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ABSTRACT

Since educational administrators must study leadership as related to improving classroom instruction, the purpose of this study was to determine if any patterns existed in the relationship between leadership and teaching reform in four previously published case studies. The studies examined were: "Elementary Schooling for Critical Democracy" (Goodman 1992); "After the School Bell Rings" (Grant and Sleeter 1996); "Making Multicultural Education Work" (May 1994); and "The Fate of an Innovative School: The History and Present Status of the Kensington School" (Smith, et al. 1987). The macrostructure of the study consisted of four domains: leadership, teaching, organization, and social context. The study's microstructure consisted of three perspectives: functionalist, interpretivist, and critical. The paper compares the four studies with respect to the four domains. Particular attention is paid to successful schools. Common patterns in the major areas of connectedness and criticalness differentiated successful schools from unsuccessful ones. These schools had an underlying principle of cooperation and generally fostered a critical perspective toward certain broad social contexts. Overlapping perspectives were also shared by successful schools. The paper closes with implications for research, practice, and organization. (Contains 67 references, 2 figures and 3 tables.) (RIB)

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Leadership and Teaching in Four Schools with Varied Organizational Structures and Social Contexts

by

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Background

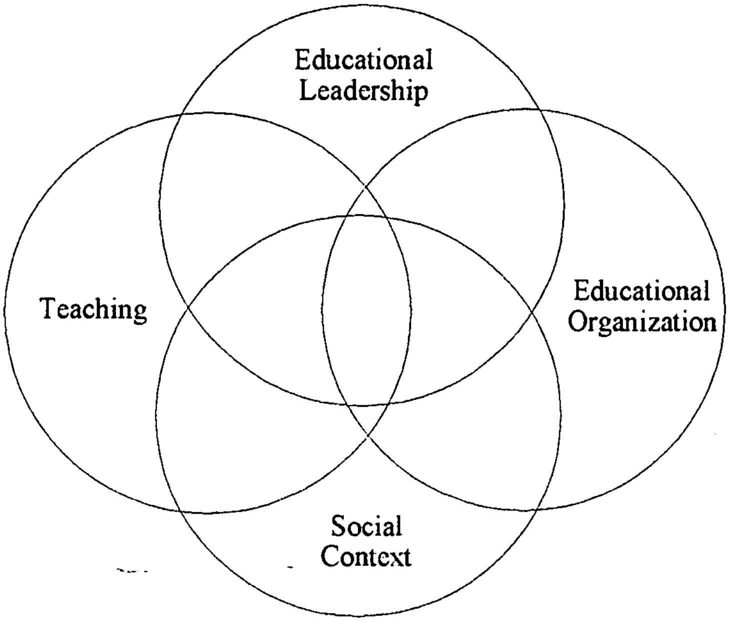
The foundation for this research is the belief that we in educational administration must study leadership as it relates to improving classroom instruction because teaching is the essence of why we are, what we are, and how we act. "But there remains an uneasy feeling among many observers that research in educational administration gives insufficient attention to issues of learning and teaching in schools" (Rowan, 1995, p. 345). But after over thirty years of educational reform prompted by the Coleman Report in 1966, many claim classroom teaching has changed very little (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991; Cuban, 1984; Spring, 1994).

The purpose of this study was to determine patterns in the relationship between leadership and teaching reform in existing case studies. Four domains - leadership, teaching, organization, and social context - served as the macro-framework, and three perspectives - functionalist, interpretivist, and critical - comprised the micro-framework.

The Macro-framework

Greenfield (1995) asserted that leadership is at the center of teaching reform because leadership influences teachers to change and facilitates instructional improvement. Rowan (1995) extended Greenfield's discussion by stating that leadership is one of four overlapping areas - leadership, teaching, organization, and social context, and contended that it was the overlap of these four that should be the focus of study. By focusing on this overlap as the research construct, researchers in educational administration can better investigate the relationship of leadership and teaching (see Figure 1). The question moves from, "What is the linkage between leadership and teaching?" to, "What is the relationship between school leadership and teaching in varied organizational and social contexts?"

Figure 1. The Overlap of the Four Domains



Adapted from: Rowan, B. (1995). Learning, teaching, and educational administration: Toward a research agenda. Educational Administration Quarterly, 31 (3), 344-354.

The Micro-framework

The stagnancy in teaching reform can, in part, be attributed to a stagnancy in perspective. Perspectives or paradigms are the foundation for human thought and activity. Historically, macroscopic paradigm shifts have inspired innovative thinking (Kuhn, 1970). They paved the way for modern thought from Aristotle through the Enlightenment to Newton. But perspectives also drive thinking and actions at a micro-level. Burrell and Morgan (1979) categorized existing social theory into four types, functionalism, interpretivism, radical humanism and radical structuralism which became a framework for much educational discourse (Capper, 1993; Denzin, 1994; Doyle, 1995; Doyle & Reitzug, 1993; Foster, 1986a, 1986b; Gioia & Pitre, 1990; Hassard, 1991; Reitzug & Cross, 1993; Sirotnik & Oakes, 1986; Skrtic, 1991). Radical humanism and radical structuralism focus on social change, and based on their similarity of purpose, are often combined (Macionis, 1994) and referred to as the critical perspective (Capper, 1993; Doyle, 1995; Doyle & Reitzug, 1993; Foster, 1986a, 1986b; Reitzug, 1994; Sirotnik & Oakes, 1986) which will also be the terminology used for this discussion. In the following, I discuss the tenets underlying each of these perspectives with examples in research and practice (see Table 1).

The Functionalist Perspective

According to a functionalist perspective, knowledge and learning are rational. Proponents view social issues as objective constructs waiting to be discovered and/or evaluated. Its corresponding research methodology is based on the scientific method and emphasizes quantitative analysis. Functionalism is,

> firmly rooted in the sociology of regulation and approaches its subject matter from an objectivist point of view...It is characterised by a concern for providing explanations of *the status quo, social order, consensus, social integration, solidarity, need satisfaction* and *actuality*. It approaches these general sociological concerns from a standpoint which tends to be *realist, positivist, determinist* and *nomothetic*. (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, pp. 25-26)

The emphasis on the functionalist perspective is evident in both educational research and practice. For example, Hallinger and Heck (1996) reviewed the research between 1980 and 1995 that assessed the relationship between the principal's role and school effectiveness. Of the 40

Table 1. A Contrast of Three Perspectives

	Functionalist	Interpretivist	Critical
Beliefs/ Assumptions	Knowledge and learning is rational; social issues are constructs waiting to be discovered and/or evaluated	Knowledge is socially constructed by people's perceptions and actions; the social world is an emergent process.	Knowledge is power; emphasis is emancipation and the freedom of oppressed persons from control of those holding power.
Point of View	objective, deterministic	subjective	social obligation
Purpose	to provide explanations of the status quo and to maintain order through prediction and control	to provide discussion and dialogue regarding the emerging social process	to eliminate social oppression and inequality
Methodology	measurable for prediction; the scientific method and quantitative measures	generation of descriptions, interpretations and theory of social constructions	study and critique of power and oppression; social advocacy
Examples in Schools	programmed instruction; standardized testing; tracking (special education)	inter-disciplinary teaching; authentic assessment; site-based management	projects of advocacy and community improvement; integrated instruction

studies, reviewed, 83 percent were quantitative studies while only 17 percent were qualitative. Teaching practices that have emerged from the functionalist perspective include programmed instruction, standardized testing, and the categorization of students through tracking, compensatory programs, and special education legislation.

The Interpretive Perspective

Interpretivism is the view that emphasizes emerging social process rather than regulation and order. Interpretivists describe social constructions and explain how they relate to theory. They view issues as subjective and created by people's perceptions. According to Burrell and Morgan (1979), "The interpretive paradigm is informed by a concern to understand the world as it is...It sees the social world as an emergent social process which is created by the individuals concerned" (p. 28).

Examples of interpretivism in research are case studies and ethnographies that describe and interpret one or a few particular settings. A growing number of interpretive studies use samples that are purposively, not randomly, selected to investigate issues such as, the evolution of a high school during desegregation (Grant, 1988) or the qualities and behaviors of a collaborative principal (Reitzug & Reeves, 1992). In practice, the increasing use of descriptive and collaborative assessment methods (portfolios) reflects a more interpretive perspective.

Throughout the remainder of this study, I use the term constructivism in place of interpretivism for several reasons. First, although they differ, both interpretivism and constructivism are terms that have been used to describe an overlapping set of beliefs. Phillips (1995) contends that, for many areas of inquiry, there is an overlap of intentions but not language. Disciplines retain their professional and specialized language to communicate similar meanings.

Second, constructivism is an interpretive view that has been aligned both with leadership (Lambert, 1995) and with teaching (von Glasserfeld, 1996) which I will describe later. By using this shared terminology, the discussion more closely binds the domains of schools. Third, constructivism is a term used more widely in current educational discussions, particularly regarding teaching practices, and therefore, may be more familiar and clear to practitioners.

The Critical Perspective

A critical view differs most from functionalism and interpretivism in its emphasis on emancipation, the freedom of oppressed persons from control of those holding power. Critical theorists, feminists, neo-Marxists, postmodernists, and poststructuralists, redefine power, encourage the study of social oppression and inequality, and promote social advocacy. Those holding a critical view argue that the current aim of public education is to efficiently teach for individual gain rather than to finding resolutions for societal problems. They aim to move that emphasis from the individual to the common good arguing that schools must be inclusionary communities not only for students of all ethnic and cultural backgrounds, but also for at risk students and students with disabilities. The process of developing an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) is an example of a critically driven practice if it is properly implemented. The process of empowered guardians collaborating with the school to develop an educational plan for their child stands in strong contrast to traditional parent-teacher conferences where teachers transmit summaries of student successes or failures to non-participative, powerless guardians.

Three Perspectives Applied to the Four Domains

To clarify the relationship of the frameworks, I now describe how each domain would look according to each perspective. To assist with analysis, I contrasted these in Table 2.

Table 2. The Four Domains According to Three Perspectives

	Functionalist	Constructivist	Critical
Leadership	Autocratic Principal at apex of a hierarchy Positional power - assigns and requires	Collaborative Principal at the center of the organization Sharing of some power	Reformative Principal integrated in the vision of social reform Exchange of power
Teaching	Transmits curriculum in discrete, linear units- emphasis on basic skills Product oriented	Transforms learners - emphasis on cognitive structures and situated learning Process oriented	Develops learners as advocates for social improvement Social reform oriented
Organization	Hierarchical Bureaucratic	Collaborative Communal	United with community Advocative
Social Context	Community involvement - supplemental Orientation - preserving the status quo	Community involvement - essential Orientation - embracing educational change	Community involvement - indispensable Orientation - advocating for social change and/or disenfranchised

Leadership

Functionalist leaders are autocratic. They allocate power by way of assigning it to positions within an organization. Therefore, in schools, the principal is placed at the top of the hierarchy and is responsible for all decisions and policies. The purpose of the organization is to maintain order and the status quo.

In contrast, constructivist leaders redistribute this power to additional stakeholders. According to constructivist thinking, social practices are socially created and not merely products of social reproduction. Decision-making is viewed as a collaborative process with the principal at the center of the organization working with teachers, not mandating to them. Leadership is distinguished from management and is shared within the school community. Although conflict may occur, the constructivist leader recognizes that managed conflict brings diversity of ideas, and guides members to understand that, as part of a community, they "agree to disagree" (Lambert, 1995, p. 39). Stakeholders become a team to build a shared vision for the school. That vision will be as unique as each school community is, and implementation will depend on a unified effort.

Critical leadership centers around a vision of social reform. Critical leadership is moral and value driven (Sergiovanni, 1992). Critical leaders focus on the examination of power and the elimination of inequality, and school principals are integrated into that vision. In critical schools, power is not given from leaders, but is exchanged so that there is shared ownership. Critical leadership emerges from the relationship between individuals and fluctuates between ascribed leaders and followers (Foster, 1989).

Teaching

Functionalist teaching, often referred to as traditional teaching, transmits a product to learners. That product is a specified curriculum composed of discrete and linear units, and delivery of the product is typically measured through objective, standardized tests.

Constructivist teaching, in contrast, is process oriented. Its purpose is to transform learners by teaching them the processes of learning. Students learn how to utilize cognitive structures and apply them to current knowledge and experience. Therefore, teaching stresses the inter-relatedness of learning through team teaching, hands-on instruction, and assessment which attempts to be more authentic through such methods as problem based evaluation.

Teaching that emerges from a critical perspective emphasizes the development of learners who advocate for social reform. Teaching strategies emphasize the study and critique of power and oppression. Critical teaching instills a sense of social obligation into students with an emphasis on the common good over individualism.

Organization

The functionalist perspective is objective and deterministic. Functionalists believe that order is maintained through prediction and control, and therefore, the bureaucracy with its hierarchical structure emerged as the organizational structure to maintain this order. Constructivism, on the other hand, is subjective and interpretive. Constructivists believe that since social practices are socially created, everyone should have a sense of community and contribute to the ongoing social dialogue. The organization functions collaboratively, and the metaphor of community is used frequently in place of organization. The critical perspective adds the belief that knowledge is power; emphasis is on the common good and the emancipation of oppressed persons from control of those holding the power. Therefore, the organization of the school is united with the community in advocating for social reform and emerges as the one that can best achieve this end.

Social Context

A school community that emerges from a functionalist perspective does not want change. Stakeholders in the community want to preserve the status quo. The order that they see in traditional education is consistent with their views of society, and they want to be able to control and predict society as it has been. Educators are viewed as the experts, and the role of parents and other community members is supplemental to what educators do with children.

On the other hand, a constructivist community sees its role as essential to the functioning of the school. If collaboration and dialogue are key to the education of children in a communal organization, parents and other community members must be part of that dialogue. A constructivist community is open to discussing education that differs from traditional teaching. A critical context advocates for social change. The emphasis is on improving social conditions, equality, and the common good. Both the school and the community would see community involvement as indispensable to the school, because, in essence, the purpose of a critical school is the community.

Included in this latter group are those school communities which are disenfranchised for reasons based on gender, race, culture, disability, poverty, or language differences. They are the disempowered without a sense of agency, the "have nots" who are acted upon because they do not feel empowered to act. They do not challenge traditional teaching because it remains the way they know it; things simply have not changed. They differ from functionalist parents who support the status quo and do not want to see change in that they might not actively promote critical education as I have described it, but they recognize their oppressed status and would accept reform of the social structures which control their lives.

I now move to a discussion of the methodology that I used to analyze existing case studies using the frameworks.

Method Overview

This research study attempted to unearth patterns about the relationship between leadership and teaching in existing case studies and, as such, was one of interpretation and synthesis. There are a number of ethnographic studies which describe teaching and leadership in various forms of educational organizations and social contexts. Embedded in ethnographies such as, Jesse Goodman's (1992) study of Harmony Elementary School in Indiana and Stephen May's study of Richmond Road School in New Zealand, are examples and interpretations of how schools are reforming teaching and leadership with various levels of success. These examples and interpretations need to be unearthed and analyzed for how they collectively help us understand the relationship of leadership and teaching. But, because these studies are site specific, generalization and synthesis across cases is difficult.

Noblit and Hare (1988) developed a research design called meta-ethnography that provides strategies for interpretation and synthesis across studies. Meta-ethnography is a systematic comparison and interpretation of the descriptions, findings, and interpretations of existing "long-term, intensive studies involving observation, interviewing, and document review" (Noblit & Hare, 1988, p. 13). By combining and adapting the work of Noblit and Hare (1988) and Rossman (1993), I developed implementation strategies which I can only summarize briefly here. Although I explain the strategies as discrete steps, which makes them appear linear, the process was integrated, and there was considerable overlap between steps.

Study Selection

My sample of case studies was purposively chosen. Because the ethnographies selected were book-length works and my purpose was understanding over aggregation, four studies provided an extensive amount of data which was sufficient to address the research question.

Criteria for Selection

The four ethnographies were chosen based on the following criteria. The first three relate to research design characteristics. The fourth criteria addresses the appropriateness and completeness of the data as it relates to the macro-framework of this study, and the last criteria pertains to variability in school characteristics.

- Each case selected must be a study of a single school.
- Each study selected must meet the essential requirements of ethnographic methodology.
- Data for each study must be relevant to current educational literature.
- Each case must provide rich descriptions and interpretations with a focus on (a) the leadership in the school, (b) the efforts to reform teaching in the school, (c) the organization of the school, and (d) the social context of the school community.
- Each case must contribute to achieving maximum variability in the sample as a whole.

Cases Selected

After reviewing approximately seventy studies, I selected the following four studies based on the criteria just described.

Elementary schooling for critical democracy (Goodman, 1992). This book is the study of Harmony School, a small, private school in Bloomington, Indiana. Harmony is an elementary school situated in a predominantly white, middle class university town with a tendency toward liberal ideologies. The student population was 25% minority and 75% white. The focus of Harmony School is teaching critical democracy as an alternative to the individualism of American culture.

After the school bell rings (Grant & Sleeter, 1996). Five Bridges is a large, public, secondary school in a major urban area in the Midwest serving a predominantly lower middle class community. The school's population is diverse with 5% African American, Native American, and Asian students, 28% Hispanic, and 67% White. The focus of the school was purported to be multicultural education.

Making multicultural education work (May, 1994). Richmond Road School is a mid-sized, public elementary school in Auckland, New Zealand. The school community consists of Maori, European New Zealanders, and other South Pacific Islanders. The focus of the school is cultural maintenance and access to power through multicultural, multi-lingual education.

The fate of an innovative school: The history and present status of the Kensington School (Smith, Prunty, Dwyer, & Kleine, 1987). Kensington School is a large, public, elementary school in a suburban area of the Ohio River Valley. Smith and Keith (1971) studied Kensington during its first year of operation as a school specializing in open education. At that time, the community was lower middle class and predominantly white. In 1979, Smith et al. returned for a follow-up study of Kensington School which, due to demographic shifts, was predominantly African American. The leadership, teaching staff, and organization of the school had changed dramatically from the school they had first studied. This study concentrated on the study of the early Kensington through an historical lens.

Data Analysis

Data analysis consisted of conceptually deconstructing and coding each case individually according to the principles of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). After extracting approximately 300 key descriptors from each study, I coded these according to the macro and micro frameworks. Using these key descriptors, I reconstructed each study into a new interpretation which emerged from my research focus. In writing these interpretations, I determined dominant perspective/s for each of the domains in each study. These determinations were guided by three boundary conditions which I will describe later.

During synthesis, I deconstructed the four interpretations I had written, again extracting key descriptors and coding them according to the macro and micro frameworks. I juxtaposed these key descriptors across domains and across studies to determine patterns in each domain as well as in the overlap of the domains.

Trustworthiness

Throughout the study I maintained an audit trail (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1988) documenting my process and decisions during case selection and analysis. I submitted a draft of each interpretation to the original authors for their review and comment and solicited additional input. From their comments, I learned that I had understood their studies and that they viewed the macro and micro-frameworks of my study as creditable and applicable to their works. The authors' feedback also confirmed that they agreed with the predominant perspective/s I described and selected for each domain of their study.

Additionally, my raw data consisted of four, readily available published ethnographies. Because users of my meta-ethnography have access to these studies, they will be able to determine if my biases shrouded what was actually there far easier than with most qualitative studies where the raw data is not as readily available.

Findings

The four schools included in this study fell into two categories: those which were portrayed favorably or positively by the authors and those which were portrayed unfavorably or in a negative light. Authors who told favorable stories made the schools appear as if they were succeeding. They did not specifically define criteria for success nor report stellar standardized test scores, but rather described model programs that were recognized as exemplary not only by the authors, but also by others as noted in comments describing national and international recognition and frequent visitors to observe the programs. Favorable also meant that the programs had staying power. That is, they were not just models of educational trends that diminished after the initial enthusiasm had worn off, but the strength of the innovative programs could be seen in their longevity.

The two schools which were portrayed as successful along these lines were Harmony School (Goodman, 1992) and Richmond Road School (May, 1994). Although Kensington School's program was recognized nationally as innovative, Smith et al. (1987) described how it was plagued with problems from its inception and was transitory. Grant and Sleeter's (1996) analysis of Five Bridges School portrayed a school that, despite its stated multicultural reform effort, lacked innovation, enthusiasm, and commitment to the education of students.

In the following, I discuss not only the similarities and differences between the four case studies according to the four domains, but I also go beyond description attempting "in some way to make sense of what the collection of studies is saying" (Noblit & Hare, 1988, pp. 14-15). This discussion is based on the reduction of key descriptors summarized in Table 3. Throughout this section, I pay particular attention to the two exemplary schools, Harmony and Richmond Road Schools because the synthesis of these two cases revealed several noteworthy contrasts.

Leadership

Leadership and Power

Power relationships between administrators and teachers had a strong impact on how schools were perceived. In the two unsuccessful schools, power was not shared. The administrators professed ideals of democratic leadership, but reality showed otherwise. At Five Bridges, they espoused situational leadership but used it "minimally in practice" (p. 196). At Kensington School, administrators espoused democratic leadership, but when differences arose, leadership became "directive" (p. 63) and "conflict" with staff ensued (p. 63).

In the two exemplary schools, there were "transformed power dynamics" (p. 65). At Harmony School, the administrators no longer were the ones responsible for the teaching function. Their "realm of power" (p. 67) was predominantly in issues that were financial, legal, and/or external to the school. The teachers owned instruction and as a result, also controlled a great deal of the organizational structures which supported that role. Their "realm of power" (p. 67) was over their area of expertise or their "sphere of influence" (p. 67), and the "transformed power dynamics" (p. 65) of the school allowed every member to feel "free to cross [these] lines of labor" (p. 65).

Table 3. A Contrast of Key Descriptors

	Harmony School	Five Bridges School	Richmond Road School	Kensington School
Leadership and Power	"transformed power dynamics" (p. 65) "realm of power and sphere of influence" (p. 67) "free to cross lines of labor" (p. 72)	espoused situational leadership; used "minimally in practice" (p. 196)	"provisional authority- person who knows most in given situation" (p. 98) "charismatic" (p. 64) maintenance of control "requires" (p. 166)	"directive" (p. 63) "conflict" with staff ensued (p. 63)
Leadership - Visions	strong vision of "critical democracy" (p. 7)	no explicit or rich vision (p. 241) "not guided by a philosophy" (p. 85)	"firm in his beliefs" (p. 67) "cultural maintenance and access to power" (p. 61)	"pursuit of the grail" (p. 13) "sell" the vision (p. 63) "not congruent with community" (p. 373)* "short-lived" (p. 178)
Leadership - Visions and Practice	created ethos of "mutual trust" (p. 64)	"tended to maintain the status quo more than challenge it" (p. 200)	created "self-sustaining, self-generating systems" (p. 151)	held democratic ideals, but leadership often "directive" (p. 63) plan "more vital...than anything else" (p.63)
Teaching - Commitment to a Critical Vision	"critical democracy"(p.7) goals of "social concern and responsibility" (p.30) "ideology establishes impact" (p. 125)	"not guided by a set of beliefs" (p. 210) "teachers did not really care about or respect students" (p. 208)	"unusual degree of commitment" (p. 81) "cultural maintenance and access to power" (p. 61)	initially committed to theory of pupil development toward maturity (p. 95)
Teaching - Theory, Reflection, and Dialogue	teachers are "transformative intellectuals" (p. 170) "dialogical" (p. 154)	"not guided by a set of beliefs" (p. 210) "did not critically examine" (p. 209) "rarely exchanged ideas" (p. 207)	"high degree of theoretical literacy" (p. 189) "reflective practitioners" "critically informed action" "knowledge in "resistance strategies" (p. 83)	"true believers" (p. 188) "accepted ideology" (p. 395*)

Table Continues

Teaching - Curriculum and Instruction	"instruction as important as curriculum" (p. 121) "various approaches to pedagogy" (p. xiv)	"guided by a limited repertoire of strategies" (p. 210) "disseminators of prepackaged content" (p. 193) "transmission" (p. 129) "basic skills" emphasis (p. 82)	"core competencies" (p. 193 "extensive resource development (p. 133) "individual learning needs addressed" (p. 174)	"creative, innovative, " (p. 188) goal of teaching - "pupil development toward maturity (p. 95)
Organization - Structures for Decision-Making	transformed power (p.65) "symmetrical and asymmetrical" (p. 65-66) "differential lines of labor" (p. 73) "free to cross lines of labor" (p. 65)	"bureaucratic" (p. 240) goals "mandated" (p. 74) "proposed by building administrators...ratified by faculty" (p. 74)	"structures create interactive and democratic teaching" (p. 75) curriculum teams "reconstituted at discretion of principal" (p. 168)	espoused democratic; practices autocratic and "directive" (p. 63) non-collaborative (p. 63)
Organization - Structures for Delivery of Teaching	subject area classes semi-graded (pp. 124-125) topics classes multi-graded, multi-age (p. 124-125)	"departments" (p. 20) graded (p. 20) multicultural education an "add on" (p. 207) focus on maintaining order (p. 240)	"ropu" - Maori for family grouping (p. 173) "careful and rigorous monitoring" (p. 170) especially of resources	"vertical and horizontal organization" (p. 35*) "flexible...frequent reorganization" (p. 34)
Context - Needs and Perspectives	"parent and school homogeneity of beliefs and purpose" (p. 57) parents' "liberal beliefs" consistent (p. 120)	community disenfranchised due to ethnicity, class, and language (pp. 15-16) teachers distance themselves from the community (p. 192)	disenfranchised (pp. 56-57) "cultural pluralism combined with structural pluralism" (p. 193) "access to power" (p. 61)	incongruous" (p. 189) "community dissatisfaction" (p. 30) "confrontations" (p. 34*)
Context - Agency	inherent agency - parents initiated selection as alternative for their children's education (p. 57)	agency not inherent - parent "intimidation" by white professional staff (p. 224)	agency not inherent-empowered by school - multiculturalism "permeated every facet of school life" (p. 56)	inherent agency - parents expressed "dissatisfaction" (p. 30) "frustration" (p. 48)

* from Smith & Keith (1971)

At Richmond Road School, power was also redistributed. Principal Laughton promoted "provisional authority" (p. 98), that is, the person who knows the most in a given situation holds the power. He then created structures which, in turn, empowered teachers and parents. However, he also placed requirements on teachers and parents (p. 166), thus maintaining an element of control, certainly more than the administrators at Harmony School did. Principal Laughton was extremely "charismatic" (p. 64), and few challenged his "realm of power."

Visions

Along with a shift in power came commitment to a vision. At Harmony School, the leaders, along with all other stakeholders in the school, held a strong vision for "critical democracy" (p. 7). Principal Laughton at Richmond Road School stood "firm in his beliefs" (p. 67) for a school committed to "cultural maintenance and access to power" (p. 61) for its students. On the other hand, the administrators at Five Bridges School had no explicit or rich vision (p. 241). They were "not guided by a philosophy" (p. 85), nor were their teachers.

In contrast, Principal Shelby's vision at Kensington School was so strong it prompted Smith and Keith (1971) to remark that he was in "pursuit of the grail" (p. 13). But, administrative commitment to a vision without complete support from the other three domains was insufficient for a school to be successful. Shelby's vision was predominantly his own. Although he hired staff who held similar beliefs, as differences emerged, he continued to try to "sell" (p. 63) his ideas rather than collaborate, listen, and modify his own. Also missing from the Kensington vision was the social context. One of the greatest problems at Kensington School was that many of the changes that the administrators sought were "not congruent with the lower middle class values of the community" (Smith & Keith, 1971, p. 373), and as a result, growing community problems ensued making the terms of the administrators and their visions "short-lived" (p. 178).

Visions and Practice

In the successful schools, the espoused perspectives of the leaders were consistent and connected to practice. An enthusiastically shared vision without adequate implementation is a vision that will fail (Doyle & Huinker, 1995; Kritek, 1992; Kyle, 1993). At Harmony School, behaviors were consistent with the vision for a critically democratic school. Administrators transferred authority and created an ethos of "mutual trust" (p. 64). At Richmond Road, implementation of the vision meant establishing structures that were "self-sustaining and self-generating" (p. 151). Access to power, a school goal, meant resisting institutional obstacles (p. 83) when necessary. Principal Laughton put his words into action by confronting those obstacles and informing his teachers about resistance theory and strategies.

Argyris (1976) found that espoused theories are often not the theories-in-use indicating that fundamental perspectives have really not been internalized. Such was the case in the two schools portrayed negatively. At Five Bridges School, the administrators talked about multicultural education, but their practices "tended to maintain the status quo more than challenge it" (p. 200). Constructivism was on their lips; functionalism was in their actions - and also still deep in their minds according to Argyris. A similar situation occurred at Kensington School but to a lesser degree. The administrators held democratic ideals, but leadership was often "directive" (p. 63), especially if members questioned the school plan which was "more vital...[to administrators] than anything else" (p. 63).

Teaching

Commitment to a Critical Vision

The definition of teacher commitment has been elusive in the literature. Firestone (1990) isolated a common theme: "a psychological bond between the individual and the object of commitment, a bond that takes on special meaning and importance for that individual" (p. 215). In addition, that bond involves a strong affiliation with beliefs and a willingness to work toward goals over a period of time. However, finding the object of the commitment has also been elusive (Firestone & Rosenblum, 1988).

Success in this study was related to strong teacher commitment to a vision which emerged from a critical perspective. Despite notable differences in implementation, teachers in both of the successful schools were passionate in their commitment to social reform. At Harmony School, the target of reform was the individualism that prevailed throughout American culture. Through "critical democracy" (p. 7), Harmony teachers hoped to increase students' "social concern and responsibility" (p. 30). In fact, belief in this vision was "essential to obtaining a teaching position" (p. 55) at Harmony School and the "hiring of faculty [became a] primary form of social control" (J. Goodman, personal communication, 2-21-97). The result was a homogeneous (p.78) school staff completely committed to a critical vision.

At Richmond Road School, there also was an "unusual degree of commitment" (p. 81) to a critical vision. Teachers were committed to maintaining cultural differences through bilingual programming while increasing access to power (p. 61) through emphasis on core competencies. Teachers placed a "priority on the development of basic skills" (p. 171) because they believed that these were the skills their students needed to compete in the larger social system.

While commitment to a vision that was critical was important in both successful schools, it was not in the unsuccessful ones. Commitment of staff at Kensington School was high, but it was based on constructivist ideas of how students should be taught, not critically based on social change. The emphasis of Kensington's program was improving individual learning for student gain. Hired because of their similarity of purpose, the Kensington School staff started at the school as a staff committed to the theories of open education (p. 95). They began as a group of "true believers" (p. 188), but as problems and conflicts developed, "heterogeneity of ideology grew" (p. 53), and commitment waned. At Five Bridges School, it was difficult to determine what the commitment was at the school. Teachers were "not guided by a set of beliefs" (p. 210), "not dedicated," (p. 195), and "did not really care about or respect the students" (p. 208). Their commitment was to fulfilling the parameters of the teacher contract - no more, no less (p. 194).

Theory, Reflection, and Dialogue

Research indicates that successful teachers understand learning theories and their relationships to their classrooms and are able to evaluate and reflect upon their own application of those theories (Osterman & Kottkamp, 1993; Schon, 1987). They need feedback from their peers and opportunities for collegial interactions (Fullan, 1991; Little, 1982; Shulman, 1989). The teachers at Harmony School were "transformative intellectuals" (p. 170) who familiarized themselves with educational and social theories which they discussed continually. Even though the school provided opportunities for collegial exchange, it was insufficient for this stimulated group, and so the teachers often met on their own to continue their "dialogue" (p. 154). At Richmond Road School, the principal recognized that the teachers had a need for "a high degree of theoretical literacy" (p. 189). He created the structures for teachers to meet to discuss these theories and to develop appropriate materials for the school. Teachers were "required" (p. 166) to spend a set time weekly in this endeavor and through the empowering efforts of their principal, emerged as "reflective practitioners" (p. 83) who were informed about critical theory and resistance strategies (p. 83).

In contrast, the Five Bridges School teachers were not well versed in educational theory, did not have a set of beliefs (p. 210), "did not critically examine" (p. 209) and "rarely exchanged ideas" (p. 207). The Kensington School teachers were "true believers" (p. 188) who "accepted ideology" (Smith & Keith, 1971, p. 395) rather than reflective thinkers who developed their own.

Curriculum and Instruction

It was not curriculum but the connection of curriculum to teaching strategies that pointed to success. Teachers at Harmony School, believed that "instruction was as important as curriculum" (p. 121). At both Richmond Road and Five Bridges Schools, the curriculum emphasized reading, basic skills, and core competencies, but at the former, it was apparently successful; at the latter, it failed. Grant and Sleeter (1996) argued that the teachers at Five Bridges School were guided by a "limited repertoire of strategies" (p. 210) which emerged from functionalist beliefs and traditional practices that stressed "transmission" (p. 129) of products. Instead of placing content in a socially or ethically related context, the teachers required boring drill of isolated skills that had no apparent relevance for students. Teachers were "busy doing" (p. 210) rather than deciding their own actions, and as a result, the Five Bridges School teachers were "disseminators of prepackaged content" (p. 193) written by textbook publishers and curriculum developers.

This was not the case at Richmond Road or Kensington Schools. The structures in place at Richmond Road School transformed teachers into authors and developers of their own curriculum and instructional materials (p. 133). Teachers developed elaborate resources which they used to address the individual learning needs (p. 174) of their students while teaching, in a multilingual setting, the core competencies that students would need to compete against the white European power class of New Zealand. At Kensington School, teachers were "creative and innovative" (p. 188). They planned and experimented with alternative strategies to reach their goal of mature, self-directed learners (p. 95). However, when difficulties arose, their beliefs disintegrated.

Organization

There were several types of organizational structures described in the four studies. In my analysis, I described these according to those used for participation in decision-making and those used for teaching.

Structures for Participatory Decision-making

The reform literature has emphasized that teacher participation in decision-making increases the likelihood of improved education for students (Carnegie Forum, 1986; Fullan, 1993; Murphy & Beck, 1995). When comparing the cognitive and organizational research, Firestone (1996) linked participation in decision-making to teacher commitment asserting that participation increases autonomy, responsibility, meaning, and ownership" (p. 221).

The organizational structures in the two exemplary schools altered the power structures of the bureaucracy (p. 65) with the resultant organization looking both "symmetrical and asymmetrical" (Goodman, 1992, pp. 65-66) in that there were "differentiated lines of labor" (p. 73). At Harmony School, teachers had more than input into the decision-making process for teaching; they owned it. The "realms of power" and "spheres of influence" of administrators were legal, financial, and external issues, but anyone was "free to cross these lines of labor" (p. 65). The organization operated more as a community with give and take between all domains including the parents and local community. Harmony had "no written delegation of authority" (p. 74), "no written policies" (p. 67). Structures were informal, dialogical, and flexible as in a "family" (p. 101). The beliefs were similar at Richmond Road School; however, the "structures [used to] create interactive and democratic teaching" (p. 75) were tighter and less flexible than those at Harmony School, and the principal maintained a higher degree of control (pp. 166; 168). Although the organizational structures differed between the two schools, the authors perceived both schools as successful.

Authors perceived schools where there were few or ineffective structures for shared decision making as unsuccessful. Practices at Five Bridges School were "bureaucratic" (p. 240) and hierarchical with broad goals "mandated" (p. 74) by the central office. School goals were "proposed by the building administrators" (p. 74) only to be "ratified by the faculty" (p. 74). At Kensington School, the organizational structures for decision-making were similar to those at Five Bridges School. The Kensington principal espoused a democratic philosophy of decision making, but practiced one that was autocratic and "directive" (p. 63), and there were few examples of shared decision-making nor collaborative vision setting (p. 63). Issues were decided either by majority rule rather than consensus or by administrative “directive" (p. 63).

Structures for Teaching

Ellis, Cogan and Howey (1991) contended that the key problem with organizational changes in schools is that they are seldom adequately integrated with curriculum and instruction;

in other words, the coupling of structures to teaching is too loose. But, according to Firestone (1996), the degree of coupling remains an unanswered research question, and "organizational form may not clearly preclude or facilitate certain approaches to teaching and learning" (p. 230).

In the successful schools in this study, structures were inextricably tied to teaching perspectives and implementation such that, although it was not always possible to determine if they precluded reform, they most definitely were tightly coupled and consistent with teaching perspective. At Harmony School, mornings were spent in partially graded classes which were organized by subject areas. Afternoons, however, were far more flexible and atypical. Groups were multi-graded, multi-age and organized around special topics which concentrated on the critical goals of the teaching program (p. 124-125). This provided the appropriate format for teachers to deliver their goals of "social concern and responsibility" (p. 30) and "critical democracy" (p. 7). The organizational structures allowed teachers to spend considerable time in dialogue with students and to create and employ teaching activities that taught students how to equalize power.

At Richmond Road School, student groups were organized according to language in multi-graded groups called "ropu" (p. 173) which is a Maori word for family grouping. Teaching was highly monitored, sequential, and organized around resources that were tied to very specific behavioral objectives with tight timetables (p. 170). Richmond Road School was far more structured than Harmony School. In fact, in some ways, the program at Richmond Road School appeared more structured than the traditional teaching at Five Bridges School.

But structure does not go hand in hand with functionalism. It was the perspective behind the method of delivery that made Richmond Road a critical school. The goal was not maintenance of the status quo, but rather "access to power" (p. 61). The belief was that the acquisition of core competencies by disempowered students was the key to that access. In contrast, the traditional structures at Five Bridges School were used to "actively" reproduce inequality (p. 224). Teaching was organized around grades and "departments" (p. 20), and focused on maintaining order (p. 240). The traditional organizational structures of the school provided no alternative ways for incorporating multicultural education other than as an "add on" (p. 207). The school touted multicultural education as its reform agenda, but did not couple any of the structures of the school with that agenda.

The story of Kensington School revealed that tight coupling of organizational structures to leadership and teaching would fail if not also coupled with the social context. In keeping with Kensington's open educational plan, the organizational structures were flexible, and complete school reorganizations were frequent (Smith & Keith, 1971, p. 34). However, that much flexibility was "incongruent" (p. 2) with the community ideology and ultimately was what uncoupled the school program from its social context.

Social Context

The social context was the local school community, and these differed between the four schools in crucial ways. How the schools interacted with the varied community perspectives and agency of members affected how authors perceived schools.

Varied Community Perspectives

When the school's perspective was inconsistent with that of the community, the schools were portrayed as unsuccessful. For example, the ideology at Kensington School was "incongruous" (p. 189) with its conservative community. In turn, "community dissatisfaction" (p.

30) escalated, and "confrontations" (Smith & Keith, 1971, p. 34) arose between educators and community members. At Five Bridges School, approximately one third of the families were Mexican American who were disenfranchised from the traditional perspective of the school. The school was insensitive to their needs, and, as a result, there was little interaction between the school, parents, and other community members. These disempowered parents did little to challenge the ineffective practices of the school which further reduced the opportunities for their children's franchising into the system..

In the successful schools, there was a unity of beliefs between the three domains of the school and social context. For example, at Harmony School, there was a "homogeneity of beliefs and purpose" (p. 57) between parents and the school. Many families held "liberal beliefs" (p. 120) which were consistent with the teaching at the school. Richmond Road School took a proactive stance to combine the "cultural pluralism" of the community with the "structural pluralism" (p. 193) of the school in order to provide "access to power" (p. 61) for students and their families. There was a sensitivity to the needs of the disenfranchised community unlike the active distancing practiced by the Five Bridges teachers (p. 192).

Agency

Agency is the state of acting or having the power to act (Giddens, 1976). In the four social contexts, agency was either inherent, absent, or acquired. In two of the schools the parents had inherent agency, that is, they perceived themselves as being able to act and cause an effect. This manifested itself in two different ways. At Harmony School, inherent agency empowered the parents to seek out an alternative for their children's education (p. 57). At Kensington School, inherent agency enabled parents to keep abreast of activities in the school and express their "dissatisfaction" (p. 30) and "frustration" (p. 48) when a constructivist program was thrust upon this conservative and functionalist community. Agency allowed the parents to express their "disapproval" (p. 156) of a program that was incongruous with community biases (p. 48).

In the other two schools, Five Bridges and Richmond Road, the parents were not empowered by their own inherent sense of agency, but rather, were members of groups that had been disenfranchised from the social system primarily because of class, race, and/or language. The way that each school addressed the needs of these groups was remarkably different. Over one third of the students and families of Five Bridges School were minorities, predominantly Mexican Americans. Because of "intimidation" by white professional staff (p. 224), parents were denied access to authentic participation in the school. Although the school proclaimed a multicultural emphasis, Five Bridges School did not take advantage of the diversity in the school. Functionalist and traditional thinking in the school kept student views on race, class, and sex, "naive" (p. 219) and "confused" (p. 202). Low teacher expectations and a watered down curriculum shattered students' dreams and channeled students into low paying jobs in the local economy. Without a sense of agency, the parents of Five Bridges School "did not challenge" (p. 209) the teachers and administrators who saw no need to actively alter this.

The opposite occurred at Richmond Road School where the school actively helped families acquire agency. Students and their families were members of New Zealand's lower class, minority groups, predominantly Maori and Pacific Islanders. Because of their overall disempowerment in the social system, this group did not typically initiate and advocate for social change. Recognizing the value of cultural pluralism, the school adopted an ethos of multiculturalism that "permeated every facet of school life" (p. 56). There was considerable emphasis on getting parents "involved" (p. 165). With the addition of motivating parent programs, involvement increased. Additionally, the school "required" (p. 87) parents to attend an interview with teachers at least twice a year. Instead of serving as a dreaded functionalist strategy as so many "requirements" are, the atmosphere created by staff and community members at these events made them festive occasions, and the "response was overwhelming" (p. 89). After many years of ongoing, gradual change, the emergent ethos in Richmond Road School was "egalitarian" (p. 62), and parents felt themselves to be an empowered part of the school.

Predominant Perspectives

Using these findings, I determined a predominant perspective for each domain in each school. Although this simplification may suppress subtleties and nuances in the texts, it was done to clarify and enlighten understanding of a more global picture, that is, the importance of the overlap of the four domains in the analysis of multiple case studies. To determine predominant perspectives, I examined the language of each study for its (a) essence, (b) redundancy, and (c) power.

First, the essence of the language used to describe beliefs and practices formed the key descriptors. I then compared these language patterns with the three perspectives as described above and coded them accordingly. For example, May described many behaviors of the principal at Richmond Road School such as, "set in place," "required," "clearly articulated," "made his teachers learn," and "handed down." When compared to Table 2, the language of each of these reflects a functionalist perspective.

Second, if the substance of the language used in key descriptors represented a similar idea which was used repeatedly, I said it was redundant; that is, the author described a perspective in a similar manner on numerous occasions. In the Richmond Road School example above, we see that, even though the words differed, there were multiple examples of how the author expressed the same perspective . Although I considered determining a frequency for this criteria, after a brief trial, I found it distorted my findings and was no more accurate than my subjective decisions. This was due to the continuous overlap of language. Key descriptors merely describe in a minimal way the idea being communicated in pages of rich contextual descriptions. To decontextualize this richness into austere units for counting purposes was in conflict with the intent of the original authors and my own goals in this study.

Third, in some cases the power of the language used was particularly strong indicating an intensity of the belief or practice being described and interpreted. As mentioned previously, the feedback from the original authors corroborated my determination of the predominant perspective/s.

At Harmony School

The beliefs and practices at Harmony School emerged predominantly from the critical and constructivist perspectives across all four domains. The administrators facilitated collaboration and dialogue within the school. They were not autocratic, nor at the apex of a hierarchy, but rather, they had exchanged power by transferring the teaching function completely to the teachers who decided matters of curriculum and instruction for the school. Recognition of "realms of power" and "spheres of influence" helped the school take advantage of what each person did best.

The teaching at Harmony School was also predominantly constructivist and critical. The emphasis was on the process of learning and transformed learners, not transmission of an established curriculum. Collectively, the teachers at Harmony School decided what and how to teach, and instruction was flexible and constantly emerging. Teachers placed an emphasis on developing learners that would become advocates for social improvement.

The organization at Harmony School was clearly not a functionalist bureaucracy. Although the organization was somewhat asymmetrical because participants recognized a need for some role differentiation, it was a community which stressed shared decision-making, collaboration, caring, and social reform. The structures for decision-making and for teaching provided opportunities for interaction and advancement of social reform which emerged from Harmony School's constructivist and critical perspectives.

The parents of the school community embraced education that was different from the status quo and were connected to the beliefs and purposes of the school. There was active involvement of the school in the community and involvement of the community in the school.

Of special notice was how the program at Harmony School looked beyond the local context. Emphasis was on a far broader social context than just that around Harmony School. The vision was to move the focus of American society from the individual to the collective for the good of all individuals despite ability, race, culture, class, or gender.

At Five Bridges School

The Five Bridges School administrators espoused support for constructivist teaching, but their practices were focused more on maintaining order and keeping the teachers satisfied.[1] They perpetuated the status quo through non-participatory decision making and inertia for changing the functionalist teaching in the school. Teaching stressed transmission of a traditional curriculum using a limited repertoire of strategies that were teacher dominated. The organizational structures in the school were consistent with this functionalist delivery method with teachers delivering prepackaged departmentalized curriculum in hasty and inflexible class periods.

But none of this was connected to the context of the students' lives. Almost all of the students and their families were members of a group or groups which were disenfranchised from the economic opportunities afforded to the dominant group. For these students, there was a division between their school lives and their home lives. The students did not see the relevance of school work, race, social class, and gender to their future dreams, and Five Bridges School did nothing to remedy this.

At Richmond Road School

The critical perspective was clearly dominant at Richmond Road School, and espoused beliefs and practices were consistent and "linked" between all four domains. The purpose of the school was cultural maintenance and access to power for students and their families who had been disenfranchised because of language differences. Just as the leadership was "critically conceived" (p. 60), so was the teaching. The stakeholders at Richmond Road School believed that the best way to implement this critically motivated purpose was through well defined organizational structures and tightly supervised curricular resource management which promoted academic rigor. This was the shared vision of leadership, teachers, staff, community members, and parents.

While critically conceived, in many ways, some of the implementation strategies at Richmond Road School also appeared functionalist. For example, the leadership at Richmond Road did not always encourage staff and parents in some implementation activities, but "required" them to attend, develop, and/or assess. Teaching and organizational structures were tightly coupled and closely monitored and stressed basic skills and core competencies with goals often behaviorally stated. However, unlike functionalism, these strategies were not hierarchically construed, indifferent, or detached, but were combined with understanding, caring, and commitment to developing an access to power for the school community and were consistent with the critical perspective.

Just as at Harmony School, members of the Richmond Road School looked to a broader social context than the local one. The school's vision was to overcome the "wider process of racism in New Zealand society" (p. 60) through teaching that provided the competencies students needed to compete while still maintaining cultural uniqueness through multilingual, multicultural education.

At Kensington School

The perspective of the Kensington School administrators was innovation and change from traditional to constructivist teaching. Principal Shelby purported ideas of collaboration, team teaching, and a sharing between students in multi-age and multi-level groupings. Those were beliefs about teaching. His perspectives on leadership also moved toward a more constructivist perspective in that he espoused a more democratic style of decision-making. However, espoused beliefs did not equate with practice. The early Kensington leaders inspired followers to ascribe to their vision, but did not inspire collaborative vision setting. The principal remained at the apex of the organization as its star, and in contrast to his espoused beliefs about leadership, his leadership practices were more functionalist than constructivist.

The teachers at Kensington School promoted instructional strategies that emerged from a constructivist perspective. The beliefs, goals, and strategies behind Kensington School's innovative program emphasized development of individual students through methods that emerged from a constructivist perspective. The intended outcomes of the program were mature, self-directed, motivated pupils. Because these goals were targeted at improving the individual rather than the collective, they were not critically motivated. The purpose of Kensington's innovative plan was never stated as improving social conditions.

The organizational structures for decision-making were functionalist because they were directive and ultimately rested in the hands of the administrators. On the other hand, the organizational structures for teaching were far more flexible and consistent with the constructivist beliefs of the administrators and teachers. The ungraded divisions for teaching allowed for multi-age and multi-level grouping and collaborative teaching and sharing between students.

Unfortunately, the perspective of the Kensington community, the parents and other stakeholders, was not in concert with the leaders, teachers, and organization, and became increasingly discordant over the first year of implementation. The social context of the Kensington School community in the days of strong innovation was conservative and predominantly functionalist which resulted in "incongruities between the community's vision of schools and Kensington's innovativeness" (p. 2).

Patterns in the Four Schools

Several patterns emerged in both the macro and micro-frameworks. These patterns differentiated successful schools from unsuccessful schools.

Successful Schools

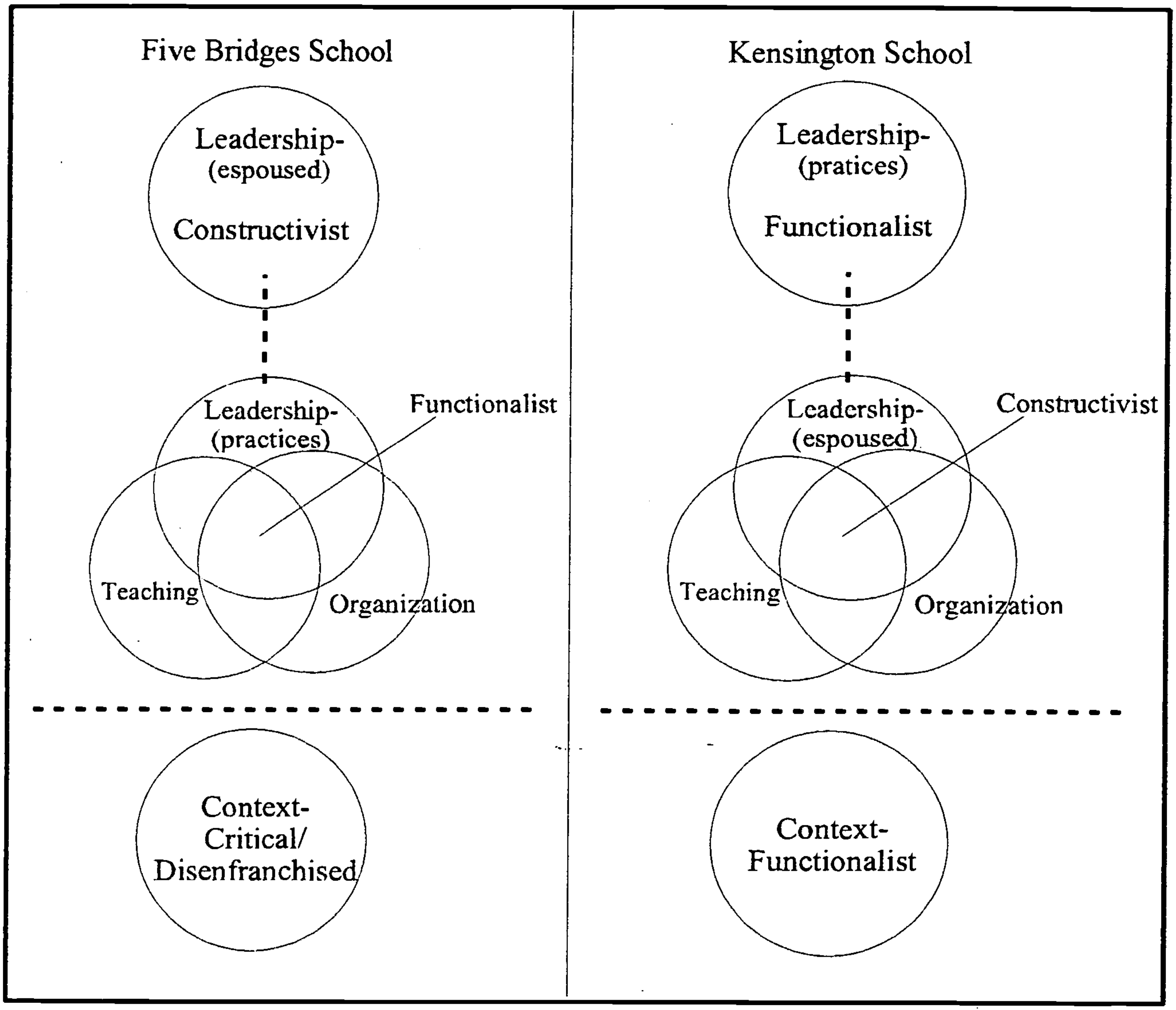
In Goodman's Harmony School, the focus was democratic education with an emphasis on constructivist and critical teaching. The leadership, teachers, organizational structures, and ideology of the community held a mutual vision and commitment; they were philosophically united by the same perspective. Applying these results to Rowan's graphic (see Figure 1, p. 3), we see that the "connectedness," using Goodman's descriptor, is the area of overlap. The constructivist and critical perspectives were dominant in all four domains. This was also true at Richmond Road School. The perspectives at Richmond Road, although more functionalist than constructivist as at Harmony School, were evident in each of the four domains or "linked," using May's descriptor, to once again form the area of overlap.

Unsuccessful Schools

At Five Bridges School, there were differing ideologies. The school administrators espoused a constructivist plan for teaching but did not act upon their beliefs. The teachers and organizational structures of the school were more functionalist, and all of these conflicting beliefs and practices within the school were unconnected to the needs of the community which was disenfranchised due to ethnicity, class, and gender. Although the traditional teaching methods used in the classrooms were in concert with the traditional structures of the school, they were discordant from the espoused theories of the leadership and the multicultural community of the school; the overlap was incomplete (see Figure 2).

The story of Kensington School was even more dramatic. Leadership, teaching, and school organization were united in their constructivist perspectives about teaching, but the perspective of the community was far more functionalist in their expectations of the school. Social context was not part of the overlap.[2] In Figure 2, we see the "incongruity," (Smith et al., 1987) between the four domains in a pattern similar to that found at Five Bridges School.

Figure 2. Disjunctures and Incongruities of the Four Domains


Five Bridges School
Leadership-
(espoused)
Constructivist
Leadership-
(practices)
Functionalist
Teaching
Organization
Context-
Critical/
Disenfranchised
Kensington School
Leadership-
(pratices)
Functionalist
Leadership-
(espoused)
Constructivist
Teaching
Organization
Context-
Functionalist

The Overlap

The results of this study suggest that thriving schools are those in which there is an overlap of perspective in all four domains. However, a second interesting pattern that surfaced was that the perspective shared by successful schools was a critical one based on social reform. Although there were differences between the successful schools, there was a critical component in both. The ideology at Harmony School was predominantly constructivist and critical for leadership, teaching, organization, and context, and the ideology at Richmond Road School was predominantly functionalist and critical across the same four domains.[3] This was not the case at either Five Bridges School or Kensington School.

Discussion

The results of this synthesis contribute to the dialogue begun by Rowan (1995). The overlap of the four domains revealed patterns which were not evident when looking at each case study individually. The overlap consisted of the shared perspectives among the four domains across schools. Patterns fell into two major areas: connectedness and criticalness.

Connected Domains

Successful schools were connected. In the two schools which were portrayed positively, Harmony School and Richmond Road School, there was a unity. All four domains were in concert or in harmony. They were holistically aligned, and there was an underlying principle of cooperation. They were "connected" (Goodman, 1992), and "linked" (May, 1994); weak schools were disjointed (Grant & Sleeter, 1996) and incongruent (Smith et al., 1987).

Throughout this discussion, I have shown that even though there were key differences between Harmony and Richmond Road Schools, there was a "connectedness" within each school. Social reform was clearly the vision of both schools, but they differed in the focus of that vision and how that was to be accomplished. The perspective at Richmond Road School was that the social reform needed was empowerment for the disenfranchised groups that comprised the school community. The method of change was through gradual structural reorganization which was manifested in timetables, requirements for teacher and parent participation, rigorous monitoring, extensive resource development, a curriculum focused on core competencies, structured format of instructional methods, and elaborate and formalized school policies. At Harmony School the emphasis was on individual ideology and the teaching of critical democracy with policy and formal structures for teaching and organization far more flexible than at Richmond Road School. There were no written policies or formal staff requirements; timetables were flexible, and each teacher developed their own curriculum and instructional materials. Ideology was most important.

Unsuccessful schools were not linked across all four domains. The authors of these studies, recognized the importance of the connectedness which they did not find in their schools. In their plan for action, Grant and Sleeter (1996) called for organizational structures and community interactions that "connect" (p. 241) with a reformed academic program. Smith et al. (1987) found that the numerous "unintended outcomes [were] part of a system (Smith & Keith, 1971, p. 399) that was fraught with "incongruity" (p. 189). The constructivist perspectives of teaching and organization were connected within the school, but not to the functionalist social context of the community.

In their retrospective study of Kensington School, Smith et al. (1987) refer to a "convergence" that occurred over the years as the school returned to traditional teaching. This appeared to be a convergence of expectations and realities which, in some ways, appeared desirable because it made teaching seem easier. But convergence differs markedly from Goodman's "connectedness" and May's "linkages". Being connected implies that the distinct parts or elements are linked together in a symbiotic relationship and are incapable of being separated while they continue to maintain their distinctness. Convergence, on the other hand, is the movement toward uniformity; the independent development of similar characteristics (Mish, 1990). What is lacking in convergence is the belief that plurality adds value. No where in the accounts of the later Kensington School or the Five Bridges School did the teachers recognize the multicultural diversity available to them as a learning tool. Their focus remained only on what they knew, teaching basic skills, and they did not reflect or think beyond to critically connect themselves to the cultures of their new school communities.

According to Grant and Sleeter (1996), there was "disjuncture" between the four domains of Five Bridges School. The hierarchical structures and traditional teaching within the school did not meet the needs of the disenfranchised community. The functionalist teaching and school organization were unconnected to the social context, and the school did not reach out to change this breech, but rather continued to blame the students and community for its own failure.

A Critical Perspective

Success hinged on a socially critical stance. In the two schools portrayed favorably there was conflict between the school and a larger social context. Although the schools were connected to their local contexts, they were unconnected to the broader social context, and in fact, took a critical stance against it. For members of the Harmony family, this conflict was against individualism that pervades American culture. Teachers held a critical perspective and took a proactive stance to build their vision for the collective. Students learned about their social responsibility and how to make difficult choices in favor of the common good over their own individual gains.

For the members at Richmond Road School, the target of social reform was the "wider process of racism in New Zealand society" (May, 1994, p. 60). The national context was not supportive of the changes at the school and placed institutional obstacles before them. Even the

Education Review Office was "functionalist..., unhelpful and non-reciprocal" (May, 1994, p. 158) in its dealings with the school expecting all innovations to fit into the national curriculum, standardized procedures, and statutory requirements. Recognizing that the odds were often stacked against them, members of Richmond Road School decided to actively employ "whatever resistance strategies [were] available in order to safeguard the emancipatory educational agenda [they had] established over the years" (May, 1994, p. 155).

In the schools portrayed unfavorably, Five Bridges and Kensington, there was no emphasis on social cause, no "criticalness." At Five Bridges School, the stated vision was multicultural education, but the multicultural education that occurred at Five Bridges stood in strong contrast to the multicultural education that occurred at Richmond Road where teachers actively incorporated cultural and ethnic features into their teaching through the use of well developed resources. At Five Bridges School, the teachers "adopted a colorblind perspective for equal access" (Smith, et al., 1987, p. 127). That is, the teachers developed neutral thinking about race. This differs markedly from a multicultural approach that recognizes racial and cultural differences and builds on them as strengths (Nieto, 1992). This observation alone revealed the serious lack of knowledge and understanding by the teachers in Five Bridges School who claimed to have multicultural education as their vision. Their functionalist perspective did not allow them to remove their blinders and see alternative ways of thinking to help those entrusted to them.

Even the reform at Kensington School, with all its educational innovation, was not critically oriented. Instead, the reform stressed teaching of students for their individual benefit; there was no talk of the collective good. The reform was propelled by an educational trend. While many of the methods such as, team teaching and cooperative learning, were constructivist, there was no critical perspective; social reform was not the issue. Their overall purpose was to improve problem solving and critical thinking of individual learners so that they could perform better in the marketplace. The purpose of the reform at Kensington was never directed toward the common good. This became even more poignant in later years when the Kensington School population shifted to a predominantly disenfranchised group of African American students, but the traditional program never adapted nor advocated for its new population. Successors to the innovative Principal Shelby were bureaucratic in their thinking. They were managers of the status quo which kept members of the system happy and the community in its place.

Implications

For Research

The findings of this study contribute to the discussion begun by Firestone (1996). In relating the literature from cognitive studies and organizational studies, Firestone suggested there was a need to increase teacher knowledge and to change teacher commitments. The patterns in this meta-ethnography indicated that in the schools viewed as successful, teachers had a knowledge of theory, opportunities for professional collegiality and dialogue, an ability to self reflect, and strong commitments to a vision of social reform. All of these were absent in the unsuccessful Five Bridges School, and the latter two were absent from the Kensington School. Although there was a strong commitment to educational reform in Kensington School, it was not critically based. More research is needed to determine the strength of teacher commitment as it relates to visions directed at social reform over visions directed at individual student gain.

Other researchers have suggested that successful schools are those which function as communities (Beck & Kratzer, 1995; Bryk, 1988; Furman, 1994; Sergiovanni, 1992, 1994).

However, what is meant by a "school as community" is not always clear. From their review of the literature in four fields of study, Beck and Kratzer (1995) concluded that community had three characteristics: (a) a vision, (b) a sharing of that vision, and (c) implementation that moved toward the vision. However, the literature does not establish who or what domains of a school must share that vision. The findings from this study can help further define community by establishing some boundary conditions for the community construct, namely, the overlap of perspective in the four domains. Schools that are communities would share a uniform perspective and vision between the leadership, teaching, organization and social context, and all practices would lead to a shared vision.

Although the findings of this study indicate that there is a connected ideology across the four domains in each of the schools perceived as successful, they do not tell us what the strength of that connection must be. Must the perspective be equally strong in each domain or should it be strongest in one particular domain? What is the impact of varying degrees of beliefs between domains? For example, at Harmony School the strength appeared strongest in the teaching domain; at Richmond Road School, the strength was in the principal.

And finally, is consistency of perspective across all four domains sufficient for success, or is there a particular combination of perspectives which must be present across all four domains? My analysis revealed that authors' perceptions of success were not limited to one perspective. Harmony School and Richmond Road School, both portrayed as promising schools, emerged from different perspectives; however, since both of these perspectives had social reform at their root, one might also speculate that the critical perspective evokes more commitment than reform that is directed at only educational goals. This returns us to Firestone's (1996) discussion of teacher commitment.

For Practice

The results of this study have implications for school administrators. The framework is a tool which educational administrators can use to assess existing conditions in their schools and plans for change. The framework can guide them toward building connections by helping them understand the perspective of stakeholders, and establish priorities not only for teaching or structural organization, but for all four domains of their schools. The stories from Kensington School and Five Bridges School illustrate this best. Just because the ideology of the teachers and the administrators overlapped with each other and the school's structures, it was insufficient because the school had failed to adequately connect with the school's social context. Astute planners would recognize differences in perspectives and using "carefully managed steps" (May, 1994, p. 184) would plan for reform that incorporated mutual perspectives in all four domains.

For Higher Education

These findings also contribute to the discussion on how institutions of higher education could be organized. For example, if overlap is of critical importance, is it of value to continue to organize our colleges and schools of education around isolated departments? Why not organize them around the connections or, in other words, around the overlap of the four domains? Study could be integrated into programs and courses that emphasized various perspectives, the importance of the connectedness of these perspectives, the problems that interfere with establishing these connections, and how educators deal with these interferences. Reorganized schools of education which place student learning at the center of the conversation can move conflicts over turf to dialogues about improved teaching, and from funding battles between departments to united educational fronts. Instead of administrators competing against teachers for limited resources, together they would compete for those same resources in order to improve learning in inextricably linked projects. The varied fields of study would all speak the same "language of possibility" (Goodman, 1992, p. 169).

Concluding Remarks

As I stated in the opening of this paper, we in educational administration must study leadership as it relates to improving classroom instruction because teaching is the essence of why we are, what we are, and how we act. The perspectives of leadership and teaching at Harmony and Richmond Road Schools demonstrated how this linkage occurs. "As the process is the product, so is the theory the practice. What we say and do is who we are" (May, 1992, p. 197). Within these exemplary schools, the critically based perspective that was espoused was also the one practiced, and principals facilitated connections and linkages across all four domains. This issue of connectedness, prompted Smith et al. (1987) to ask,

> Do principals best meet their responsibility to a constituency by steering their school along the quietest, smoothest course, sailing with currents popular at the time? Or should they risk disturbing that steady flow, seeking excellence and innovation to provide an education more suitable to all of their students? (pp. 112)

Other writers argued that this is not even a question because educational leaders have an ethical (Beck & Murphy, 1994; Starratt, 1994) and moral (Greenfield, 1987; Sergiovanni, 1992) obligation to provide leadership that is value based for the good of all (Sergiovanni, 1990) and to act as advocates and activists for their students (Giroux, 1988). This study found that, for the successful schools, it was an issue of both, connectedness and criticalness.

Endnotes

1. Interestingly, the administrators at both unsuccessful schools espoused a constructivist form of leadership, but their practices were not consistent with their words. However, the teachers at these same schools were more true to their words; they tended to practice what they said they believed.

2. Fifteen years later, the researchers found that Kensington's student population, teachers. and administrators had changed remarkably since the opening of the innovative school. The majority of the students came from lower class African American homes. The resulting pattern was similar to the innovative Kensington except that it had completely reversed; the perspective of the three school domains were functionalist, but the social context was now disenfranchised due to race and class.

3. As I discussed previously, the reduction of Burrell and Morgan's (1979) radical humanism and radical structuralism into one perspective, the critical, is frequently done. As I worked through my analysis of the two exemplary schools, Harmony and Richmond Road, I found them remarkably different and calling them both critical did not capture their uniqueness. Although I described Harmony School as critical and constructivist and Richmond Road as critical and functionalist, a return to Burrell and Morgan's radical humanist and radical structuralist respectively would be more accurate for this and possibly other studies.

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