled, and more likely the subject of reflection-for-action. Additionally, the participants did not always have an active role in the assemblies and were observers at times. In fact, think aloud data frequently showed participants assessing how assembly events unfolded in relation to how they expected things to happen. Although participants felt responsible for the programs they also realized that they could do little to change things once events got under way.

Next, in Chapter Seven, anticipatory reflection is more closely examined by having participants look ahead to future situations. Similar to Chapter Five, participants first work on a fictitious situation involving a principal who is preparing for a major policy change. Participants
then have opportunity to reflect for a future situation where they are a central player. As well, this chapter will elucidate reflection as it pertains to policy.
CHAPTER SEVEN

Anticipatory Reflection; Getting Ready

This chapter chronicles the reflection-for-action of the six participants using a vignette and critical incidents identified by each participant. Information was collected through two interviews with each participant, one on the vignette and the other on each person’s critical incident.

The vignette is about a fictitious principal, Pete Cole. Pete has to prepare his school for a new provincial policy concerning the delivery of services to students with special needs. The situation occurs in May but the policy takes effect in September. Pete knows the staff is not supportive of the policy, some students will no longer qualify for service and parents have yet to be informed about the policy change. Results of this reflection-for-action are collectively reported using the five phases of reflection as identified in the conceptual framework (suggestion, problem, hypothesis, reasoning and testing).

In the second interview I asked participants to identify an upcoming situation that they expected to usurp a significant portion of their time and energy in the near future. Participants were given a week’s notice about the nature of this interview. Each participant’s situation is individually presented, again using the conceptual framework.

Since policy is a key theme in the Pete Cole story, I also took the opportunity to ask participants about their reflections on policy. This was to understand better how their reflections on policy differed from reflections on practice.

Pete Cole, Policy Peril

I chose the delivery of special services as the focus of the Pete Cole vignette because it was relevant and pertinent to the participants. The provincial ministry of education was in fact starting a new delivery model for its special services at the time of data collection. Though the process of implementation varied throughout the province, all six participants were expected to be ready for it by September.

Most of the interviews about this vignette took place in May. Although I did not originally specify an actual time in the setting of the vignette, all participants were anxious to know when this vignette was taking place. For consistency, I told all participants that they could assume that the vignette occurs in May and that Pete needed to develop a plan for September.
Interview question six (Appendix E) was adapted to include this point.

Meanwhile, participants faced a dilemma similar to Pete’s. Under their new special services delivery plan, classroom teachers were expected to make greater efforts to accommodate students with difficulties. Examples of these accommodations might include supplying these students with a peer helper, copies of classroom notes, oral testing and exam study guides. Students could be considered for special education services only after formal efforts to accommodate them in the regular classroom proved to be ineffective. When this happened, a process was initiated whereby a student’s learning outcomes were modified with the support of a special education teacher. Under the new policy, students with the most severe needs received special education services on a priority basis. Those requiring accommodations as opposed to modifications, could receive special education teacher services after programming was in place for those requiring modifications, provided time was available.

The onset of this policy was causing concern for the participants. The teachers’ association, of which participants are members, was opposed to the policy and developed a position paper outlining their objections. Teacher workload was a major concern. However, the association argued that the policy would be ineffective without proper resources. Meanwhile, many parents and students with special needs were worried that an appropriate program would not be available to them. These points and many others become especially apparent as participants related their own experience to this vignette.

Suggestion

As participants began their discussion of Pete Cole’s situation a number of suggestions came to their minds. These suggestions were the basis for their reflections as problem framing and hypothesis development stemmed from them. Perhaps the first thought that came to participants was that no matter what Pete does this policy is not going to be liked by teachers, parents and students alike. Beth suggests that parents will have “his [Pete’s] hide over this.” Others like Kay note teachers are not going to like the changes and students will feel “left out in the cold.” Cam perhaps sums it up best when he observes that no matter how good this policy is, Pete Cole is going to have a hard time selling it.

All participants feel that timing is a big factor in Pete’s situation. They believe, to expect a
principal in May, to begin implementing a policy this extensive is not possible. Some identify timing as Pete's biggest drawback, positing that few new initiatives can happen in May. This is a time when things start winding down for the year.

Besides believing that Pete will have a hard time selling this policy and that the timing is all wrong, the six participants also believe that this is a policy aimed at making long term changes. However, Pete is expected to make many immediate and painful short term changes to accommodate this long term shift. If Pete does "sell" the change despite poor timing, participants believe no obvious improvements will be evident in the delivery of special services for some time. In other words he will be accused of changing a delivery system that many were content with, only to make things worse.

**Problem**

Various degrees of complexity are evident in participants' description of Pete's problem. Jon succinctly describes Pete's problem as "trying to implement a policy mandated from the department [ministry] of education through the school board..." This, he adds, will severely impact Pete's teaching resources. Cam on the other hand stresses time constraints. He contends that Pete has to address many details and make many major decisions if he is to be ready for September.

The remaining four participants maintain that Pete's problem is how to contend with a policy that will be more restrictive in the delivery of special services. Pete knows he has six students who are no longer going to receive the services of a special education teacher. Teachers, not supportive of the policy, must meet the needs of these six through their classroom practices. Furthermore, the teachers believe they do not have the time or expertise to accommodate children with special needs in regular classrooms.

Kay and Paul more specifically claim that Pete knows some students will no longer qualify for special education services and he knows that this is frustrating for his staff. Pete's problem is how to accommodate children with difficulties who can no longer use the services of the special education teacher. Paul also remarks that Pete has to find a way to do this without having a special education teacher to assist them.

Roy's comments perhaps summarize the various points raised by the other participants.
He considers Pete’s problem to be multifaceted. Roy suggests Pete has to decide, “What does he do about the policy, about the children who will no longer be served and how does he clearly identify the ones who need to be served?” In essence, Roy concludes that Pete has to contend with a reduction of direct and indirect service from the special education teacher.

**Hypothesis**

Most participants feel Pete has to implement a policy by September that is not going to be well received by his school community. Should he follow this policy to the letter, many students as Paul states, “fall through the cracks.” The lack of an implementation plan and accompanying resources also hampers this policy, according to all participants. However, Cam and Paul feel that having to implement this policy by September should not be a forgone conclusion. They hypothesize that unless many issues are addressed this policy cannot possibly be ready for September. Cam and Paul also believe that since it cannot be ready for September, Pete is going to have to find a way to delay the implementation date.

Two distinct approaches appear in participant commentary about what Pete should do. The first focuses on lobbying for a delay in the implementation of the policy. The second dwells on what has to be done at the school level to prepare for September. Cam advocates that Pete should try to “get a reading on where this policy direction is coming from and the necessity to implement it for this September.” He asserts that Pete should argue to the board that the plan does not have enough support to be implemented well. Cam goes as far as suggesting that Pete lobby a group of principals to have the school board go back to the ministry of education on their behalf, to develop a better implementation plan.

Others like Paul argue a similar point. Paul thinks Pete has to identify ways of controlling the pace of this policy. He feels that Pete should continue to provide special education services for the six students. This would allow more transitional time for staff and parents alike, to accommodate students with special needs under this policy. Paul concludes that Pete should not worry about a September delay and the possibility of not operating within the new policy until later in the year.

Meanwhile, participants continued to offer other ideas if the start date was inflexible. Kay’s advice for Pete, contrary to Cam and Paul’s, is to immediately work toward having the staff
embrace and accept the policy. She feels once Pete gets the staff to do this, they will then move on to consider “creative” ways to provide for children with special needs. She suggests these might include oral testing, having parent helpers in class, teaming with student teachers at the local university and having the special education teacher act in more of a consultative role. Most other participants also suggest Pete develop the role of the special education teacher to provide more consultative service to regular classroom teachers.

Reasoning

This section, although lengthy compared with the other four phases of reflection, attempts to trace the rationale for suggested actions by first exploring participants’ perceptions about Pete’s role. The action ideas are further considered through the values, training and experience of participants.

Pete’s Role

Participants describe Pete’s role as a difficult one, of having to lead parents, staff and students into a process to provide the best possible programming. Beth acknowledges “this is not an easy thing to do in this kind of a situation where the change is not welcomed.” Meanwhile, Kay emphasizes the organizational dimension of Pete’s role. He points out that “Pete has to establish special services teachers and line them up with their designated students, so they [students] are covered off.” To do this, Jon adds that Pete has “to schedule things, organize things so that these six may still be able to tap into a minimal amount of support in which there is some contact [with special education teachers], so that there is a go between the students and home room teacher.” Roy too, feels that Pete has to help his school community make the transition to a policy with “a narrower definition of special education.” He counters that this also includes accommodating the return of the six displaced students to regular classes.

Some participants also feel that part of Pete’s role is to challenge the implementation dates of this policy. Paul remarks that Pete must check with the board to make sure that this has to be. Jon believes that Pete should “feed some reaction,” that is find out and report concerns of teachers, parents and students regarding the policy and its implementation. From there, Jon submits, Pete “will have to make the best of it” and see what can be done for the children losing service. Cam vocalizes that Pete’s first role is to communicate information to all groups so they
better understand the policy and its implication. Communication, Cam argues, should also include outlining to the board the need for time line extensions. He holds strongly, that Pete does not have “very much time for action” yet Pete has to address issues pertaining to teachers, parents, special education services, the new delivery model and the school board.

**Values and Principles**

The interview on the Pete Cole vignette was usually the second last interview and about my eighth contact with participants. I noticed that by this time, participants were more relaxed when talking about values and principles. The discussions flowed smoothly and participants did not seem to experience any difficulty when commenting about values and principles relevant to this vignette. As with other interviews, some patterns were apparent.

By far, participants frequently identified *professional values*, in the context of Pete’s responsibility to students and staff. All participants clearly articulated that students are entitled to an education and that Pete is responsible for the quality of this education. Beth remarks that every child is important and “their education has to be very valuable to every one of us.” She goes on to say that Pete’s role is to facilitate the best education for the child, by working through others. This Beth says, is not done through “power and control, this means working with people.”

Jon expresses a similar idea. He describes Pete’s professional responsibility as supporting student learning through the resources available to him. Using a high school example, Jon supposes that if Pete puts the six students in a regular class without supports, it will stress the receiving teacher. However, if Pete tries to “spread them around somewhat” the situation might be more manageable. Unfortunately, Jon adds, Pete may have no choice but to put all six in one course, when for example only one section is offered. Then he says that Pete has to consider the impact of this on the regular class too.

Kay emphasizes Pete’s responsibility to students by arguing that he must ensure that students have the opportunity to be successful. She emphasizes his responsibility to make sure that students are not left to “doom, gloom and failure.” Roy too accentuates the importance of *professional values* by commenting that Pete has to be very concerned about the children. Pete according to Roy, must continuously monitor how the children are doing by closely examining
their concerns and response to the change.

Professional values also dominate participant’s discussions about Pete’s approach to his staff. More specifically participants feel that Pete has to consider his specific responsibilities and the consequences of his decisions. For example, Paul notes that if Pete follows policy, and places some of these six in a class of thirty-five the teacher’s ability to provide quality instruction to the entire class will be impaired. Kay too, highlights the adverse impact this policy may have on regular classroom teachers. She suggests Pete has to be cognizant of teacher workload and ensure that teachers “are not going to be totally drained” which could eventually increase sick time usage. Jon adds his voice saying Pete has to consider how stressful the implementation of this policy will be for regular classroom teachers.

Participants also identify social and political values, when discussing Pete’s approach to his staff. All stress Pete’s need to support his staff by sharing their concerns and problems. They suggest that Pete has to help them develop solutions and give them a meaningful say in how they implement the policy. As an example of sharing, Roy says that Pete has to demonstrate to his staff that he realizes that this policy means extra responsibilities for them. Pete, he adds, also has to convey to staff that they can come to him and together they can try to work through their concerns.

Cam asserts that it is important to let staff know that their professional judgement is valued. He contends that they must be reassured that supports will not be simply pulled away from some students because of a new policy. Cam further remarks that Pete must reassure his staff of his willingness to take responsibility for an implementation plan that fits their school, even if it means implementation delays.

Basic human values are apparent in participant commentary, especially in Pete’s approach to parents. All participants strongly emphasize the need for honest, informed and full disclosure of the policy and its implications. They emphasize the need for Pete to include parents in the implementation process as early as possible. Roy notes that parents want the very best for their children and that Pete has to respect them and “their right to full knowledge about this.” According to Roy, Pete should also let parents know his personal views about the policy. Kay too, remarks “parents have the right to be informed . . . there should be no secret meetings about
their children."

Others like Jon, Paul and Cam believe that Pete should help parents make their views known to the board and ministry of education too. Jon contends “sure he [Pete] has to work in support of the school board . . ., but he also has to help parents get some type of support for their children.” Cam says he would be sure to inform parents of what services can be provided and what implications might potentially hinder their child’s education. He further reveals, that he respects parents as the prime educators of children and because parents are a child’s prime advocates, he would subtly implore them to lobby for more services.

Participants’ Similar Experiences

Participants identified strongly with Pete’s situation, so much so, that many of their responses about Pete were more about their own situation. Sometimes I responded by acknowledging their comments and then asked them to respond more specifically about Pete’s situation. However, I also believe that participants had ample opportunity to discuss their own experience since about half the interview questions were specifically about them (Appendix E).

Considering that Pete’s vignette is very similar to the participants’ situation, I probed participants about possible similarities and differences. Jon explained that his staff went through a process similar to Pete’s. Individual student assessments were completed, student files were updated, necessary documentation was put in place and only those requiring program modifications were included in the service. A key difference, Jon notes, was that his story unfolded about five months earlier than Pete’s. This he says gave him the time to sort many details and get ready for September.

Kay too found herself in a situation much earlier in the year then Pete. She felt her situation was just as “deep and as wide” but that she had more resources, including time, to work through it. Kay’s situation also involved making sure all students with special needs were documented for other schools, because her school was closing at the end of the year. Kay further reports that some of her staff supported the new policy and were relieved that children who needed services the most would finally get them. She reports that some staff felt many children only needed supports in their classrooms, not services in special education.

Beth found her situation to be very much like Pete’s. Being in her first year as an
administrator, she noticed that many students were using special services without supporting documentation. She relates "[some] don’t fit special education services at all but they do have needs," and explains that many came from disadvantaged backgrounds with fewer supports outside school. Meanwhile, their parents expected the service and felt panicked that it might not be available. Beth acknowledges that her staff was frustrated in trying to develop a transitional process but concedes they were never as resistant as Pete’s staff.

At Cam’s school, Cam reports his staff was very concerned about the policy shift, especially considering the school was closing and all students were dispersing to other schools. Furthermore, his staff, like Pete’s, felt the existing policy was working well and that change was unnecessary. Cam believes that Pete does not have an “intimate understanding” of how this policy will actually affect his school. He concludes that Pete probably does not have an in–depth understanding of how work load might be affected or even how the special education program differs from other programs such as choral music. Cam further notes that Pete is not able to work through the situation and is left scrambling late in the year.

Paul and Roy state too, that their situations were similar to Pete’s in that a policy initiative was coming from the provincial ministry of education. However, they felt their board understood and appreciated school based concerns. Paul felt that although the board supported the policy they knew many transitional difficulties had to be overcome. Roy adds that his staff agreed with the spirit of the policy but needed more time and resources to implement it effectively.

Relevant Training and Experience

Participants’ response to my questions about relevant training and experience yielded comments mostly about experience. All six identified the administration of special services as a major component of a principal’s work. Usually the participants assume full responsibility for this in their schools, but a few report that they share the responsibility with other staff such as the assistant principal or guidance counselor.

Beth recounts that in her first administrative appointment she knew very little about special services. However, the principal supported her as she became confident about most special education issues. Since then she has worked in several other administrative appointments where her principal gave her full responsibility for special services without any support or
monitoring. She feels to this day that principals often treat special services teachers in the same manner. That is, they tell them to implement policy without much staff understanding or support.

Beth reveals that when she started her current position in September past, implementation of the ministry’s new special services policy was an important goal for her. She felt that most special education personnel appreciated and understand the policy but she anticipated that a lot of teacher development was needed before classroom teachers embraced it.

Of all participants, Cam has the most experience with special services. He claims that almost 30 percent of his students use special services and that providing for these children uses a “horrendously large amount of time.” Cam explains that he approaches every case individually resulting in, “a lot of meetings involved with a lot of informing, a lot of communication, a lot of scheduling.” Cam further asserts that regular classroom teachers and special education teachers do not always have a great working relationship “... so there are fences to mend and bridges to build.” Special services consume so much of Cam’s time he sometimes wonders if it is taking up too much administrative time.

On the other hand, Jon claims not to have much responsibility for the provision of special services in his present school. Meanwhile, Jon points out that his former board’s special services policy was already in line with the current initiatives. He says he did a lot of work with special services in his former school. Nevertheless, he credits his guidance counselor and special education teachers with implementing this policy and organizing appropriate services in his current situation. Jon feels special services issues are not a major concern for his school. Being a high school, Jon shares that students use a credit system for graduation requirements and students enroll by course. Students needing special education services do not usually take a full course load and tend to register in basic courses. Jon did not see the shift in special services policy as a major concern and felt there were no major implementation problems at his school.

Paul also has considerable experience providing special services to high school students before his school was reconfigured to an intermediate school a year ago. Paul, in consideration of this experience, supports a special services policy shift. In previous years, he claims, special education teachers were assigned to teach basic courses like Consumer Math and low achieving students were placed in these courses. Roy speculates these courses were mostly remedial classes
and offered little assistance to special education students. Meanwhile, no special services were available outside these particular courses. Now, working mainly with intermediate students, Paul notices a role for both remedial and special education classes. However, he realizes that if he offers remedial classes, the teacher allocation for this service must come from his regular staff allocation thereby increasing class size for all other students.

Kay explains that she did not have much special education policy experience. When board consolidation occurred several years ago, schools were instructed to continue operating within existing policy until new district wide policies were developed. Before this consolidation, Kay worked in a board different from the one that runs her present school. This meant that throughout the year, Kay had to operate under many different policies. She maintains that this change in setting caused her to notice aspects of many policies, particularly special services. Kay found that this helped sensitize her to issues of policy and policy implementation.

As earlier mentioned, few participants identified training that was useful to them in their handling of special services policy. Aside from highlighting the usefulness of principals' area meetings and small discussion groups only Paul and Roy spoke about formal training. Paul said that while he was a high school principal he read formal reports and attended several useful inservices on the new special education policy. The education ministry and board sponsored these sessions. He acknowledges that they gave him a good theoretical understanding of the special services issues.

Roy highlights his graduate work in administration as especially useful. He claims that his Master’s program helped him analyze and think through policy. Roy recalls many sessions where he and his peers discussed policy issues. He is certain that this gave him the "faculty to deal with direct educational issues in a sound analytical way." Roy remarks "more importantly it gave me the confidence to handle such complex issues."

Testing

Since reflection-for-action is anticipatory, actions are imaginative and speculative. Furthermore, in reflection-for-action the reflector does not have the benefit of testing feedback to further shape other phases of the reflective process. Participants engaged in the testing phase of reflection in Pete Cole’s situation by detailing possible action plans and time frames. I also asked
them to comment on the responses they could expect from the various stakeholders.

Proposed Action Plan

Beth contends that Pete should go through the files of the six children to find out how and why they initially received special services. She remarks that if these six do not have any exceptionalities such as a learning disability, then they should indeed come off the special services list. Beth thinks Pete will ultimately have two groups needing help, students that qualify for special services because they have a defined exceptionality and students that cannot avail of the service because they have no defined exceptionality. Beth accepts that Pete must organize the services for those qualifying for it. However, he has to develop a school wide response, beyond the special services policy, for those with lesser needs.

For example, Beth says if there are reading difficulties it might be that there is no homework help, that the children are not read to, or that printed material is not available to them outside school. She contends, it also could be an in school issue where they need parent volunteers or the curriculum outcomes need to be modified only slightly. Beth, in essence, suggests that Pete organize the special services for those who qualify and simultaneously find ways to provide supports for those who are no longer eligible.

Jon, a high school principal, offers a different approach for Pete. He theorizes that Pete could find ways around the policy and still provide for these six students. He believes, as an example, that Pete does not have to put in the same work effort to document the needs of these six students, “but piggyback [them] onto those that are identified.” Citing a Geography course as an example, Jon contends that if several students are already receiving modifications through special services than any of the six “may tag along under the shadow of these.” He proposes that if the special education teacher is modifying a program for a student within the policy, than an ineligible student in the same course with similar needs, could benefit equally.

Kay offers the approach of getting staff involved in an implementation plan. She proposes that Pete reconvene the staff to look at ways of providing for students who no longer qualify for special services. Kay concludes that they might come up with ideas about scheduling, team teaching, involving the learning resources teacher or having the special education teacher work with home room teachers more routinely in their classrooms. She contends that with this
approach "some [teachers] will continue to be frustrated, and so on, but some will come forward and say 'well why don't we try this?' So you need to include them in some of the decision making."

Roy advocates that Pete develop a team process to handle the situation. Roy suggests Pete form a committee, representative of all stakeholders, to monitor the implementation of the policy and to convey concerns to the school board. Vital to this process, he adds would be parental input. Roy contends that the committee must first become conversant about the policy and then develop a detailed implementation plan. Cam offers similar advice. The establishment of a monitoring committee, he asserts, would mean that parents are more informed, that rate of implementation would be better controlled and the concerns of teachers would be acknowledged.

In summary, the development of supports is a common theme in all responses. These might be for students who cannot access special education programs, to parents who need to understand the implication of special education programming, to special education teachers who will develop many curriculum modifications and to teachers who will develop curriculum accommodations within their classes. There is also a sense that while participant's are trying to respond professionally to a difficult challenge, they are vying for additional time. Cam acknowledges that everybody has to feel they are attacking the problem, "not just sitting around, spinning your wheels." He further states that if he were in Pete's situation "I will do it [implement policy] with the staff, to the best of our ability, but while I am honoring that, I am also taking shots at the board, trying to gain some time for us."

**Time Frames**

Most participant time frame responses revolved around the months of May and June with secondary commentary about September. Beth for instance vocalizes that she would recommend that Pete get things in place before school closes. She acknowledges that although May and June are already very busy, September is a "whole new mind set." Beth explains that if Pete waits until September many other things will take precedence and by October and November other problems related to special services will probably need address.

Beth's priority for May would be to get the guidance counselor into an organizational role and to start coordinating meetings. She says if she were Pete she would start recruiting classroom
volunteers and helpers to work with the home room teachers. By the end of June, Beth feels that Pete should have a summary sheet on file for every student needing accommodations within the regular class or adaptations through the special services teacher.

Both Cam and Roy offer more detailed plans for Pete, beginning with the establishment of committees. Cam says if he were in Pete’s situation he would organize a committee consisting of primary, elementary and special education “movers.” Then he suggests he would meet with the full staff to explain the policy initiative and the school plan to interpret it for their use. Cam feels the committee would have to meet weekly. Meanwhile, Cam pictures meeting individually with all affected parents to explain the policy and to encourage them to articulate their concerns to all levels of education.

Cam states that as a principal in Pete’s situation, he would also keep board trustees aware of policy concerns. Additionally, he would network with other principals and lobby for changes in the implementation date. Concerning how to inform students affected by the change, Cam suggests he would have their parents speak to them. He feels that having students meet with a group of four or five adults to discuss their programming would only panic them.

Roy’s suggested plan for Pete is very similar to Cam’s. He would hold another staff meeting to explain how he intends to proceed with implementation of the policy. Meanwhile, he would encourage his monitoring committee to lobby for more time. Roy also contends that he would meet individually with parents of the six children no longer receiving the services of the special education teacher. In September, Roy advocates that Pete meet with the homeroom teachers of the six displaced students to find out their needs. Roy also expects that in September, these teachers meet with their parents and start planning for their needs throughout the year. Like Cam, Roy would also lobby with other principals to voice their concerns to the board and ministry of education. Furthermore, Roy suggests that Pete should make this an issue for his school council.

Kay also makes a case for Pete to work mainly through committees and to avoid another full staff inservice until more details are sorted out. She feels that the negative momentum of a few in a general staff meeting can dampen any efforts to deal with the policy. Like others, Kay feels that if she were in Pete’s situation she would individually meet with parents whose children
the policy affects most. Having done this she would then meet them collectively to develop their ideas and suggestions. Regarding students, Kay outlines that she would speak too each of them in their own terms. She feels that Pete must hold out hope for the students, explain changes in service and find out, “Is there anything else that we can do for you?” Kay feels that Pete has to try to involve students as much as possible in the solution process.

Paul and Jon are consistent with each other when recommending a plan for Pete. Both suggest that Pete have all student files updated and identify those who do and do not qualify for services. They suggest that this will involve the guidance counselor because some reassessments on “stale” files will be needed. Once this is done, parent contact would come next. Paul advocates meeting individually with parents to explain policy changes. Jon however, thinks that a letter would suffice. Jon explains, “You word it in a sense that we [staff] recognize that there are concerns or weaknesses but they [your son or daughter’s needs] are not as bad as others, and we have to put our energies into those, I suppose.”

Both Paul and Jon agree that beginning lobby efforts for more help is important, once they have identified students qualifying for special services. They assert that Pete should keep parents informed of his efforts and advise them of their options. Meanwhile, both suggest that the special education teachers meet with their students and explain program changes.

Anticipated Reaction

After participants outlined some time frames for their suggested plans, I asked them how students, teachers, parents and district office might respond to their plans. Although participants were resigned to the view that Pete could not please all stakeholders, they felt their suggestions would appease many. Most comments dwelled on possible staff and parent reaction and this was the focus of action steps identified in the previous section.

Many participants like Beth, Kay, Cam and Jon explicate that in any staff there are those who complain and resist, those who follow the lead and those who will lead. Cam and Kay suggest that Pete set up a committee process keeping in mind who can lead and who can minimize the impact of detractors. Most participants feel that if they work through a committee process and delay full staff meetings until more planning is done, the staff will eventually work toward implementing this policy. Beth contends that if Pete acknowledges staff concerns and works with
teachers to address these concerns, he will have staff support and credibility.

Kay reports that Pete can expect parent reaction to this policy to be similar to hearing of a death. Referring to Elisabeth Kubler-Ross' work *On Death and Dying*, Kay says, "there is denial, there is anger and there is rejection and there is bargaining. Finally you accept [it]..." Consequently, Kay makes the case that if Pete helps parents work through these emotions, as days and weeks progress they will eventually accept it.

Cam believes that despite the portrayal of staff resistance in the vignette, the majority of any staff will want a plan to work if they are part of the planning. He confirms that if Pete develops the staff role in this manner, the school will successfully work through the changes. Roy too, pictures Pete's staff starting with the implementation after they sort the initial frustrations. Paul makes the same conclusion, yet cautions that it may depend on how much alarm Pete creates.

Paul reiterates that Pete must be conscious of keeping all stakeholders calm and preventing the plight of these six students from becoming a political struggle. However, all participants expect parents to be disappointed and to complain and lobby beyond the school level for more service. Some participants encourage this and even suggest that Pete has a responsibility to outline his concerns, and advise parents of options available to them.

For the most part, participants feel that Pete can expect board and district office support on his efforts to implement this policy. Participants acknowledge that the board will complain at the ministry level if enough principal concerns are voiced. Roy and Cam for example, posit that the district office is especially responsive when principals collectively make their concerns known. Paul however, cautions that the approach to the board has to be carefully thought through because given the present climate of school restructuring, they tend to respond defensively.

When I asked Roy what reaction Pete might expect if he followed his suggested plan, Roy primarily elaborated on student reaction. He believes student reaction will depend on a number of factors including how special education is presently organized, the ages of students and their needs. Some students, he reports, may be happy to remain in regular classes and not to be pulled out for special services. Others would probably prefer to stay with the special education teacher and may be upset about losing the contact. Roy stresses that this is why Pete must attend closely
to the six students losing special services. He feels that if Pete approaches it positively and ensures the six that they will be monitored, then they should not be distressed. This is also why Roy feels that the special education teacher is the best person to discuss the changes with the children. Meanwhile, Roy says Pete must be true to his word and ensure that the special education teacher continues to check the progress of the six, in their regular classrooms. Roy concludes that if Pete proceeds carefully and the implementation is done properly, students will adjust accordingly.

Reflective Summary

As a way of summarizing participant’s reflection on the Pete Cole vignette I focused on two areas. The first was participants’ level of confidence in handling Pete’s situation while the latter was what participants might learn from this situation.

Participant Confidence

Participants expressed various levels of confidence in handling this situation. Despite Roy’s confidence to handle policy issues, generally he is not so sure about Pete’s situation. Roy felt that existing policy was working well because it gave principals the freedom to make early interventions and provide remedial service to children as they needed it. Under new policy, he fears that children needing early intervention may not get it until they fall far enough behind to qualify for special education service. Consequently, Roy’s biggest problem with Pete’s situation is that he could not go before parents or staff and defend a narrower definition of special education. He claims that he would have no difficulty holding meetings with teachers and parents to deal with their frustration and “move them along if I really have to.” However, Roy rebuts that he would be obligated to express his concerns for the children needing remedial services.

Paul espouses confidence in establishing a process to implement the policy, even if he disagrees with aspects of the policy. He offers the suggestions that he would make it known “in the right circle . . . to the powers that would be,” that his staff needs a transitional period. Paul though, sees no point in complaining, without first getting a policy implementation process in place and trying to resolve some issues. Otherwise, he adds “I would be just going down the political road complaining with nothing in place for September.” In the end Paul feels he has two choices, to be “miserable and complain” or to make plans and prepare. Paul concludes that if he
approaches this negatively, students will also detect this, possibly creating a student morale problem.

Cam lacks confidence in handling Pete's situation, mainly because of limited time frames. He conveys the view that May and June are very difficult months for teachers, adding that the staff needed to drive this policy, would be involved in many other things. Cam claims "They would not be able to devote their energies to this effort." He concludes that he could have a delivery model prepared for September but, "I don't think I would have the people prepared for the delivery model."

The remaining three, Beth, Kay and Jon, suggest they would confidently handle a situation similar to Pete's. Jon, being in his first year with his current board, shares that his former board addressed a similar process. He also reveals that he was surprised to discover that the special services policy in his current board was not as developed as the one in his former board. Kay comments that the experience of her past year makes her very confident in handling a situation like Pete's. She acknowledges that she went through a similar process throughout this year, but with a much earlier start. Kay confirms that teachers were initially frustrated, upset and angry and even rejected the policy. "Eventually towards the latter part of the year," she expresses, "there was acceptance among teachers and among parents and among students." She concludes, "you are able to journey it better probably, a second time." Beth too, believes her varied experience in the administration of special services confidently enables her to handle a situation like Pete's. Her experience, she says, helps her understand Pete's situation from many perspectives and would benefit her immensely, as she develops and implements a policy plan.

Lessons to be Learned

The final interview question to each participant was "Is there anything to be learned from Pete's situation?" I asked this question to encourage participants to relate Pete's story to their work circumstances. This they ably did. Beth feels that the vignette prompts her to think about the nature of her work, "What are you here for? What are you doing?" She says the message of this story is, "You have got to be actively, wholeheartedly involved in everything about education . . . and that's a lot of work." Cam wonders what Pete could have done about this policy before May. He contends that Pete must have had more warning about this, even though he is not ready.
Cam asserts that as a principal he must be looking ahead and scanning the horizon for what comes next. In Cam’s opinion, Pete did not do this and “Apparently he is blown out of the water. This is what is to be learned!”

Jon and Paul’s comments also highlight the need for preparedness in administration. Jon emphasizes the many ways that Pete could be ready for this policy and to respond to anticipated concerns of teachers. Paul declares that Pete must also avoid setting off panic. He believes that Pete should spend more time helping his staff understand the policy. Otherwise, he discerns the staff is frustrated in trying to develop an implementation plan for something they do not quite understand. Paul says this vignette emphasizes the importance of not only having good policy, but collectively working through in an agreed implementation plan.

Kay regards every situation as a learning opportunity. But when situations like Pete’s occur and there is backlash she asserts “you really have to gain from these experiences.” She believes that the vignette is a story about humanity, “about people about how to deal with anger and frustration and rejection.” Kay also mentions that this kind of story can also bring a school community together because teachers and parents will be spending more time working through issues and socializing. She concludes “Pete will certainly get to know the parents more intimately and probably see the students in a new light.”

Roy’s commentary also focuses on the human dimension of this vignette. He expresses that when considering policy, the most important consideration is the people it affects. Roy agrees that although policy “may have been hammered out by people with the best of intentions,” unfortunately the reality is, “it is hammered out away from the clientele and without enough consideration . . . for the people going to implement it.” Roy summarizes policy makers have to be more attuned to the impact of their policies and the people who become marginalized.

This ends the analysis of Pete Cole’s policy peril. However, policy discussion continues in the next section. Research question three “On what basis do selected school administrators choose to reflect?” is further probed. Since this vignette focused on a policy issue, I thought it was a good opportunity to ask participants about their reflections on policy and how they differed from reflection on practice.

Policy Reflection
I garnered the perceptions of principals on policy reflection through two types of questions. The first concerned the nature of their reflection on issues of policy while the second explored their recent experience with policy. More specifically, I inquired about the nature of policy reflection by asking them to describe the process and to compare it with reflection on practice. Policy experience was examined by requesting participants to comment on other policy that they have implemented. This section outlines how participants describe their reflection on policy and some of their policy experience.

The Process

All participants describe policy reflection as deliberate, intermittent and collaborative. Jon reports this to be so because “Policy is a bit more formal and it is something that is often in print, it is often mandated by other people or departments. Whereas, the day to day reflection is . . . self induced.” Kay points out that policy and policy change causes her to reflect on the “what, why and how.” She claims policy forces her to reflect “more poignantly than practice . . . because I expect things not to run smoothly when there is a change in policy.” She compares policy reflection with reflection on adverse situations that are unpredictable and indeterminate.

Paul decrees that issues of policy require more reflection for him than issues of practice. He voices the view that policy is about how to implement an established vision or goal. Reflection is needed to understand the vision and its context. Paul especially reflects on policy to consider how to connect the policy vision with the realities of his school and its resources.

Beth too, emphasizes the visionary component of policy. She says it used to be that for many teachers, policy followed practice but now practice follows policy. Beth thinks that the former is ineffective because policy does have guiding things to say, “like this is what we are following, this is what we believe in, this is what we are going to do.” Being responsible for policy implementation makes Beth further reflect about how best to bring policy to practice. Similar to Kay she also posits that as she becomes more comfortable with a policy, she reflects less on its purpose and more on its practice.

Cam responds that he frequently reflects on policy, “I look at policy to see if it’s workable, if it’s an improvement, if it has complications of legalities, problems and things like that.” He adds that he reflects on “as much of what is good as what is needed.” Strengths and loopholes
are a concern to Cam too, as he considers both the policy and its practice. Cam surmises that when staffs feel they are recipients of policy and the policy has little merit, then it requires even more reflection.

Roy reports that in his present work climate of board consolidation and school restructuring, policy issues are constantly in the forefront. He feels that this is true to such an extent, he has to be selective about the policies he examines. For Roy, policy reflection is very time consuming and requires a series of reflective episodes to “mull through it.” All other participants concur with Roy’s point emphasizing policy reflection is not a one shot deal. It requires sustained reflection over a longer period.

Perhaps a significant reason that policy reflection is a sustained effort is because of its collaborative nature. Beth contends that policy reflection requires collaboration with those who have expert knowledge. For example, she says this has happened with the special education policy. During some of the district psychologist’s scheduled visits to her school, Beth says “I might question something else that I have been thinking about . . . and saying now to clarify that for me.” Beth says once she is comfortable with one aspect of a policy, she continues to the next until she works through the details of policy practice.

Beth not only identifies the need to collaborate with others who have expert knowledge of a given policy. She emphasizes that collaborative reflection has to occur among people with similar degrees of responsibility. For example, referring again to the special education policy, Beth contends that principals need to confer with other principals, special education teachers with special education teachers and so on. Her point highlights the deliberate nature of reflection too. Policy stakeholders, she asserts, have to plan time to think about policy collectively.

Many participants agree with Beth but equally emphasize their need to have a personal working knowledge of policy before heading into a collaborative process. Cam for instance says “if you are talking about the policy that is coming down . . . I like to reflect before it is implemented.” Kay agrees, stating, “I think turmoil, transition, conflict, internal struggles exterior struggles, all cause a discerning person to stop and to think and to wonder.” She concludes “I would spend some time myself, going over this policy and reflecting on it before I would bring it to my staff, to the students, to the parents.” In this personal reflection Kay asks “What are the
ramifications for me, my staff, my students and the parents of my students?"

Many participants point out that they personally reflect on policy at quiet times away from the school. Roy shares for example, “I like to take these things [policy documents] home . . . away from phones and everything else.” He also acknowledges that once he begins a policy reading he tries to finish it as soon as possible. However, this usually takes several sessions. Meanwhile, between readings “things may come up in the school relevant to the policy,” causing him to think about both the new policy and existing practice in light of his reading. This way he claims, policy and practice inform each other.

Participants offer concrete ways of initiating collaborative reflection once they have personally prepared themselves. Some begin the process by providing related literature to the staff for an upcoming meeting. Others begin by presenting the policy itself. Kay says she would provide literature and pose questions like, “What came out of this for you? What were some questions, some concerns you had?” She emphasizes the need for staff to first respond individually, then through small group sharing, eventually to whole group discussion. Cam reveals that he would also structure small group discussion to ensure multiple views are expressed from a variety of staff by arranging groups so that various grade levels and viewpoints are represented.

Many participants state that they are reluctant to begin policy reflection in a whole group setting. This is mainly because of their concern that a few resistant staff could dissuade others who might express support or interest. Even in whole group settings, most participants say they would only present a synopsis of policy and prevent discussion from being mired in details needing clarification.

Once staff has been challenged to consider policy, participants say they would continue their efforts to develop a consensus of what the policy means. From there they would use staff ideas to work on action plans and logistical implementation details. At this point parents are included as well as district office personnel. Participants emphasize that policy implementation takes time and continuous feedback and that it perhaps never reaches a state where it is finished or completed.

All participants were given opportunity to provide instances of policy reflection by
discussing recent policy experience. They continuously identified two policies, student evaluation and curriculum pathways. The student evaluation policy concerned evaluation of students in the classroom. It was an attempt to bring together evaluation policies of the former boards and standardize student evaluation methods within the district. The Pete Cole vignette is in part based on the pathways policy. This is a provincially driven policy that attempts to better identify students who require curriculum supports and adaptations. Five possible pathways exist with the first being regularly prescribed programs, two the regular program with supports, three an adapted program where student outcomes are changed, four a special course and five an alternative program that does not resemble the prescribed curriculum. Both policies were considered equally pervasive because they greatly affected the work of every teacher in the district.

**Summary**

Participants describe policy reflection as beginning with the receipt of a draft document. They consider the nature of the policy and who needs to have input. Cam for example states that once he has considered the policy and made some notes he next shares the policy with a couple of staff people “specific to areas of their expertise.” From there a policy synopsis is presented at a staff meeting, mainly to highlight the policy and its implications. This is usually a time to highlight aspects of the policy generally and to make available full copies for individual reading.

At the next staff meeting discussion is more detailed. Many participants organize staffs into groups to consider the policy’s strengths, concerns and implementation details. Much of this type of feedback is passed on to the board. Cam says “That is why they are called draft policies.” Participants conclude that their main responsibility with draft policy is to make sure that they properly vet it and that they advise policy developers of any serious concerns before the next draft is prepared.

**Anticipatory Critical Incidents**

In the final interview I asked participants to reflect on an upcoming critical incident that would require a great deal of their energy and effort (Appendix F). This was my ninth taped session with each participant, besides the five to eight hours I spent observing them in their daily work. The school year was over at the time of these interviews. Participants were noticeably
more relaxed and casual. Some interviews were held on warm evenings when the only
distractions were the sounds of summer and empty buildings.

I sensed that participants looked forward to this interview. By then our level of trust and
rapport was very well developed. They appreciated my attentiveness and trusted me with even
their most vulnerable thoughts. I was frequently told things “off the record” or for “my ears
only.” The final interview, as the analysis will show, was an opportunity for them to further their
reflection on a pending situation.

Since it was summer, it is not surprising that all participants identified change issues
pertinent to the start of the next school year. Cam and Kay are taking new positions and reflect
about this, while Beth considers establishing a new school community in her existing position.
Although Jon, Paul and Roy’s work situations are relatively unchanged, they too dwell on
September issues.

Student Advocacy

When students dismissed for summer vacation, it was for their last time at Kay’s school.
Under board restructuring the school was closed and all children were being moved to Lakecrest
School. Lakecrest itself is also undergoing many changes, including reconfiguring from a K - 9 to
a K - 6 school. In September, about half or Lakecrest students will be from Kay’s former school.
Kay is also moving to this school, not as principal but as assistant principal where she will have a
major increase in teaching responsibilities. Kay confirms that although this assignment was not
her first choice, she is comfortable with it.

Suggestion

Kay has had a number of conversations with colleagues, parents and students. These
conversations have left her wondering and concerned about expectations that Lakecrest staff may
have for her in relation to the students that come with her. One teacher who was on staff with her
during the past year has said to her several times, “You’ll be able to fill in the staff up there [at
new school] now on disciplinary problems.” At another time the principal of Lakecrest, who is
continuing in this position in September, has stated, “I’ll be relying on you, now especially with
the difficult children.” Even the Lakecrest staff has commented to her. Kay articulates, “I have
bumped into teachers who have said to me, ‘You’re going to be a great asset because you have
half the answers regarding the kids coming from your school.’”

Problem

Most of Kay’s students, whom she has served as principal, are moving to Lakecrest School. Kay is also reassigned to this school as an assistant principal. Students from Kay’s former school will constitute about 50 percent of the new student population. Additionally, Lakecrest is also experiencing many staff changes because many grade seven to nine teachers are being reassigned, and replaced by elementary teachers.

Lakecrest, like Kay’s former school, serves students from a variety of backgrounds. Kay remarks that many come from difficult circumstances of inadequate housing, unemployment and dysfunctional family situations. However, Kay senses that students with difficult behaviour and discipline in Lakecrest are not faring as well as those without problems. She reports that over the past year Lakecrest staff has publicly complained loudly and aggressively about their difficulties.

Kay fears that many of her former students will have a difficult time adjusting to Lakecrest. She contends that in the last year, she has gotten “beneath the surface of the discipline problems and got to know the families and so on, these were good children.” Now she is concerned that the Lakecrest principal and staff will “need to travel that journey and sort of get to know the kids more, and form relationships with them through experiences, not by running to me for that.” In fact Kay believes that having staff run to her for the “lowdown” will only exacerbate students’ circumstances. Kay’s problem is how to advocate for her former students without appearing to be negative or unsupportive of the Lakecrest principal and staff.

Hypothesis

Kay is concerned that students moving to Lakecrest with behavioural difficulties may not get a fair chance. She believes she has to carefully support Lakecrest staff in their response to difficult students. However, Kay does not want to contribute to staff forming negative perceptions about these students. She summarizes “I want these children to start out with a clean slate and not to be prejudged and certainly not having their assistant principal participate in that kind of scenario [helping others prejudge them].” Kay envisions that the best approach for handling staff when they request the lowdown on students is not to secede to such requests, even when the request originates with the principal or guidance counselor.
Reasoning

Kay asserts that some information would perhaps “reaffirm any misconceptions that they [staff] might form.” She acknowledges that she would provide details of a factual nature but would withhold behavioural information of a subjective nature. Kay says examples of factual information would be confirmation of an individual program plan or a confidential file. However, Kay affirms, “I don’t think I will say this is the way to deal with this child and this is where this child is coming from, this child’s father is in jail and so on.”

I asked Kay why teachers would look for “a quick fix or the scoop on a child” if it were not in the child’s best interest. She counters that the practice is more likely among veteran teachers who are probably not even aware that they are doing it. Kay believes their intentions are good and they genuinely want to be helpful and to alert their colleagues to students with potential discipline problems. Another reason she feels that veteran teachers engage in this practice is that it saves undue time for instructional planning. Time that is otherwise spent responding to behavioural problems could be better devoted to instructional planning.

Initially, Kay expects that her colleagues, especially her principal, might be frustrated with her approach concluding “she is tight lipped, you can’t get any information from her.” She says that staff might even be a bit angry. Confidently Kay asserts that as they get to know her and the children “they will understand why I am going to be somewhat tight lipped and not ready to give out the dossier on all the students.”

Kay maintains that she would try to keep abreast of how all students are doing in terms of discipline and behaviour, even if classroom teachers do not come to her. However, if a student’s needs are not being met and a teacher would benefit from information of last year, Kay reveals that she would ask the teacher to check the records. Kay anticipates that this problem will be most pressing during the first months of school. After that, she points out “As the year proceeds, I think they [staff] will get to know me through my actions, through my conversations, through my teaching practices.” She concludes, “They will get to know me, I guess, like they will get to know the students.”

Kay revealed in our first interview that she has been in ten schools thus far in her career. I suspected that this experience may have been a major factor in why she identified this problem.
So, I asked Kay to elaborate on how being in so many different schools has prepared her for this situation. She vividly recalls many experiences where as a junior teacher, she was given the lowdown on a class by the previous teacher. According to Kay, “The kids were all branded before I even had the chance [to meet them] on the first day of school!” Furthermore, Kay discovered many predictions about student difficulties did not come to pass. She concludes that being in ten different schools has taught her “You need a fresh slate, every school needs a fresh slate and you can’t have preconceived ideas and preconceived notions of students.”

Kay also credits her background studies and reading with making her aware that beginning a school year with preconceived notions is not the way to start. She makes a case for giving teachers information about the child’s program, needed adaptations or accommodations, effective teaching strategies and preferred learning styles. For example Kay shares she would suggest to a colleague “you might want to try this technique, this really worked well or this discipline technique or this teaching technique really works well with this child.” The important thing she remarks is to do it “in a positive light.”

Values and principles also help shape Kay’s recognition of this problem and her subsequent approach to it. Fairness is upper most on Kay’s mind as she outlines, “Every child should be given an opportunity, a fair chance. It’s not fair to blemish a child’s character or reputation . . .” Kay expresses the belief that children develop with maturity and what happened at year or two ago might never be repeated. Therefore, she argues, “We need to give every person a clean and new opportunity in every school year because they are always growing and developing.”

Apart from the general moral value of fairness, respect is also essential to Kay. Entwined in respect is confidentiality. Kay reports that confidentiality is important and that she regards full disclosure of student details as a violation of their confidentiality. When teachers want to be “filled in” on a student she says, “I see the value or principle of confidentiality and respect probably not being practiced as it should be.”

Kay continued her discussion of values by commenting that teachers also have a professional code of ethics that outlines “what they should be saying in terms of each other, parents and students.” She claims to be very familiar with the code of ethics as both teacher and
administrator. Kay argues that in the name of professionalism, teachers must uphold this code and always consider its importance and its implications.

Testing

Since this and the following five critical incidents are future oriented, participants do not have had the benefit of overtly testing their reflection. Nevertheless, I pursued the imaginative testing phase of reflection by asking participants how they would gauge the effectiveness of their efforts to respond to their situation. Kay proposes that she would gauge the success of her approach by “looking at the frequency of which the teachers are coming to me and if there have been any changes in the first week of school towards the last week [of October].” She expects staff will come to her more frequently in September but will ease off as they understand her position. Kay makes a case for monitoring student office referrals too. She says she would check on the frequency of referrals, who was referred and by whom. This information she adds, could be useful in a more specific follow up with a student or teacher.

Kay also expects useful parental feedback, especially from some vocal ones with needy and behaviourally challenged students. She says she has already worked with many during the past year and feels they will see her as their advocate in the new school. Kay explains, “I have had lots of feedback with them and I am sure that they will certainly be able to voice any concerns they have.”

As for gauging the principal’s response, Kay contends that despite some initial frustration she believes that the Lakecrest principal will understand her position. Kay anticipates that during the first several months the principal will handle potential problems related to existing students while Kay responds to potential problems of first time Lakecrest students. However, as the year passes by, Kay expects that the principal will get to be more familiar with the first time students as she gets more comfortable with existing Lakecrest students. Kay concludes that navigating through the first several months of school will be critical. If all goes well, students enrolling for the first time should get the fair chance that they deserve.

Summary

Kay’s reflection-for-action interview occurred in late June as she considered a challenge that awaited her in September. She and her students were moving to Lakecrest School. Although
the move was two months away, Kay reveals that she had been thinking about this situation since May, when her appointment to Lakecrest as assistant principal was announced. The first comments she heard from other teachers was "This will be great, you will be able to fill us in on each student . . . you can take care of the discipline problems." Kay says the more she heard these comments the more she thought about it and the more concerned she became.

However, she acknowledges that reflecting for this situation through a structured interview was very beneficial. She declares, "I probably didn't give it as much concentrated effort as I have here today." Throughout the interview she explored her thoughts to consider "Is this going to be good? What are the repercussions of this job? How am I going to approach September?" The interview, she shares, helped her realize "The first couple of weeks are going to be crucial, I have to be prepared for some (pause), probably isolation or anger from my colleagues." After going through the interview Kay seemed to accept that this is the way it had to be. She also seemed to have more resolve to stand up for her beliefs, postulating, "Maybe some of the teachers . . . eventually will see and realize that this is a better approach to take, when you are starting a new year and a new me/you."

**Staffing Preparations**

This next reflection-for-action occurs in mid August. It is about Jon’s preparations for September. He is preparing for major staff changes and an influx of new students. The board’s restructuring plan precipitates most of the staffing activity. The student catchment area for Jon’s school is expanding. This means an increase in teachers, at a time when other teacher vacancies have developed through retirements and transfer requests.

**Suggestion**

Throughout the past year Jon often thought that with his staff "there is a need for new blood, new ideas and stuff like that." Some of his staff was inflexible and unwilling to take on new initiatives. When Jon’s board assigned four additional teaching units to his school he was very pleased because he knew he would have a large say in whom these new teachers were. However, as summer moved on, other staffing changes occurred. Another seven positions opened through retirements and successful teacher transfer requests. Jon is concerned that the size of the change may create many new problems. He states, "I would have preferred to have
brought in six or eight . . . to churn the pot a bit and come up with some good ideas and what not, but with eleven out of twenty-eight, it’s a big chunk.”

**Problem**

Jon figures staffing issues are “going to chew up time and energy for me that I know I could probably put into the other things.” He anticipates that all aspects of his program will be effected, including special education, sciences, language and learning resources. Furthermore, about eight of the new staff positions will be permanent. For Jon, this not only means that he has to consider long term implications when hiring, it also means many of the new staff will be serving a probationary period. He describes his problem then, as how best to respond to a high and unexpected staff turnover for September. Jon anticipates that this will be a big undertaking with implications for staff orientation, policy implementation and the overall school culture. He also anticipates that 40 percent of students will be attending his school for the first time in September and this too, will complicate matters.

**Hypothesis**

Jon anticipates problems associated with a high staff turn over and feels that he must be proactive in his response. Conversely, he believes that if he does not pay close attention to this staffing situation many existing problems will become compounded. Jon is concerned that the eleven new staff might not gel together and that personality clashes may occur between the existing and new staff. He also wonders if there will be dissatisfaction among existing staff with some of his recruitment choices. However, he hopes the new staff will come “with a lot of fresh ideas that can be incorporated into the school.”

**Reasoning**

Jon believes that he must begin responding to this situation well before students arrive in September. He feels it is important to accommodate the new teachers by making sure things including classroom materials, schedules and teacher supplies are ready for them. Throughout other interviews he has made many references about on going efforts to develop a teacher handbook. Now, more than ever, he asserts “this handbook will be a priority.” He postulates that having the handbook in place will let the new staff know that there are certain expectations. Jon also contends that it will ensure consistency between new and existing staff. Therefore, he
expects that he will spend much effort presenting the staff handbook to the entire staff in September.

Aside from handbook efforts, Jon presents the need to collectively meet with his eleven new staff on a regular basis. He surmises that this will encourage them to bring forward any of their concerns and it will help him better determine their needs. During the opening weeks of September Jon makes a case for making a lot of individual contact with new staff. Jon suggests much of this will be informally “just in the corridors and before the classes.” He also states that by the end of September he would want to meet individually with each new staff member “to find out how the first month went and what we can do to make life here in the school better.”

Jon reveals that he considered calling a meeting for the new staff before the start of the year but decided against it. He remarks “I don’t want to ruffle too many feathers starting off” referring to strong union sentiments among existing staff. To call this kind of a meeting prior to the start of the year, he feels, would certainly be met with objections because of the teachers’ collective agreement. Meanwhile, Jon anticipates that many new teachers will be in school during August and “on the go before the official opening of the school year.”

Jon strongly feels that “down the road” many issues will be reduced if he concentrates on getting his staff off to a good start in September. He relates that if he “gets things started off on the right foot, positive atmosphere, you know set your expectations, it will cut down a lot of the questions . . . uncertainties.” This approach will also put the new staff at ease. He adds, “making them more comfortable about what they are doing and where they are going.”

Jon uses several examples to illustrate this. The new staff will know for instance, that term exams must be typed and in to the office a certain time before the exam is due. Jon cites fee collections as another example. “There has got to be something in place so that they [staff] know the money comes in, you sign for it, you get a receipt. You don’t leave it on the counter or in your desk.” He goes on to illustrate other examples such as what to do when students have not purchased text books. Jon believes the handbook will not only be invaluable to new staff, it will make clear to all staff what is acceptable and what is not acceptable.

Jon also realizes that getting the staff off to a positive start will benefit students. Students, he suggests, will find that things are organized and in place not only for September but for the
long term. Jon speculates that once students experience structure and high expectations first hand, their achievement will be better in the long run. Otherwise, he points out, when a student finds that a teacher does not even know when locker money is due, this student will conclude “how is this teacher supposed to know about Science or Math or Geography?”

Despite Jon’s perceptions about the magnitude of this problem he feels poised and ready to deal with it. In his previous high school, in another region of the province, he dealt with staff downsizing due to declining enrolments. This he found difficult because he not only lost staff, but he had to reassign remaining staff to cover existing programs. Enrolment decline continued and several years later his school was reconfigured. This meant that 14 of his junior high teachers had to be transferred out and replaced by senior high teachers from a nearby school. Jon shares that at that time he did not know what to expect with 14 coming from a different set of “policies and procedures and expectations.” When these fourteen came, he points out, “They felt that they should have a greater input.” Many staff debates resulted about school procedures on issues like how best to take care of lateness and when to contact parents. Jon concludes that in the end it was a positive experience for him because he was able to develop the best of staff ideas and improve existing policy and procedures.

Jon also shares that high staff turnover was generally the norm at his former school because of its remoteness. This meant that many novice teachers came for several years, accumulated experience and eventually moved on to other areas of the province. Jon notes too, that he started as one of these novice teachers looking for experience. As a young teacher, he remembers wondering “Where do you go when the fire alarm goes off (laughing)? What’s the procedure for a student assembly and parent teacher night?” For Jon, these experiences have given him considerable knowledge in recruiting and supporting new teachers.

Jon also identifies the influence of values and principles in his reasoning. He pays particular attention to social and political values. He asserts that for those eleven, joining a staff can be very stressful. Stress, Jon claims, may bring out the best in them, or it may tear them apart. Jon believes that he must put these eleven at ease and make the school as inviting and accommodating as possible. He thinks his personal touch can accomplish this, “We are all here together, we are working together, we are one in the same as such, we all want to row together in
the same direction.” This is reiterated when he adds “we want to get that message across that you are not out there on an island to yourself, we are all here for one purpose.” Jon elaborates that this type of support also says to new teachers “We can’t go off on our own island, our own sphere and sort of do things on our own without being aware of what is going on down the hall or in the classroom next to you.” He concludes that team work is his priority.

Jon also takes his professional responsibilities seriously. He sees team work as collective and professional and something that should not be left to chance. Jon realizes that he has a responsibility to sort many details before school opens. He is determined that his school will be organized and ready for opening. This, he adds, will go a long way in promoting professionalism and high expectations.

As earlier mentioned, Jon is optimistic that September will go well and that his staff will cohere. Undoubtedly, some of this optimism comes from his values and experience. Some of the eleven he has recruited are known to him. Others, he says, have very good track records. Jon adds that when hiring he was also seeking “leaders or strong people with foresight and intuition.” He points out that those newly hired “are very sincere, very personable people that get along well with other people as a team.” This, he confirms, is what the school needs, especially with almost 40 percent of the students enrolling for the first time.

**Testing**

The testing phase of Jon’s reflection-for-action was further examined through his commentary on how he will gauge the success of the eleven new staff. Jon concedes that “officially” it would be difficult to know. However, he would rely on a variety of indicators. He reveals “Sometimes you might think that things are going well but somebody whispers in your ear that such and such. . . .” Jon acknowledges that there are people on the existing staff who will give him straight answers to his inquiries. Hopefully, he adds “they will give me some direction there too.”

Jon further contends that he would not get into any “official questionnaires or stuff like that.” Rather, he would rely on his own observations and the input and reactions of existing and new staff. He emphasizes “I probably will be up and around corridors and communicating with people throughout, so hopefully I will get some feedback in that respect.” Jon equally emphasizes
the need “to put a finger on the pulse” of how students are adjusting too. This, he intends to do through staff feedback and direct communication with students and parents.

Summary

Jon has just completed his first year as principal of his existing school and at times has found it chaotic and disorganized. As September approaches it is apparent that more than one third of Jon’s staff will be new to the school. He figures that if he pays careful attention to staffing issues the new group should cohere with existing staff and help generate much needed improvements. However, Jon also feels that if he does not respond effectively to this situation the next school year will be even more chaotic than the last.

I asked Jon how much thought he had given this situation prior to our interview. He reveals that he had thought about the situation frequently over the summer. Yet, he suggests that the interview has helped him consolidate his thinking and develop a mind set of what remains to be done. He remarks that this situation did not develop abruptly but “over the summer the [staffing] numbers were mounting, that we were getting a larger turnover and some concerns were going through my mind. . . .” Jon supposes that many aspects of what he shared in the interview had previously occurred to him in isolation. However, the interview for Jon seemed to be an opportunity to pull together many thoughts that were otherwise fragmented.

Timetable Tribulations

This critical incident concerns Paul’s efforts to develop an instructional timetable for September. The interview was originally scheduled for Canada Day because Paul was leaving for holidays within a few days. When I arrived at his school at the appointed time he asked that we defer the interview because he and the assistant principal were working on the instructional schedule for September. He explained that his train of thought was on the schedule and felt that switching to a reflective mode would be difficult at this time. Naturally I concurred and returned the following day. Paul reported that the schedule did not get completed on that hot festive day, despite their best efforts. However, he wanted the timetable to be the topic for his anticipatory reflection. He felt that it was a good opportunity to step back and review his efforts.

Suggestion

Overall, Paul is excited about the prospects for September. He reports “In spite of all the
administrivia, I will still have some time to deal with curriculum programming, teacher morale and teacher development . . . leadership in the true sense.” Nevertheless, Paul has to prepare an instructional timetable for more than four hundred students using a staff of twenty-three. To do this Paul has to consider realities of his grade configuration, program requirements and the profile of his staff.

Problem

Paul spent a good portion of this interview detailing the full extent of this problem. Though his comments were protracted, they were useful in understanding his situation. Stated concisely, Paul views his problem as how to best organize a junior high curriculum schedule that equitably assign teachers a workload consistent with their expertise and interests. As Paul explains, many factors complicate this process.

Like many participants, Paul’s school is undergoing many changes in September because of board restructuring. In Paul’s case, his grade structure is not changing, however, his student population is increasing and more programs will be offered. This means that Paul’s school will provide the required program for grades seven, eight and nine along with late French Immersion, accelerated Math, Art, Choral and Instrumental Music, Special Education and Technology Education. Additionally, he has a number of students repeating whose programming spreads over more than one grade level.

Paul’s recruitment work for September is limited despite some staff openings. Vacant positions are being filled by teachers bumped from other restructured schools. Consequently, most of Paul’s staffing is complete. In total he has 23 teaching units including his position. Although Paul has specialist teachers for areas like Physical Education, Music and Technology, he will be assigning these teachers teaching duties in areas beyond their specialities. Paul states that this happens because there are not enough courses offered in their speciality areas to fill their schedules.

Paul’s school operates on a 14 day cycle with five 60 minute periods per day. However, out of a maximum of 70 periods per cycle most teachers are assigned about 60 instructional periods. Some courses such as Math and Language are scheduled for 15 periods per cycle. Others like Core French and Social Studies have seven periods, and still others like Health and
Music are assigned three periods per cycle. Consequently, teachers depending on what they teach, may be assigned anywhere from 57 to 62 periods per cycle.

Paul identifies the number of courses and classes a teacher teaches as another variable in distributing workload. A Math teacher, he says, may be teaching four courses for a total of sixty periods. Yet, a Social Studies teacher may have to teach three classes of Social Studies and three classes of Religion Education to reach 60 periods. To take it further, he notes that a teacher teaching “fringe classes” like Art or Technology may teach more than 15 classes to reach only 57 periods.

Besides these concerns, Paul points out that many teachers prefer to teach at one grade level. Sometimes when this is accommodated, some teachers may end up teaching just two courses in three or four different slots. Yet a specialist teacher like the Physical Education teacher ends up teaching every student in the school. Furthermore, some teachers have to assume homeroom duties besides carrying a full course load. These duties include tracking student attendance, preparing reports, reporting achievement to parents and monitoring a student’s overall success.

Another complication Paul raises is that some teachers argue that their course should be offered at an optimum time of day. For example, Art teachers prefer not to offer Art during the last period of the day. Other teachers might argue that they should offer their courses early in the fore or afternoon session. Paul concedes that his ability to spread the workload among his teachers equitably is limited. No matter what plan he devises, some teachers will be dissatisfied.

Hypothesis

Paul believes he must make every effort to distribute the workload fairly and to match teachers with courses that suit them. He further contends that teachers should receive about 60 periods of instructional time per cycle. However, when this is not possible other workload factors have to be considered such as the number of courses or students being taught. Paul realizes that he will not produce an instructional schedule that is pleasing to everybody. He does feel that the staff will accept it if he can show that he has developed the best possible scenario and that he has tried to accommodate their requests. Paul surmises “I think most teachers are professional enough to understand that this is the best I can do.”
Reasoning

Paul asserts that teachers are most effective when their workload is fair and their assignment matches their ability and interests. He further argues that when these conditions are met, teachers are happy and students get the “best quality instruction and the best quality education.” He offers a number of strategies to distribute staff workload fairly and to help teachers realize that every effort is made to accommodate their requests. Paul advocates advising teachers of their workload as soon as it is determined, possibly in June. At the time of interviewing, most of Paul’s staff had been informed of their workload. He points out though that determining workload is very different from determining the instructional schedule.

Workload, according to Paul, is mostly determined by the courses teachers have to teach. For example, he posits that a Language Arts teacher will probably receive four courses at 15 periods per cycle for a total of 60 periods. Paul believes that it would be highly unlikely that a Language Arts teacher would pick up a course in Science or Art. To do so would probably mean that this teacher could only teach three 15 period Language Arts courses and have a total of 48 or 52 periods. Consequently, Paul feels that before the tedious task of scheduling begins, most teachers should have some indication of their workload.

In deciding workload Paul identifies a number of premises for his decision making. He agrees that teachers, where possible, should teach at one grade level and work with as few students as possible. He suggests that he would make every effort to assign teachers courses that match their area of university study. Paul also advocates minimizing the number of different courses for each teacher as long as it does not translate into a large number for another teacher. For example, he may have to decide between giving a teacher two Health classes for a total of six periods or one Science class at seven periods. Paul remarks that even if the science teacher wants all science classes, he can not accommodate the request because it would leave somebody with many Health classes to teach. This brings Paul to his next premise.

Paul articulates that some courses naturally fit together academically and administratively. Some of these marriages for example, would be Health and Science or Social Studies and Religion. Combined, these courses account for ten periods. Paul maintains that if teachers are interested in one of these courses, more than likely they have to be assigned the companion course
too. He contends that the combination of ten periods is also more manageable than trying to assign courses having just three and four periods.

To account for academically weaker students or those repeating courses, Paul offers the idea of lowering student enrolment for one stream at each grade level. Although Paul eschews homogeneous grouping, he accepts that it is a viable way to provide additional help to those who need it most. He says that in this stream for example, not only will class size be lower, but students could be given additional Language Arts or Math time by removing Core French from their program. Paul also contends that this arrangement makes scheduling for students requiring special education services more manageable.

Paul points out that at the time of interviewing, early July, most teachers were aware of what they would be teaching in September and the reasons why. He reveals that over the summer as the instructional schedule is developed, some changes may occur. In these cases he maintains, he would call the teacher with the details and rationale. Paul feels that it is important to provide staff with details, avoid surprise announcements in September and keep everything “above board.”

According to Paul, the tedious work of developing an instructional time table begins only after general agreement on workload. Paul reveals that building the time table can take weeks and requires close cooperation with his assistant principal. He claims that both of them work on it together from start to finish. Paul stresses that when responding to staff inquiries, it is important that they both know the thinking behind every decision.

Paul reveals that he and the assistant principal construct the time table manually using charts, markers, paper and props. Computer programs are available however, they prefer to manually complete this job together. Paul points out that the process begins by first scheduling the most complicated scenarios. For example, the grade eights may need to be grouped into five classes for a certain time slot and into four classes for another. Furthermore, paired subjects like Science and Health cannot be offered simultaneously if the same teacher is teaching them.

As the timetable gets closer to completion Paul notes that each step gets more difficult. Fewer options and choices remain and this is when teacher workloads can become skewed. Paul illustrates this by using Art as an example. The scheduling of Art is deferred to the end of the process. Some Art classes may ultimately have to be assigned to a teacher who is available.
Furthermore, it may also increase this teacher’s instructional periods beyond sixty periods or leave the person with an inordinate number of courses to teach. However, Paul feels that at the end of the process he must be able to say, “It is fair, it is above board, it’s communicated, here is the way we did it.” Paul and his assistant principal have worked together many times on developing an instructional timetable. He remarks that time tabling is a challenge, comparable to completing a jigsaw puzzle. Consequently, he maintains that he is undaunted when things do not work out or when he reaches an impasse.

Beyond Paul’s extensive administrative experience, Paul reveals that over the years, “I have taught everything under the sun, I have had large classes, multi classes.” This, he suggests, helps him understand workload and scheduling issues from a teacher’s perspective. Paul claims that he will do what he can to be fair. However, Paul strongly believes teachers themselves must bring a positive attitude to this situation. He expresses the opinion that there is no point in teachers spending their year “crying about it and complaining about it” when their workload and schedules are not what they expected. Paul concludes teachers have to realize that the process is complicated and every effort is made to be fair.

When I asked Paul about values and principles that guide his actions he outlined many that spanned all four sets of values outlined in Chapter Two. General moral values are especially evident. Paul frequently uses phrases like “fair and equitable” and goes through great lengths to see that things are done this way. He points out that the workload and time tabling process takes weeks to complete, if fairness is to be a guiding principle.

Professional values also have a significant role in Paul’s thinking. He remarks “every teacher is a professional who knows what he or she is all about and what they want to do.” Paul emphasizes that the whole purpose of setting up fair and equitable workloads and instructional schedules is to give the teachers the tools to work. Paul discerns, “I want to provide the best supports for teachers. . . . Once they have been given the tools, the teacher will be the leader, the teacher will be the one that makes the school work.”

Paul is conscientious to the point of developing the best schedule, not just one that works. He says that he is willing to commit whatever time is necessary, even if it is vacation time. Paul makes the case that his school is a better place for teachers and students alike when the best
possible job is done with this aspect of his professional responsibilities. He further contends that when teachers know their work is valued, they in turn believe in their students and “give them the best quality of education . . . and the time that they deserve.”

Paul is confident that when school reopens in September teachers will be mostly satisfied with their teaching assignments and schedules. He states, “the reason I feel that way is because I think we have a super staff . . . we feel good about where we are going and we feel good about our vision.” Nevertheless he speculates, “I would be very apprehensive if I had not done the ground work for time tabling and workloads.”

*Testing*

Paul will not know the effect of his workload distribution and instructional time table until the school year is well under way. I probed the testing phase of his reflection by asking him to summarize time lines for actions and to comment on how he would gauge the success of his work. Paul pointed out that at the time of the interview, most of his staff already had a reasonable idea of what their workload would be. He anticipates that he and the assistant principal will continue to work on the timetable. However, he figures that it will be more closely examined in mid August. At that time if any significant changes occur, he intends to contact individual teachers and update them. Meanwhile, while he is away on vacation the assistant principal plans to work on some schedule details and complete interviewing for the remaining part time positions.

When I asked Paul what indicators he would use to determine the effectiveness of the instructional schedule he made a number of points. He says the first indication of a successful instructional schedule is that students can access the programs they need. This may mean a student can enroll in the regular program, advanced placement or in remedial classes. Paul says he has been very frustrated with the current number of grade eight repeaters. He will monitor these in particular, to see that they are able to enroll in appropriate courses. Paul concludes that if instruction is organized well, then every student should have the opportunity to be successful in school.

Paul claims teacher reaction will develop throughout the year. He envisions getting some opinion in September but says that he will not really know how things are going until the year progresses. Paul doubts that many changes will be made to the instructional schedule and
individual workloads once the year commences. He raises the point that concerns and complaints will be noted and reconsidered when they plan for the next year. Meanwhile, he expects teachers to regard "every course as valuable and important," even if it is not their preference.

Summary

In this critical situation Paul meticulously details the challenges of determining equitable teacher workloads and instructional schedules. This case is unique in that it is an opportunity for Paul to reflect on ideas that he has in mind for September. It gives him a chance to reconsider the situation, review his anticipated outcomes. By far most of Paul's discussion was within the problem and reasoning phases of reflection. Although Paul says he did not develop any new ideas throughout the interview, the process helped him better organize his thoughts. Furthermore, it prompted him to think more about his efforts and approaches to this situation.

Developing Parental Involvement

During the past year a school council was organized in accordance with new provincial legislation. Roy believes this gives him a new opportunity to develop the role of parents in his school.

Suggestion

When the school council was recently organized, Roy observed much parental interest in school decision making. The council, consisting of teacher, parent and community interests, lobbied vigorously to maintain the school's grade configuration. Despite their best efforts the school board decided that within two years the school would be reconfigured as a K to six elementary. Throughout the year Roy noticed that council meetings were well attended by parents and that parent and community members articulated their views and concerns very well. These events have left Roy wondering about opportunities for parents to be more involved in decision making.

Problem

For the past eight years, a committee of teachers and parents has directed the school improvement process. Their goal has been to assess where the school is, where it is going and how it can get there. Roy reports that many good things have come out of this process and positive changes have resulted. Despite these successes, Roy feels that the process has never been
able to include parents in the decision making meaningfully. He takes some responsibility for this saying, "A lot of it I think was really a lack of initiative on the part of the administration here and the teachers, to bring parents into the process." Roy says past efforts amounted to keeping parents informed of what was going on. He reveals parents were never really involved in formulating goals, "They are usually brought in to say, 'okay here is what we have done and here is what we are going to do about it,' without actually getting input from parents."

Meanwhile Roy credits parents for their help and involvement in the school over the years. They often volunteer for various committees, but he states, "The reality is that they were never really into the meetings." Roy is confident that teachers respect parents too, they welcome them and are not threatened by them. However, he surmises, that although parents have always been in a helping and supporting role they have never been involved in deciding what has to be done or how to do it.

Roy hopes that the recent establishment of a school council might give parents more that a supporting role. The council provides parents and community representatives a much stronger legislative presence in his school. Roy also feels that if he does not promote and support the school council in September much of the energy and good will developed over the last year will be lost. He acknowledges that some council members were disappointed and disillusioned at the end of the past year. This was when the board decided against the council recommendation to maintain the existing grade structure. Roy concludes that if the council does not develop a clear focus in September, it will indeed be a council in name only.

Meanwhile, Roy is equally concerned about teacher response to increased parental involvement. He contends "I do anticipate ... some tensions, because undoubtedly if you have an area that you have been solely responsible for, as teachers have, ... and all of a sudden you have other people with a bit of parental expertise, I expect there are going to be some problems." Roy knows that some teachers think that it will "end up with a group of parents deciding that we are going to run the whole situation." Roy is faced with the challenge of increasing parental involvement without alienating his staff.

Hypothesis

During the past year the establishment and subsequent success of a school council compels
Roy to reexamine the level of parental involvement in decision making. Roy holds that the work of the council shows that parents are capable and want to be meaningfully involved in the education process. Now that the restructuring issue is closed, Roy believes the time is right to mobilize parents on other issues and to involve them in other important school initiatives. He feels that he can use existing committees to develop parental involvement, especially at a time when some members of the school council are discouraged. At the same time Roy realizes that he must do this in a way that is non threatening to teachers.

**Reasoning**

Roy theorizes that his main responsibility in this situation will be to act as a facilitator. He expects that he will position himself “in the middle” and work toward developing parental involvement while minimizing teacher concerns. Roy explains, “My role, I think, is to try to see that parents have a healthy respect for the professional expertise of teachers but at the same time, that teachers have a healthy respect for parents’ views.” More specifically, Roy speculates that he prefers not to be seen as a person with a set agenda of bringing both sides together. By contrast, he insists that he would like to help all parties understand their goal and their respective responsibilities, “but then let dialogue flow and only jump in when it is necessary to allay fears on either side, or correct notions about territory and what people are concerned about.” Roy summarizes that his role is to make this initiative as “as collaborative a situation as possible.”

When I asked Roy to outline what actions he would take to develop parental involvement he conveyed first that the process had already started. He says it began with the inception of the school council and their subsequent struggle to maintain the school’s grade configuration. Roy explains that the board provided inservice and training sessions for school councils. He reports that these sessions were valuable and useful because school council members became aware of their responsibilities and how they could carry them out.

One of the main functions of school councils, identified in this training, was to monitor school wide achievement. With respect to this, Roy comments that councils are encouraged to examine, “What has been the achievement? What are you doing about it? What can we do about it?” Roy identifies school wide achievement as a probable goal for parents and teachers to work on collaboratively.
Roy notes that school achievement has also been a focus of school improvement initiatives for most of the past eight years. However, he concedes that parents were never really involved in analyzing achievement and developing action plans. He attributes this to the structure of the school improvement process. Roy shares that school improvement is mostly a teacher driven initiative with parents having only token representation. For example, Roy points out that the school improvement team is comprised of five staff representatives and only one parent. When ad hoc committees are established, they often included parents. However, Roy reveals that the reality is that parents were not very involved in the meeting process.

Roy regards the establishment of school councils as a positive systemic change in the organization of schools. He asserts that school councils can better position parents to be involved in decision making because of the composition of the councils. Teachers, parents and community each account for one third of the membership and where possible, a parent or community representative is expected to chair the council.

Though teachers account for only one third of the council, Roy does not expect his staff to feel threatened. He repeats his belief that in the past it was not that teachers did not want parental input. The problem was finding a way to make it happen. Roy believes that now it can work by partnering school improvement and school council initiatives to examine school achievement and to develop appropriate responses.

Roy also bases some of his optimism on the overlap of membership between both groups. At the moment, he remarks, the parent representative on the school improvement team is also a member of the school council. Additionally three school improvement staff members serve on the council. Roy feels that this overlap will simplify cooperation between both groups. Meanwhile, he is not concerned that the overlap will cause the school council to be the school improvement team under another name. Roy asserts that this overlap constitutes less than half of the full school council membership.

Roy believes that during the past year the school council’s efforts to maintain the school’s current grade configuration helped its formation. He points out too that training sessions have made members aware of responsibilities and protocol. Now that the reconfiguration issue is out of the way, Roy posits the council will want to get at their main function, monitoring
achievement. Roy feels the school improvement team can be very helpful to this process by preparing an annual school report on achievement results. Roy surmises, “What I can see in September, is getting both together, looking at the reports and then mapping out a plan.” He confirms that many details of how this is to be done, need to be worked out with parents and staff. However, Roy maintains that both groups need to be involved from the start, “[It’s critical that they [school council] really have the knowledge base to work from, and this is where they need collaboration.”

Roy feels that aspects of his training and experience shape his response to this situation. Consistent with comments in other interviews, Roy again emphasizes the importance of his graduate administrative training. He claims to have learned a great deal in his Master’s program about “the whole idea of process, and thinking out and thinking back and anticipating . . . trying to keep everything moving and keep everything together.” Roy explains that as a principal he has a dozen different things coming at him at once, yet his training forces him to think and avoid quick reactions. He contends that this thinking also helps him to use his experience to anticipate reactions and detect ideas that have not been well thought out.

As for other training, Roy shares that he has attended helpful school improvement training sessions over the years. At these sessions Roy asserts that he especially enjoys engaging discussions with other principals about how they develop school growth plans. Interestingly, Roy also identifies his experience with the scouting movement as helpful in this regard. He claims that with every scouting activity “you have to think ahead and plan, go over and anticipate and think of possible things that are going to happen.”

When discussing his values, Roy says that his thinking on this situation is dominated by two, parental participation and accountability. Put in terms of the values format identified in Chapter Two these could be described as social and political and professional values. Roy voices “I have always believed that if people share the plan and share the direction, then you can rejoice together in the results . . . ” At another point he contends “This is critical that parents become more and more involved in what goes on in the school, and the heart of school is educating children so they achieve.”

Roy observes that attempting to increase parental involvement within the present context
of education reform and restructuring has political overtones. Yet, he concludes that in his school there is a lot of openness to this idea between parents and teachers alike. Roy feels there are many other issues that the council could take on but the most critical is achievement. He makes the case that parents can help provide the best education possible even if “it makes teachers be a little more open and open minded to what they are up to themselves.”

Testing

I asked Roy to think ahead to the next school year and to comment on how he would gauge the development of parental involvement. Roy considered this request from both the perspective of parents and teachers. He first qualifies that it will take time before any lasting results become evident. However, from a parental perspective his reading of their attitude would be important. Roy says he would do this by monitoring committee membership, membership attendance and the number of other parents who attend meetings. Roy also stresses that he would monitor the frequency and types of concerns that parents express at meetings. He speculates that it would be interesting to know how many concerns are specific to curriculum and programs. Roy notes that it is much easier for parents to be concerned about playground facilities, maintenance needs and things like that.

Roy feels that by having a small staff, he will get immediate teacher opinion through the school improvement team, in staff meetings and in informal staff room discussions. Roy adds that these venues have already given him encouragement to move ahead and develop parental involvement through the monitoring of the school’s achievement levels. He is confident that teacher response will be constructive and it will help make his efforts even more effective.

Roy contends that the ultimate indication of increased parental involvement will be improvements in the achievement levels of students. He views this as a long term indicator, but the most important one. Although the school is achieving on par with provincial standards, Roy feels there is room for growth. He believes that once the school council develops an informed picture of student achievement they will want to establish an academic goal in consultation with the school improvement team. Roy highlights vocabulary awareness in Language Arts as an example. He suggests that if they identify this as a performance weakness, they will identify strategies to remedy it. Consequently, the school’s performance on the Canadian Test of Basic
Skills should improve within two years.

**Summary**

Roy is confident that now is the time to more meaningfully involve parents in school decision making. Despite potential staff concerns he believes that a collaborative effort between the school council and school improvement team can work. This effort would provide a direction and focus for the school council while renewing the achievement efforts of the school improvement team.

Roy maintains that he has given this situation much thought before the interview. Yet he found the interview to be very helpful. He contends that the interview helped him focus on the major areas of this issue. It also helped him to be more aware of where he is in terms of the overall situation. It has helped him extend his thoughts. More specifically, he states, “I hadn’t thought out action plans for September, it was thought out to June. But teachers have to be alerted, parents have to be told . . .” The interview also helped Roy concretely think through how he would get the school council and the school improvement team to work together. Roy concludes that the interview helped him develop a more interconnected plan for September.

**Starting Anew**

This critical situation is about Cam’s thoughts on his preparations for September. Cam, as earlier stated, is near to the end of his career. In September he will be principal of an entirely new school community in a retrofitted building. This community, established because of the school board’s restructuring plan, will consist of K to six children in a large, spacious building that was a former high school. Cam is excited about this challenge and views it as a positive opportunity. His reflection-for-action is mainly about how to create the conditions for a positive start and continued success throughout the school year.

**Suggestion**

I held my last interview with Cam on June thirtieth. It was at a time when most things in his existing school were packed and ready to be moved to Vista Academy where Cam would be assuming new principal duties. Although Cam felt lonesome about leaving his old quarters, he was excited about the prospects for Vista. He was cognizant however, that much had to be done in a short time span if he was to get Vista Academy off to a good start.
Problem

Cam realizes that the students and staff coming to Vista in September are a diverse group. Students are being rezoned from eight different schools while teachers are originating from five different schools. Cam contemplates that although some students and staff were with him in the past year, everybody is coming to a new environment. Cam concludes "I suspect teachers, parents and students will probably have different expectations of what they would want in their school." Consequently, he theorizes that a lot of his efforts for the next year will be toward discerning and shaping community expectations.

Despite the diverse nature of Cam's student base, he does not anticipate rivalries or factions among students. He acknowledges that there may be some divisions along religious affiliations, socioeconomic and neighbourhood lines, but for the most part, rivalries between children will be few. However, he suggests, "I do believe we are going to have a wide spectrum of environmental factors, we have those who are on social assistance, those who have both parents working, stable, unstable, functional and dysfunctional families."

Cam also muses that having a staff that contains blocks of teachers from five different schools will also be an issue. He imagines that he will have to prepare a lot of policies and expect staff to accept them and work within them from the day school opens. Aside from having many new policies and procedures, Cam also figures that a lot of norming will occur within the staff. He expects that this process will continue over the next several years, nevertheless one that needs close monitoring.

Perhaps one of the biggest "unknowns" as Cam describes it, is the physical state of the building. He reports that the building has received little maintenance in the last few years and the wear and tear it received by an older student population is very evident. Cam is gravely concerned that the "facility is not going to have a pleasant atmosphere." At the time of interviewing, Cam reports that no construction activity was started though the building had been vacant three weeks. It also concerns Cam that this type of upheaval is taking place all over the district. Construction crews are in many buildings as central office staff frantically sort the logistics of staffing and student transfers. Furthermore, Cam feels that he will be working through most of the summer alone. He is to receive a new assistant principal, the support staff will soon
be taking annual leave and district office staff will otherwise be preoccupied. Cam knows too, that because of the retrofitting, the building will not be accessible until several days before school starts.

_Hypothesis_

Cam seems genuinely excited and optimistic that he can successfully organize and have Vista Academy prepared for September. However, as summer begins, he feels that it will take up most of his summer. Cam’s efforts will be on many fronts. First and foremost he says, the retrofitting has to be complete and the building must be aesthetically ready for opening day. Next, he feels much effort will go into organizing policies and procedures for his new staff. Finally, Cam he must concentrate on presenting a calm, organized and structured start to the year. He suspects that if he commits to these details over the summer, Vista Academy will be off to a great start.

_Reasoning_

Cam envisions himself as a catalyst in this process, the one who will “take all those stakeholders and put this school together with everybody else.” He accepts that this is a huge challenge and “one I have to do a lot of thinking and a lot of planning on.” Cam presents the need to first work on the physical dimension of retrofitting. He shares that he has to get the school board on his side to get a lot of physical things done. Cam imagines that he will be making many visits to the supervisor of maintenance and if nothing gets done he will be knocking on the director’s door. He summarizes that maintenance and painting will be his priority because he wants the building to be at least as good as the schools that most staff and students are leaving behind.

The next strategy of Cam’s is about conveying to staff that things are organized and that “we are prepared for this.” Cam is equally concerned about “making teachers understand how we want this school to run.” He describes this to mean not only daily routines but the overall ambiance and tone. Part of this, he relates, is communicating information to them quickly. This, he accepts is best achieved by welcoming them and being available to them.

However, Cam feels that because he is setting up a brand new school, he must unilaterally decide many things. He uses student supervision as an example. Cam states that he will already
have a supervision plan in place that outlines the number of teachers on duty, their locations, times and responses to various student behaviours. At the start of the year he would present this to staff as a tentative plan, looking for possible errors or omissions. He would also review it with staff after the first instructional cycle. Cam articulates that many of his policies would be like this, "starting points." Nevertheless, he believes that if he does a good job of planning, there should be few changes. He shares "then the teachers say well he knows what is going on, there is a certain credibility factor built into what I do."

About students, Cam also identifies a number of action priorities. He expects that the children will be informed early about behavioural, curriculum and achievement expectations. Cam remarks they will come to know "This is the best school, this is going to have the best kids with the best programs and the best neighbours in the community." Cam offers vivid images of how this plan will work. He intends to develop student expectations mainly through his staff. Cam says that even in the first staff meeting, before students arrive, he will lay out what Vista will look like "six months from now, what students are going to be doing." He elucidates this by adding that he would use daily announcements and assemblies to quietly push the expectations of "calm, order, happy, cooperation, pleasant, respectful..." Meanwhile, Cam would promote these behaviours through "assemblies, fire drills, tours of the school, just moving through corridors, how we exit, how we enter, very simple things."

Cam expects that over the summer he will be producing a lot of paperwork too, "organization of schedules and books, making sure that texts and desks and all these things are in place..." He anticipates that a lot of his planning will be on computer discs until a secretary is put in place about a week before school reopens. Cam remarks that once the discs are given to a secretary, they will be cleaned up and organized into orientation packages.

I asked Cam why he was taking such a meticulous approach to this situation and he reveals that it is because of his experience. This experience has shown him that every child wants structure, routine and expectations. "Every child," he has discovered, "not only needs but wants to know, what do I do in this situation?" Cam asserts that if teachers in the classrooms, in the corridors, in cafeterias keep reinforcing positive expectations, children will know what to do and will be successful.
Cam relates his handling of this situation to other relevant experience. He states that his military training “is perhaps the thing that has organized and prepared me most for the jobs that I do.” However, Cam also gives credence to experiences gained through his administrative and teaching career. He repeats that being an administrator has given him many opportunities to work with “a lot of different people.” Cam says that his military experience combined with his administrative experience “has taught me to prioritize and organize and in some ways energize.”

When discussing relevant experience Cam revisited and earlier theme of his, coping with adversity. For Cam, “adversity is that which you haven’t prepared for.” For example, he explains an adversity might be “I haven’t planned something for lunch time and all of a sudden there are not enough teachers supervising and the kids are going nuts and there is panic. That is an emergency, that is adversity.” This, he stresses is different from obstacles that are things that can be planned for. Cam reveals that over the years adversities have become fewer and fewer. He expects that in September there will be obstacles like teacher being unhappy with their room assignment or parents unhappy about homework expectations. Cam concludes his planning is about preventing adversities and dealing with obstacles as they arise.

In terms of values, Cam’s commentary highlights a connection between basic human and professional values. He claims that respect for students, teachers and parents is the nature of his work. Cam is convinced that if his staff believes in their students, and establishes a positive relationship, then high expectations and achievement levels will follow. He points out that he knows the needs of students, teachers and parents alike. Cam believes that working toward meeting these needs and creating an atmosphere of respect is important.

Beyond respect, Cam acknowledges the importance of his professional values. He realizes that his summer vacation is going to be quite busy but feels that he must have things ready for opening day. Not only does Cam feel that things have to be ready, but that “expectations for achievement are exactly the same as for any school in the province or district.” Cam maintains “All things that I will be doing will be directed towards improving achievement.” He further declares “the sole purpose we are here for is to make achievement possible.”

Testing

Cam identifies a number of strategies for gauging how well the school forms during the
first term. He first talks about indicators of success from a student and parent perspectives, then from a teacher perspective. Cam believes there will be no trouble finding out the concerns of students and parents. He says he will sense student response “by being around, being very visible, being in the classrooms, being out there when kids are dismissed, talking to parents.” On a more formal note, Cam plans to hold parent orientation sessions throughout September and will seek out their responses. Cam also asserts that after the first month he and the staff would design a survey instrument for students. The results of these surveys would be published in parent newsletters and discussed at staff meetings. This, he says would help identify priorities for the next few months.

Concerning staff, Cam says he would monitor complaints over the first few weeks and again be about to observe how teachers are doing. Cam anticipates having several staff meetings in September and he plans to set some time aside for questions and answers at each one. He expresses “I will be very open and I will say ‘here are some of the things I see’ but I will be expecting people to be honest with me.” Additionally, Cam plans to set about twenty minutes aside with every teacher toward the end of September. He explains that this will not be during their preparation time but will be accomplished by doubling classes or getting an available teacher to cover a class. In that meeting Cam vocalizes that he would like teachers to honestly comment on the strengths and needs of the school as they see it. Cam acknowledges that this approach is ambitious but remarks that it is necessary and will be useful in making necessary adjustments to the start up plan.

Cam expects that the start of the next school year will be “hectic but wonderful.” He believes that the opportunity to start a new school community is the chance of a lifetime, “Here is a brand new school, brand new kids, brand new parents and teachers as a staff . . . now how do you want to do it?” Cam states that he intends to start the year with the belief that “this is the chance to do it right.” He believes everybody including parents, teachers, and children will also want to get it right the first time.

Summary

Despite the magnitude of Cam’s September undertaking, he is excited about the opportunity to open a new school. He realizes that much of his summer will be occupied sorting
out many details. However, he remains convinced that things will go well.

Cam reveals that this situation has been on his mind since he was appointed to the position about two months ago. He further states that since last week when he decided to discuss it at this interview, he has been thinking about it a lot more. Cam points out that so far most of the ideas are sliding around in his head and have not yet gelled. The interview, he shares, has helped prepare him to write down a plan, “I believe in the next week or so I’ll block out the tasks and under each task, this, this, this and this, which will show me the immensity of it.” Cam theorizes that once he gets a plan to paper it will then gel and solidify. Then, he adds I can “prioritize and establish time frames” and carry it out.

Community Factions

Beth’s story is well rooted into the events of her past year, although her focus is on the start of the next school year. The interview was held in Beth’s office on June twenty-ninth. The school was all but empty as summer holidays had begun. Most staff were finished and left for the summer. By contrast to the bustling days of my other visits, the only noise to be heard was the dribbling of a nearby aquarium.

Beth says she barely survived her first year as principal, having to handle many difficult and challenging issues. This was the first year that the school was operated as a public school and not as a Roman Catholic denominational school. Parents, led by the school council, rallied against this change and were often confrontational with school board trustees and staff. Furthermore, the council persisted in trying to maintain many practices exclusive to the Roman Catholic tradition.

For September, even greater changes are expected. The school will become a K to six school with a revised student catchment area. The population is expected to almost double because a neighbouring school is closing and all these children are being reassigned to Beth’s school. Beth reports that many rivalries exist between both former school communities. However, in September they will be consolidated into one. Meanwhile, about 25 percent of students will be returning in September while the remaining 75 percent will be first time students to her school.

Suggestion

Beth’s experience of the past year causes her to be concerned. Parents who lost their
Roman Catholic school, were embittered and resisted any further changes to their school. They publicly opposed the school board’s plans and fought a new grade configuration. She is concerned that although only 25 percent of them are continuing at her school they will not be willing to compromise within a new community.

Meanwhile, in September Beth expects many new parents will not be Roman Catholic and will not support Roman Catholic traditions. These parents too, are bitter about the closing of their school and are reluctant about consolidation. However, many of them fought for educational reform and the abolition of denominations schools. Beth surmises, “You have two very diverse thinking groups coming together.” Based on the events of the past year she expects many difficulties.

Problem

In September, Beth’s school will be reconfigured and serve an almost entirely different student population. Beth is concerned that several parent factions may develop making it difficult for her to develop a new school community. Beth observes that both factions have visible leadership through past parent committees such as school councils. They have also publicly opposed each other on past issues like public schooling. Beth concisely states her problem as “How do you develop a school climate and culture and offer the best for each one of the children coming from these two distinct backgrounds?”

Hypothesis

Beth acknowledges that her school just went through a “horrible year” and she is determined that the experience will not be repeated in the next year. She believes that the normal focus of any school is curriculum and instruction but she emphasizes “that comes with a climate and culture.” Beth contends that in September she must begin by making every effort to develop a positive school climate where parents and children feel they belong. Otherwise, she argues “If you haven’t got it, then you’re swimming up stream constantly.”

Reasoning

Beth is convinced that if she is to offer the best to each child she must “work to bring these two [parent] groups together.” Otherwise, she remarks, “one group is going to have their own agenda and that is what is going to be pushed.” Again she points to the past year where the
sports program received most of the focus. Beth reiterates that she has to be a "facilitator and a mediator to bring these [factions] together, so we don't develop the same kind of thing again."

Beth intends to do some advance planning over the summer and implement a number of specific measures in September. She identifies other principals who have a similar task of opening a reconfigured school. Beth relates that she will be meeting with as many of these as possible, to share ideas. Additionally, Beth plans to confer with school improvement consultants to get their reading of the situation and to find out what they suggest. She also plans to seek an outside facilitator to work with her throughout the fall term. Beth conceives that this person will work primarily with administration "on how we can proceed, give us food to think about, and maybe there will come a time when you will work with the children, parents and staff."

Beth feels that before that happens the school has to get off to a robust start. Her approach to this is to plan an opening carnival within the first two weeks of September. Thinking back to last year, Beth says that she is determined to do it right and not to make the same mistake twice. She states that she has already planted the seed of this philosophy with many staff "that it is a new school, we are having some kind of thing to bring them [communities] together to talk about it and share it." Beth postulates that the carnival idea will go a long way in helping the school "develop a sense of who we are."

Before the carnival though, Beth intends to do a parent mail out "to explain some of our plans and to get parents thinking." She also plans to use this opportunity to solicit volunteers for the carnival day. Beth conveys that a number of volunteers have already been identified from the other school that closed. She plans to call them personally and invite them to continue their work in September. Beth relates too, that the carnival will bring in many first time volunteers who will see first hand, "what we are doing for the children to develop a climate and a culture." She also points out they will see "we can't do it without you, so come in and volunteer." Then, she posits, volunteers themselves will meet and greet each other, hopefully tearing down some barriers.

Beth carries on her discussion to talk about a curriculum night that would be held in late September, following the carnival. She espouses that they should hold it at the end of September as parents and children become more settled into the school year. This, she emphasizes, would have to be well thought out. Beth remarks that the focus for the night would not only be
curriculum outcomes, but the context for offering such a curriculum. She concludes that this should highlight the importance of a "positive school culture and climate."

Looking ahead, Beth speculates that the next year is going to be difficult and challenging. Yet, she feels that she has learned much from the past year and feels confident about the tasks that lay ahead. She suggests, "I think I have learned a lot from a very terrible experience this year." Beth continues by asserting "I know in my heart that is what I want to do . . . I know that this is a burning desire in me to do something, to make a difference." Beth contends however, that through the experience of the past year, "I have certainly learned enough about these political agendas . . . and their subtle ways."

In talking about experience and training Beth states that her Master's studies were very positive and useful in her subsequent administrative work. She reveals that she entered administration late in her career because she came to realize that within the education system the principal is the one best positioned to affect change. Beth said she entered her studies with this high ideal but soon found that many courses were about administration as management not as leadership. She adds that fortunately one professor encouraged her to pursue her leadership interests and helped her monitor course selections and assignments. Beth reveals that she eventually completed a thesis on leadership and was lucky enough to go into a situation in her first year of administration that was "a real learning, like a wealth of information . . . I just soaked it [experience] up." This combination of training and experience she finds has always encouraged her to learn from every situation and find ways to improve. Beth concludes, "This [past year] wasn't rewarding, but it was rewarding in terms of really learning about dealing with people and that is what this is all about."

Beth, throughout the interview identifies a number of values that help direct her reasoning on this problem. Social and political values are evident in Beth's discussion of parents and teachers. However, professional values are more predominant when she talks about children. As for staff, Beth stresses "I don't want to be a controller or a manipulator on a power thing." She voices that she has to "work with them [staff] and facilitate them working together to achieve goals." Beth deems this effective because every staff person needs to be heard and supported in his or her efforts to achieve established goals.
Pertaining to parents, Beth confirms that staff has a responsibility to work with parents in getting their children “the very best education.” However, Beth takes this notion a step further and counters “if we don’t have them working with us, then they are going to be working against us.” Consequently, Beth maintains that an environment has to be created where parents are heard. Conversely, she adds parents too must hear what the school stands for and “what is going to be done for every child in this school.”

Ultimately, Beth contends that every child should be “given an opportunity to learn to the best of their ability in an environment where they are cared for, where they are valued.” Beth outlines that children may not understand this first hand. Therefore, this has to be achieved by working through families. Beth maintains that her responsibility is to provide education for every child and a well rounded one at that.

**Testing**

Central to Beth’s opening plan is the carnival idea. She admits that gauging the success of this will be a good indication of how things get started in September. This, she repeats, “can have parents coming together in small ways” and can “reshape some of the thinking.” Beth is confident that the carnival will help tear down some established boundaries between both groups. Beyond September, Beth is thinking long term, as in three to four years. She posits that change research suggests a three to five year change period. She concurs with this and points to the fact that she will probably finish her career at this school within this time. Consequently, Beth is focused on what will be done in the last administrative assignment of her career.

Beth concedes that during the first year of the new school community, she will not be giving curriculum and instruction the same level of attention as in a routine year. She reveals that this does not worry her because her experience has been that primary and elementary teachers are very knowledgeable about their curriculum. By October, Beth explains, that she would like to survey parents through a questionnaire. She would ask them what they would like changed and what they would want the school keep on doing. Beth says she would structure the questionnaire for parents to make written comments. These comments she says, are “rich in information.” By the end of the first term Beth hopes to see at least a 25 percent increase in the number of parent volunteers. She also expects to receive feedback from parents and staff saying things turned out
better than the expected.

Early in the year Beth expects some children will be unsettled because they will be angry about having to change schools. She feels they will also know if their parents are not supportive. Beth says she will monitor this over the year, but expects these situation will dissipate as children realize that the school community is a caring and respectful one. She maintains that by the end of the first term she expects that they would feel comfortable and happy in their new surroundings. Beth states that she would be mindful of hearing what they have to say and “looking at little faces” to see if they are happy and pleased.

**Summary**

Beth asserts that in September if things do not get off to a better start than the previous year, “I will be leaving it [administration] and saying ‘I don’t have the ability to do what needs to be done as an administrator in this school.’” When I asked Beth how much thought she had given this situation before the interview, she responded by saying that the ideas had been “churning in my brain for a long time.” Beth added that she did not get any “new stuff” in the interview. Yet, she attributes the interview for “cementing” her thinking and increasing her confidence. She states, for example, she could vocalize thoughts like “I have to do that, that I really believe this and this is what has got to be done now.” She further remarks that the interview structure helped “give me a sense that what I am doing is what I really believe in, mainly because I am hearing myself saying it out loud and because I did all the talking (laughing)!” Beth concluded the interview on a positive note and remains determined that what she learned from the turmoil of the past year will help her through the upcoming year.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter I have explicated reflection-for-action or anticipatory reflection by presenting the findings of two different interviews with each of the six participants. These interviews were the final ones in a series of eight interviews. They occurred over the summer period when school was out. In the first interview each participant was given a vignette about a fictitious principal, Pete Cole. Pete was in the throes of preparing his staff for a major special services policy shift. As reported, Pete’s situation was indeed very similar to the experience of participants. In the second interview each participant was invited to identify an upcoming critical
situation that would require significant attention and energy. All participants chose a situation set in September, the beginning of the next school year.

I found it harder in the second interview to uncover the *suggestion* phase of participants’ reflection. This was mainly because even though participants were reflecting-for-action, the suggestion phase probably started before the interview. Otherwise, they would not have recognized a problem to begin with. Also, because the *testing* phase of anticipatory reflection is imagined, for many participants their testing was not as detailed. As a result, in reflection-for-action, problem and reasoning phases were most represented in the discussions. Nevertheless, analysis continues to show the interconnectedness of Dewey’s five reflective phases.

Many participants reported they enjoyed the reflection-for-action interview and regarded it as an opportunity to vocalize their thinking. Some claim that they did not develop new knowledge or insights through the interview. However, all describe the interview as a beneficial experience because it “cemented” their thinking and consolidated their ideas. Some participants also report that the interview gave them confidence and reassured them what they were planning was proper. Others report that the interview helped develop their reasoning to another level and say it prompted them to reflect even further. Several reported that the interview further prepared them to develop a written plan.

This brings to a close the presentation of data. These findings along with Chapters Five and Six describe the various time dimensions of reflection. In the next and final chapter I comparatively discuss all three instances of reflection and what this might mean for the work of principals. Furthermore, I relate this discussion to the reflective process as it is portrayed in the literature review and in participant interviews.
CHAPTER EIGHT
Summary, Findings, Implications

This, the final chapter, presents a summary discussion of the findings. It begins by briefly reviewing the research design and data organization. Various themes that emerged throughout data collection, organization and analysis are then reported. These findings are presented mainly according to the various elements and phases of reflective practice identified within the conceptual framework (Figure 1.1).

Leithwood, Begley & Cousins (1994) postulate that principals play a pivotal role in school effectiveness and change. Still, Sergiovanni (1991) contends that their work is based on few predetermined solutions, leaving them the difficult task of creating knowledge in use, as they practice. Although researchers use many terms to describe this process, reflective practice encompasses most. Professional literature portrays reflective practice as the process of deliberately inquiring into one's thoughts and actions to better examine a perceived problem so that a response might be reasoned and tested.

This study examined the nature and extent of reflective practice among six school principals. The conceptual framework considers three elements of reflection, the intent and purpose of the reflection, the practitioner's background and thirdly, the timing of reflection in relation to the situation requiring thought. All three combine to shape a reflective process that consists of five possible phases; suggestion, problem, hypothesis, reasoning and testing. The extent of each reflective phase depends in large part on the synergy of the three identified elements.

Data for this study is based on multiple case studies of six principals. I began the study by conducting a review of professional literature on reflective practice and related topics. Next, I developed a conceptual framework from the literature that emphasized the working interactions of many factors in reflective practice. To understand the nature of participants' reflection, they were interviewed five times using prepared vignettes as well as critical incidents identified by the participants themselves. I also observed participants at their work in three different settings. Later on the same day of observation, I reported my notes to participants to stimulate recall and to collect their think aloud about the observation period. This data allowed me to compare and
contrast participants’ reflections on past, present and future situations. All data were analyzed within the context of the conceptual framework.

Chapters Four to Seven presented details of many findings. This chapter synthesizes them by first comparing participants’ perceptions about reflective practice to the literature findings. The complex nature of participants’ work is further considered as well as the varying extent that participants reflect. Temporal differences in the five phases of reflection are also examined. Additionally, the influences of participants’ values, training and experience are explored by looking across the full spectrum of data for each participant. The chapter concludes with a look at the implications of this study for practitioners and researchers alike.

Connecting the Literature With Participant Views

This section compares and contrasts some findings of the literature with views that participants expressed in their preliminary interviews. Although it identifies mostly consistencies, some differences are highlighted.

Reflective Definitions

The literature portrays reflective practice as a process involving critical thinking and learning that in turn, leads to significant self development. Finding meaning through the questioning of ideas and existing patterns, is emphasized too. Images presented by the participants were very much like this portrayal. This was especially so when participants presented reflection as a series of questions that revolved around developing a better understanding of situations or events. Self questioning, usually aimed at examining existing thought and developing alternate perspectives, often helped participants better understand their reality and consider how to make necessary changes.

Where and With Whom?

Participants consistently stated, that they did not reflect during their working day, rather, outside the day when immediacy for action was not present. They also suggested that they did not plan a time to reflect, that it just happens when conditions are right, and participants like Jon know their right conditions. These conditions usually include being away from job responsibilities, being in comfortable surroundings and perhaps in the quiet company of a trusted friend. However, participants asserted that often they need to work things through in solitude
before including others in their reflective process.

No literature references were found about where participants reflect, though all participants have strong views on the matter. Most participants, for example comment that reflection occurs at professional development sessions. Although these sessions may appear crowded, busy and noisy, participants say it gives them opportunity to step back from their work, and alternately introspect and socialize with colleagues. They are able to confidentially discuss concerns and thoughts during unstructured times.

Wilson (1994) and Leithwood & Steinbach (1995) identify the importance of social interactions in learning and in the development of expertise. Wilson argues for example, that praxis is to be done as a community of inquirers while Leithwood & Steinbach emphasize Vygotsky’s (1978) zone of proximal development. The credit that participants give to their gatherings acknowledges the ideas of these theorists. Whether through a formal agenda or incidental discussions at break time, participants thrive as a community of learners at conferences and meetings. As Cam says “it solves a whole bunch of unnecessary individual reflective time, to which you would not get the same results.”

Similar to the literature review, all participants identified the need to have a trusted friend. This friend usually had no immediate involvement in the problem situation and generally had a long-standing rapport with the participant. Many reflective strategies such as Costa & Kallick’s (1993) critical friend or Barnett’s (1990) peer assisted leadership (PAL) are based on similar principles. Such strategies help participants develop critical and alternative perspectives in a trusting and supportive atmosphere.

**Reflective Prompters**

The prompters for reflection, as identified by participants, parallel the finding of the literature review. Dewey (1933 and as cited in Ashbaugh & Kasten 1993) and Schon (1983) explain that reflection usually occurs when self correction is needed, which in turn happens when the unexpected occurs. Participants clearly stated they reflect when the unexpected occurs and when they need to adjust their actions. They also identified extreme experiences and difficult problems like interpersonal issues as prompting reflection, adding that routine matters do not prompt much reflection.
The views expressed by participants about reflective prompters can also be explained through cognitive theory. Kompf & Bond (1995) assert that individuals mentally construct schemata from their experiences to produce uniform patterns of behaviour. Additional knowledge is either assimilated into existing schemata or accommodated by altering the schemata. A further process of deliberation then occurs leading to action or inaction. Kompf & Bond’s contention that events and objects activate and focus thought processes with the purpose of mentally anticipating, adapting or organizing, helps explain why participants reflect about surprising and extreme events. Cognitively, these events and situations prompt participants to either extend or accommodate their schemata, which in turn necessitates an action decision.

The findings about reflective prompters can also be linked to values research to explain the prevalence of values and ethics in reflective practice. Begley & Johansson (1997) found that values were important in deciding action, particularly in providing structure for problem solving. This was especially so when principals lacked information, considered the problem unique or when principals were pressed to act quickly. Leithwood & Steinbach (1995) also found that expert principals, in comparison to nonexperts, were much clearer about their values and could use them as a substitute for knowledge, when domain specific knowledge was lacking. Additionally, they found that values served as a perceptual screen influencing what principals chose to notice and how they defined problems.

Situations where principals increase reliance on their values are very similar to circumstances that participants of this study identified as prompting them to reflect. Additionally, the functions of reflective practice and valuation overlap considerably. They are both used to detect and resolve difficult situations. Since a fundamental goal of reflective practice is to frame a problem situation properly and to resolve it affably, the use of values in this process is a natural fit. On the other hand, reflective processes facilitate the inclusion of value considerations.

Espoused Values

The values findings of Leithwood & Steinbach (1995) are somewhat different from the values espoused by participants in their first interview. Leithwood & Steinbach found little emphasis on general moral values and this was also evident in participants’ comments. Basic human values ranked second in Leithwood & Steinbach’s study but ranked first as the most
prevalent set of values among participants in this study. Professional values received the highest ranking in the Leithwood & Steinbach research, and although participants of this study considered them important, social and political values were more frequently referenced. Even within professional values, the participants of this study gave more attention to their general and specific role responsibilities and less to consequences. The most referenced value for the six participants was respect for others. This in turn, was supported by consistent emphasis on social and political values. Campbell-Evans (1991) describes four role orientations of principals. Based on the analysis of participants’ espoused values, it would appear that all have a humanitarian orientation. Perhaps this finding should not be surprising given that in the initial interviews, participants emphasized personable leadership styles. To this end, social and political and general moral values mutually support each other.

Encouraging Reflection in Others

Despite participants’ inclination to reflect, they believe that the use and extent of reflection among principals varies considerably. The literature reaches similar conclusions based on concerns about the quality, foci and processes of reflection. Participants observe varying levels of reflection among their colleagues. Despite this, all claim that they deliberately prompt others to reflect. The literature briefly addresses how principals might develop reflective practices among staffs. It appears that most principals engage in Schon’s (1987) joint experimentation and follow me approaches, depending on the principals’ working relationship with the person. Kay for example, would be more inclined to use the follow me approach with a novice teacher, joint experimentation with a more experienced teacher and perhaps avoid prompting her immediate supervisors to reflect. This could suggest that within organizations like schools, individuals are more likely to be prompted to reflect by persons with more, rather than less authority.

The Nature of Principals’ Work

Sergiovanni (1991) contends that the work of principals seems to take the form of an endless series of practice episodes made up of intentions, actions and realities. Such a depiction tends to present the work of principals as disjointed and frustrating. Still, this was not the picture for the six principals included in this study. On the contrary, they showed an ability to maintain a focus, though it entailed working on many issues intermittently. Observing their work was analogous to viewing a mystery movie where several strands of a plot unfold simultaneously,
coming together before the end of the movie. Jon compared working in this environment to being a juggler with many balls in the air at a given time.

When the participants arrived at school for the start of each day, they already had much planning and preparation in place. As the day progressed, they frequently compared their planned day with their actual day, to assess their accomplishments. Although participants were prepared for many interruptions, they still expected to accomplish most of what they set out to do. Some principals like Cam had strategies to stay on his planned day. In the morning, for example, he would take fifteen minutes to regroup once the instructional day had settled down. This was to reassess his priorities for the day and to proactively slow the pace.

Barnett (1990) described the principal's role as complex, pointing to the risk of information overload because of the need to retain and retrieve information at a moment's notice. All six participants were astounded by the amount of activity that I recorded during observation periods. Responses like "Did I do all that?" "There was a lot going on!" or "You never missed much!" were typical. Such responses merely indicated the capacity of participants not only to cope with ambiguity, but to deal with a constant barrage of activity.

Loughran (1996) uses the term with-it-ness to describe persons who can ably reframe problem situations and their actions as situations unfold. Applying the term to student teachers in pre-service programs, he described with-it-ness as "knowing what is happening in all places at all times during a lesson. . . . and see what is happening as they teach."(pp.180-81). The research for this study supports the importance of with-it-ness and even documents the lengths that principals go through to know what is happening in school. One of the more typical practices, evident in all six, was their ritual walk about at the start of the day. This was to get a pulse on staff and students and to identify any unexpected issues for the day. Paul's morning movement, for instance, led to the identification of some student drug activity. Cam even commented that his strategy was to move rapidly throughout the building to be seen in many different places. Principals not only gauged physical aspects of their buildings but even mood and tone of the school community. In turn, this information was used as they planned their own work for the remainder of the day.

All principals expressed frustration and disappointment with administrivia, or as Kay politely describes, "office work of a mindless nature." Most conceded that the period of
education reform that they were currently working through was causing some of this. However, they were vehement that paper work, although necessary, took them away from the work they were suppose to be doing. Some of this was caused by a lack of supports such as administrative or even secretarial time. Another perceived root cause of administrivia was the down loading of duties from provincial and board levels. Some principals like Roy acknowledged that teachers could take it a step further and argue that principals were also downloading work to them.

The major work of principals, according to participants, involved developing an environment where teachers can teach so students can learn. This prevailing instructional focus, consistent with the findings of Principal Profiles developed by Begley (1998) in various national and international settings, requires detailed planning and organization especially in view of limited resources. Participants considered the involvement of parents in this process to be priority. Many described their efforts to do this in detail, especially through school councils. All participants emphasized a high degree of accountability especially for student outcomes. This supports Stoll & Fink's (1996) contention that schools are in an era of decentralized decision making regarding the delivery of educational programs and services. However, centralized accountability is on the rise through the establishment of provincial and national outcomes testing. Consequently, participants were sensitive to any disruptions in their instructional day and deterrents to learning were seen as problems requiring immediate address.

A surprising aspect of participant’s work, uncovered in the research, was their image consciousness. Participants felt that the public needed to place a lot of confidence in their ability if they were to be effective. If this public confidence was lacking, as Beth perceived, then their work became much more difficult. Participants strived for the support of teachers, students and parents alike. As Cam explained, it was not about being liked, it was about getting the work done. To be effective meant being personable, available to the community, and constantly communicating a collaborative, positive tone. All participants described at length their efforts to cultivate their image among all groups, asserting that it was a necessary part of their job.

The problems participants faced in their daily work varied in complexity. Leithwood & Steinbach (1995) report that a full two thirds of principals’ problems are about “the internal workings of the school its staff and clients” (p.27). They also reference Boyd & Crowson’s (1981) work (as cited in Leithwood & Steinbach 1995) who conclude “principals typically have
an ‘insider’ focus and spend the bulk of their time in organizational maintenance tasks and pupil control tasks” (p.27).

Staff and personnel issues frequently appeared as swampy issues for principals and were therefore more likely to prompt reflection. Cam, for example, appeared so expert in many aspects of his work, yet struggled all year in dealing with his art teacher. All participants, whether through their critical incidents or think alouds, identified personnel issues. Even in the vignettes, many participants identified personnel issues as a significant element of the problem situation. Personnel issues too, consistently involved support staff like custodians and secretaries. All participants throughout data collection raises issues about persons in these positions. Although they were described as support staff, all conceded that custodians and secretaries hold lead roles and have a major impact on their own effectiveness.

Participants’ critical issues also had a strong student focus to them. Essentially many situations came to be defined as problems because of their student impact. For example, all critical incidents identified by participants for retrospective reflection had student components. These included an art teacher’s inability to handle students, limited student access to computers, a student sports achievement being used to criticize the school board publicly, student bussing and the negative impact of a disruptive student on his class. Leithwood & Steinbach (1995) reiterate that their findings do not support Boyd & Crowson’s (1981) (as cited in Leithwood & Steinbach, 1995) contention that the focus of principals’ work is maintenance and control. The issues identified by principals in this study concur with Leithwood & Steinbach’s assertions. Participants identified many swampy issues that could only be unearthed using reflective processes. This finding may not necessarily contradict Boyd & Crowson’s work. On the other hand, it may illustrate the extent that the work of principals has changed over the last two decades.

It was probably not surprising that many participants identified larger community concerns in their anticipatory critical incidents. Their educational district was in a period of upheaval and faced public criticism daily. Kay was concerned about ensuring that students and their parents were respected when they moved to a new school. Cam focused on the intricacies of bringing several school communities into one, as did Beth. Roy contemplated how to get his school council to continue their momentum after a roller coaster year. Jon also looked ahead to shaping a new school community in the next year. Paul delved into curriculum concerns about
teacher workload and student course selections. Public unrest and dissatisfaction with educational reform may also have heightened their image consciousness as earlier described.

One last area that warrants comment before concluding this discussion of participants' work, relates to Dewey's (1933) characteristics of reflective people. He identifies three as necessary to the development and use of reflection, open-mindedness, whole heartedness and responsibility. Predictably, these characteristics were prominent in the profiles of the six and their comments bear witness to Dewey's contention. The six characterizations depicted individuals as life long learners who thrive on opportunities for growth and development. All displayed enthusiasm and a positive disposition in their work. For example, Roy's open mindedness was evident in his main reason for participating in this study, "to be driven to think." He viewed himself as a flexible thinker and regarded the ability to listen to others with importance. Beth in a similar vein, placed emphasis on listening to people's story while Roy suggested that to do otherwise would be a mistake.

Participant commentary about the most important aspects of their work exemplified Dewey's (as cited in Loughran, 1996) attitude of responsibility, that is considering one's actions and needing to know the why of things. Paul for example, believes that reflection is necessary for personal growth and he further adds that reflecting on one's values is equally important. Commentary from Kay too, about taking every opportunity to grow, "not only as an administrator but as an individual," is another instance of this attitude.

Overall participants believed that it was vital to be involved in understanding the school's curricula and accompanying instructional strategies. They felt it was their responsibility to set a positive instructional tone in schools where students are safe and cared about. Proactive approaches for developing positive instruction including being accessible to parents, teachers and students were emphasized. In many ways participants felt it was their duty to facilitate efforts among and between these three groups.

Reflective Shutters

This section now zooms in on findings about the three shutters identified in the conceptual framework.

Perspectives

The perspectives shutter draws attention to the role and purpose that the reflection holds
for participants. Van Manen (1977) identified three distinct levels of reflectivity, application of skills, consideration of assumptions underlying practice and the third being critical questioning of moral and ethical issues. In a similar way, Grimmett (1989) identified three variations in the use of reflective practice. The first uses knowledge to technically direct practice while the second is more practical. Although the reflector has to decide between competing courses of action the decision is more contextually based. Self enlightenment, Grimmett's third focus, is aimed at transforming practice.

As discussed in Chapter Two, each level is considered an advancement over the previous one. However, Van Manen (1977) believes that as individuals mature through their lives and careers they tend to be inclined to move beyond technical applications to more critical questioning. On the other hand Grimmett (1989) suggests that the purpose of reflection is so context dependent, that its role could vary for any given situation. The findings of this study support aspects of both Van Manen and Grimmett's assertions.

All participants, consistent with the views of Van Manen (1977), reveal significant change and development in their reflective processes as their lives and careers mature. Most notably they report that changes have occurred in the purpose of their reflection. It appears that the reflective growth of participants has sequentially moved from directing, to informing to transforming practice. Many identified the purpose of reflection in earlier career stages as mainly to direct practice, while the purpose of more recent reflection was to transform practice.

Participants provided instances of all three perspectives but tend to regard the reconstructionist perspective as the most significant. Cam, Paul, Roy and Beth are nearing the end of their careers, all having less that five years remaining. Generally, the views they expressed in their commentaries were seasoned with maturity as they critically challenged fundamental issues. Often they delved into complex matters that needed to be addressed at many levels.

Examples of this are Roy's handling of the disruptive student and Beth's concerns about possible community factions within her reorganized school. Roy could have handled this student in a cut and dried manner by having the boy suspended and eventually expelled once the limits of the school discipline policy were exhausted. Roy, however, handled this problem at a much deeper level and faced a lot more resistance from his staff because he did not want to give up on the boy. Beth too, could have washed her hands clear of possible factions in her new school
community. However, Beth again took it to a higher level believing school was more than an efficient running organization. Beth felt her role was to bring forward issues, to explain to parents the good things about their school and to promote how the school supports them in educating their children. She maintains that the school belonged to all parents, not just the narrow segment that tends to control everything.

Although all four are nearing the end of their careers, Beth’s experience in administration is much more limited that the other three. Beth at times feels that she lacks a full understanding of her work. Although she may be a critical theorist at heart, she believes this lack of understanding and related know how has limited her ability to bring about change. Furthermore, personal dissatisfaction with her efforts to do so, may have widened the gap between her perceived reality and her self expectations.

Kay and Jon are just beyond the mid points of their careers, yet seem comfortable with their understanding of their work and their subsequent effectiveness. Van Manen’s (1977) theory might explain how they differ from Beth. Though the length of their administrative experience may be on par to Beth’s, they are at earlier points in their careers. Therefore, their understanding and expectations for their position may not be as developed as Beth’s. Consequently, their goals and objectives may be more consistent with their abilities. Beth’s sense of school purpose however, may exceed her administrative abilities.

Jon for example, in his critical incident interviews identified computer access and staff recruitment issues that have technical, practical and logistical concerns. Meanwhile, Beth addressed parent factions and ill-gotten media access to her school. In the student assemblies Jon analyzed the happenings at a technical level while Beth raised ethical and moral social justice issues. Kay tended to look for the best in people and in a certain sense seemed to possess idealistic views about human nature. Consequently, she believes that with the right attitude she can be effective. No doubt, the data documented in this study illustrates her genuineness and her positive contribution to her school community.

Grimmett’s (1989) contention that practitioners can operate at any reflective level is also consistently evident throughout this study. In fact, when the issues raised by participants in the vignettes, critical incidents and think alouds, are considered, Grimmett’s theory is more plausible than Van Manen’s (1977). Paul for example, brings up student drug possession, time tabling
considerations and student failure rates. A similar range of issues is evident in Cam’s topics, teacher performance, and developing a new school community while dismantling his existing one. Roy challenges many aspects of his school culture in his handling of a disruptive student and rethinks the future role of his school council. Yet, in his reflection-in-action many technical issues are reflected on such as how to distribute diplomas to kindergarten children to setting a date for the sports day.

What is also apparent in the data, when examined from Grimmett’s (1989) viewpoint, is that contemporaneous reflection tends to be more technical and practical in focus, whereas anticipatory and retrospective reflection are reconstructive in focus. Postulating the reconstructive nature of past reflection may seem odd. However, this is so because participants at times developed new interpretations about past events. Additionally, participants used their reflections on past events to better handle future events. Anticipatory reflection however, had the greatest tendency to be reconstructionist because participants often approached issues from the perspective of how they wanted to change things or do things better.

Nevertheless, there were exceptions to these patterns. When Paul was reflecting-in-action at the student assembly, for example, this reflection was far beyond a technical level as he questioned the impact the school was having on student achievement and as wondered about what had to change. These thoughts were occurring to him as he spoke to students in their assembly (Table 6.1). Similarly, Paul’s anticipatory reflection was not always higher order thinking. Paul’s time tabling discussion at times was very technical and practically focused on balancing an instructional program with equitable teacher work loads.

Timing

Loughran (1996) contends that anticipatory reflection is the most common form of reflection followed by retrospective reflection. The other form, contemporaneous reflection, is widely regarded as the most challenging because it requires an almost immediate shift in action. However, as difficult as reflecting-in-action may be, Loughran declares that contemporaneous reflection is an important link between retrospective and anticipatory reflection.

Retrospective Reflection

Very often retrospective reflection begins with an event or happening. In other words, testing has already taken place. The reflective process however, may lead to a reinterpretation of
this event or happening and possibly more testing. Dewey (1933) postulated that the process is activated with suggestions or ideas of what to do in a situation. He believed that suggestions were a substitute for direct action and that when two or more collided, action is diverted to produce further inquiry. In data collection for retrospective reflection, participants were easily able to voice suggestions, probably because they had deliberately considered them prior to the interview. Additionally, in the June Dwyer vignette, Dewey’s notion seems to explain how suggestion formed as participants attended to their thoughts and ideas that were otherwise swirling.

In retrospective reflection, testing has the potential to inform all phases of reflection. Jon for instance, in his critical incident about computer access redefined his problem because his testing permitted him to form a new hypothesis for action. This problem turned out to be more about hardware, not access rights as he originally thought.

A point I raised in retrospective interviews focused on possible insights participants might have gained through the interview process. To my surprise, and perhaps initial disappointment, most participants said they gained no new insights from the process. However, as I wondered more about this, it helped me realize the depth and prevalence of their reflection. It verified that participants were not reflecting on this issue for the first time nor were they reflecting on it because I had asked them to reflect. It also made me realize the permanence of their reflective learnings. In each case an “extreme” event had occurred, the participants worked through it and eventually stored these thoughts as part of their long term memory.

Contemporaneous Reflection

Action learning literature is pertinent to understanding this temporal dimension of reflection. In developing a research design for contemporaneous reflection I sought ways to observe participants in situations of varying intensities. Fortunately, I was able to observe all participants in three situations and later collect their think aloud response.

I expected the office, assembly and staff meeting settings to respectively range from least to most stressful. Generally, this was true for most participants, but individual differences were noted. For example, the office observation was the least stressful for all except Paul who had to call in the police. Most participants, except Beth, were relatively at ease at the assembly. Roy in fact, reported that he looked forward to the annual event. All, except Cam, showed their highest
level of anxiety at their staff meetings. Cam rarely showed anxiety in any situation and usually had things under control.

Loughran (1996) posits that contemporaneous reflection-in-action is not as likely to take place in stressful situations when the reflector is pressured. However, the data of this study does not support this assertion. Consistent with literature findings, participants were prompted to reflect-in-action when they needed self correction, the unexpected occurred or when difficult problems such as interpersonal conflict arose. These situations frequently occurred in stressful situations, especially at staff meetings. Roy and Kay, although working with small staffs, relate contemporaneous efforts to navigate through such tensions. It is not surprising that staff tensions arise in staff meetings. However, these types of staff tensions were more frequently reported for small staffs, perhaps because of the impact individuals can have in smaller group settings. Interestingly too, participants often tuned into affective clues when detecting conflict. Beth and Kay were very capable at this, as was Paul. Whereas, the other three did not use affective details as frequently when reflecting-in-action.

Another example that refutes Loughran’s (1996) assertion about stressful conditions inhibiting contemporaneous reflection is in the analysis of Roy and Beth’s awards assemblies. Roy was relaxed at his assembly and had no difficulty with correcting errors and stopping as needed. By contrast, Beth’s anxiety escalated every time something went wrong, eventually peaking when the council chair spoke. However, there was no dearth of contemporaneous reflection for either.

A possible reason why Loughran’s (1996) findings differed from this study may lie in the nature of participants. All of Loughran’s participants were novice students in a preservice teacher training program. Participants in this study varied widely and all were past the midpoints of the careers. Even though Beth and Kay were novice principals they had considerable experience as teachers. Aside from being older and more mature, there was much evidence to suggest that the participants of this study were reflective persons. That is, they possessed the three attributes identified by Dewey (1933) as necessary for the development and use of reflection (open-mindedness, wholeheartedness and responsibility).

Besides producing informative detail about participants’ work, the think aloud protocol also illustrated individual differences among participant’s reflection-in-action. Roy considers reflection-in-action challenging and productive and he deliberately engages in it. He contends that
reflection can shape action on the spot, making him more responsive to situations. Cam’s think aloud, relative to the others, shows limited use of reflection-in-action. A self professed planner, Cam prefers reflection-for-action. During his think aloud, most comments were about how things unfolded compared to what he expected. Because Cam is an experienced and meticulous planner, rarely does the unexpected occur.

A limitation of observing reflection-in-action is that the full reflective cycle cannot be observed, sometimes providing only snippets of information. However, through the data collected, it was apparent that participants sometimes reflected-in-action mainly to better note suggestion/problem/hypothesis details, not to reason and test action. One can only guess that action will be later impacted. The data collected also illustrates that the full reflective cycle does not always occur for each situation. Sometimes participants might reflect to better tap into a new problem frame or to reason better testing. What is significant about reflection-in-action is that it can lead to immediate shifts in action.

Schon’s (1983) work on reflection-in-action in some ways complements Dewey’s (1933) because Dewey over emphasizes rational processes. However, Schon’s work may be an account of one temporal dimension of reflection. Loughran (1996) poses another interpretation of Schon’s (1983) theory. He posits that the key to contemporaneous reflection is the ability to reframe problem situations. This, requires standing back and observing ones own actions, similar to what Osterman & Kottkamp (1993) describe as simultaneously being the actor in a drama and the critic in the audience. Loughran contends that the more reframing occurs, the more likely it will continue, leading to an even great store of ideas and suggestions. This he says could be an indication that Schon’s (1983) reflection-in-action, “is an elegant form of higher order reflective processing that may have once been more conscious and deliberate, but through experience, has become more refined and less time dependent” (p.187).

Loughran (1996) concedes that in his own research of teachers in a pre-service education program, he missed an opportunity to verify teacher’s reflection-in-action processes because he did not probe his transcripts in a way to verify the existence of Dewey’s phases of reflection. The findings of this study however, offer limited support to Loughran’s assertion about Schon’s theory because of evidence that all five reflective phases were existent during reflection-in-action.

Participant think aloud commentary collected after the shadowing session was grouped
into two possible categories (Appendices H-L), suggestion/problem/hypothesis or reasoning/testing. The boundary however, between each phase within each grouping was blurred and could not be easily distinguished. Separating them further was also complicated because the data collection method was not designed to collect the complete reflective process for each incident. Dewey (1933) also contends that although it is possible for all five reflective phases to be prevalent in a given situation, it does not have to be so. The findings of Chapter Six verify the potential existence all five phases to various degrees during contemporaneous reflection.

Anticipatory Reflection

Anticipatory reflection is regarded as the most widely practiced form of reflection. The critical incidents identified by participants for this study tended to contain few instances of interpersonal conflict and were less charged affectively. Anticipatory reflection tended to be a controlled look at an impending situation with less than an urgent need for action. It was a time for participants to consolidate thinking about how to go about something.

Given that these interviews were held in early summer it was not surprising that most participants identified issues about the start of the next school year. Cam was perhaps the quintessential anticipatory reflector, even to the point of committing many ideas to written form. His anticipatory reflection preference was even evident in his contemporaneous think aloud. Most of his reflection during these times was to compare how things were unfolding relative to his planning. It could be argued that Cam has such a developed sense of anticipatory reflection that the need for him to use other temporal forms of reflection is reduced.

During anticipatory reflection, especially when identifying critical incidents, participants put lesser emphasis on suggestions and problem discussion. Frequently, they already had a developed sense of these phases and spent more time developing their hypothesis and reasoning. Stated differently, they brought a defined sense of the problem to the discussion and were mainly concerned about what to do and how to do it.

Testing did not have the same weight in anticipatory reflection as it did in retrospective reflection. In anticipatory reflection, testing is imagined, therefore more theoretical and probably not as germane. Although participants gave considerable thought to testing it did not seem to inform other phases of their reflection as it did in reflection on and in action.

What was especially interesting about data on anticipatory reflection was that it showed
the process was still evolving for the participants. Without exception they said that they benefited from the interview. Most said it helped them better organize their ideas, focus more clearly on key issues, extend their thoughts to form new ideas, cement their thinking and/or increase their confidence to address various situations.

This was a case then, where the research method became an intervention that extended their reflection. Although I merely asked questions and listened, offering no ideas, the collaborative process advanced their reflection to another level. I earlier reported in this chapter that although participants welcomed collaborative opportunities to reflect they liked to first work through issues privately. The research design for anticipatory reflection seems to have mirrored this pattern. All participants said they had already been giving the situation thought and the interview was an opportunity to orally assimilate these ideas into a coherent plan.

Temporal Summary

To summarize the three temporal dimensions of reflection I refer to Loughran’s (1996) assertion that contemporaneous reflection is an important link between retrospective and anticipatory reflection. Though I did not start out with the expressed purpose of cross referencing events and situations in Chapters Five, Six and Seven, this naturally occurred. This in itself is a significant finding, because it illustrates the linkage among all three time dimensions.

When reflecting-on-action, participants were always asked to identify learnings they could take away from the vignette or critical incident. Very often evidence of these lessons reappeared in their contemporaneous think aloud. Also, new ideas that came to participants in contemporaneous reflection, reappeared in anticipatory reflection. Kay’s planning for the school closing celebration or Jon’s preparations for the student awards are excellent examples. The same issues were the subject of anticipatory, contemporaneous and retrospective reflection.

These connections show that each temporal form of reflection benefits the others. It might also suggest that practitioners have a preferred temporal style. Evidence already presented suggests Cam, for example, prefers anticipatory reflection while Roy enjoys the challenge of reflecting-in-action. These connections also suggest that participants can choose to reflect on a situation from either temporal vantage point.

Antecedents

The third shutter of the conceptual framework highlights the importance of the reflector’s
background in reflection. Sergiovanni's (1991) position that practice does not just emerge, but forms from a number of antecedents was the basis for this shutter. The fourth research question for this study considers the function of experience and other antecedents in practitioners' reflections. The findings are explored under three antecedents, values, training and experience.

**Values**

To examine participants' values I first had to decide on a values classification scheme. The literature review presented a variety, but in the end I used Leithwood & Steinbach's (1991) (as cited in Leithwood, Begley & Cousins 1994). This classification was considered an improvement on one used in earlier studies and it correlated with other models. For example, Type I values of principles and ethics identified in Hodgkinson's (1995a) hierarchical model corresponded with Leithwood & Steinbach's *basic human values*. Similarly, Type II values of consequence and consensus paralleled *professional values*. Using a values classifications scheme also permitted me to compare participants espoused values over a number of interviews.

I accomplished this by asking participants about their values in the preliminary interview (Appendix B). Figure 2.1 was not actually presented to participants but was later used to sort their responses. In a similar way I asked participants about values that guided their reasoning in the vignettes and critical incidents. Again, value sets identified in Figure 2.1 were used to categorize these responses.

Values that participants espoused in their preliminary interview appeared consistently in their anticipatory and retrospective reflections. Roy for example, routinely espoused *basic human values* and *social and political values* whereas Jon emphasized *professional and social and political values*. The only exception was in Beth's media mayhem critical incident where Beth's *general moral values* guided her through this situation. However, she did not emphasize these values to the same extent during the initial interview. Meanwhile, the media mayhem critical incident was a story of deceit and collusion.

Data reported in Chapter Six also verifies consistencies between participants' espoused values and values they use when reflecting-in-action. In fact the consistencies were easier to discern in contemporaneous reflection because participants were not as bounded by the content of the vignette or critical incident being discussed. Also, participants were not asked to consciously describe their values in this data collection method. Therefore, evidence of values in use in
contemporaneous reflection was more authentic than other values evidence collected in this research.

This raises another important point about the values data. Although Begley (1996) draws attention to the difficulties of identifying the motivational bases of values, he accepts the merits of Hodgkinson's (1978) model. However, Begley asserts that such a typology has to be applied cautiously because of difficulties earlier cited (Chapter Two) in explicating the motivational basis of values. However, the longitudinal nature of this study does permit a discussion of participants' motivational bases. Repeated encounters with participants, a developed sense of trust between myself and the participants, and the multiple contexts of issues raised, provides a measure of confidence that many values can be authenticated using Hodgkinson's typology.

Participants frequently used transrational values and rational values of consequence in their retrospective reflections. In the June Dwyer vignette some advocated that June should embrace change and help the school community accept the inevitable. Others recognized that June and the school community preferred to keep things as they were. All participants recognized though, that June had a responsibility to contain the situation, and walk the fine line of supporting her community while being loyal to her employer.

Cam's motivation to respond to the art teacher was driven by his responsibility to promote quality instruction. He was constantly concerned about the impact this teacher was having on the children. Meanwhile, he tried to focus the teacher on the fallout of her lack of preparedness, classroom management and rapport with staff and students. Beth was strongly driven by transrational values in her handling of the media mayhem. She felt she could not back down or turn a blind eye because a wrong had been done and the interests of the children needed to be protected. Values of consequence were also uppermost in Beth's mind. However, she was compelled to do what was right and face the consequences of parent disapproval and sanctions.

Similarly, Paul was motivated transrationally to take a stand on student drug use. He felt lives were being ruined and he refused to have some students run his building using fear. He was prepared to route out drug activity, even at the risk of involving innocent bystanders.

Jon's computer access problem was driven by both rational values of consequence and consensus. He could clearly see the impact that an inefficient computer lab was having on instruction, and he approached it by trying to develop staff consensus. His subrational value to
have only one person with administrator access rights was not sustained once he better understood the hardware problems.

Kay's initial handling of bus misbehaviour was driven by values of consequence. She had worked in another school where unfortunately, a child was killed in a bus accident. Her initial concern about the bus situation was student safety. However, her transrational values of human respect shaped her response to the way she handled the driver and children.

In the final critical incident Roy detailed his efforts to keep Eddie in school despite disruptive behaviour. Although Roy had to respond to Eddie's outbursts, he approached the problem by trying to develop staff support and understanding. Roy frequently mentioned his duty to keep Eddie in school and Eddie's right to receive help, whether he wanted it or not. He felt he had to keep Eddie in school at all costs. Hodgkinson's (1978) typology might suggest that Roy's transrational value was so entrenched that his staff perceived his actions as subrational.

The motivational forces of values in anticipatory reflection appeared to be much narrower. Fewer examples of transrational values arose. Rational values of consequences and consensus prevailed with consensus having more priority. Rarely were there references to subrational values and only occasional references to transrational values. Participants felt that in the vignette Pete had to help make the policy work through a team approach. They also felt he had to value staff ideas and lobby for more resources. In Kay's critical incident, she felt that she had to collaboratively work with new staff and administration without compromising the opportunities for students with special needs moving from her school. Jon was focused on the opportunity to build team and collaborative spirit for his school through increased student enrollment and new hirings. Roy strived to more meaningfully involve parents in school governance while Beth tried to devise ways to bring various community factions together.

Meanwhile, Paul and Cam expressed greater concern about their professional responsibility to have planning in place for September. Cam was starting a new school community and wanted it efficiently running on opening day. Paul on the other hand, was developing a master curriculum schedule but not just any schedule. He wanted to be certain that it was fair and equitable for students and teachers.

To revisit values motivations explicated in contemporaneous reflection would be redundant here because they have already been linked with actions and motives in the presentation
of data in Chapter Six. Their consistency with espoused values of other data collection also supports their authenticity. For example, transrational values that Paul espoused about student drug use in his retrospective reflection appear again in his think aloud on the office observation. As another example, Jon's reliance on consensus values dominated his action in his vignettes, staff meeting and student assembly. As well consensus dominated his actions in the computer access rights and staffing preparations critical incidents. Additionally, he highlighted the importance of consensus in his preliminary interview.

One other area of values that warrants comment in light of the data, deals with the literature on values conflicts. Leithwood, Begley & Cousins (1994) identified two sources of values conflict, competing values in a solution process or dissonance between a person's values and actions. Similar to the findings of Begley & Johansson (1997), interpersonal conflict was a key theme in critical incidents identified by participants. All retrospective critical incidents had interpersonal conflict elements and all six anticipatory critical incidents were in some way concerned with preventing or minimizing interpersonal conflict. There were but a few reported incidents of internal conflict between a participant's required actions and personal values. Examples were Roy's stance toward school district restructuring. Jon's need to be more decisive, yet have his staff take more initiative was another instance of this type. Beth showed some internal conflict, for example, in the staff meeting when she felt it was too late to take a stand on some things. She generally relented and consented through silence. In contemporaneous reflection values conflicts mostly involved competing solutions to problems.

Possible responses to values conflict, identified by Roche (1997, 1999), also surfaced in this data. Roy gave a detailed account of how he handled dissonance between his role as a principal and his disagreement with his board's restructuring plan. Though his explanation was plausible, he might have resorted to suspended morality. Yet he felt that he did not compromise his beliefs and values to the extent that he could not morally live with himself. Roy believed that a process had been followed and in the end he had to accept the board's decision.

Cam, in his analysis of both vignettes, offers advice that amounts to creative insubordination. He advises that the fictitious principals find ways around their predicaments, buy more time, and adapt the situation to their local needs. As another example, Kay hopes to avoid value conflicts in her anticipatory critical incident by withholding student information and
refraining from situations where teachers expect the lowdown.

Before discussing the place of participants' training and experience in the reflective process, a recap of this section is needed because of its complexity. The values classification used to examine participant values in this study was reviewed and the values analysis was extended to emphasize the motivational bases for participants' values. Furthermore, values conflicts were reviewed in light of the findings. Participants showed a keen awareness of their values, though some initially had trouble expressing them.

*Training*

In the preliminary interview I probed participants about their views on the importance of training and experience on their reflections. Responses to this were reported in Chapter Four. Although participants verified the importance of both training and experience, they gave greater emphasis to experience in preliminary interviews. For each critical incident and vignette I followed up on this by directly asking participants about the usefulness of their training and experience to the particular situation. In analyzing the think aloud data I also looked for evidence of participant references to other training and experience.

Similar to results for the preliminary interview, participants offered many concrete examples of how their training and experience helped them. However, they tended to downplay training and give most credence to experience, perhaps because of their practitioner focus. The June Dwyer vignette was the first theoretical discussion with participants. I was conscious of keeping discussions practical, considering that I was using valuable practitioner time. I did not specifically ask about relevant training. However, participants excitedly related their experience of a similar situation. This was not surprising because I developed this vignette knowing that many participants could practically relate to it. Their own experience did sharpen their observations about June's predicament and allowed them to advise her confidently. Without doubt, the advice offered to June by participants, was directly shaped by their experience with a similar situation.

In the Pete Cole vignette I more deliberately probed participants to sort the usefulness of training and experience in their handling of this situation. Again, references to training were overshadowed by relevant experience. Apart from references to inservice on special education policy, only a few references were made to formal university courses and special education
training. Experiences were so dominant that I found it hard to focus participants on Pete Cole’s situation and not their own. Similar to the first vignette, this was not surprising, because this was one of the most pertinent curriculum issues for the participants’ district at the time of data collection.

Of all temporal forms of reflection, training seemed to have the most importance in retrospective critical incidents. Beth specifically referenced her leadership studies in her Master’s program while others referenced more specific training. Paul, for example, spoke about his knowledge of legal matters and Kay commented on her understanding of bus safety programs and bus procedures. She further commented how her association with a public speaking organization gave her the confidence to handle difficult situations.

When training was lacking participants also showed a willingness to bring advice to the situation. Paul sought out computer information from his staff and consulted with hardware suppliers and district office people. Cam regretted not having brought the art consultant into his situation sooner. However, he was delighted to have her second opinion when she became involved.

Some comments meshed both training and experience. Kay’s references to her involvement with a public speaking organization was one such example. Roy was grateful to his former principal who guided him on many matters especially discipline. Although he described it as experience, he also viewed it as training because he believed she never missed a learning opportunity to sit and dialogue with him. He reported that his experience with his former principal taught him to exhaust every avenue on disciplinary matters.

In contemporaneous reflection there were few references to training. Kay’s training in public speaking was about the only example noted. This significantly shaped how she observed the school closing ceremony. Also, consistently evident in Kay’s think aloud was the impact of her Christian Spirituality studies. She possesses what Beck (1993) describes as spiritual values such as awareness, wonder, gratitude, hope, courage, love acceptance and gentleness. No doubt these shaped her response to others and caused them to perceive her as approachable and possessing what Gilligan (1982) would characterize as the ethic of care.

As indicated in Chapter Six, the lack of direct participant references to training in contemporaneous reflection is not to suggest that it does not play a role. The data collection
method focused on the action present and did not encourage participants to probe beyond the immediate. It is likely that training imbues participants' actions, but tacitly.

References to training do appear more frequently in the anticipatory critical incidents of some participants. Although Jon, Cam and Paul hardly reference training, Roy and Beth revisit their graduate studies. They comment not so much about content, but how this program gave them confidence to process situations and to keep moving events forward. Kay also cited studies and readings specific to her anticipatory critical incident.

*Experience*

As indicated in the above comments participants tended to elaborate most about experience when asked about training and experience. Responses showed that experience was an important influence in all forms of reflection. In retrospective critical incidents, participants related past events very specific to their current situations. Cam talked about handling other teachers with performance problems, Jon dealt with a similar computer access problem five years earlier. Paul also recounted other student disciplinary experience. The absence of experience was also important. Roy had never handled a disciplinary matter as serious as Eddie, and his school community had not been exposed to such a difficult student. Beth reported that she had never worked with such an adversarial group of parents and that her past interactions had always been positive.

Similar patterns were evident in the anticipatory critical incidents although participants' experiential comments were more general. Kay for example, had been in ten different schools. Jon's assessment of his present situation was based on his last school and Paul had prepared master schedules many times. Roy reported his involvement with the school improvement process and Cam acknowledged his military leadership. Beth generally spoke about how she learned from every situation and consciously tried to carry this experience forward to the next situation.

With contemporaneous reflection, Beth showed an ability to connect present situation to other experiences. For example, she used a form to collect classroom reports for the parents' newsletter because experience had taught her that teachers more consistently respond to a form, instead of general requests. Cam's obvious ability to anticipate and respond was in large part experientially based. Meanwhile, Jon continued to handle present situations in light of his
experience at his past school. Roy was also very effective at bringing other experience to current situations. The kindergarten diploma incident was an excellent example. Of all participants, Paul rarely acknowledged other experiences in contemporaneous reflection. However, some experiences were evident, for example, in the way he handled discussion of drug possession at the staff meeting.

One of the major functions of experience for all participants was to heighten what Loughran (1996) calls with-it-ness, their ability to assess an immediate situation as well as the impact of their actions. This was especially evident with Cam, Paul and Roy the most experienced of the participants. Conversely, Beth and Kay had the least administrative experience and this concerned Beth the most. The more experienced principals also tended to question underlying assumptions in various circumstances. Cam and Paul, for example felt that Pete Cole should not be pressured by a September deadline. Both frequently discussed contacting district office to challenge their decisions. However, less experienced principals like Kay seemed much more compliant.

All participants placed emphasis on learning from the experiences of others. The more senior principals in particular spoke about the importance of unstructured time at meetings and workshops to run problems and situations by others. These principals probably raised this concern because they were more likely to benefit from it, having more social contacts. Perhaps too, they are more confidently able to raise swampy situations because of their greater store of action suggestions. Roy, in particular, identifies the need for situations where the experience of others can be shared. Furthermore, Cam talked about how opportunities to share the collective wisdom of administrators would eliminate a lot of needless individual reflection. Filby (1995) however, cautions that wisdom cannot be told.

Beth, Kay, Paul and Roy illustrated greater empathy and compassion in the discussion of various situations, than did Jon and Cam. In the Pete Cole vignette for example, the fate of the six students losing services was a major ethical concern for most. However, Jon did not express concern when he stated that Pete must see what can be done for the children losing the service, realizing that some will fall through the cracks. In the solution process, Jon talked about piggybacking them onto other students eligible for the service.

When discussing experiences, these four were also more open to discussing their areas of
weakness. For example, Beth frequently discussed how she struggled with the challenges of her position. Kay specifically discussed concerns she had with moving her students to Lakecrest School. In Paul’s think aloud he grappled with the effectiveness of his school on student achievement. Roy remained troubled about Eddie’s situation.

On the other hand Cam showed a greater sense of strength and self-control. He also seemed more in charge of his emotions as he maintained an action focus. His approach to the vignette was to first take steps to prevent the situation from getting any further out of hand. In the critical incidents his planning was detailed and he tended to individually hold himself responsible for what happened under his leadership. Similar to Cam, Jon focused on his strengths and abilities to develop a more collaborative atmosphere. He felt dissatisfied with his current effectiveness but was confident that things would improve as cooperation and collegiality grew.

Experience also seemed valuable in helping participants identify and attend to situations before they escalated. Beth cites examples about how her inexperience led to situations getting out of hand. For example, in the media mayhem critical incident, she failed at first to see a problem forming. When she did, she felt her political experience was inadequate to deal effectively with a more politically skilled council chairperson. Cam, on the other hand, prevented many things from happening. His student assembly provided numerous examples of how he intervened with a look, by moving nearer to a talkative parent, praising good behaviour and keeping things on schedule.

In summary, the emphasis that participants give to the place of experience in their reflection does not come as a surprise. If anything, they over emphasized the place of experience and under rated training and theoretical know how. This is not to suggest that the participants fit Sergivanni’s (1991) mystics description. Calling them scruffies might be appropriate, and a term they would readily identify with. Schon (1983) in trying to address this very schism between theory (training) and practice (experience) emphasized that practitioners need to hold reflective conversations with their situations and wholeheartedly bring themselves to the situation. This he says would foster the development of interrelated means and ends solutions.

**Reflective Process**

The conceptual framework identifies five distinct phases in the reflective cycle, each influencing the others. Dewey (1933) insists that when a situation puzzles an individual “the most
'natural' thing for anyone to do is to go ahead; that is to say, to act [author's emphasis] overtly” (p.107). Yet, Dewey contends that inhibition of action, however momentary, is necessary for reflection. Suggestion, the initial stage, begins with thinking about possible courses of action to find a way out of a situation. It is Dewey's contention that a first suggestion occurs spontaneously and if no other suggestions develop then reflection does not occur. However, when individuals suspend their initial suggestion and turn back to the situation looking for others, reflection begins.

Dewey (1933) maintains that the ability to develop suggestions varies individually. This variance occurs in terms of quickness, variety and profundness. In terms of quickness Dewey contrasts impervious minds where “everything presented is lost in a drab monotony that gives nothing back” to bright minds that “reflect, or give back in varied lights, all that strikes upon them” (p. 48). Dewey also emphasized individual differences in the range of suggestions that occur saying the number could range form a “flood to a slender trickle” (p. 43). Finally, Dewey emphasizes that not all reflective thought operates on the same plane, illustrating that one person's may be superficial while another’s may be profound. In connecting depth and slowness Dewey postulates that slowness might lead to more substantial ideas and conversely, quickness may be but a “flash in the pan”(p.44).

Although all participants demonstrated brightness, the quality of suggestions did vary. More substantive suggestions were offered in retrospective reflection while those in anticipatory reflection were vague. Although suggestions could not be specifically labeled as such in contemporaneous reflection, ideas for action tended to be more immediate and superficial. Perhaps the only contemporaneous exceptions were Beth and Roy, who continued to offer equally profound suggestions. The flood of ideas that occurred to Beth as she noted patterns of student absenteeism at the awards assembly typifies this point.

It could also be argued that qualitative differences existed among the six participants’ ability to generate suggestions. For example, Jon’s ideas seem to be more immediate, have less range and focused on fewer possibilities, whereas Paul considered situations from a wider perspective, generated more suggestions and operated with more compassion. Although Roy was much more low keyed in his approach, he tended to operate at a deeper level, offering many different and unique perspectives. Cam also demonstrated an almost amazing ability to raise
various dimensions of situations and issues. Kay however, raised fewer dimensions of issues but further probed ethical and moral aspects of her situations.

Dewey (1933) theorized that suggestions and problem understanding stand out at the same time. Suggestions are in reality an immediate response to a perceived problem. However, Dewey explains that “If we knew just what the difficulty was, and where it lay, the job of reflection would be much easier than it is” (p.108). Consequently, as suggestions form, the reflector is forced to turn back on the situation to apprehend it better. The various critical incidents identified by participants clearly support this. One of the best examples was Jon’s handling of computer access rights. As he developed better suggestions, he realized his frame of the problem was not accurate. Roy also discovered this in his efforts to handle Eddie. Only part way through the term did he realize how the problem situation had changed. On the other hand, Kay’s expert diagnosis of her busing problem allowed her to respond efficiently.

Some critical incidents also demonstrated that participants needed to change their hypothesis or governing suggestion and form better ones. It was common for participants to revert to another suggestion or form a new one when the guiding one was no longer functional. Cam’s handling of his art teacher illustrates this. As the year progressed, he attributed much of the situation to her inability to teach. He never doubted her artistic merits but once he reframed the problem, his suggestions and hypothesis changed too. This critical incident also illustrates how the problem and solution stood out at the same time. The facts of the problem, as apprehended by Cam changed, creating new insights. This in turn forced him to modify his suggestions into a more definite hypothesis aimed at finding a better solution.

Loughran (1996) argues that Dewey’s (1933) final two phases of reflection, reasoning and testing are at a higher cognitive level and require more reflective expertise. It is one thing to understand the nature of a problem, but it is another to reason and action a response. Reasoning is about linking ideas together into what Dewey calls trains where “intervening ideas are linked into a consistent whole . . .” (p.112). Dewey acknowledges that reasoning, “. . . depends upon the store of knowledge that the mind is already in possession of” (p.111). Data presented in this study not only confirms this, it also illuminates other aspects of reasoning that Dewey gave only light attention.

Beck’s (1993) concern about the lack of values in Dewey’s model is an example. The
findings produced evidence about values and their motivational importance in the reasoning phase of reflection. The reflective cycle of every participant was laden with values statements, especially in the reasoning phase. In fact the reflective process of some participants like Roy, was very similar to Wilkover's (1994) valuation process. Furthermore, the exploration of participant's perceptions about their training also verifies that training is important in development and extension of reflective practice.

Dewey's (1933) description of real or imagined testing highlights other significant temporal differences in reflection. Real testing is characteristic of retrospective and contemporaneous reflection whereas imagined testing is usually limited to anticipatory reflection. Although participants expounded their imagined testing it was necessary to more specifically probe them for responses. For example, in their anticipatory critical incidents a question that I found useful was “How will you gauge the progress of your interventions?” (Appendix F). In earlier questions I sought out their intentions and actions and now I was asking how these imagined actions would be tested.

In retrospective reflection participants’ emphasis on testing was more apparent. They tended to offer more about their understanding of the problem and the reasoning for their action. Most times they added that they gained no new insights through retrospective interviews. This was perhaps because other phases of their reflection were better informed by their testing. Whereas, in anticipatory reflection actual testing was yet to be carried out. Similarly, Dewey (1933) maintains that the five phases of reflection do not necessarily follow a given order. Yet, each step perfects the suggestion, thereby promoting change to the hypothesis and a better problem definition. These in turn make action more conscious, facilitate systematic planning and brings enriched meaning to the situation.

The conceptual framework developed in Chapter Two portrays reflective practice as a dynamic and interactive process. As earlier explained, the three shutters synergetically create a reflective aperture. However, the working of these three shutters depends on the reflector. For one, the shutters may create the tiniest aperture revealing what Dewey (1933) calls “drab monotony” (p. 42). These same shutters, for another person, might create an aperture capable of exposing radiant insights.

Chapter Two explores the various approaches in the reflective theories of others (Louden
1989, Grimmett 1989, Van Mannen 1977, Sergiovanni 1991, Argyris & Schon 1974, Schon 1983, Kompf & Bond 1995 and Brown, Colins & Duguid 1989). However, the data produced through this research consistently supports cognitive theory perspectives as fuller and more contextual explanations of reflective practice. Kompf & Bond’s assertion that familiar events and situations prompt assimilation of thought while anomalies yield accommodation, is analogous to Dewey’s reflective theory. Events and objects are similar to Dewey’s reflective prompts such as the unexpected or puzzlement. Practitioners according to Kompf & Bond assimilate knowledge from their experiences by extending or altering their mental structures and by relying on their personal reality and experiences. In the same way, Dewey contends that hypotheses change in response to new suggestions better problem framing and situational feedback.

Leithwood & Steinbach (1995) describe expert problem solvers as having complex knowledge and skills. They postulate that over time, ability to convert facts, ideas and theory into procedural know how develops. Others such as Short & Rinehart (as cited in Leithwood & Steinbach, 1995) contend that as knowledge becomes increasingly interconnected and integrated with experience, the holder is better able to modify this knowledge and develop more advanced thinking. Undoubtedly the participants of this study exhibited varying levels of problems solving expertise, with those like Cam, Paul and Roy being more expert. Yet, all deploy a reflective process when deciding action, especially in tenuous situations. Reflective shutters that help focus this process also shape and develop participants’ use of procedural know how.

Leithwood & Steinbach (1995) emphasize the importance of metacognitive thinking in problem solving. The findings of this study too support metacognitive thinking. There were frequent examples of participants observing themselves and benefitting from this self awareness. At times this cognition focused on affective observations but there were other times when participants used it to gauge their effectiveness. Metacognition was reported most frequently in contemporaneous reflection. However, it was a regular occurrence in all forms of reflection and typical of participants’ efforts to reconstruct their experiences.

Implications

In this section implications of this study are considered, first from a research perspective and then a practitioner perspective.

Research Implications
A number of methodological implications are apparent in this study. This study, consistent with Begley & Johansson's (1997) findings, emphasizes qualitative research methods such as interviews, stimulated recall, and participant observation followed by think aloud data collection. Any one of these methods is limited, but when triangulated and in a longitudinal nature, they become very effective. One-on-one data collection provides an excellent opportunity for the researcher to consistently observe and better understand the participants. Meanwhile, it allows the participant and researcher to form a trusting relationship, the basis for authentic data collection.

Participants of this study reported they enjoyed the preliminary interview and looked forward to repeat visits. However, they expressed concerns about the demands this research placed on their time. Therefore, it was a priority to use time efficiently. Redundant discussion was avoided and data collection was at their convenience, regardless of the time of day or night. Furthermore, to reciprocate benefits of participating in this research, participants were given ample opportunity to talk about their concerns and perspectives. This meant that more often than not, they lead the discussions. As an interviewer, I compensated for this by returning to issues not covered as interviews wound down.

Participants enthusiastically responded to the vignettes and identified strongly with the fictitious principals. The relevance of these vignettes was key to their usefulness. Vignette discussions were also the only opportunity to compare participants' views on common situations. The vignettes also paved the way for the critical incident interviews by giving participants a sense of the interview process and encouraging them to bring their situations to the data collection. This also helped compensate for the demand on participants' time. By bringing their work to the research, participants were not time wasting and had opportunity to work through complex issues. This not only provided more authentic data, it also helped participants understand the merits of the research as they reflected on pertinent situations.

A great deal of researcher discretion needs to be exercised when conducting shadowing sessions. The researcher has to be as unobtrusive as possible, yet have enough proximity to collect useful data. At times this means respecting the participants' privacy in sensitive situations and being discrete when using recording methods such as a note pad. It is also useful that the professional school community know the researcher's shadowing purpose. Otherwise, staff are
left wondering about what is happening and who really is being observed.

Collecting subsequent think aloud through telephone interviews was a positive decision. It gave me time to review my notes and complete them in more detail before discussing them with participants. I also avoided disrupting their work day any further. In planning data collection many participants were concerned that the shadowing sessions would require up to three continuous hours of data collection, (two hours of observation and about one hour of think aloud time). By using the telephone to collect think aloud data, I was literally able to slip in and out of school during the day and contact participants by night. This minimized disruptions to their day and allowed them to carry on their normal work patterns.

In presenting the findings for this study every effort was taken to present the data through the voice of participants. Clandinin & Connelly (1986) advocate a similar approach as one way of understanding how individuals know, and come to know their situations. In narrative inquiry the focus shifts from an “analysis of practice in terms of theory to the development of theory in terms of practice” (p.131). If research is to genuinely narrow the reflective practice theory-practice gap, this approach must continue. When interviewing, I did not specifically use key terms derived from the conceptual framework such as shutters. This created more open ended responses, and made analysis more difficult. For example, the critical incidents interview questions focused on participants intentions and actions, however, Dewey’s reflective cycle was used to analyze responses. Similarly when I asked participants about their guiding values, participants were not provided a descriptive list from which to select.

One area of analysis that was especially difficult was contemporaneous reflection. The format I used (Appendices H - M) was very helpful in distinguishing participants’ problem framing and testing. Although it does not separate each of the five reflective phases, it usefully distinguishes contemporaneous reflection from the other temporal forms. However, this approach is lengthy and extremely time consuming.

In analyzing other temporal forms of reflection the research methodology was able to focus on the full reflective cycle. Vignettes and critical incidents were very appropriate for this. Participants were encouraged to identify their own situations and work through them. In anticipatory reflection probing imagined action proved to be very useful for completing the reflective cycle.
In the beginning stages of this thesis development I considered using some writing activities to collect participants' reflections. With more academic advice I decided against this. Though participants like Cam and Paul described a written component to their reflection such writing was sketchy. However, more significant constraints to using writing activities are participant effort and time requirements. All six participants had concerns about what was expected of them in this data collection and other principals declined to be involved because of time demands. Yet all of the data was orally collected using audiotapes. Even when participants were given typed transcripts of their interviews, some commented that they did not know when they would find the time to read them.

Another consideration that researchers must keep in mind with this type of data collection is the tremendous ethical responsibility to protect the participants. Data collection is based on trust that specifically includes protecting the confidentiality of the participants who reveal many personal thoughts about themselves, their colleagues and their employers, potentially leaving them open to reprisals. When participants share antecedent information they become potentially vulnerable to those who might use the information unscrupulously. Consequently, fictitious names were used and some identifying information was altered. However, some data still could not be reported because it potentially compromised the identity of the participant or needlessly revealed personal details. To do otherwise would have unnecessarily strained collegial relationships by turning private thoughts into public criticisms.

**Practitioner Implications**

The findings of this study have relevance for practitioners in a number of ways. The first has to do with the nature of their work. The reflection-in-action data in particular, shows the hurried pace of an administrator's day. Clearly, if principals do no build reflective opportunities into their work, reflective practice will be mostly by chance. One participant said that he did not just sit and say "I am going to reflect now." Participants knew the conditions that facilitated their reflections. It might be through deferring a decision, taking a ten-minute reprieve for silent thought or conferring with a trusted friend. In fact, any number of reflective strategies highlighted in Chapter Two are pertinent to the realities of principals' work. So, practitioners need to consciously create conditions and use processes that enhance their ability to reflect.

All participants revealed in the final interview that they enjoyed participating in this study.
and that they found it challenging. Some said it caused them to reflect more and others reported it increased their confidence. They also reported that being a participant made them more alert to the importance of reflection. This points to the need for principals to look for collaborative opportunities that support reflective practice. Many reported having a critical friend and the importance of meeting colleagues at professional seminars and meetings. Yet, reflective opportunities could be incorporated into the formal part of these meetings and not left to chance opportunities. The work of Osterman & Kottkamp (1993) for example, offers a refreshing perspective for professional development, based on reflective practice principles. Some participants also alluded to the importance of relying on the experience of others. A number of other reflective strategies outlined in Chapter Two use this approach.

Not only do practitioners need to organize their work for "reflective rests" they need consciously to think about their experiences if they are to learn from them. Filby (1995) contends that learning does not automatically result from experiences. It occurs when the learning is consciously thought about. Some participants even suggest they extend their reflection by recording their thoughts in some manner. This for instance, could mean attaching a notation to a file for future use. When the situation or event again occurs, the practitioner can then reference it as retrospective reflection.

The three shutters of the conceptual framework also have implications for practitioners. It is important that participants think about their training, experience and values and how these shape their reasoning process. Working in environments where values conflicts are common place, administrators must know the sources of these conflicts. Aside from this, they must also recognize how their own values, training and experience shape their actions. It is equally important that administrators assess the consistency of their intentions and actions and better know their motives and biases. Similarly, administrators must be able to interpret the action and intentions of others, especially in light of Hoy's (1996) description of post modern times.

The findings of this research illustrate that an individual may reflect on an event or situation from any temporal perspective. Although there are differences in each type, all three forms are effective. However, contemporaneous reflection seems to be the key link, where participants either bring past events to a situation or notice features of the present situation for future decision making. Consequently, it is never too late or too early to reflect. Practitioners
need to consider the temporal dimensions of reflection and preferably use all three. However, they could also develop a preferred temporal style and routinely apply it to their work.

The purpose of reflection also has direct relevance for practitioners. Grimmett (1989) suggests that practitioners can operate at any reflective level depending on purpose and method. The analysis of the critical incidents supports this assertion and encourages practitioners to use reflective practice widely. Not all reflection involves reconstructivist thinking. Some very experienced participants in this study used reflective practice to technically direct their practice, as in Paul's time tabling critical incident. Others, like Cam, in his retrospective critical incident, used it to improve his handling of the art teacher's inadequate performance. Although many participants reported that with time the purpose of their reflection has broadened and deepened they were not adverse to using it for fundamental purposes. This in itself suggests that no area is off limits for reflection, as asserted by Willower (1994).

Despite the many applications of reflective practice for practitioners, some limitations also need to be noted. This study does not attempt to correlate descriptions of participants' reflective practice with specific leadership styles such as those identified by Leithwood & Duke (1999) who for example describe instructional, moral, managerial, participative, transformational, and contingent leadership. Nor does it correlate reflective practice with other aspects of leadership effectiveness. Although this study demonstrates that participants test and use their ideas to plan and implement professional action, it is for another qualitative study to explore the effects of reflection on leadership styles and effectiveness.

Bright (1996) and others including Dewey (1938), raised the concern that not all reflection is effective. Dewey postulates that reflection can be so extensive that it leads to inaction. Bright expresses concern that practitioners may limit areas open to reflection, thereby restricting its depth and quality. A similar observation is noted by Campbell (1996) who states that because one has reflected before making a decision does not infer that the decision will be good or ethical.

The findings of this research cannot refute any of the above points. In fact, many of the same cautions were expressed by participants at various stages of data collection. What the findings do reinforce is a notion expounded by Bright (1996). The main purpose of reflective practice is to increase the reflector's relative awareness of factors that influence planning and
action. In many ways this is an ethical undertaking, however tentative the planning and action. Dewey (as cited in Willower, 1994) concludes that if reflection is to play a part in making everyday moral choices, that it has to be an internal habit of mind. In essence to develop reflective practice is to develop one’s habits of mind.

**Final Take**

Because of competing research perspectives and paradigms, researching a topic as elusive as reflective practice presents many unique challenges. Additionally, theoretical research findings have limited application for practitioners. Some practitioners say research is irrelevant while others complain that the language of scholarly research is unappealing and confusing. Yet, because of the need for more informed and reflective judgement, researchers must continue working with practitioners and focus on problems of practice. By working together in the context of reflective practice, researchers and practitioners can narrow the gap between theory and practice. Touchstone theory, according to Loughran (1996), consists of overlapping ideas between competing theories about theoretical claims and methodological approaches (p.73). In many ways this dissertation can be considered a touchstone thesis that supports further, collaboration between researchers and practitioners alike.
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APPENDICES
Appendix A: Correspondence

1. Letter To Eastern Canadian School Board Requesting Permission To Conduct Study In Their Educational District.

Dear Ms. XXXX:

This is to request permission to include six school administrators from your Board in a study to be completed as part of my doctorate program with the University of Toronto. The purpose of my research is to examine the nature and extent of reflective practice among selected administrators. More specifically the following questions will be examined.

1) What is reflective practice?

2) What is the nature of reflective practice among selected school administrators?

3) Under what conditions is reflective practice most frequently used by selected administrators?

4) To what extent is reflective practice among selected administrators a function of their individual attributes?

Included administrators would be interviewed and observed by myself. Interviews would focus on perceptions about their reflections in, on and for practice. All interviews would be audio taped, transcribed and returned to participants for verification. Observations would include shadowing selected administrators for about three ninety minute sessions. For each of these sessions I would make notes about their environment, conversations and actions. Immediately after the shadowing sessions I would use the notes to recall the session while the participants think aloud about what was transpiring at the time of the observations. The thinking aloud would also be audio taped, transcribed and returned to participants for verification.

With your permission I would issue a letter of invitation to all school administrators in your Board. In the event of a large expression of interest, participants would be selected randomly provided that they vary according to gender, training, experience and grade configuration. Every effort will be taken to ensure participant and school confidentiality. The data collected for this study will be reported in a manner so as not to identify participants or board. Furthermore, participants will have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. It is hoped that the results of this study will further the practice of educational administration by illuminating the reflective aspect. Potentially the research findings will clarify reflective processes, facilitate their use and improve administrator effectiveness.

I am available to meet with you to further discuss this request in detail. Meanwhile, if you find this request acceptable I will issue a letter of invitation to all administrators once I receive an affirmative reply. In anticipation of your support I wish to offer a sincere thank you.

Sincerely yours,

Cyril P. Coombs
2. Letter to Principals Seeking Their Participation.

Principal's Name  
Address  

May, 1999  

Dear XXXX:  

Your school board has granted me permission to conduct research in schools under its jurisdiction. This letter is to now enlist principals for a study that I am conducting as part of my education doctorate degree with the University of Toronto. The purpose of the research is to examine the nature and extent of reflection among school principals. Put differently, I wish to examine the relationship between the intentions and actions of administrators in their daily work.

Participation in this study would require about ten hours of your time over a period of several months. About half of this time would be used for interviews about your reflections on past and future situations. In the remaining time I would observe you in your work on three occasions and interview you afterwards about your thinking during the observation period. At the end of the study a professional development session will be offered to share my findings. I will be seeking a limited number of participants with varying training and experience who represent schools with different grade configurations. In the event that there is a large expression of interest, participants will be selected randomly.

Being a school principal, I realize that this is an extremely busy time and that you might be thinking that you could not possibly take on another thing. Please realize though, that this study revolves around discussions and situations embedded in your everyday job situation. Consequently, your participation might be helpful to you in your work because of its relevant and timely nature.

Be assured that should you participate, every effort will be made to protect the confidentiality of you and your school. All raw data will be properly secured and password protected. Data that is reported specifically, will be done in a manner that protects the anonymity of individuals, schools and the board. All interviews will be audio taped and transcribed so that you may review the content of your statements. Furthermore, you also have the right to withdraw from the study, if necessary.

It is hoped that this study will further the practice of educational administration by clarifying reflective processes, facilitating the use of reflection and improving administrator effectiveness. You can indicate your interest by phoning, faxing or emailing me. In anticipation of your consideration I would like to extend a sincere thank you. Meanwhile, best wishes to you as you conclude a hectic year.

Sincerely yours,

Cyril P. Coombs  
(Researcher)
Appendix B: Participant Biographical Information Form

Interview Date: ___________  Time: ___________  Location: ___________

A: Biographical Information

1. Participant’s Name: __________________________
2. Gender: __________________________  3. Age: ___________
6. Grade Configuration: __________________________  7. # of Staff: ___________
8. # of Administrative Units: ___________
9. # of Years Worked in Education: ___________
10. # of Years as a Principal: ___________
11. # of Years in this school: ___________
12. University Training: __________________________________________
    __________________________________________
    __________________________________________
13. Other Significant Training/Experience: __________________________
    __________________________________________
    __________________________________________
    __________________________________________
B: Administrative Goals, Beliefs and Work Perceptions (based on Osterman and Kottkamp's Platform Questions, 1993:71)

1. How would you describe your role in this school?

2. What do you like/dislike about this role?

3. Of the things you do, which do you consider to be the most important?

4. As principal, what are some of your most important goals and priorities?

5. What methods help you move toward these goals?

6. What beliefs and values are important to you in your work?

7. What are the biggest problems you face in your work?

8. How do you believe they should be solved?

9. Where do you see yourself in five years time?
C. Perceptions about Reflection

1. What is your understanding of reflection?

2. What kinds of situations and issues prompt you to reflect?

3. When do you reflect?

4. Does your reflection tend to be on past, present or future situations or some combination of these?

5. Tell me what goes on in your head when you reflect. What does you reflection look like?

6. What kinds of information do you use when reflecting?

7. What is the place of a) academic training b) experience and c) values in your experience?

8. Are you more likely to reflect in some situations than others?

9. Do you feel that reflecting on a situation results in a better decision?

10. Do you include others in you reflective process?

11. Do you share your reflections with others?

12. Do you encourage others to reflect?

13. Overall, what usefulness would you say reflection has in the work of a principal?

14. Do you ever wonder about the quality of your reflection and how it has changed with time?
Appendix C: Vignette # 1
Retrospective Reflection

During the past few years educational reform has resulted in a larger school district with dwindling financial and human resources. Consequently, the school board has initiated a three phase plan to better organize its district. The physical structures of schools were rated in phase one. The second phase included a study of population trends and the district feeder system leading to phase three, the final report on how the district should be organized.

Principals and the chair of each school council were invited to attend a press conference for the release of this final report. During the presentation the director emphasized that a consultation process would begin immediately. Although aspects of the report were open to change, he cautioned that the report was "interconnected and complex."

The principal of Seashore School, June Dwyer, and school council chair, Grace Green, attended the news conference. They were shocked to learn that Seashore was recommended to be reconfigured from a K-9 school to a K-6 school and that its student catchment area was to be changed. This meant that seventy percent of the current student population would not return to Seashore School in September. A school council meeting was scheduled for the next night and a plan of action was to be discussed. June though, was unsure of how it would go.

Early next morning June contacted the director to emphasize the degree of discontent. The director listened attentively and suggested that she attempt to focus discussion around the need for change, adding that he was willing to personally meet with the council. The director also reiterated that principals are employees of the board and that they have a responsibility to steer the process in a constructive manner. The board would not tolerate principals fueling protests against the board.

Chaos ensued at the school council meeting that night. Discussions focused entirely on how to stop the board’s plan. In the end the council decided to call a press conference of its own for the next day to request the resignation of the trustees and an end to the reform. They also made it clear to June that they expected her participation in the process. Ms. Dwyer attempted to explain her responsibility and role in this situation but was not heard. Eventually she became silent thinking about what could be done.
1. What is your understanding of June's problem?

2. How did she end up in this predicament?

3. What do you think her intentions were?

4. What actions did June take?

5. Did these actions correspond with her intention?

6. Did these actions lead to the outcomes she intended?

7. How did others respond to her interventions?

8. What values and principles do you think guided her action?

9. How confident are you about your ability to handle this situation?

10. Have you ever experienced anything similar to this?

11. If June could have consulted you after the Board press conference what advice would you have given her? On what basis would you give this advice?

12. What advice would you have given June after she talked to the director? On what basis would you give this advice?

13. What advice would you have given June after the School Council Meeting? On what basis would you give this advice?

14. What lesson can June draw from this situation for future benefit? What lesson would you draw from this situation for your work?
Appendix D: Critical Incident Retrospective Reflection

1. Please take a few minutes to think about a challenging situation with one or more individuals that you have experienced in the last six months. Try to recall as much detail as you can.

2. Who was involved?

3. What other background information is pertinent?

4. What was your role?

5. What were your intentions?

6. How confident were you about your ability to handle this situation?

7. What actions did you take and on what basis did you determine these actions?

8. What values and principles were guiding your actions?

9. To what extent did your actions correspond with your intentions?

10. Did these actions lead to your intended outcomes?

11. Were there any elements of this situation that surprised you?

12. How did others respond to your action?

13. What critical events and decisions influenced the outcome?
14. How did your perceptions about the situation change as the situation evolved?

15. Did this result in changes in your intentions and/or actions?

16. Was there anything about your background, training and/or experience that was especially helpful to you in this situation?

17. How was this situation similar/different from others that you have been involved with?

18. If you had the time back would you do anything differently?

19. What lesson can you draw from this situation to help you in the future?

20. To what extent were you aware of your thoughts and feelings as expressed today, at the time of the situation?
Appendix E: Vignette # 2
Anticipatory Reflection

A new provincial policy for the delivery of special services takes effect in September. Since the inception of this policy, teacher resistance has been mounting due mainly to the lack of human and financial resources needed to support it. Effective September, the needs of core special education children must be met before any special services are extended to children with lesser needs.

Pete Cole, principal of Oakridge School, is worried. He knows that the district’s realignment plan will tax his special education resources to the limit. The special education teacher will have to drop six students currently using the service because these six do not fit the criteria as core. However, these students have reading difficulties, require an alternate Language Arts program, and need general assistance with organization and test taking in other subject areas.

A professional development day was recently devoted to the policy. Pete’s staff was adamant that students currently receiving special education services could not simply be dumped back into regular classrooms with modifications. Teachers, frustrated with growing class sizes and increased work load, argued that they could not keep up with the required levels of documentation and did not have the time or expertise to offer accommodations for these children within the regular classrooms.

September is fast approaching and Mr. Cole has some tough decisions to make. Students qualifying for the services of the special education teacher have to be identified while alternate program supports and placements have to be developed for students who no longer qualify. Teachers remain distressed and parents have yet to be informed.
1. What is your understanding of Pete Cole's situation?

2. What are some of the broader issues here?

3. What is Pete's role?

4. What actions should Pete take?

5. What would be the intention of acting in this way?

6. Let's assume that this situation has developed to this point by mid May. What time frames would you suggest for Pete's action plan?

7. What values and principles are important here when considering students? teachers? parents?

8. How might students, teachers, parents and central office respond to the proposed actions? On what basis do you suggest this?

9. How confident are you about handling this situation?

10. A shift in policy is a key element to this story. Do issues of policy cause you to reflect in the same manner as issues of practice?

11. Is there anything about your background, training and/or experience that is especially helpful to you in this situation? How about background, training and/or experience in dealing with matters of policy?

12. How is this situation similar/different from others that you have been involved with?

13. Is there anything to be learned from Pete's situation?
Appendix F: Critical Incident
Anticipatory Reflection

1. Please take a few moments to think about a challenging situation that you anticipate will require significant attention and energy in the near future. Try to describe the situation in as much detail as possible?

2. Who will be involved?

3. What other background information is pertinent?

4. What will be your role?

5. What might be your intentions?

6. What action will need to be taken to achieve these intentions? On what basis will you decide these actions?

7. What values and principles will guide your action?

8. What reactions are you expecting?

9. How will you gauge the progress of your interventions?

10. Is there anything about your background, training and/or experience that prepares you for this situation?

11. How might this situation be similar/different from others that you have been associated with?

12. Would you have given this upcoming event as much advanced thought had we not discussed it today?
Appendix G: Think Aloud
Contemporaneous Reflection

Participant Directions:

During the shadowing session I kept detailed notes about your actions. I am now going to orally report my notes to you in segments. Each segment covers about five minutes of real time. Here is what I want you to do.

I want you to try to think aloud as the notes are reviewed. The important thing is to talk aloud for I want to get everything you happen to think of, no matter how irrelevant it may seem.

(Periodically participants may be prompted with a statement like 'keep talking' or 'think aloud'.)
## Appendix H: Cam’s Student Assembly and Subsequent Think Aloud.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggest./Problem/Hypoth.</th>
<th>Researcher’s Notes</th>
<th>Reasoning/Testing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cam makes a P. A.</td>
<td>He adds that classes will be called in order. Cam reminds students that this is an important assembly and that their cooperation is needed. K-3 classes are called. Cam goes to gym, checks microphone and leaves.</td>
<td>The assembly is a celebration and a reflection.</td>
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<tr>
<td>announcement calling visitors and parents to the gym.</td>
<td>Cam returns to P.A. and calls the next group. He returns to gym with assistant principal, Rob, and goes to podium on stage. Cam surveys gym and then goes to floor where primary are seated. He assists with seating.</td>
<td>Just making sure students are arriving and everything is okay.</td>
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<tr>
<td>It is encouraging to have parents here. Some parents can’t get off work while others use leave time or lose pay to be here.</td>
<td>The junior high students arrive. The tune <em>It’s a Small World</em> is playing and the gym is busy. Students are clapping to the music. Cam and Rob, go to the podium. Cam bids everybody a good afternoon and the place becomes quiet. He thanks the visitors and parents for coming. Cam says the purpose of the event is to celebrate and share, not to be sad.</td>
<td>Just making sure everything is on schedule. For these students, praise works best.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rob calls Kindergartens to stage, then Gd. 1 and 2s. Cam helps them take their places and then he sits in the audience.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Just trying to set the tone.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rob and I always trade roles. I used to do this role myself but two voices and two persons are a lot more effective and useful.</td>
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<td>Keep the program moving smoothly. I realize that I have to give out buttons next. I want that to be ready.</td>
<td>Rob introduces primary choir who sing <em>All My Life is a Circle</em>. Cam goes back stage and reappears on the other side. The song finishes and children receive applause. Next they sing <em>We Are the Children</em>. Rob adjusts microphone for the children. When they finish the audience applauds loudly. Cam gives every student a souvenir button as they leave the stage. Once they are seated Cam puts on his glasses while Rob shows students how to affix the buttons to their shirts. Cam makes a presentation to three volunteers. Students are somewhat talkative but become quiet when Cam becomes silent and looks at them. Cam poses for photos with the three. Rob commends students for how polite and respectful they are. Cam returns to audience and reviews his notes with another teacher. Rob calls the elementary choir. Cam goes to the stage and assists with their placement. He then puts on his glasses. Rob adjusts the placement of some choir members to be better seen. Choir sings <em>Through the Years</em>. Cam leaves his seat and stands by a parent who is talking. He offers to find a seat for a mother with a toddler and an infant in a carriage.</td>
<td>I enjoy listening to the song. When I put on or take off my glasses I tend to move to what is next. Sometimes I intentionally do this, more times I fiddle with them. I do need them to read print though. I constantly reinforce courtesy and politeness. It creates positive expectations. Rob is very good at detailing the logistics of every movement. I always move around to be on the alert. I want to know how the choir sounds in the back. I tend to stand by parents who are chatty. This silences them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteers need more public recognition. These events let parents and students see what others do for them. Students live up to their expectations. The staff torments me about the glasses thing but it works. I have a responsibility to make sure students are heard. A principal’s presence is very important. If it is not enough I will ask the parent to be quiet.</td>
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<td>The primary students are getting restless now and need some coaching.</td>
<td>Elementary choir receives applause. Cam circulates in area where students are seated, bends and chats to them. Elementary next sings <em>I Will Remember You</em>. Cam goes in front of primary and makes a listening gesture by cupping his ear. Students become quieter. He stays in the immediate area and eventually goes behind the stage.</td>
<td>I stand in front of them of them to model listening.</td>
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<tr>
<td>These presentations are very important. Some of these people are never publicly recognized.</td>
<td>The group receives applause. Rob calls them off the stage in reverse order while Cam distributes the buttons. Rob instructs students to put buttons on. Cam recognizes several more volunteers. Presentations are made followed by photos.</td>
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<td>Somebody thought they smelled smoke. It is probably a parent in the court yard having a smoke.</td>
<td>Rob calls junior high students to stage. Cam remains on floor and eventually takes his seat. He abruptly leaves his seat and goes to the back of the gym after an adult speaks to him. He goes to various opened exits and goes outside the building.</td>
<td>Junior high students need to be treated with more independence. They are capable of seating themselves.</td>
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<td>This is a good time for students to release some tension and stress.</td>
<td>Students receive applause. Rob calls directions for students to leave while Cam distributes buttons. Cam presents another volunteer award, followed by photos. This volunteer receives a standing ovation. When finished, Cam gives a hand signal for students to sit and be quiet. Rob leads students in the school chant, a 100 year old cheer.</td>
<td>Leave nothing to chance. I have experience with school fires.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students are losing their concentration.</td>
<td>Rob introduces teachers' song. Students are noisy and Cam comes to the front and makes eye contact. They settle down. Rob resumes by asking students to remain quiet as the staff gets ready for their choral performance. Staff sings <em>Til We Meet Again</em>. Lots of applause.</td>
<td>The lengthy directions are causing some of the restlessness.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The staff really wants to contribute to this farewell.</td>
<td>One student makes a whooping noise. Cam looks at him to stop. Cam signals students to be quiet using increased eye contact, hand signals and by calling some students by name to be quiet. In closing the assembly he thanks everybody and acknowledges the mixed feelings of sadness and happiness.</td>
<td>There is always an appropriate way to respond.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am not worried about the performance part, but that whooping detracts from the atmosphere.</td>
<td>Students are dismissed in reverse order. Parents are again thanked.</td>
<td>Dismissal has to be as orderly as assembling. Today's dismissal is a little more chatty than normal. Parents usually leave first but today they are staying to be with their children.</td>
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<td>Cam stays in the front part of the gym talking to parents as students leave.</td>
<td>Parents generally approach you at this times if they have any concerns. It is important to be available and around for parents.</td>
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<td>I tried to reach secretary to advise that I would be arriving late because of my efforts to book a substitute.</td>
<td>Paul arrives, checks fax machine and counter for messages. Discusses substitute needs for the day with secretary. Goes to staff room gets a coffee.</td>
<td>I check with the secretary for any urgent messages. I need to circulate and say good morning to everybody.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A teacher is giving an exam and needs a key to enter the room. We have to be sure that an international test is properly administered today.</td>
<td>Lady comes in for elevator key. Another teacher is looking for keys. Paul is looking for books on secretary’s desk. Laughs and jokes with teachers.</td>
<td>I try to be around in case teachers might have any concerns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant principal is away so I have to be even more accessible.</td>
<td>Paul goes to kitchen, converses with a teacher and others who enter. He offers me a coffee.</td>
<td>I need to be watching for urgent surprise messages, otherwise just to be around.</td>
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<td>Goes to staff room, talks about outdoor things. Discusses a schedule change. Checks on availability of cafeteria for later. Goes to computer and keys in morning messages. Finishes coffee, collects keys, starts a walk through building. Greetings exchanged with many students. Returns to staff room. Goes back into hall.</td>
<td>People might have questions and my presence may be preventative. Important to mingle and not make much outside contact at this time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I need to be sure that students are moving to classes.</td>
<td>Continues to weave about. Exits building through one door and enters another. Engages in a hushed conversation with a parent.</td>
<td>I check for all doors to be unlocked. On some days I like to go outside to hurry some students along, especially smokers and those dropped off by car.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I have already spoken to one particular student who is still making no effort to go to class.</td>
<td>Paul returns to corridor outside office. He raises his voice for students to move to class.</td>
<td>Raising my voice lets him know I'm not pleased.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I need to ensure that messages are read some time during the day.</td>
<td>P.A. Messages. 1) Asks for quiet, reminds teachers to check mailboxes and computer screens for messages.</td>
<td>Some announcements were late so I better announce them in case teachers have started their day without checking their monitors.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) Thanks those who participated in the 30 hr. famine and raised $2000.</td>
<td>Here is a nice way to let others know about kids less fortunate and that we can help others.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3) Acknowledges money for street kids and thanks teacher.</td>
<td>I want to promote school spirit, school ownership and getting involved.</td>
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<td>4) Highlights students in upcoming concert.</td>
<td>Good opportunity for students to come to office and write up P.A. message and to foster community.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5) Encourages students and parents to come and see their work.</td>
<td>Parents will be anxious to know if their sons/daughters will be accepted here in September.</td>
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<td>6) Explains testing in Room 105.</td>
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<td>7) Announces birthday greetings for several students.</td>
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<td>Discusses student transfer letters with secretary. Advises her they must be in mail today. Meanwhile, instructs secretary to give verbal confirmation to parents who call.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>These transfer letters should be in parent’s hands today.</td>
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<td>This is the same student who I raised my voice to earlier. This day is not going well for him.</td>
<td>Paul speaks to one of several students signing in late.</td>
<td>Thought I would speak to late students because this time of year frequency increases. I want to remind them that there are only a few days remaining in the year.</td>
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<tr>
<td>When I was outside earlier a parent informed me that he saw the student exchanging what appeared to be drugs on the street outside the school. Last week outside the school.</td>
<td>Returns to his office, goes to staff room. Paul brings a student to the office. He asks the boy why his day is off to a rough start and why he is not willing to work. Student is later escorted out of office, provided a pencil, told to return to class.</td>
<td>I need to intervene now because things are not going to get any better for him. He will be a bigger problem later today. He will probably have to be sent home by later today.</td>
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<td>Paul leaves office and goes to Room 105 where testing is ongoing.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Returns to office, brings in a student and closes door.</td>
<td>I want to be sure test is going okay and students are cooperating with an external examiner.</td>
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<td>Paul confronts student about being seen taking something out of his pocket. Advises student to be truthful and that police are being contacted.</td>
<td>When I was earlier told this I was too busy to deal with it. Once things settled down I went to student’s class and brought him to office. Reminded him to be truthful and asked about drugs. Student admitted to it and took drugs out of his pocket. He said he had it to sell at a weekend party.</td>
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<td>Goes to secretary’s office, receives more messages tells secretary a police officer will be arriving shortly.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>A teacher arrives to office with a disruptive student and leaves him there.</td>
<td>Despite police presence most things seem to be on track for this time of day.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Paul makes a phone call regarding a job interview schedule.</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Police officer arrives and is escorted to Paul’s office. Some other students make repeat trips along hall outside office looking in.</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>I need to handle this without alarming others. Need to find out as much as I can about school drug use. I also need to deal with this other student in the office.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Paul remains in office with police officer and student. The police officer makes a phone call.</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>Bell rings and student in outer office leaves. Some teachers arrive at office to sort keys.</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>I have to make sure everything is explained to her and that the police officer explains the student his rights.</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>Parent arrives and is escorted to Paul’s office.</td>
<td>Parent will be very upset. My job is try and keep her calm by being calm.</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>Student has returned to class without me seeing him.</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Parent, police officer and student go into an adjacent office that is vacant. Paul goes to P.A. and calls student who left the office. Student reports to the office. Secretary updates messages and advises you of students snooping for information.</td>
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<td>33</td>
<td>This is now a police matter and I can move on to other things.</td>
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<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Student has not been dealt with. This student seems angry and unhappy.</td>
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</table>

**Researcier's Notes**

Teacher arrives to office with disruptive student and leaves him there. Paul makes a phone call regarding a job interview schedule. Police officer arrives and is escorted to Paul's office. Some other students make repeat trips along hall outside office looking in. Paul remains in office with police officer and student. The police officer makes a phone call. Bell rings and student in outer office leaves. Some teachers arrive at office to sort keys. Parent arrives and is escorted to Paul's office. Parent, police officer and student go into an adjacent office that is vacant. Paul goes to P.A. and calls student who left the office. Student reports to the office. Secretary updates messages and advises you of students snooping for information.
## Appendix J: Jon’s Staff Meeting and Subsequent Think Aloud.

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<th>Suggest./Problem/Hypothesis</th>
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<tr>
<td>I would expect some response, even if it were “this seems reasonable or something was left out.” I expected somebody would question the criteria for writing supplementaries.</td>
<td>Jon presents agenda, asks that 3 student awards be deferred to the last item. He comments that he hopes to finish the meeting on time. He begins discussion on year end checklist. Room gradually gets quieter. Exam schedule, reports and projects are discussed. No staff response.</td>
<td>The staff are either comfortable with the information of there is apathy. This silence is very disappointing.</td>
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<td>Supplementary exam schedule is discussed. Jon stresses the need for borderline students to be directed to write exams. Summer institute plan for junior high and issue of junior highs out of school during exam periods was also raised.</td>
<td>This should have received more support. This was another opportunity for staff input but they chose not to. I was hoping to get something back to tell students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This orientation is not given much importance. No input was given from the staff. This comes across negatively.</td>
<td>Ken, the assistant principal, presents information on orientation for next year’s Grade 9’s. He says they will be given the 10 cent tour, there is not much for them to do. He then proceeds to talk about teacher’s medical notes.</td>
<td>This was a problem in the past. This is a missed opportunity to develop professionalism.</td>
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<td>These outlines will have required elements. I am trying to be proactive and create higher expectations.</td>
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<td>Next year’s course outlines and resources are reviewed. New Science courses are discussed. A teacher suggested that plenty of everything be ordered.</td>
<td>The delayed opening on the last day is to have things relaxed and to support the flower garden idea.</td>
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<td>Social committee update is given. Golf tournament, barbeque and plans for last day are discussed. Class reports will be distributed after flower garden dedication on last day.</td>
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<td>I want to support the efforts of the social committee. This could be another way to generate staff involvement.</td>
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<td>Some students do not want to come to this school.</td>
<td>Library concerns are raised. Jon shares that he is trying to develop some regulations for the staff handbook. The library closes tomorrow. Jon asks for questions, there are few. Another teacher arrives at this point. Jon reviews staff and student numbers for next year. About 30 students assigned to Jon's school are requesting transfers elsewhere.</td>
<td>This can also affect our teacher allocation next year. Hopefully staff can see the benefits of students transferring in.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The comment bank is very narrow. It is amazing that a teacher wants to put a mark with no comment. This violates board policy too. I was surprised when I came here to see what comments the staff were selecting from. As a parent how would he feel?</td>
<td>Computer mark entry methods are discussed. They have to be done in a set way so the university can access transcripts. A teacher objects strongly to putting comments on the final report cards. Jon accepts his position but agrees to disagree. Another teacher adds that the comment bank is limited for final term comments.</td>
<td>I want the staff to know that there are things going on at meetings when I am away.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This problem is partly caused by teachers who send students to the resource center unsupervised. Even books are getting damaged. I want the library closed so there is no more damage this year.</td>
<td>Library resource issues are revisited by one teacher. He feels the library is not accessible enough, especially the computer lab. Jon acknowledges the comment and says that the LR teacher has too many duties.</td>
<td>I think it is cold hearted to do this. I don't want to be heavy handed although we do have to develop a better selection of comments.</td>
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<tr>
<td>At the moment some of our assigned LR time is used to offer other courses. How does the staff feel about assigning more teacher time to the library?</td>
<td>Jon reports that more LR time will be available next year. The teacher says this issue should be more public through the school council. The LR teacher adds there are now Internet supervision problems.</td>
<td>I turn up my comments a gear to counter this teacher who can be negative.</td>
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<td>I was cautious of where this teacher was coming from because he has strong union connections.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maybe there is enough support to increase the LR time.</td>
<td>Another teacher suggests that efforts go into the library for one year only, and review computer lab in the following year. A second teacher disagrees. Jon disagrees also. Others want to speak and Jon identifies the order of speakers. Bill suggests a computer lab schedule. Jon agrees and adds budget problems are also part of the lab problem. The teacher who started the debate concludes the topic saying it should become a school council issue. Mary asks for more printers and computers and suggests ways of combining courses.</td>
<td>This would mean larger class sizes though. I worked in another school that had a full LR teacher and many staff resented this. Agreement for a lab schedule is a good thing. Priority should be given to technology course. I doubt if they will follow through on a lab schedule. If these are good ideas why haven’t they happened yet? We need to work collaboratively. I am uncomfortable of where it is coming from and I am afraid of where this might be going. Mary is a strong teacher and is respected by her peers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There seems to be little support for this solution.</td>
<td>The student award’s program is next discussed. Jon gives an overview of the program and awards. These include most improved and valedictorian. Student names are discussed and no agreement is in sight. Jon switches strategy to ask for objections.</td>
<td>I don’t want to dominate this process but I have to get it moving. I switch gears to bait response on who they are comfortable with? Who should be dropped? Atleast I am getting some reaction. I switched.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is time to make a jab or joke to lighten up and move on.</td>
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<tr>
<td>When I came in September the process was loose. When awards were distributed last November it was hard to get everything in place. I want a lot of this stuff clue up by June and not wait for November. The guidance counselor suggested this process. The staff are candid on the appropriateness of these nominations.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Another teacher says staff already had an opportunity for input. Why are we at it again? Two student names are agreed to for valedictorian. A student vote will be held tomorrow. Jon agrees to call these two tonight to see if they agree to put their name forward. Jon then writes names for merit awards on board and he asks for objections. Pat suggests that a male and female be selected for each award. The idea is bantered about and dropped. Staff eventually agrees on nominees. Guidance counselor helps move process along. Students for other grades are discussed. Agreement is reached. A staff member wants to go back to an earlier decision. Others objected and it was dropped.

Grade 9 nominations are finalized. Jon thanks everybody for their endurance. Everybody exits quickly as Jon makes closing remarks.

My intention is to get the staff to develop a process rather than me say this is the way it is. This is a chaotic but it is their first time doing this. I have no idea how this will turn out. I was floundering in getting staff to make decisions because I don’t want to run it.

The staff has made some good choices. The decisions have a strong academic basis and this is good.

It was good that the guidance counselor got involved. I jumped on his idea to speed things up.

Not going back plays into my cards. Consensus is coming easier now. We have already dealt with this, why go back.

I will communicate the rest in awards ceremony memo.
**Appendix K: Beth’s Staff Meeting and Subsequent Think Aloud**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggest/Problem/Hypothesis</th>
<th>Researcher's Notes</th>
<th>Reasoning/Testing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I wasn’t aware Jerry was going to introduce that song. I feel agitated.</td>
<td>Ceremony begins with singing of school song. The assistant principal, Jerry, begins emceeing by welcoming everybody and then introduces the school song. He is advised that it was already sung. Audience laughs. Jerry makes light of it and moves on. Grade 5’s are called and Beth is asked to come forward, although she appears uncertain why.</td>
<td>I silently pray that the Lord help him through this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>These people are critical.</td>
<td>Grade 5's are called. Beth gives envelopes to teacher who present them to the students. About five students are absent. The next group of Grade 5’s receive diplomas. The same formation is followed. About the same number are absent.</td>
<td>I will do it to keep things moving.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A committee member is suppose to hand the home room teacher the envelopes but Jerry thinks that is for plaques only. I don’t like the limelight.</td>
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<tr>
<td>We must give the children a sense of importance. We should have put a bus on. We thought of it yesterday but there was no time to get it organized.</td>
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<tr>
<td>It is a difficult job keeping all this straight. I’ve done it at another school. Jerry can pick up on any errors and fix them. In the Grade 6 class there are a high number of honors students. We have to find out why this is happening when the numbers decrease so much in Grade 7?</td>
<td>Grade 6 class is called. One student is missed and Jerry is advised. He makes a correction. One boy receives applause for his Math achievement. The next Grade 6 class receives their awards.</td>
<td>I am anxious because people can be critical of him.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>We want to highlight Math achievement. We should have given Math awards separate from class awards.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Suggest./Problem/Hypoth.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Researcher's Notes</strong></td>
<td><strong>Reasoning/Testing</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>This ceremony is probably too awkward for them and their families.</td>
<td>Grade 7 awards are presented. Absenteeism is higher. One student is noted for home schooling. Several students recognized for perfect attendance.</td>
<td>Amazing these students are there everyday. School is not a pleasant experience for them. Some are probably not here because they do not have a special outfit to wear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some students are rebelling from the uniform.</td>
<td>Grade 8 certificates are presented. When Jerry’s class is ready, Beth calls his list. Wide variations in attire of students evident, ranging from hip to hand me downs.</td>
<td>I wonder did we spend enough time to explain what we should wear. Should we have pushed the uniform or let them go as they pleased?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This part is taking too long. Many band students have a long ways to travel to get their awards.</td>
<td>Jerry explains that a school pin is placed in every envelope. Some clatter of envelopes as students check them. He then introduces a band selection from Jesus Christ Superstar. Beth returns to her seat in back and reviews her notes. Band receives a lengthy standing ovation.</td>
<td>We expected each class would take five minutes but others were critical that it would be a long evening. We chose a song to be upbeat because people have been sitting for so long. For many of these people nothing else but the band matters. It is a superb band but to the detriment of many other things.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t like to put pen to paper. I agonized about what to say yesterday but I just felt hollow.</td>
<td>Jerry moves on to individual awards. Highest average awards are presented. There are some delays between when a student is called and when the award is presented. Beth continues to review and edit her notes.</td>
<td>I was going through my notes to make sure I do not give special emphasis to any one thing. I asked a couple of teachers for ideas. I am editing on the spot as I get a feel for what is happening. This is what I will speak about.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>We changed the cash value of these awards to give out more of them.</td>
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<td><strong>Suggest./Problem/Hypoth.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>We want a donor representative to present. The student’s name is mispronounced but Jerry corrects himself.</td>
<td>Some perpetual awards are presented including Attendance, Special Education, Public Speaking and Art. Music awards are announced. One Grade 8 student stumbled. Some students make hooting and whistling noises. Jerry reminds students to show their pleasure by clapping, not ‘cat calling.’</td>
<td>They sometimes do this out of nervousness. We warned them about unacceptable behaviour all day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If he didn’t pick up on this it would escalate quickly. I’m glad Jerry jumped in right away.</td>
<td></td>
<td>We try to recognize whoever is involved in these in these presentations. Where are you? It was his professional responsibility to be there. I was personally disappointed the Phys. Ed. teacher was not there. These are prestigious awards for the students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very little was said about these winners. The Phys. Ed. teacher could have done this.</td>
<td></td>
<td>We called on the chair because he feels he has not been called on to do much this year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There were some delays with students getting from their places to the podium.</td>
<td>Grade 8 honors awards are presented by council chair. He gives each student a handshake and makes a private comment to them. Other special awards are presented by the PTA president.</td>
<td>The process favored students who were at this school for the longer term and who were more familiar to teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Few students that transferred here received these awards.</td>
<td>Students of the year are named. Beth is finishing her editing and goes forward to present the awards.</td>
<td>These students are certainly deserving of the awards. I wonder how the parents of these students feel? I am so happy that Lori’s mother is surprised.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Rhonda presents her valedictorian speech. She compares school years to a meandering river swift, slow, smooth, frightening and eventually to the bay of life. Thanks teachers and parents and recaps some school stories.</td>
<td>She was selected from one of four to present. The meandering river describes this school very well. School was comfortable and then it was polluted by reform. We will work our way back to something better. I must listen attentively to avoid repeating her points.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Rhonda thanks administration and reminds students that they will move on to something bigger not better.</td>
<td>This is her way of saying I supported them when so many publicly said I didn’t. This is her crack at the school board. The students dearly love her and she will be missed. The parish wanted to acknowledge its affiliation with staff before restructuring took effect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>PTA presents award to retiring teacher and calls on the pastor to give this teacher a blessing. A parish rep. presents all staff a certificate. Comments are made about each teacher. The music teacher receives an ovation. The support staff receive loud applause. Two teachers are absent. Jerry acknowledges two student assistants left off the list.</td>
<td>There are various levels of applause. Classroom teachers deserve a lot more recognition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Music again, captures most of the praise. Some staff are hurting because there is so much hype for music.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Council chair is called on to make an address. He greets scholars, musicians, artists and athletes. He extends a thanks to the pastor and school councils. He comments that evil prevails when good people do nothing and adds that it spreads like wildfire when misguided people are in charge.</td>
<td>I am agitated, irate, angry and everything. He reopens many wounds. We need healing, this was not helpful. It would have created less anger, hurt and bitterness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Sometimes we can not distinguish our personal beliefs from the good of all.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>He recaps how school council fought every step of reform. He says forgive them for they know not what they do. He closes saying we have lost our school but not our children. We still have church support.</td>
<td>The tone is quite different. She is thanking people gracefully. This is much like what I have to say. It is too late for me to make any changes. I hope things get better. That is why we put all our energies into this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>President of PTA gives her address. She applauds students, salutes teachers and says it was an honor to be president. She wishes peace and happiness to all. She pays tribute to retired principal who is present. She closes by saying that she hopes the next place will be at least half as good as this was.</td>
<td>I want to put a positive tone on a difficult year. It is time to move on.</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Beth is called to make the closing address. She says tonight recaps a week of celebrations and it is important to take time for good byes and thank yous. She wishes students well and acknowledges the difficult year for parents. Beth wishes the retiring teacher well, thanks the support staff and looks forward to seeing the returning students in September. She closes by saying “Lets go celebrate!” and invites the audience to the reception that follows.</td>
<td>I went over this many times to avoid repeating what was said. I want to say something from the heart.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>The vast majority don’t like what I have to say.</td>
<td>I want to truly thank every single child. I am trying to be conscious of the audience out there.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>The crowd is very restless.</td>
<td>I was really glad Jerry contained them to listen to the finish. The Irish Blessing was strategically done to highlight performers other than band. There is such relief that it is over and it went well.</td>
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<td>39</td>
<td>Jerry makes a final announcements about schedule for the next day, thanks the audience. He asks them to be attentive as a trio closes with singing of An Irish Blessing. The audience disburses and moves to reception.</td>
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<td><strong>Appendix L: Roy’s Office Session and Subsequent Think Aloud.</strong></td>
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<td>Suggest./Problem/Hypoth.</td>
<td>Researcher’s Notes</td>
<td>Reasoning/Testing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Some students are with assistant principal on a disciplinary matter.</td>
<td>Roy arrives, quickly drops off book bag and goes into assistant principal’s office. Some students and assistant principal are already gathered.</td>
<td>Not unusual to have to attend to something as soon as you get in the door.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I need to be out in corridor in the morning.</td>
<td>Five students leave office, Roy remains and talks with assistant principal. Roy comes out in hall talks to several students about T shirts. He also has a delivery slip to check out.</td>
<td>I always rehash disciplinary matters with the assistant to review what happened. I’ll have grade 8 students check on spelling for tee shirt order.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have to check on a delivery before driver leaves.</td>
<td>Goes into Kindergarten room, talks to teacher, returns to hall and talks to another teacher. Asks a student to tidy up by the locker. Goes to Gd. 8 area and speaks to assistant principal. Returns to locker area, goes to computer lab.</td>
<td>I speak to the teacher who visited my sick family member. I speak to another teacher on a school council matter. I confirm with assistant principal, our nominees from yesterday’s interviews. I check to see that computers are turned on and everything is fine in lab.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I want to be visible to staff. A family member is ill and in hospital.</td>
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<tr>
<td>This student has scraped another student. There have been other incidents with this child. It is time to set up a meeting with parents.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I need to get a letter out to parents about up coming events. Teacher transfer nominations have to be finalized today. This can be done now that I have again discussed them with assistant principal.</td>
<td></td>
<td>I took many papers home last night to work quietly. Teacher transfer nominations have to be completed now. They will be sent to board office today.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regular teacher is off. I presumed that the sub knew the routine but I shouldn't have. The substitute does not know all details.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Having just one diploma for a class practice will cause many problems. Enough diplomas are needed to give every child one. The rehearsal has to be like the real event, especially for kindergartens.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The children must have practiced with only one diploma yesterday. This will be hard to correct now that she has formed a notion of how to do it.</td>
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<td>I have to remind the boy not to have anything in his hands on diploma night</td>
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### Researcher's Notes

- Continues to work at desk. Reads several more messages. Goes to secretary to confirm a student's date of birth.
- Roy transfers information from resumes to nomination form. Kindergarten teacher asks Roy to come to gym for rehearsal for diploma night. Roy goes to gym, then to stage and then back to piano.
- Roy notices that there is only one diploma on the table. He requests more. Student assistant gets about 10. Then Roy explains procedure to Kindergarten children. Rehearsal begins. Students have difficulty following the process. Roy asks children to stop playing with diplomas. Once all 10 are given out, they are collected and given out to the next 10.
- A challenging needs child accepts a diploma but insists on giving it back to Roy. Several more students practice. A boy is asked to go back and do it again.
- All students receive diplomas and are standing in their places. Roy goes over to same boy, bends down and has a quiet talk with him. Roy then tells class that he will next announce the class and everybody will clap for them.

### Reasoning/Testing

- I want to make sure birthday announcements are ready for morning messages.

- This would go a lot smoother if we had enough diplomas. Otherwise, we are training them to accept a diploma and then give it back, while on stage. This will be fixed by tomorrow and children will get it right.

- Her parents will not like her being noticed like that on diploma night. A student assistant will have to help her. The other boy has something else in his hand. He has to do it over.
<table>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We have to practice this too,</td>
<td>Exiting directions are discussed</td>
<td>Hopefully we won’t be too</td>
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<tr>
<td>to make sure everything runs</td>
<td>with teacher. Children practice</td>
<td>serious about this.</td>
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<td>smoothly.</td>
<td>taking their chair and leaving the</td>
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<td></td>
<td>stage.</td>
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<tr>
<td>It still might be best to</td>
<td>Roy discusses placement of</td>
<td>Teacher will have to be mindful</td>
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<tr>
<td>arrange students</td>
<td>children with music teacher.</td>
<td>of where children sit in relation</td>
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<td>alphabetically to avoid</td>
<td></td>
<td>to one another.</td>
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<tr>
<td>confusion when names are</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>called.</td>
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<tr>
<td>About a week ago things</td>
<td>Roy returns to office and a boy</td>
<td>This student had a lot of</td>
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<tr>
<td>changed. What’s really going</td>
<td>is waiting to see him. Roy calls</td>
<td>difficulty last year, but is rarely</td>
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<tr>
<td>on here? This student is a</td>
<td>him in and discusses lack of</td>
<td>sent to the office this year.</td>
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<td>thinker and tries to be one</td>
<td>homework, leaving books home.</td>
<td>When his behaviour veers off</td>
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<td>step ahead of you. In the</td>
<td></td>
<td>course, something is bugging</td>
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<td>past the boy’s father has not</td>
<td></td>
<td>him.</td>
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<tr>
<td>been a consistent factor in</td>
<td></td>
<td>If I work with this boy on his</td>
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<td>his life. I heard that his</td>
<td></td>
<td>school work he might tell me</td>
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<tr>
<td>mother has a new job. This</td>
<td></td>
<td>what is really bothering him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boy has two other siblings</td>
<td></td>
<td>I will call the boy’s mother later</td>
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<tr>
<td>starting in September. What</td>
<td></td>
<td>to see if she has any insight.</td>
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<td>is this boy upset about?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I have to give a rationale for</td>
<td>Returns to office and completes</td>
<td>Teaching philosophy is</td>
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<tr>
<td>nominating applicants.</td>
<td>paper work. Roy finishes first</td>
<td>important and I’ll write it in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should I add something about</td>
<td>folder, goes to second folder.</td>
<td>I’ll also include training,</td>
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<tr>
<td>teaching philosophy? I need</td>
<td>Reexamines some resumes. Taps</td>
<td>experience and ability to teach</td>
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<tr>
<td>to fill out forms and get</td>
<td>pencil looks upward.</td>
<td>French.</td>
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<tr>
<td>them to board today. It is</td>
<td>Resumes writing.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>just a matter of finding time</td>
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<tr>
<td>to write them up.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sorts five files and puts forms</td>
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<td>on secretary’s desk for dispatch.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suggest./Problem/Hypoth.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sports Day details need to be finalized. Lady from cafeteria needs to get things ordered in time and line up volunteers to help on Sports Day.</td>
<td>Takes out another file and goes to secretary’s desk and discusses hotdog arrangements for Sports Day. Roy return to his desk and signs several cheques for a tee shirt order. He returns these to the secretary. Works at desk and eventually finishes everything. He repeatedly checks the bulletin board.</td>
<td>I’ll pass all information to secretary to get the order finalized. I must have a tendency to look at the bulletin board when I’m thinking.</td>
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</table>
Appendix M: Kay's Staff Meeting and Subsequent Think Aloud.

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<th>Suggest./Problem/Hypoth.</th>
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<tr>
<td>It cost $120.00 for a newspaper ad. This might mean running another ad.</td>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kay makes P.A. call for start of meeting. She asks teachers to bring award sheets to meeting. Kay gathers her papers goes to staff room, puts agendas on table, removes food from fridge. Another teacher is trying to capture a wasp. Several visiting teachers leave. Kay sits to head of table, calls meeting to order and explains that several will be late arriving because of ongoing PPT meetings. She also explains the researcher's presence. Kay begins by reading a poem <em>Sowing Seeds</em> as a reflection. Kay introduces agenda saying housekeeping duties would be the main item for today. She discusses the two school closing celebrations; one on Sunday for former community and the other on Monday for present students and parents. A member of the school council has had experience with another closure. The council wanted impromptu speakers for the event. Lynn and Kim debate the merits of having planned vs impromptu speakers. Another teacher arrives. The names of possible speakers is discussed. Discussion next moves to ways to advertise for impromptu speakers.</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By announcing a start some will be prompted to get ready. Teachers won't bring these sheets unless they are reminded. These will be helpful in this discussion. The food helps people settle in and relax. The spring time theme was pertinent given the stresses of this time of year. Although house keeping can be nitty gritty I want staff to see the context for these items. The experience of this council member will be very useful. I have to try to not make Lynn seem less important that Kim. When I saw that Lynn was thinking the same way I promoted her position. I try to affirm the good ideas that both have. I can't justify that expenditure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggest./Problem/Hypoth.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 I am feeling some tension over how music should be in the program. I thought about asking Kim to give a bit on this before the meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 The agenda is getting bogged down here now.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 The staff wants time frames in place for the program.</td>
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<td>4 Hopefully Don will follow through on the photos and this is not just talk.</td>
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<th>Suggest/Problem/Hypothesis</th>
<th>Researcher's Notes</th>
<th>Reasoning/Testing</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tension between Lynn and Kim might rise here.</td>
<td>Planning for the distribution of souvenir hats is discussed, as well as the placement of choral performers. Somebody asks if kindergartens will be attending the ceremony.</td>
<td>I am watching the dynamics between these two. Kindergartens are part of our community. It is surprising that a teacher would ask if they are coming.</td>
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<td>Group pictures are discussed. Lynn wonders if the full class will show. Theresa suggests that they advertise the free hat and picture as an enticement. The discussion is almost finished. Kay reiterates that a number of principals and board trustees have been invited.</td>
<td>Theresa’s comment can be sharp and cutting. Parents will come and cherish this night.</td>
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<td>Don raises a concern about availability of chairs. A second teacher arrives late. Theresa suggest they check with a local shop for a photographer. Kay asks for other suggestions. It was agreed that all staff need to attend both events.</td>
<td>The staff are generating practical ideas now. She routinely arrives late. I am disappointed that she would do this. I am happy with staff willingness to attend both sessions. I know I can count on the staff when they are needed.</td>
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<td>Kay next brings up student awards assembly. She announces that school will be closing for students a week earlier than planned. Details of proposed awards are explained. Cathy arrives late. There is some talk and giggling when this teacher arrives. Kay explains that a parent letter will be sent home to provide necessary details.</td>
<td>This is the first award’s assembly. It is a good way to affirm students. The early closure will lift a lot of people and lighten their loads. I was disappointed with her late arrival and the chatter that followed. The letter will encourage parents to attend the awards.</td>
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<td><strong>Cathy has a lot to offer and would contribute by making some remarks. Most say no because of their fear of public speaking.</strong></td>
<td>Kay asks Cathy if she would speak on Sunday or Monday. Cathy declines saying it would be too emotional and that she is not a public speaker.</td>
<td>If you are in this profession you must overcome that fear. I have worked with many to overcome this. Our council chair is an example.</td>
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<td><em>Lynn is asked to speak on resource center matters. Staff is getting restless. Time is getting late.</em></td>
<td>Don raises year end social plans. Staff agree to delay the social due to a timing problem.</td>
<td>I asked Lynn to speak on this because I don't want to hog the meeting. She likes to speak on her ideas.</td>
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<td><strong>Don knew about this clash well ahead of time.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Science fair is discussed. Kay suggests choir practice will be held first followed by student/parent viewing of projects. Kay states that student participation in science fair is compulsory.</strong></td>
<td>It would be better if this were held later. I felt I should express this on behalf of others too. He should have proposed another date today.</td>
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<td><strong>Lynn wants events put off well and will help. Tension between Lynn and Kim present. It is a bit late to bring up students not participating. Students should partake in the full program.</strong></td>
<td>Tracey asks about decorations. Kay suggests each class be responsible for a different section of the gym. All agree. Kay mentions sign up list for helpers. Kim reviews names of past teachers. Most staff are relaxed and snacking. Kay concludes meeting and thanks everybody for their attentiveness. She remains and speaks to a few teachers. Kay asks Cathy to reconsider and speak at the ceremonies.</td>
<td>Tracey is an asset to this staff. I need the support of all staff to get this done. They are very helpful.</td>
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<td><strong>This school has a long history and a lot of tradition.</strong></td>
<td><strong>I stay around afterwards. This is when somebody might want to nab me or share an idea not expressed in the meeting.</strong></td>
<td><strong>This school has a long history and a lot of tradition.</strong></td>
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