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ABSTRACT

This study describes a proactive approach to teacher empowerment that attended not only to public outside perspectives, but also to private internal ones. This approach is based on the concept that the power and authority which teachers exercise in the classroom can transform the teaching profession from the inside out. A committee of teachers was formed with the purpose of empowering teachers to make a public contribution. The committee exists within a loose national federation of 19 independent, college-preparatory elementary and high schools called here the "Network." The committee grew out of a grassroots request by teachers for a structural forum where they could exercise their voice and authority in the public consideration of education issues both in the Network and beyond it. The description and analysis of this committee is based on a model of the early stages of organizational development which proposes that every new group or organization involves the development of both ideas and relationships. The new group develops from ideas held by the founders which become embodied both in a design for the group and in the implementation of its specific details. In addition to describing the genesis of the committee and assessing its initial impacts, the paper discusses the model which guided the committee leaders and summarizes the activities of the committee during its first year. (JD)

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A COMMITTEE OF TEACHERS FOR TEACHERS: THE FIRST YEAR

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BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Teachers are at once powerful and powerless. They are extraordinarily resilient in keeping "outsider" efforts to change their practice at bay (Cuban, 1990), yet strikingly unable to bring their "insider" perspectives on practice to bear on public debate. They stand at the center of the very activity of education (Graham, 1989), yet their knowledge about teaching and learning is rarely tapped. Ignored in a body of research which gives infrequent voice to their understandings, judgments, and creative use of repertoire (Schon, 1983; Carew & Lightfoot, 1979; McDonald, 1986, 1988; Duckworth, 1987) or which studies their teaching in fragmented bits of behavior and outcomes (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1990; Stodolsky, 1988; Shulman, 1987), they ignore it right back (Evans et al., 1987). Yet despite the perceived irrelevance of much educational research to practitioners, an "outside-in" approach to inquiry is normative and has powerful and debilitating effects on practice. For once embodied in educational products, it undermines the authority and agency of teachers. It asks them not to be the creators and agents of culture themselves, but to be the technicians of "teacher-proof" curricula and the replicators of "effective" behaviors as isolated and defined by the experts (Grumet, 1988; Schon, 1983; Martin 1982; Carlson, 1982).

The emerging research that has focused on teacher thinking reveals that the work of teachers requires complex creativity, and that the knowledge teachers gain in negotiating a wide variety of variables in each instance of practice is context-specific, uncertain, idiosyncratic, and constantly evolving (Bolster, 1983; Lightfoot, 1983; Bruner, 1986; Walizer, 1987). It is no wonder that teachers resist recurrent waves of school reform which ignore the social and structural realities of their work places and attempt to "professionalize" them on every base except the richest one: the

knowledge base of the practitioner. Teachers have, and are likely to continue to counter efforts to control and/or raise the status of that profession through such external prescriptions as higher standards, competency testing, or merit pay and other ranking devices (cf Johnson, in press). However, far from invulnerable to the intense scrutiny they receive whenever a society in trouble turns its attention to schools (Warren, 1989), they tend to lead a double life. They may nod their public assent to the proclamations of the experts, but turn, silenced, to the privacy of their classrooms to exercise what they "know-in-action" (Schon, 1983) to be meaningful practice.

Even the more recent reform movement of teacher empowerment runs the danger of perpetuating the silence of the practitioner if it values participation in administrative activity over the articulation of the teacher's knowledge. Consistent with earlier attempts at power equalization within schools (e.g., Bartunek & Keys, 1982), teacher empowerment usually refers to attempts to provide teachers with more decision-making power on the local level. But if these approaches attempt to make teachers more professional by involving them in what the "real" educational professionals do, i.e. administration (Herbst 1989), they still beg the deeper question of how schools might be restructured in order to build on the base of teacher knowledge for improved teaching and learning (Johnson, in press). Such approaches to empowerment continue as well to obscure the fact that teaching is a female profession. They fail to acknowledge the problematic that arises when "power" is related to "teacher," for "power" in U.S. culture is a trait genderized in favor of males (cf Martin, 1985). A lack of power -- personal and public -- is more often the experience of those in "women's true

profession." The low esteem and gender-laden images associated with those doing this "women's work" have a way in getting internalized, resulting in a group of people with low self- and professional-confidence (Herbst, 1989; Johnson, in press; Grumet, 1988; Maeroff, 1988; Clifford, 1989; Lightfoot, 1978; Lortie, 1975). To achieve its intended aims, the empowerment of teachers must involve more than externally granting teachers a share in someone else's power; it must involve an internal mining of their own.

A deeper and far more important challenge of teacher empowerment involves affirming, strengthening, and communicating the power and authority which teachers exercise at the heart of the educational endeavor -- the classroom -- and transforming the teaching profession from the inside out. The premise for the research reported here is that strategies of empowerment must involve teachers in naming, valuing, and reconstructing what they know about teaching in a potent enough way that teachers can contradict, for themselves and others, the cultural negation of their authority, and actively enhance the field of education by contributing their insight to the public consideration of ideas (cf. Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1990).

In this paper, we describe the early stages and assess the initial impacts of a committee of teachers designed to achieve such a purpose: to empower teachers to make a public contribution. This committee, called here the Faculty Development Committee (FDC), exists within a loose national federation of 19 independent, college-preparatory elementary and high schools, called here the "Network." The group grew out of a grassroots request by teachers for a structural forum wherein they could exercise their voice and authority in the public consideration of educational issues in the Network and beyond.

The examination we do here of one concrete effort to empower teachers is infrequent in the literature. Yet it is consistent with Cuban's (1990) recommendation that if we wish to get beyond the mismatching of solutions with problems prevalent in education, we "can do better by gathering data on particular reforms and tracing their life history in particular classrooms, schools, districts, and regions" (p. 12). By examining the first year of a specific committee of teachers, we do not seek to universalize from the particular, but rather to generate from the "rich data" of this particular some learnings and concepts which can be explored for their illumination and applicability in other circumstances (Lightfoot, 1983). By analyzing the experience of a committee trying to be about "making a difference by doing differently" (Calas & Smircich, 1989), we hope to raise questions which will shed theoretical and practical light on empowerment efforts.

FRAMEWORK FOR INQUIRY

Our approach to describing and analyzing this committee is based on a model of the early stages of organization development originally proposed by Bartunek and Betters-Reed (1987). This model includes the proposition that every new group or organization involves the development of both ideas and relationships. The new group develops from ideas (such as a plan for the group) held by a founder. These ideas become embodied both in a design for the group and in the implementation of its specific details. Relationships develop from a relatively simple one between the founder and his or her initial ideas to include relationships between the founder and planners and then relationships among the founder, planners, and new members who are expected to implement the developing ideas.

This model suggests that adequate description of the beginning of an organization or group requires description both of the developing idea for the group -- the (perhaps implicit) conceptual model held by the founder(s) for it -- and relationships, especially relationships among members of the group and the founders/planners. Thus, in our analysis of the early history of the FDC, we will explore both the founders' ideas for the group and important dimensions of relationships among members.

In addition, we assess the FDC in a rather uncommon way, from both "insider" and "outsider" perspectives. As we suggested above, most studies of schools and other organizations are inquiries from the "outside," analyses by outside researchers who have a comparatively minimal connection with the group or organization (cf. Evered & Louis, 1981). A few studies are "inquiries from the inside," descriptions by the group members themselves, generally the leaders, who focus on issues of most concern to them. As Evered and Louis (1981) note, these types of inquiry have different characteristics and different aims. Inquiry from the outside is characterized by researcher detachment from the setting. In contrast, inquiry from the inside is characterized by the researcher becoming an actor in the setting. The purpose of inquiry from the outside is generalizing from the particular to construct a set of universally applicable statements while the purpose of inquiry from the inside is understanding in depth the reality of the historically unique situation. As one dimension of these differences, an outside investigator typically pre-selects a set of categories to guide inquiry. With inside research, however, pre-selected categories typically are not chosen. Rather, important features emerge in the individual's experience of the situation, as figure against ground.

These features are useful for generating tentative categories grounded in concrete circumstances. They can subsequently be used to guide more deductive, hypothesis generating research.

Evered and Louis (1981) suggest that combining these two types of inquiry may help achieve more communicable and usable understandings of phenomena, understandings that provide both situationally applicable action guides and situationally grounded theoretical foundations. They suggest that one means of doing this is by carrying out both "inside" and "outside" approaches simultaneously, and aggregating their results.

In this paper we make a conscious effort to combine these two types of inquiry. The first two authors are insiders, the founders and leaders of the FDC. The third author is an outside researcher. When we present the idea (the conceptual model) underlying the formation of the FDC, we do not present an abstract theoretical model derived solely from outside literature. Rather, we present the model that guided the first two authors in their design of the group. In addition, in tracing the events of the first year and in assessing the impact of the group we use the experiences of the first two authors as leaders of the group as well as the data gathered by the third author as an outsider.

We begin by describing genesis of the committee: its "pre-history." Then we present the model that guided the leaders of the committee. Finally, we summarize its first year.

GENESIS OF THE FACULTY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Since the early 1970s, the Network had been engaged in radical philosophical, organizational and personnel change. Numerous national meetings had brought administrators, most of whom were members of a Roman

Catholic congregation of women religious, support staff, and some teachers together to articulate a new vision, a decentralized structure, and criteria by which to evaluate these schools in their implementation of this new vision of education. Collaboration became increasingly central in the Network, and as understanding of the meaning of collaboration grew, so did consciousness of overlooked and undervalued groups.

In 1986, some key administrators formed a committee that included the first author (a nun, a doctoral candidate, and a former administrator in the Network) and the second author (a laywoman and Director of Studies in a Network school) to address the concerns of one of these undervalued groups -- teachers. mostly laywomen, with seven or more years of experience within the Network. After some false steps in trying to prescribe what these teachers might need, this committee decided to talk with the teachers themselves to determine what they saw as essential to their development and to their sense of Network ownership. Over 150 teachers voiced clear concerns: they wanted to raise the status and rewards of their profession, fuller participation in a larger community united by a common philosophy, more opportunity to examine with each other societal change and social issues vis-a-vis classroom teaching, and more opportunities to affect policy in their schools. With a growing sense that the teachers themselves could best address these issues, the administrative committee proposed a Think Tank to which interested experienced teachers could apply, and then dissolved.

The Think Tank, which took place in October 1987, brought together 16 teachers from 9 schools. The first two authors had designed a four-day process which asked these teachers to share their research and stories of practice and to plan developmental ways to engage teachers across the country

in similar exchange. The experience of collegial exploration proved powerful, and the teachers, far from creating what the two authors had timidly anticipated -- some "occasional" processes to involve their peers in conversation about a few vital issues -- took the more radical step of proposing a "permanent" organizational forum to raise the voice of the teacher in the Network: the Faculty Development Committee. Further, they developed several initial, short range, and long range objectives for this committee. The initial objectives relevant to this paper include the development of a mentoring program through which experienced teachers would work with new teachers and the formation of an educational journal for the "sharing of research, descriptions of innovations in curriculum and methodology, and personal reflections on the educational process " The Think Tank members submitted this proposal to an administrative oversight committee in the Network, which approved and funded it, and then solicited applications for membership from the Think Tank participants. They selected five teachers from diverse regions of the country to join the first two authors (hereafter called the leaders) for its membership.

THE CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE THINK TANK AND THE FDC

Over several years, the first two authors have continually discovered and re-discovered essential ideas taking form from personal conversation and professional collaboration. These ideas have shaped the design of the Think Tank and then the FDC. They believe, first, that teachers and their experiences can provide the most crucial and valuable knowledge base for educative inquiry, research, and theory; thus, improvement of education hinges on encouraging teachers to bring their experience to the public realm. Second, they know that teachers, isolated and devalued, need opportunities

for community. They need the time and space to build relationships with other teachers so that they might tell their professional stories, hear those of others, discover commonalities, recognize recurring themes, articulate challenges and problems, collaborate toward innovations and solutions, and celebrate successes. In so doing, teachers become aware of the knowledge they have gleaned from their work, of their capacity to reinterpret their experiences in order to critique and make meaning of them, and of their power to imagine together new ways of educating.

Since these leaders were working in a particular context -- a Network of schools staffed by some 1300 teachers and administrators, the majority of whom are women -- their vision for this work grew out of a concern for the development of women as powerful teachers and agents of change. They began to explore educational literature that was addressing feminist concerns to find metaphors and methods that resonated with their experience.

A metaphor of Madeleine Grumet (1983) proved particularly compelling for their emerging sense of what they were about. Concerned with the question of why teachers (mostly women) tend to replicate culture rather than to create, Grumet traced the transfer of the 19th century feminine ideal of domesticity, piety, purity, and submissiveness from the home to the school as the profession was feminized. This inheritance lives on amidst the fluid work boundaries, male-dominated administrations, and low pay scales of most schools, and promotes a group that remains isolated and silent behind classroom doors. Using the metaphor of the artist, Grumet calls teachers to create spaces -- studios -- in which to harvest their silence by giving narrative form to their experience. Further, she calls them to go beyond these studios to hang their work in the public gallery of educational debate.

For to share insight in the privacy of the studio may only serve the "mutual consolation" of teachers, whereas to communicate their knowledge for broader interpretation and critique could serve to establish its contribution to the public forums of educational reform.

Essentially, the leaders envisioned the FDC as such a space -- a studio to which the members of the committee and an ever-widening circle of teachers can bring the knowledge born of practice, can give it public shape by articulating it, and can gain confidence in its value through the sharing of experience and thought. They believed that this reflection on the knowledge born of action would empower, for to give form to one's experience is to shape it, to know it anew, and in the knowing, to begin actively to critique and transform it (Grumet, 1988; Schon, 1983; Freire, 1986), and, ultimately, to "go public" with it (cf. McDonald, 1986).

As they designed the Think Tank and the FDC, they wanted three things which they termed, however loosely, "feminist" to characterize its processes and projects: 1) they would honor, respect, and begin with the knowledge base of teachers rather than that of "experts"; 2) they would seek to articulate, authorize, and incorporate narrative language and subjective truth in their work, rather the "language of fact and 'objectivity'" (Bruner, 1986, p. 129) or the instrumentalist approach of technical rationalism (Schon, 1983) which characterizes the field of education; and, 3) they would count on the power of collaborative relationships to test the subjective truth released through narrative and to reinterpret its meaning for the communal work of teacher empowerment and educational reform.

This called for a different type of leadership than is present in most settings (cf. Heifetz & Sinder, 1988). As leaders, they viewed

"relationships" within and beyond the committee not as instrumental toward the accomplishment of pre-determined agendas of their own, but as empowering by releasing and enabling the agendas of ever more inclusive circles of teachers. They intended not to do the work of empowerment for teachers, which would indeed be a contradiction in terms, but to ask them and their peers to do their own work of claiming authority, dealing with the pain of self- and cultural devaluation, and choosing realistic courses of action.

To implement these ideas, whenever the FDC came together as a committee, it began with a sharing of research the participants had done in advance in their own classrooms and with a sharing of personal experience, often in narrative form. This subjective foundation became a "text" for the community to read and interpret in order to uncover important considerations to be kept in mind while engaged in more task-oriented business on behalf of other teachers. At the end of each meeting, we returned to reflection on personal experience, so that all work would begin and end with the center of authority -- the teacher -- and that each teacher's authority would be disclosed and enhanced as vital to the intelligent progress of a committee of teachers for teachers.

THE FIRST YEAR OF THE FDC

The FDC held its first two meetings in October 1988 and February 1989. At the October meeting the members of the group outlined initial plans for three things they could accomplish within the first two years: a mentoring program, a meeting of teachers and administrators regarding hiring practices in the Network, and a journal of teaching writing. Desiring to widen the circle of teachers affected by their work as soon as possible, they designed a process to select members for the Editorial Board of the journal (two

members of the FDC, one of whom was the first author, and three other teachers in the Network), and those, as their major communication vehicle, two teachers from each school who might serve as "contact people" to relay information to teachers in each school. They asked the administrator of each school to select one of the two, and sent out initial information about their activities.

Immediately prior to the February meeting, the newly formed Editorial Board for the journal met to plan initial strategy for soliciting, reviewing, and publishing papers, and to finalize a proposal for funding. The FDC then met for the second time, and, after difficult discussions, decided not to design a mentoring program or to convene a meeting on hiring. These activities might deflect attention from teachers to administrators in one of the FDC's first projects. Instead, they decided to create an Institute for Experienced Faculty to be held during the following school year, 1989-1990. This Institute would bring two teachers from each school together to work in one of three areas: 1) to develop a New-Teachers' Guide to the educational philosophy and practices of the Network; 2) to share research on educational pedagogy; and, 3) to create a model for the training and development of new teachers through collaboration with experienced teachers and administrators.

The FDC sent its proposals for the journal and Experienced Teachers Institute to the administrative oversight committee. Somewhat to the surprise of FDC members, the committee of administrators approved the Experienced Teachers Institute -- about which it had not heard at all before -- but, at least tentatively, disapproved the journal, to which it had already given at least tacit assent by its approval of the aims of the FDC. The administrative oversight committee members communicated to the FDC that

they did not expect that the journal would receive a sufficient number of submissions to make its publication worthwhile, but that they would reconsider this opinion if the Editorial Board could gather enough "letters of intent" to indicate that teachers would indeed write articles. The members of the Editorial Board worked diligently for the remainder of the school year to solicit letters of intent for articles for the journal.

In April, the five members of the FDC (including the second author) who were not on the Editorial Board of the journal met with two other faculty members from the Network to plan the Experienced Teachers Institute, scheduled for October 1989. They designed the format for the Institute, prepared application forms, wrote letters to administrators in the Network telling them about the meeting, and wrote letters to the experienced faculty in the Network inviting them to attend. Immediately after this meeting, they contacted the contact people to distribute the letters and application forms and found a site at which the meeting could be held.

The above material summarizes the ideas underlying the committee, and its work during its first year. But what were the experiences of the leaders and group members during the year? Was implementation of the committee consistent with the initial ideas? What were the relationships among the members, especially in terms of empowerment?

METHODOLOGY

Data Gathering Procedures

In keeping with the dual insider/outsider approach, we collected data in multiple ways. The two leaders kept their own journal notes about the committee. Prior to the two scheduled FDC meetings, the third author interviewed the first two authors jointly about their plans for the meetings.

After the conclusion of the meetings, she interviewed each of them individually about their perceptions of what had occurred. After receiving permission from the group midway through the October meeting, the third author sat in as a non-participant observer of the group at the FDC and Experienced Teachers Institute planning meetings, and took notes on them. Near the end of each of these meetings, she tape recorded a session in which the group members reflected together on what they felt had gone particularly well or badly at the meeting. After transcribing these tapes with the help of a research assistant, she provided the transcripts to the first two authors to assist them in reflecting on the events that had occurred and to help their planning for the next meeting. Finally, in both January and May of 1989, she conducted telephone interviews with each of the teachers on the committee to determine their perceptions of and reactions to the committee.

In these interviews with teachers she asked several questions that are pertinent to this study. During January, she asked, "What most stands out for you about the October Meeting of the FDC?" During May, she asked, "In general, how do you feel now about the FDC - what are your reactions to it, of any kind, including reactions to the February (and April) meetings?" These questions enabled a general assessment of the teachers' experiences. She also asked them about future activities of the committee to determine their sense of their own power to accomplish their aims: "What's your best guess at this point as to what will happen with regards to 1) the Faculty Institute; 2) the journal; and 3) the FDC itself?" At the time she asked the questions, the applications for the Experienced Teachers Institute had just gone out so no one knew how many teachers would apply. In addition, the fate of the journal was unclear. Letters of intent were still to be received and,

even if an adequate number of these came in, the oversight committee still had to accept the FDC's proposal.

Data Analysis

The extent to which the committee achieved its public aims for the year (as it revised these aims by substituting a Faculty Institute for a Mentoring proposal) was assessed by: 1) the number of applications for the Experienced Teachers Institute; 2) by the number of letters of intent for the journal; and 3) the decision about publishing the journal made by the administrative oversight committee.

The experiences of the FDC, especially as these were related to empowerment, were explored from the two perspectives. First, the leaders, focusing on their idea of empowering teachers in a collaborative forum, reviewed their journal notes, the transcripts of meetings, and the interviews the third author held with them in order to reconstruct what stood out for them as "figure against ground" (Evered & Louis, 1981) with respect to this issue. Then the third author, making use primarily of her own reading of the transcripts of the reflection periods during the meetings and her interviews with the teachers, analyzed this issue from the perspective of an outsider. In this paper, her analyses are confined to issues raised by the leaders, although this is not required by dual insider/outsider approaches. We present the results of both sets of analyses below. Then we combine them, in order to discuss some of the complexity and implications of the experience of the first year of the FDC.

FINDINGS

Public Goal Achievement Related to the Initial Ideas

Experienced Teachers' Institute. The FDC received 62 applications (from 18 of the 19 schools in the Network) for the 38 places available for the institute. During the summer the FDC members reviewed these applications and sent out acceptance and rejection letters to the applicants.

The Journal. The Editorial Board received 47 letters of intent from faculty members in almost all the schools of the network and successfully resubmitted its application for funding of the journal to the administrative oversight committee. The Editorial Board notified the contact people in each school and asked them to encourage teachers who wrote letters of intent to submit their manuscripts. By the August deadline, 28 articles had been received.

Relational experiences of the committee related to empowerment

Insiders' Perspective. As the first two authors reconstructed, remembered, and reviewed the transcripts of both our planning meetings as co-leaders and the actual meetings of the first year of the Faculty Development Committee, we found that, despite the successful progress of the work, a core phenomenon runs through reflection on that work like a theme song: self-doubt.

We found this self-doubt at work on two levels: the leaders wondered whether they could exercise a collaborative leadership that would prove empowering for the teachers; the teachers wondered whether they could make things happen that would prove empowering for their peers in the Network. During the first half of the first year, these two levels were more distinct,

mirroring and "troubling" each other. During the second half of the year as plans were concretized, the types of doubts of leaders and teachers merged.

Pre-October 1988. Long before the first meeting of the Faculty Development Committee in October, 1988, the first two authors struggled with the inconsistency we felt in co-chairing the committee. We had been both surprised and delighted when the Think Tank which proposed the FDC recommended that, despite our administrative profiles in the Network, we be on the committee. We considered the emergence of teacher leadership in a proposal for structural change at the Think Tank as one of our best ever professional experiences, and felt very clear in January of 1988 about the next step:

DW: The question of leadership may come up in the first meeting. What if they ask us to be chair? We have to say no; otherwise we'll break the vision that teachers can be agents of change. If the administration is chairing that communicates a fundamental contradiction. (1/18/88)¹

By the time we met in July, we had talked our way through to a very different posture. We were heavily influenced by a conversation which the second author had had with a Peggy McIntosh of Wellesley's Center for Research on Women. McIntosh had advised her not to forego the leadership, but to lead, and to lead collaboratively. Her warning rang true to our experience: if people are not grounded in feminist theory, groups get taken over by the hierarchical patterns normative in the culture, feminists lose heart, leave the group, and good projects fail to take root.

October, 1988. We had decided in July to risk taking on the leadership of the group despite the mismatch with our own theory, but as we met in

¹In quoting from transcriptions, the initials of the speaker will be given preceding the quote (CL and DW, the first two authors, T1, T2, T3, T4, and T5 the teachers) and the date in parentheses after the quote.

October to plan the first meeting, the ambiguity of our position continued to gnaw away:

CL: Diane and I aren't teaching, and we're chairing and once again it's the double edged, the inconsistency or the contradiction in a certain sense of the fact that once again the chairpersons of this committee are not the teachers and yet that at the same time the belief that probably at this point it would be better not to surrender leadership...as is the wont of many women, not to be afraid to exercise influence. (10/13/88)

We also expressed doubt about whether a committee of very busy teachers could exercise broader influence in the Network:

CL: I'm afraid that I'll get stuck with a lot of work...I'm afraid that the teachers are really busy and they don't have any time to spare...or I'm afraid that the group won't feel like it can do the stuff, won't exactly know how to start, I mean, I'm not sure I know how to start... I'm also concerned with how...to connect this with all that's happening in the Network right now. (10/13/88)

DW: My greatest fear is that it will be this nice little committee that's off working at the Network Office from time to time, who does an occasional nice thing for the occasional teachers who's been around for a long time and need a shot in the arm. Not that that's not a good thing, but it's not enough... (10/13/88)

During its first meeting, the FDC worked strenuously, and the accomplishments were great. Bonds were renewed and deepened, the founding mandate and ideas reclaimed, entry points chosen, plans outlined, and communication processes with the wider Network established. Nevertheless during the reflection session at the end of the meeting, the teachers on the committee expressed self-doubt both about the responsibility they had taken on and the possible reaction of other teachers to their efforts:

T1: ...We want to succeed and we want to do so much for the people back home in every one of the 19 schools, including the ones not represented by one of us, and I just feel empowered, but I also feel so damn responsible...

T2: Not only responsible, but have we bit off more than we can chew?

T1: Well the answer is always yes to that.....

T3: But I think the fear is there of what if back in the schools they say, "Oh God, another one of those things" that's coming and they don't know, and they don't understand where it's--

T4: and we've like given our blood and sold our souls--

T3: and then we get jumped on for some reason-- (10/16/88)

Some of the teachers also suggested that the committee's accomplishments at the October meeting were due primarily to the leaders' efforts, rather than to their own abilities:

T2: I keep wondering how much or how successful we have felt and I'm not sure I know--it's dependent upon how much you two [the leaders] did before the first time we met [in the Think Tank] and how much you two did this time when we met and is that possible if there are not that kind of two who are planning each new thing along the way. I really do not know how much that was important to what happened to our group. I mean I think we're all really pretty good--but how much of it was us? (10/16/88)

This latter query at the end of the first meeting struck a raw nerve of self-doubt in us as leaders. In reflecting on the meeting, we began to question whether we were capable of fostering true collaboration; we wondered if we were not falling back into some of the competitive patterns we were trying to counter in our leadership:

CL: ...Diane had made all these references to me as the expert and I really was resisting it...when she's insecure she talks a lot and does this. When I'm insecure I retreat and get quiet... (10/21/88)

DW: ...I didn't like some of what I saw in her which seemed to me a pulling back for reasons that were enigmatic to me...there was a certain amount of judgmentalism that was going on... (2/23/89)

February 1989. In coming together to plan the February meeting, the two leaders re-articulated doubts about their leadership:

CL: It's the same thing, like we've sort of given birth to this, we've started and then all of a sudden it's like, can we do it?...it's like that moment of profound panic and then losing heart...I lost faith and then I start feeling inadequate and going some bad place...(2/23/89)

DW: The whole purpose of the FDC is to build collegiality in the Network. If we can't do it on site, in the FDC, we are lost... (2/23/89)

During its February meeting, the FDC as a whole experienced the doubt and discouragement that went with the very difficult task of shaping the brainstormings of October into specific proposals to be submitted for funding. The concerns of the leaders and the teachers moved closer to one another as evidenced by reflections at the end of the meeting:

DW: ...There were moments yesterday where I felt a lack of real hope for a while, I mean not ultimately, but a sense of hopelessness about one particular proposal, or, there were times when I felt impotent because, "Oh my God I really don't get all the politics in this." I mean, I, I can say that I understand, I'm scared that whether the administrators are going to buy this, but I'm not sure how to get around it and I'm not sure--there's a little worry about do I really understand how this faculty development committee can function in that... But I'm wondering if it has to do with impotence. (2/26/89)

T4: ...I had a really hard time yesterday...that there was in the way that we were together or working together, that there was something missing or some sadness or some something...I don't know what it is. And, maybe, maybe, it had to do with feeling that somehow we had...lost our way a bit and being kind of disillusioned and, and thinking, "Oh, you know, I really thought this was gonna be important and it's really gonna work and it's not." (2/26/89)

As plans got concretized to the point where the members of the FDC would be dividing up to work with others in the Network to implement the proposals, should they get funded, both leaders and teachers talked about their apprehensions:

T1: A thing that really has not gone well for me is that I have this real fear that we're not going to make any difference. We've made a tremendous amount of difference in each other, but I have this well-spring of frustration, it's more than frustration, it's really fear... (2/26/89)

CL: ...a dimension of this that I felt is how difficult it is to...balance the desire to know what's happening in each one's life...and...the work...and the work is, you know, sort of about relationships, really, and about building them outward, and there's a lot of pain in it, there's a lot of grieving in it, there's a lot

of fear in it for me, like, will this be, will this make any difference at all...? (2/26/89)

Spring 1989. The failure of the administrative oversight committee to approve the proposal for the journal the first time it was submitted provoked a new level of self-doubt among FDC members, especially for the FDC leader on the journal's Editorial Board:

CL: I wonder that if I wasn't associated with this, if that would make a difference... We need to find someone else for this committee if my presence is problematic. (4/8/89)

Even as the disappointed Editorial Board strategized ways to re-present their case to the funding committee during a conference call, they expressed a more fundamental fear: "No one will write." Was there, in fact, Network-wide support for a journal of teacher writing?

When FDC members met with two other teachers from the Network to plan the Experienced Teachers Institute, the blow to the committee's confidence made itself felt there as well:

DW: ...one reason it [the meeting] didn't go so well was the fact that we knew the journal had been put on hold.

T3: That's right that was really a downer--we, we have spent quite a bit of time talking about that (4/16/89)

There was still, at this meeting, some lingering doubt in the teachers about whether things were going well because of their own capabilities, or the leaders:

T2: I still believe that you [Diane] and Catherine [the leader not present] are the guiding force. I think we're all the guiding force, but there is something about your and Catherine's leadership that makes this happen better than it would happen without your leadership. (4/16/89)

When the first two authors looked back over notes and transcripts, however, we did not only see self-doubt. We noted that at different stages of our first year, we made use of our feelings of self-doubt to struggle

through an empowering progression: 1) claiming our own knowledge/authority; 2) naming our pain, the self-doubt we felt with regard to acting on that authority; and, 3) recovering our power by working collaboratively to figure out what clues the pain might give us about things to attend to when working with other teachers.

For example, when the leaders felt the inconsistency of our chairing a committee of teachers, we labored long to talk through the ambiguity in order to reclaim our desire to exercise influence. But this ownership of authority was never comfortable; it made us do what we were asking teachers to do: articulate more clearly our own knowledge and foundational ideas, acknowledge overtly our doubts and differences with the committee, and reflect continually about how our practices in chairing the committee intersected with and spoke to the work of the committee:

DW: ...I'm real interested in this FDC which is supposed to be spawning collegiality and rippling pools throughout the Network...so I think we oughta come clean and say leadership is really hard for these reasons.

CL: ...if we could figure out a way to talk about our experience in a way that would serve the group in talking about how hard it is to keep track of working collaboratively... (2/23/89)

Likewise, the self-doubt that group members experienced at various times turned into valuable information about our work when faced and processed. For example, during the concrete choice-making of the February meeting, the group used the pain of some of its members as criteria for decision-making. As the personal and communal memories of the unaddressed needs of experienced teachers resurfaced, the group deepened its sense of mission and revised its plans in a way that gave priority to experienced teachers rather than administrative issues:

DW: My concern is personal. There are a lot of 7+ years' teachers not receiving attention paid to bringing people to orientation meetings...I'd rather focus on experienced teachers...I feel very drawn to experienced teachers...

T2: That's very persuasive. I agree. That was the purpose of the first Think Tank.

T4: When you think of how much pain was there -- because we've had that experience we're ready to have that spread out. (2/26/89)

The first refusal of the journal proposal had a similar effect. For example, it led the Editorial Board to take a more pro-active approach to finding out from their peers in the Network if, indeed, they did want to write. Likewise, it moved the Institute planning group to develop more astute ways of communicating with teachers, administrators, and the various constituencies of the Network at large.

Outsider's Perspective. As is evident from the above presentation, the relational issues that most stood out for the leaders when they were reflecting on the FDC was a very strong experience of self-doubt and eventual movement beyond it. From my own review of the transcripts of the reflection periods, I found several instances of the expression of self-doubt such as those presented above. However, there were instances in which this doubt was counter-balanced with expressions of optimism and other more positive feelings. For example, during the reflection period during the February meeting, one of the teachers commented:

I went through a reflection about something last night that today has really justified and that I feel wonderful about today. Because at one point yesterday afternoon I thought, and I think I said to somebody else, "Oh, I wish (a particular Network administrator) were here to answer some of our questions, to help us out of this dilemma, to give us some indication of what the (administrative oversight) Committee would think about something or other, and then last night before I went to bed I was thinking really hard about it and I thought, "No damn it, if we can't do it without (the administrator), we're denying everything that we're saying about taking our own authority--if we need to turn to (the administrator), we're not doing that. And if we can't do it without

(the administrator) then that says something about us and I think this morning when we did it essentially I thought that's just exactly what we're trying for, what we're after.

Both self-doubt and optimism were expressed in the interviews as well. For example, when asked in the individual interviews for their reactions to the October meeting, two dimensions most stood out for the teachers: the amount of work they had accomplished and the relationships they developed with other group members. One commented, for example,

I was astonished at what we did. That's half of it. And then the closeness we felt. I hadn't expected to feel quite as bonded.

Another said of one of the projects the group was working on:

It made me realize there'll be fruit for our labor....I feel like I've known [the other FDC members] for years (rather than only two meetings spaced a year apart).

When asked for their more general reactions to the FDC during the May interviews, three of the teachers said that they liked the meetings very much and three of them commented that they felt excited and energized by the work the committee was doing. Two of the teachers commented on a very clear disjunction they experienced between the positive experience of the meetings and their back home experiences, both at work and in their homes. One of them said, for example:

I wish I could see us making a visible difference. Sometimes I think it won't happen, that the way we go about teaching and communicating will remain individual people isolated in classrooms.

This comment suggested another dimension to the teachers' concerns: awareness of a possible discrepancy between the internal workings of the FDC and the experiences of the teachers "back home." This awareness of internal/external links was not a central focus of the internal authors' perceptions; they were more focused on the internal workings of the group.

However, it was frequently mentioned in one way or another by the teachers on the FDC.

Finally, the teachers made divergent predictions about the various dimensions of the future work of the FDC. First, there was a difference of opinion about the likely success of the Experienced Teachers' Institute. Two of the teachers predicted that it would go well, that it would be renewing and energizing for participants. Two wondered if there would be a sufficient number of applicants to hold the meeting. There also was a considerable lack of certainty about the journal, with two members wondering if the journal would ever come out. Finally, when asked about the future of the FDC itself, most of the teachers responded by talking about a planned rotation of some of the committee members the following year. Two of the members said they believed this would be good for the committee and expressed a desire to rotate off.

DISCUSSION

The FDC, established in part to empower teachers to place their work in the public domain, very successfully achieved its short term goals during its first year of operation: it took the first steps towards the publication of a journal in which teachers could publish their work and prepared an Experienced Teachers' Institute in which experienced teachers from all of the Network schools could work together to develop pedagogy and plan ways of training new teachers in the Network. By "public" criteria established to measure the implementation of the "idea" for the FDC, the committee was clearly a success.

By other criteria, the experiences of the committee members in terms of relational issues associated with empowerment were much more complex, given

the experience of self-doubt noted by both internal and external researchers. The findings of insiders and outsider, however, emphasize different dimensions of this experience. The insiders focused on the emergence and effect of self-doubt in internal group functioning; the outsider saw the confidence which manifested itself alongside this self-doubt, as well as the concerns teachers had about relating to individuals and structures external to the FDC.

The difference in perceptions of external issues was probably due primarily to the fact that while the external author was interviewing the teachers they were in their home setting. Inter-external links would be likely to be more salient to them in this setting than when they were attending FDC meetings. The more crucial difference in perspectives was the focus on self-doubt. One likely reason for this difference might have been the fact that empowerment in this group through validation of the teachers' experience was a fundamental aim of the two insider authors. This type of empowerment represented for them a qualitatively different way teachers might understand their contribution in schools.

Research in other settings sheds some light on typical experiences that occur when change agents are attempting to foster other people's viewing their experiences in a new light. When change agents are trying to introduce a qualitatively new perspective in a group or organization, a typical initial impact of the introduction of the perspective is heightened awareness of the negation of that perspective, an increase in participants' awareness of occasions when the approach being introduced is not being enacted (e.g., Moch & Bartunek, in press). When change agents try to introduce collaboration in a system characterized by managerial control, for instance, it is typical for

participants to notice the decisions that are not truly collaborative -- at least according to the way they initially understand collaboration.

It seems possible that such an event occurred to some extent in the FDC. The insider authors were very aware of empowerment as a new type of understanding to be inculcated. One normal consequence was that they became very sensitive to occasions when their experience did not seem consistent with their understanding of empowerment. This sensitivity was greater than that of the outside author, who was not acting as a change agent and did not experience the same emotional investment in the issue.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESULTS

At the end of this committee's first year, the insider/outsider design of this research project and the ongoing articulation and review it entailed enabled the leaders (and the committee members, in turn) to "correct" their initial focus on self-doubt as a negative, paralyzing force. Aggregating the results of the insider and outsider perspectives suggested that the manifestation of self-doubt might instead be interpreted as a sign that they were close to the paradoxical center they desired to touch and work with -- the strange mixture of power and powerlessness in teachers.

The external researcher uncovered some essential information that proved vital in pressing the FDC through a concentration on internal relationships during its first year to the necessity of attending to its relationships with external groups (cf. Bartunek & Betters-Reed, 1987) as it moved into its second. Knowledge that optimism coexisted with doubt, and that teachers were more aware of and concerned about their impact vis-a-vis external groups of teachers and administrators helped the leaders to re-assess self-doubt as a fulcrum point for the work of empowerment.

Given the devaluation of teaching as a profession, it does not seem surprising that doubt would characterize an attempt to assert its value. The empowering movement of this group through doubt to a recovery of power and confidence through collaboration suggests the necessity of counteracting certain attitudes to which teachers have been well-socialized as members of a culture, as teachers, and as women: 1) repressing intuitive and subjective knowledge as inappropriate data for "work"; and 2) not getting beyond "mutual consolation" (Grumet, 1988) to collective action.

1. Using Rather than Repressing the Subjective. "Subjective truth" and relational power have generally been put in parentheses in the work place as too messy and too unscientific. They have been seen as appropriate to the private domain of home and interpersonal relationships, a domain genderized in our culture in favor of females, but not as helps to get work done in the public arena, a domain genderized in favor of males. And even though schools may have been domesticated through the feminization of teaching (Clifford, 1989), the discourse used in administering those schools typically imitates the objective, measurement-oriented language of the work place, and reinforces in teachers and students alike a bifurcation of work and non-work, "a split between the repressive demands of work and the more expressive realm of private meaning" (Carlson, 1982, p. 126).

The FDC chose another type of language, one more suited to explore the partial and uncertain nature of teachers' understanding, the pain and joy of living in a world where all is not within one's control. This kind of subjective, inconclusive talk flew in the face of the assertive language of the marketplace, yet it invited more conversation, dialogue, and collaborative interpretation of complex realities (cf. McIntosh, 1985).

Strategies of teacher empowerment may well need to engage teachers in narrative language in order to break through the habits of a dominant educational discourse which covers up instead of discloses what teachers know.

2. Moving from Mutual Consolation to Collective Action. When teachers and leaders told their stories at FDC meetings, pain inevitably emerged, for theirs is a profession with "scant cultural power" (Clifford, 1989, p. 316). Paradoxically, the sharing of such stories led to a sense of relief, even liberation, when individuals realized that they were not alone in their experiences of disappointment or of celebration. The mutual consolation of recognition and empathy bonded the FDC and invigorated their commitment to their peers in the Network.

Mutual consolation provided an important beginning point, but it would not prove a strategy for transforming the teaching profession from inside out if it did not move from private support to public activity:

By identifying the perception of emotion with a form of solace rather than with action and communication, we replicate the patterns constituted by patriarchal relations in history and society and its divisions of public and private experience. (Grumet, 1988, pp. 90-91)

Teachers struggled to figure out what the pain and self-doubt they shared had to say to the work they wanted to do with teachers. Concretely, this involved a conscious effort to resist spending group work time in the therapeutic modes of response to pain so prevalent in our culture, that is, efforts to help someone identify her "problem" and then offer comfort. Rather, the attempt was to listen very carefully, to welcome the subjective experience as a clue about the doubts, devaluations, or resistances that other teachers or administrators might also know and feel, and then to interpret collaboratively what personal and political realities to keep in

mind in planning, implementing, and communicating with and on behalf of teachers.

This activity of intense discernment began to alter the very definition of "work" for the FDC. Over the course of its first year, the committee began to realize that its very wedding of subjective truth with communal (professional) interpretation, analysis, and choice for action was the important work to be done. Committee members began to shed, however slowly, the inherited standard of "real work" as visible, measurable accomplishment, and started internalizing the value of work that looked in the final analysis a great deal like what they did in teaching. Such a reevaluation proved to be a powerful motivator for action for FDC members, even in the face of internal self-doubt and external resistance. Strategies of teacher empowerment which invert the "business-as-usual" privileging of "objective" modes of knowing for "subjective" ones may well contribute to a strong articulation and affirmation of a type of experience and work that has been submerged and undervalued in the our culture (cf. Calas & Smircich, 1989).

CONCLUSION

The results suggest the usefulness of taking simultaneous insider and outsider approaches to research as means not only of more complete data collection, but also of providing a counterbalance on ways of interpreting experience. As Evered and Louis (1981) note, insiders' perceptions will always have a more powerful impact on a group than outsiders', while outsiders' perspectives are likely to have a stronger impact on external perspectives. The simultaneous use of these two approaches can both give insiders a chance to influence external opinions and enable their understandings of events to be seen within a larger context.

The results also suggest the necessity of intertwining public and private dimensions, both in approaches to and understanding of empowerment for teachers. The original focus of this change effort was primarily public: to move the teachers beyond the private sphere of their classroom into the public domain. This aim was accomplished. Nevertheless, the primary emotional experience associated with this effort had strong "private" components, and, in fact, the two leaders found they had to work with the private dimensions of self-doubt in order to move the public work forward. It is important in future change efforts to devote conscious attention to both of these elements simultaneously.

Related to the intertwining of the public and private dimensions, the study focused both on the implementation and development of the founders' initial idea for the group and of relational issues salient to that idea. Originally these were experienced as somewhat separate, with the ideas considered primarily towards the public sphere of accomplishments and relationships primarily in the private sphere of internal group strengthening. Over time, however, these two dimensions came to be joined to a considerable extent, with the "work" eventually experienced as integrally linked with dimensions of group members' relationships.

Finally, the results suggest important confirmation regarding issues of teacher reform and the use of research for this purpose. We noted at the beginning of this paper that most research regarding teaching has been external to the profession, and that not much attention has been given to the role teachers might play in generating a knowledge base for the profession (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1990). This study described a proactive approach to empowerment, one that attended not only to public outsider perspectives, but

also to private internal ones. In this case, the teachers were highly involved in the research. The results of the study suggest the possibility of another approach teachers might take beyond ignoring educational research. They may contribute to it themselves, and, in the process, influence and transform their own and outsiders' understandings of their profession.

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