# The Art of Successful School-Based Management[*]

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**Abstract**

In this monograph the author offers the reader a new perspective on an important, dynamic, and sometimes daunting issue: managing successful school-based leadership. Organized around the seven elements of art criticism, the author uses an arts-based approach to weave together notions of research-based leadership skills for successful school-based management with standards of professional competence as represented by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards for School Leaders.
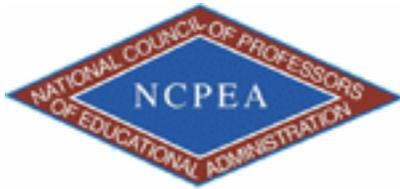


NOTE: This module has been peer-reviewed, accepted, and sanctioned by the National Council of the Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA) as a scholarly contribution to the knowledge base in educational administration.

The Art of Successful School-Based Management [1]

In this monograph the author offers the reader a new perspective on an important, dynamic, and sometimes daunting issue: managing successful school-based leadership. Organized around the seven elements of art criticism, the author uses an arts-based approach to weave together notions of research-based leadership skills for successful school-based management with standards of professional competence as represented by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards for School Leaders. More particularly, in each section of this monograph the author presents a brief introduction of the leadership construct as represented in the art metaphor more fully described below. Then, the author suggests some possible applications of the theoretical element to the real-world realities of school leadership. Using a common-sense discussion on leadership coupled with theory and research within an arts-based perspective, the author encourages the reader to engage in the seemingly persistent problems and old trials of school management from a new perspective resulting in some refreshing possibilities for supporting student achievement in schools. It is also the goal of this arts-based approach that the reader might avoid the tendency to reduce school-based

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[*]Version 1.1: Jul 7, 2006 3:14 pm -0500

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[1]1Much of this monograph draws on my recent work The Art of Leadership: A Choreography of Human Understanding (2006) published by Rowman & Littlefield.

management to formula and instead recognize the complexity of leading and managing students and teachers within the constantly evolving culture of today's schools. As a result of this qualitative inquiry into the nature of leadership for today's schools, the author invites a new vision for old assumptions in schools, for teacher leadership, and for student learning. The eventual product of such an investigation might be a new vision for school leadership that is "more diversified and equitable" and one that "can expand our conception of human cognition and help us develop new forms of pedagogical practice" (Eisner, 1998, p. 245).

Leadership in the school building is at the heart of school leadership. It is in the school building, the halls, and classrooms that principals most directly impact teacher behavior. The question that arises from a study leadership in the school building is not about if principals can affect teaching behavior but rather in what manner and to what extent principals might affect teaching behavior, school environment, and ultimately student learning (Stronge, 2002). And there is growing consensus in the literature, most recently reported in the "School Leadership Study" out of Stanford University (Davis, et al. 2005) that successful school leaders can influence student achievement in at least two important ways: (1) By selecting, supporting, and developing effective teachers; (2) By managing, implementing, and adjusting effective organizational environments. Other authors in this book will devote more time to the first element of effective leadership. In this monograph the author will focus on how school-based leaders can effectively manage the competing, and sometimes conflicting, demands of leading in today's schools so as to provide an organizational environment that encourages growth and development on the part of students, teachers, and administrators. The responsibility of managing a successful learning environment is one shared by all stakeholders. If doing it alone is the plan for the school principal, then research suggests that the leader is less likely to maintain and support learning environments and is more likely to "burn out" under the broadening responsibilities of today's accountability environment (Hargreaves, 2006). In light of this harsh reality, in sections of this monograph the author will offer school leaders ideas and possibilities for sharing the awesome responsibility of managing effective schools.

In distributed leadership contexts, school based leaders find ways for multiple stakeholders to participate in the leadership, and thus successful management, of schools. This notion of distributed leadership is most recently articulated by Andy Hargreaves and Dean Fink (2006) in their book, Sustainable Leadership. The principal, as school building leader, interacts with teachers and students. It is at the school building where teachers also provide leadership in the daily interactions with their peers, with their students, and with their parents and other stakeholders. And, it is in the daily interactions with students that teachers and principals can encourage students to take on leadership. The literature regarding successful school based management continues to grow both in breadth and depth and if my graduate students are any indicator of today's leaders, school based stakeholders yearn for specific and guiding principles for how to manage today's learning environments. In very obvious ways it is at school building level where the tug between theory and practice is most powerful and most often confrontational (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006). Although establishing theoretical context is essential in framing a theory of leadership, principals often consider such discussions meaningless in helping them make sense of daily pressures and demands of schooling. What principals want is a theory of school building leadership that can speak honestly and directly to the challenges of helping teachers and students achieve in an atmosphere of standards and accountability (Stronge, 2002).

A Way of Thinking

Over the past few years the author has investigated leadership in the schools from an arts-based research methodology. Based on his own experiences, conversations with leaders, and research, he grew to be suspicious that leading was in fact more than just good management. Indeed, it was management but also much more. There was this sense of art, not just craft, among the very best leaders. For example, the author began to discover that traditional assessment methods for instructional leadership were often quite effective in addressing narrowing teaching functions but failed to grasp the nuances, subtleties, and totality of successful classrooms (Blumberg, 1989; Pajak, 2003). From a very different point of departure, Stronge (2002) also concludes that school leader practice has little to no effect on teacher behavior and subsequently student learning. According to Stronge, principals managed to do the craft of observations and provide some evidence of what they saw. They often completed this task with short, drop-in visits. But what was missing from this type of management was the fact that little change in teacher or student behavior came about as a

result of the observation. In some ways, according to Stronge, principals failed to address the complexity of the teacher function. Indeed, leading schools and supporting teachers required school principals to do much more than managing. Successful schools were places where craft and art were practiced.

At this point, the author needs to ask the reader to consider a slight shift in thinking. Instead of trying to compete with the reader's assumptions and practices regarding school leadership, assumptions that emerge from powerful and successful experience no doubt, and instead of trying to convince the reader that the answer is "this" instead of "that," the author wants to encourage the reader to engage in "and" thinking. Recently when working with a high school principal, the author had this exchange: "I noticed that your teachers did not feel you visited their classrooms often enough. How might you respond to them?" The principal, in obvious frustration, responded "Yes, I know I need to do more than I have been doing but I cannot find time because of all the discipline referrals." The principal was doing what the author affectionately calls "Yes . . . but" thinking. How many times might one say in a day's time "Yes, I could get to that job but I cannot find time" or "Yes, I need to be in halls greeting students but I just cannot get out of the office and all the paperwork." This type of thinking tends to be defeatist in nature as it builds obstacles instead of possibilities. A different way to consider our thinking is what the author calls "and" thinking. For example, "Yes, I need to be in the halls more often and I will distribute some of the paperwork so that I can find time to do it." In reality, individuals tend to find time for those things that matter most. If being in the halls greeting students was really important, then they would create a world where that could happen. The shift from "yes. . . but" thinking to "and" thinking is a subtle but powerful change. Such a shift represents a change in values and priorities, indeed a paradigmatic change. In like fashion, when considering the work in this monograph the author wants to challenge the reader to engage in "and" thinking and not "yes. . . but" thinking. Instead of looking for the absolute answer in this work, consider the possibility that the content offers another way to be successful; not the only one. Now let the reader put that type of thinking to work as he or she prepares for the more specific discussion of successful management of schools.

Arts-Based Research as a Way of Seeing

Is quantitative research the best choice for discovering truth? Or, is qualitative research the best methodology? In some traditional debates, the argument might follow something like this: "Yes, qualitative research offers some answers to questions on teacher performance but the real answers are in quantitative analyses." Or, "Yes, quantitative research has been around a long time but it is qualitative research that most clearly offers the best picture of teaching." Both examples tend to create obstacles and not possibilities. The alternative conversation might flow something like this: "Quantitative research has certainly withstood the test of time with its rigor and analysis and qualitative research provides another perspective and level of analysis on the same behaviors." This type of thinking encourages possibilities, not obstacles.

A similar dichotomy emerges regarding the nature of effective teaching. The debate over whether effective leadership is art or craft, or if effective teaching is technical in nature or aesthetic, is important and often lively. Indeed, there is growing research that supports the notion that teaching, when done well, is both art and craft, technical and aesthetic, personal and clinical (Lewis, 2004; Newmann et al., 1996; Blumberg, 1989; Eisner, 1983). When individuals begin coupling their thinking that teaching is both art and craft with a growing presence of arts-based research that seeks to extend the notion of what is meaningful, then they can begin to see the value of "and" thinking. In fact, teacher effectiveness research findings support the notion that students learn best from teachers who can be characterized as managing both the craft and the artistic dimensions of effective teaching. So as the reader engages in the journey of what makes for successful school based management, the author wants to implore him or her to engage in "and" thinking so that he or she can begin building power bridges for successful schooling and fewer walls.

Toward defining, evaluating, and thus understanding the leadership function in the school building the author will ground the following discussion in an arts-based research theoretical approach (Eisner, 1998; Barone & Eisner, 1997). The arts-based research format seemed appropriate for this investigation because as a form of qualitative research, arts-based investigations can more readily gain "a firm foothold" on the nature of human interactions embedded in school cultures (Eisner, 1998). The function of successful leadership is characterized as practice that acknowledges, embraces, and develops the relational nature of schooling. That relation may be student to student, student to teacher, student to subject, teacher to teacher, teacher to

leader, leader to community, community to school, and on and on. At some level, all successful schooling is relational in nature. In addition, qualitative thought is always a component of interaction between individuals (Eisner, 1998) and coming to terms with the nature of relationships is central to the human experience. So, as readers come to terms with the fact that leadership encompasses both technical and aesthetic dimensions, craft and art, then they can begin to understand that an arts-based approach is entirely appropriate as one way to understand effective school leadership and management of schools.

As the author begins the work from a qualitative theory perspective (Eisner, 1998; Barone, 1998) that leadership may be viewed as an art form and that it can be described as interactive and relational, a sort of choreography of human understanding, then the reader might do well to develop a mechanism for "seeing" it as an artist might view a painting or a choreographer a dance (Kelehear, 2006). For the purposes of this investigation, that mechanism comes in the form of the elements of art and it is the goal of this monograph to help the reader begin developing some facility with aesthetic dimensions of leadership in the school building. Specifically, the author will use the elements of art to help frame the discussion of school-based leadership in this monograph. Just as the elements of art can assist a viewer of art describe, analyze, interpret, or evaluate a work, those same elements can help a viewer of leadership art describe, analyze, interpret, or evaluate the management of schools. When individuals continue to view leadership narrowly, as a function of management and formula, then they narrow their view of leadership from an art of human experience and understanding to a strategy for control and manipulation of personnel. By applying the language of art individuals can construct a lens through which the nature of one's humanity begins to become clearer.

Elements of Art as a Way of Understanding

The elements of art are line, value, shape, form, space, color, and texture. In the first part of each section the author will offer an artist's definition of each element. In an attempt to help the reader connect the arts-based frame to the leadership frame, in the second part of each discussion the author will briefly describe the leadership themes and possible implications. In the third part of each section, and indeed a key part of the entire discussion, the author will highlight key research initiatives and findings relative to that particular function. In the final analysis, the reader can have a helpful and grounded overview of what makes for successful school-based leadership in today's schools.

Because the author is framing the leadership discussion in an arts-based theoretical approach, some additional consideration about that approach is necessary. Similarly, as the author organizes the leadership discussion with a corresponding and appropriate language of art, in the form of elements of art, then that format can help the reader to understand the nature of the form. Eisner (1985) has explored the implications of this challenge of leadership as art most fully in his work, The Educational Imagination. A few of the more notable scholars who also looked to the arts to provide useful models to better understand and improve educational practice include S. L. Lightfoot (1983; 1997), P. Jackson (1998), T. Barone (1988), and A. Blumberg (1989). Within art, the author suggests that disciplines of aesthetics and criticism in general provide us a structure for understanding.

Dewey (1934) conceived aesthetics as the branch of philosophy that allows one to analyze the way he or she looks at the qualities of the world and assign value to experiences. Dewey's aesthetics provides a theoretical construct for thinking about leadership. Individuals are engaging in aesthetic thinking when they use their perceptions, sensations, and imagination to gain insight into what they might feel and understand about the world (Greene, 2001). Furthermore, Dewey (1934) implies that aesthetic refers to one's first critical reflection on objects he or she experiences. What is especially important is that experiences stem from attention to qualitative relationships. Through these reflections one's world and the wonder of life begin to take on deeper meaning. Priorities become clear. Important events assume an appropriate relationship with daily challenges. As these experiences first occur outside of language and the expected constructions of the world, by reflecting on them they offer individuals opportunities for understanding. This type of reflective analysis of experience is an integral part of critical theory through which one examines his or her own practice and habits of mind.

In cultivating this sensitivity one begins taking on an aesthetic task. One begins answering the questions: What is of value? What is meaningful? What is moving about a given situation? It is through attending to the smallest nuances of art or life that one begins to transcend to a more attentive form of existence.

He or she moves to a plane of existence that releases imagination, passions, curiosity, and extraordinary circumstances. It is Dewey's view of reflection that leads one to the notion of critical theory as a vehicle for understanding and valuing. Dewey was adamant that this form of aesthetic experience as antithetical to the appreciation of beauty. Dewey's aesthetics is an active form or mental engagement with the world – not a detached, coldly objective appraisal.

When one begins to recognize that leadership is inseparable from human interaction, then one begins to understand that leadership is more about listening to and understanding each other rather than devising a checklist of behaviors. Leadership is engagement, not detachment or mere observation. The benefit is that one begins to appreciate the nuances and subtleties that come with managing and leading people. Being able to engage in this critique of human interaction and motivation allows one to view leadership as an art rather than a formula. It is interpretative, relative, and sophisticated. As such, it requires a comparable methodology for understanding: aesthetics, critical theory, and leadership as art. Following the guidance of aesthetics and critical theory, one can begin to view the art of leadership through the lenses of the elements of art. Just as the elements provide art observers with a language for critique, those same elements can help frame the critique of leadership.

Borrowing this notion from the world of art, the author will use the elements to describe specific, observable attributes of the art of leadership. As mentioned above, the elements are line, shape, form, space, color, value, and texture. In terms of understanding leadership, the author suggests that the elements will offer building blocks for understanding basic leadership skills. The author takes each of the elements as discrete parts of the leadership function. As the reader becomes more skilled at describing leadership, then he or she will also notice that it is difficult and artificial to see the elements as "stand alone" skills of leadership. Rather, the reality is more about one element playing a primary role while other elements function in a supportive capacity. Together, they support the leader's ability to work through a given situation.

As one begins to rely on elements, one begins to come to terms with what is seen, felt, and sensed. Understanding leadership becomes an aesthetic process. One not only knows it cognitively and conceptually, but also emotionally and personally. And leadership is skill, emotion, and personal. Leadership, when it is done well, is an art and applying the standards of the seven elements of art might help one to begin to know what leadership does, what it looks like, what it feels like, what makes it work. Just as with art, school leadership is not about finding a "magic formula." Given the complexity of people and situations that leaders confront, it is no small wonder that no prescription exists. But, when one sees something work at this school or that system, one may often try to assign the success to a single strategy or individual. The reality is, however, that the success comes from the interdependence and interaction of several leadership functions in much the same way that the elements might contribute to the interpretation of an artwork.

Effective School Building Management: A Way for Learning

The elements of art are the basic visual symbols in the language of art. They provide a specific, and often concrete, vocabulary for describing art. The elements are line, shape, form, space, color, and texture. The elements of art help create a view, a perception and a vision of effective management in the school building. Within each school, all seven elements may be present. The relative perceptivity of the various elements in a school, however, can be very different depending on changing needs, varying times of the year, or changes within the district. The constant, however, is that in effective schools, and by association in effective leadership, the seven elements provide a specific mechanism for reflecting on practice and for navigating the often difficult choices that come with educating our children for successful citizenship.

In the table below [See Table #1], the author offers an alignment of the ISLLC to the Elements of Art and the particular Leadership Dimension embedded in each element. In the discussion to follow, the author will offer each element, an artist definition, a leadership perspective, and then relevant research as a way to frame the key research and best practices for successful school building leadership.

Table 1
Aligning the Elements of Art, Leadership Skills, and ISLLC Standards

| Element of Art Line | Leadership Dimensions Limits, Boundaries, Parameters, Expectations | Supporting ISLLC Standard Standard #1, #2 Facilitating a shared vision that is shared by school community |
|---|---|---|
| Value | Priority, Focus | #2 Supporting student learning and teacher development |
| Shape | Management, Details | #3 Ensuring management of organization, operations, resources |
| Form | Perspective, Empathy | #5 Acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner |
| Space | Collaboration, Growth, Challenge and Support | #2 Supporting growth of student and teacher within school culture |
| Color | Diversity, Openness | #6 Understanding & responding to larger political, social, economic, legal, cultural contexts |
| Texture | Tapestry, Bridges, Inclusiveness | #4 Collaborating with families, community members; responding to diverse perspectives |

Element # 1:
Line: A long narrow mark or stroke made on or in a surface
The Artist's View:

Artists recognize the important contribution line brings to a holistic understanding of a given work. Lines can be vertical, horizontal, diagonal, curvilinear, and zigzagged. When artists vary the line's length, width, texture, direction, and degree of curve they can multiply the visual impact of a work of art. For example, vertical lines convey height and inactivity. Vertical lines also express stability, dignity, poise, stiffness, and formality. Imagine how vertical lines on the side of a building will make the building look taller, more stable. By contrast horizontal lines are static. They express peace, rest, quiet, and stability. Horizontal lines can help make one feel content, relaxed, and calm. Diagonal and zigzag lines suggest activity. They communicate action, movement, and tension. Diagonal lines also seem to work against gravity and create a pull and tension that can be uncomfortable. Curved lines also express activity. Spiral curves around a central point are hypnotic and tend to draw the eye to the center. Zigzag lines in an artwork help to create a feeling of confusion. Clearly an element as simple as line can have a powerful affect on the message of an artwork.

ISLLC Standard #1: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.

A Leadership Perspective:

For school leaders, line means to be clear about boundaries and parameters. Successful school leaders communicate expectations for students and staff. They are consistent with the application of that understanding. Few things are as demoralizing to a staff as to see the leader apply rules inconsistently. The school draws stability, dignity, and poise from the consistent and fair application of rules and expectations.

Line also serves to remind leadership of the important role of mission and vision. When teachers are clear about where the school is going and how they are going to get there, then they begin to understand their role in the process. Conversely, when the direction of the school seems flat, or horizontal, then the learning atmosphere becomes stagnant and unproductive.

Finally, line informs leadership about the delineating negotiable and non-negotiable boundaries. If a school committee is to decide a particular issue, then effective leadership is clear about what is open to conversation and what is not. For a committee to work at an issue and submit a solution only to discover that the answer was not one of the options can frustrate good intentions.

In a recent article regarding organizational culture, Patterson and Kelehear (2003) assert: "Even with the best of intentions, organizations can't devote equal attention to all of the important culture values. Something's got to give when various culture values compete for your organization's time and energy" (p. 35). Without attending to the assumptions and beliefs in managing the school, leaders run the risk of developing "organizational blind spots [that] represent undetected misalignment between what the organization says it values vs. what it really values, what it says it does vs. what it really does, or what it really does vs. what it actually values" (p. 35). Although there continues to be some debate over the relationship between culture and leadership, the debate is not that the two do not impact each other but the degree to which one has influence over the other. In the NASA article referenced above, the conclusion of the investigating committee on the Columbia disaster was that leadership absolutely effects organization culture. In fact, the committee asserted unequivocally that leaders create culture and leaders alter cultures. When what is valued, what is said to be of value, and what is valued in practice are not consistent, then leadership has created a dysfunctional organizational culture destined for failure.

Bolman and Deal (2003) assert that leadership plays a key role in providing symbolism for what the organizational culture values. Whether in terms of providing symbols (e.g., clothing, school cultures, trophy cases), providing vision and mission statements (e.g., in writing, on walls, in shared language), sharing organizational stories and myths (e.g., founders' day, past heroes), maintaining rituals (e.g., pep rallies, senior lunch rooms, seasonal concerts), or in other symbolic ways, leaders help craft a shared perspective on what matters most in the school and help build a culture that supports those articulated values.

Starratt (1991; 1994; 2003; 2004), Sergiovanni (1992; 2005), Strike, et al. (1998), Fullan (2003), Buzzelli & Johnston (2002), Cooper (1998), and others have articulated that school leadership has a responsibility of not only establishing a shared vision but that they are to create a shared ethical vision of behavior among all constituents in the learning community. That is to say that an effective leader helps others know how interaction among teachers, parents, and students is to occur, helps others know what to do in moments of confrontation and crisis, and helps others know how to engage each other in matters relevant to student concerns whether academic, emotional, or physical in nature.

When the rules of interaction and roles are clear, then individuals reduce the chances for misunderstanding that otherwise might infect healthy organizational environments. Sometimes leaders like to refer to their schools as families, a comfortable analogy upon first view. There is, however, something dysfunctional about such a comparison. In a family environment, there are often very clear distinctions between what parents may do and what children can do. When we apply the family metaphor to schooling, then we run the risk of establishing very clear expectations for the parent (i.e., principal) and the children (i.e., teachers and students) and there is something very unhealthy about such an organizational culture. Thus, making expectations clear is only part of the challenge. Treating each other fairly, so as to encourage a shared stewardship of learning and a shared responsibility for what happens during a school day, is an important part of establishing the element of line in an effectively managed school environment. An element closely related to that of line in effective school management is that of value where the leadership creates a culture of mutual growth among students and teachers alike.

Element #2:

Value: The lightness or darkness of a color or object

The Artist's View:

Value is the art element that describes the relative darkness or lightness of an object in a drawing or painting. How much value a surface has is dependent on how much light is reflected. If there is an absence of light, the surface will be dark; and if there is much light, the surface becomes lighter. There are many ways that artists create value. For example, when one looks at a dollar bill, one may see an entire artwork that is composed of tiny lines. The artist or the engraver uses lines to create value. The closer and more plentiful the line appears in a space, the darker the value. In turn the less line in a given space there is less value, and the space appears lighter. In fact, value is related to all the elements and is often understood best in association with other elements.

ISLLC Standard #1 and #2: A school administrator facilitates a vision and promotes success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.

A Leadership Perspective:

For school leadership, value represents the "light" that emerges from daily activities that reflects attention to what matters most. Often times in schools individuals can fail to recognize, or to remember, what is most important. They earnestly engage in any number of activities that seem important, for the moment, but cast little light on the picture of what or who they are. In other words, their actions do not adequately support their most central, core values.

Core values are not observations, perceptions, or operating rules. They are things individuals believe to be extremely important. They are characterized by descriptors such as fundamental, guiding, philosophical, and pointing the way. Core values help answer such questions as: Who are we? What do we stand for? What business are we really in? What is important to us? Where do we want to go in our preferred future?

Accompanying core values are "we will" statements. "We will" statements are specific, concrete, observable, measurable actions that support the philosophy that emerges from core values. In many instances, the "we will" statements are single efforts such as special events or activities. In other cases, however, "we will" statements involve multi-year approaches to complex and systemic issues.

When individuals consider leading a school, it is important to note the relative importance of the many activities that come in a school day. Value in leadership means defining what matters most so that all can begin to understand what the business of school is. As individuals articulate the core values, the guiding and philosophical principles, then all decisions can emerge from a shared belief. The synergistic effect is that they can begin putting their energy toward specific values, avoiding the ad hoc decisions characteristic of many schools. What the student, teacher, leader, and community see reflected in the activities of the school is a value-driven institution with a vision for where it is going rather than an event-driven body. Just as with value in art, core values speak to all other elements of leadership. When done well, core values become the guiding principles for all decisions and help create school space characterized as a place for authentic learning and caring.

In watching the students and teacher work together one trait consistently emerges as essential to a caring and authentic school: Empathy. Empathy can become value in that it represents a guiding principle for the school culture. Empathy is that interpersonal quality that allows one to know the feelings of another (Kelehear, 2001; 2002). As students work with each other, as teachers work with the students, and as the principal assists the teacher, the level of empathy present defines the qualitative relationship. And at the same time, the participants cultivate a sense of caring in the relationship as they began to understand the commitment in working together toward shared goals. In as much as caring becomes a part of the school climate, the relationships become more substantive and paying attention to each other becomes the order of the day. A process by which we can begin to shape a positive school culture might begin as school based leaders realign the role of four key players in the school day: the student, the teacher, the leader, and the curriculum.

Given the powerful influence on standardized assessments, federal mandates, and state-level oversight, it is easy to reduce students to input/output items rather than see them in their humanity. In his book Schools Without Failure, William Glasser (1969) emphasizes that allowing grades to create an incentive for learning

has, in fact, a contracting effect on what is learned. The more that grades, and by extension standardized tests, are emphasized the more that students want to know what is exactly on the test, and only those items on the test. Students come to believe that any other information can become an obstacle or a distraction to getting the grade, and thus should be ignored (p. 65). Effective school leadership will recognize that there is a role for grades and standardized testing. Indeed, they can help provide accountability for learning certain bits of information. But to rely solely on grades and traditional assessments is painfully shortsighted.

School based leaders can build a school culture that shines light on authentic student learning and staff professional growth. One way to construct such a climate is to place emphasis on what Ted Sizer (1992), in his book Horace's School, calls exhibitions. This type of assessment helps encourage students to bring together facts and basic learning to create a new understanding– what Mortimer Adler (p. 29) called maieutic expression. A word of Greek origin, maieutic is loosely translated as "giving birth." Just as an artist might be able to use the elements of art to paint a still life, it is the artist's use of those "skills" and the simultaneous interpretation of that object through experience and feelings that can give birth to a new perspective, a new understanding, a deeper cognition (Eisner, 2001). Similarly, other aspects of the curriculum could have the same consequence.

School leaders and teachers must help students come to command facts and information, the kind of information that is readily assessed through pencil and paper tests and standardized assessments. Quickly, however, students begin to use the newly acquired information in applications of the concepts through repeated practice and coaching; just as the artist begins to command the elements of art. Although many very good teachers might guide students to this level of mastery, this is not enough. Through demonstrations, exhibitions, or other public forums, teachers should encourage students to create a new, deeper understanding, a maieutic expression. The student's knowledge and understanding takes on what Eisner (1994) calls "a social dimension in human experience" (p.39). But teachers and students will only be able to do such authentic practice when the environment in general, and school leadership in particular, supports such practice.

In a recent study of an arts magnet school (Bender-Slack, Miller, & Burroughs, 2006)researchers observed teaching practice in the standard curricular areas such as mathematics, English, social studies, and science. The researchers also followed the students to the classrooms for visual and performing arts. The purpose of their observations was to ascertain the degree to which an arts-infused curriculum was being implemented. The observation and data collection were conducted in an art magnet school; the same type of place that one might think that arts-infused practice would be the norm, not the exception. To the surprise of the researchers, teaching practice among the core subjects areas remained traditional (i.e., teacher centered, lecture formats, seat work) and void of arts-infused practices. Similarly, the art teachers rarely embraced the standard curriculum in their delivery of instruction. Keeping in mind that the mission statement of the school emphasized an arts-based, multi-disciplinary approach to learning, the researchers discovered that the school had changed leadership several times in the previous five years. The message for the researchers was clear, where leadership fails to support innovative practice for teachers and authentic performances for students then leadership could not expect for the school to be any different than one that might be characterized as unimaginative and traditional (Bender-Slack, Miller, & Burroughs, 2006).

Understanding the teacher's role in developing authentic learning experiences is essential to supporting a school culture focused on teacher and student learning. The traditional view that the teacher is the conveyor of knowledge and truth is only partially correct. Newmann and Wehlage (1995) and Newmann, Marks and Gamoran (1996) assert that students learn best when teachers are engaged in authentic pedagogy design and provide learning experiences that: 1) encourage students to build new knowledge, 2) embrace and support disciplined inquiry, and 3) have value beyond the school setting. Creating such authentic pedagogy supports knowledge that students believe is more meaningful and relevant than what might be expressed in traditional pencil and paper tests that seek rote answers to prescribed questions. This position is not to suggest that knowledge memorized is always an undesirable product of schooling. The practice alone, however, is wholly insufficient. Rather, and in keeping with a position supported by Dewey (1934) and more recently embraced by constructivist philosophy (e.g., Lambert et al., 2003), when students begin to engage subject matter in meaningful ways, then they begin to construct meaning of and establish value in the school curriculum. The ownership of problems in the curriculum moves from teacher to student. In other words, instead of a

teacher presenting problems to students to be addressed, students move to engage problems (i.e., sources of dissonance) that compel them to resolve apparent inconsistencies in their previous understanding. An important part of this authentic perspective posited by Newmann and Wehlage (1995) and Newmann, Marks and Gamoran (1996) is that authentic pedagogy supports meaningful, personal, and private reflection on the part of students and teachers alike. In essence, they are addressing qualitative relationships and fine grained distinctions (Eisner, 2002) between what they knew to be true before the learning experience compared to what they are coming to know based on the personal construction of new knowledge. This intrapersonal reflection then becomes part of a classroom that embraces the aesthetics of learning. As students continue to seek meaning and purpose in the new knowledge, then they move to open discourse with their peers and teachers.

In order for teachers to encourage authentic expression from student and for teachers themselves to experiment with what works for different types of students, there will need to be a special type of leadership. The role of the principal is to protect jealously the learning environment, to guard the classroom as a safe place where teachers and students may take risks, and to promote an atmosphere of openness and authentic communication. Embedded throughout this vision for leadership is the pivotal role of trust (Kelehear, 2001).

Through open communication, shared decision making, and mutual respect, the school will model the characteristics of a pluralistic, democratic society. There will be many teaching styles; ideally, as many as there are different learning needs. The leadership will celebrate those differences while maintaining high expectations for student learning. Allowing teachers to utilize different techniques does not free them from responsibility for student learning. In fact, the opposite is true. In as much as the principal allows for teachers to choose strategies for student learning, then the principal can hold those teachers responsible for what happens in the classroom. The question to the teacher will not be "Did you teach well today?" but rather, "Did the students learn today?" As Sizer (1984; 1992) reminds us, if the answer to the second question is "yes," then the answer to the first question is "yes." Said differently, one cannot have taught well in the absence of student learning!

Authentic leadership would seek to construct a context where the teachers and principal work together to form a school culture that is focused on student achievement and engaged citizenship. The teachers and principal would be clear about student achievement and teaching excellence as essential core values. They would attend only to those activities that support and foster student and, as an extension, teacher successes (Patterson, 1993, p. 37-52).

The nature of leadership would be such that it too is not a prescription. Rather, leadership in the authentic school would celebrate children's uniqueness and the art of teaching. Similarly, teachers and principal alike would understand that leadership is in itself an artwork under construction. Just as the principal celebrates and promotes the uniqueness of teachers, the teachers would likewise support and challenge the principal to be open, authentic, and a risk-taker in making decisions that support the core values of the school.

Authentic learning spaces emerge when leaders create opportunities for teachers and students to reflect on experiences in qualitative ways. Central to the construction of such a space requires leadership to design a curriculum in which all the disciplines are embraced as complementary and supportive and not in competition for space and budget. In essence, successful school management becomes a process of providing opportunities for meaning-making for teachers and student alike. The final assessment of our schools might be as Eisner (2001) states, "It's what students do with what they learn when they can do what they want to do that is the real measure of educational achievement" (p. 370). If our students do not continue after school the things about which we talk in school, then we may have failed them.

In today's schools, leaders are confronted with the harsh reality that effective teaching and leadership involve experiment, reflection, and refinement and that effective school based leadership supports such practices. Today's school cultures must be places that allow teachers and leaders to recognize their own humanity and that of their students (Palmer, 1998). Both teachers and students ought to be allowed to fail and leaders must provide for them support in their mistakes. School leadership can begin, thus, to acknowledge that out of the diversity of ideas, great wonders can emerge. Indeed, Steinbeck (1955) reminds us, "teaching might even be the greatest of the arts since the medium is the human mind and spirit" (p.7). Today's school

building leader must have the strength of will and the commitment to doing what matters most: attending to the needs of the children. The best way to achieve this goal is for school leadership to allow for the art that is teaching where authentic learning and caring for each other carry the day. Being clear about value and the light it sheds on practice is indeed a crucial part of successful school based management.

Element #3:

# 1 Shape: Two-dimensional area

The Artist's View:

A shape is a two-dimensional area that is defined in some certain way. By drawing an outline of a circle on a piece of paper, one has created a shape. By painting a solid red square, one has also created a shape. Shapes may be either free-formed or geometric. Free-form shapes are uneven and irregular and usually promote a pleasant and soothing feeling. Geometric shapes on the other hand are stiff and uniform and generally suggest organization and management with little or no emotion. Shape tends to appeal more to viewers' minds rather than to their emotions.

ISLLC Standard #3: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.

A Leadership Perspective:

Schools have a shape, a smell, a look, a feel. As we imagine our elementary school days, we create physical images that capture our learning experiences. Similarly, as we walk into the elementary school just before lunch to smell the bread cooking in the dining hall, we are taken back to some of our favorite (or maybe not so favorite) memories of schooling. Whatever the quality of those memories, they are certainly vivid. We watch the big yellow school bus traveling down the road and wonder about the children in that lovely "monster" of a vehicle. These images are not about instruction. They are about the other things that inform our memories and have deeply affected our lives. Even though they are not instruction, they are important to the successful school. They are the shape of schooling.

Management is the shape of schools. We manage budgets, discipline, community relations, and personnel. These are not the things that should be our focus in schools but they are exactly the matters with which we must deal so that we might teach children. And, the degree to which a leader can handle aspects of time management, scheduling, random but daily details, personnel management, parent conferencing, and community relations will determine the level of success for the students at that school. Of the management details, supervision of personnel is the most rewarding, demanding, and exhausting. Successful leaders find ways to be instructional leaders by offering supervision, staff development, remediation, and when necessary termination. But during the whole process of management, leaders struggle to balance being compassionate and supportive with being clinical and direct with personnel. Both sets of skills are necessary, but it is the rare leader who can do them both well. Effective leaders understand how to shape the modes of management to support the business of student learning.

Recently, while involved in staff development for assistant principals, it became clear to the author that the systemic configuration in the schools inhibited, or prohibited, the proper application of leadership functions. Put bluntly, school leadership has assumed so many different roles in the building that some leaders felt they were not doing any of the jobs very well. In fact, based on recent research with practicing assistant principals (Kelehear, 2005) the author and participants reconstructed the leadership position so that myriad responsibilities might be separated into two categories, for two different positions. Instead of one position in charge of both management and leadership, there would be the Manager of Programs (MP) for administration and the Instructional Leader (IL) for instructional supervision. Being in charge in today's schools continues to be a daunting task. Given the competing demands of federal mandates, state assessments, standardized-testing schedules, shrinking revenue streams, and the like, it is no small wonder that children and teaching somehow get lost in the shuffle.

It is clear from the literature (Sergiovanni, 1999; Smith & Piele, 1989; Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2004; Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2002; Fullan, 2001; Starratt, 2004; Robbins & Alvy, 2003) that principals are

called upon to do a myriad of jobs. It is a challenging task for principals to offer instructional leadership and also manage the other competing responsibilities. In much the same way as a teacher must be a successful manager of classroom behavior in order to be able to teach, the school leader must be able to manage the school so that instruction can take place. But to ask one person to manage all the business of schooling and also to conduct instructional supervision might be an unrealistic expectation. In working with 14 administrators, the author began to imagine that by separating the instructional supervision function from the principal's responsibility, then maybe another teacher leader could more fully supervise instruction in our schools (Kelehear, 2005). The role of instructional supervision would rest with someone whose primary responsibility was instructional development. Managing all other affairs of schooling such as budgets, parent conferences, and discipline would reside with the principal's position. The Manager of Programs (MP) was responsible for all matters of school governance and management with the exception of instructional leadership.

The Instructional Leader (IL) would conduct all instructional programs relative to evaluation, supervision, induction, remediation, and instructional staff development. This job would carry with it a supervisory supplement that would recognize the lead teacher's supervisory responsibilities. The school would have an instructional committee whose responsibility it would be to select an IL who may or may not be a member of the committee. The IL's appointment would be 3 years. The IL would function as a part of the instructional committee but leadership within the committee would reside with a different person. One way to imagine the organization is to imagine an elected school board with an appointed superintendent. The committee will have representatives from grade levels for elementary schools or from subject areas for high schools. Middle schools would have instructional committees drawn from teams.

For matters relative to evaluation, the IL would have the primary responsibility for making "judgments concerning the overall quality of the teacher's performance and the teacher's competence in carrying out assigned duties as well as provide a picture of the quality of teaching performances across the professional staff" (Nolan, 2003). These data will be collected as part of the teacher's overall evaluation in terms of retention, tenure, and promotion. The actual process for making employment decisions is described later in this paper.

Within the context of supervision, the goal of the IL is to offer instructional support for teachers through-out their professional career paths. Novice teachers might receive close-ordered coaching to help through the stresses of being new to the profession. Tenured teachers might receive support in the form of instructional development and experimentation. End-of-career teachers might receive requests from the IL to share expertise with others or to take on staff development responsibilities. At whatever the career stage, the nature of the instructional support will be in the form of developmental supervision or mentoring.

Research on mentoring emphasizes that the direction and content of instructional development is a shared responsibility of both the novice teacher and mentor teacher (Glickman, 2002; Reiman, 1999; Reiman & Theis-Sprinthall, 1993). Through collaboration and coaching the pair of teachers observe each other, share reflections on experiences, and develop professional development plans. Although during the early stages of the professional relationship, the mentor will likely assume a dominate role; over time the nature of the relationship will shift responsibilities from the mentor to novice (Gray & Gray, 1985).

A key function of the IL is to identify, develop, and supervise a cadre of successful teachers who are trained in developmental supervision and mentoring. The IL will be the lead mentor and will offer support and guidance to the cadre and will also substitute in cadre classes when the mentor is conducting observations or conferences. Each mentor will provide reports to the IL regarding dates of mentor contacts, the nature of the observation, and any issues that the IL might need to address. Because of the need for confidentiality and trust in the mentoring relationship, care will be given not to offer specific details of the mentor's contacts. The mentor's contacts will be formative in nature. Differently, the IL will conduct summative observations and evaluations of teachers for employment decisions. The IL will offer summary reports and recommendations to the MP and those reports would become a part of the teacher's personnel file. The MP will also make recommendations, again for inclusion in the personnel file, for employment based on teachers' performances of non-instructional responsibilities (e.g., bus duty, lunchroom supervision, committee participation, attendance). The instructional committee will receive recommendations and will offer its

recommendation for employment as well. In effect, employment decisions then come upon a three-vote decision: one vote from the IL, one vote from the MP and one vote from the instructional committee. Based on the three reports, the MP will construct a letter to the Director of Personnel that summarizes the findings and will offer a recommendation regarding the continuing employment status of the teacher. Both the MP and the IL will sign the letter. Any disputes or dissenting opinions will also be submitted, as attachment, to the Director of Personnel for inclusion in the personnel file.

Although the IL would be responsible for the personnel evaluation component, the instructional committee and mentors would engage in supervision exclusively. The group based the distinctions of what constitutes evaluation vs. supervision on Nolan's (2003) work. According to Nolan, the natures of evaluation and supervision are fundamentally and critically distinct within various functions of the teaching experience [See Table 2]. Given a particular dimension, the distinctions between evaluation and supervision become clear.

Table 2

Purposes for Evaluation and Supervision for Various Teaching Dimensions

| Dimension | Evaluation | Supervision |
|---|---|---|
| Purpose | Minimal competence | Growth |
| Rationale | Protect children | Complexity of teaching |
| Working Relationship | Hierarchical | Collegial |
| Scope | Comprehensive | Focused |
| Data Focus | Standardized | Individualized |
| Expertise | Evaluator as expert | Shared expertise |
| Perspective | Best foot forward | Risk taking |

It is in the form of mentoring as a supervisory practice that some of the more powerful benefits for teacher growth and development seem to emerge (Reiman 1999; Glickman, 2002; Pajak, 2002). Individuals who have a trained mentor are more likely to realize professional and personal growth than those who work alone (Vygotsky, 1986). This benefit is especially noticeable when teachers are in new assignments or in new

settings. Whether we are speaking about new doctors, new teachers, new administrators, or new professors, a supportive colleague can help a novice move to higher levels of effectiveness. Writing about medical school novices, Rabatin et al. (2004) noted that a "mentoring model stressing safety, intimacy, honesty, setting of high standards, praxis, and detailed planning and feedback was associated with mentee excitement, personal and professional growth and development, concrete accomplishments, and a commitment to teaching" (p. 569).

For public school teachers having a mentor is associated with professional growth and a sense of self-efficacy for both novices and experienced teachers. In working with veteran teachers, Reiman and Peace (2002) sought to "encourage new social role-taking, support new learning in effective teaching, encourage new complex performances in coaching and support conferences, and promote gains in moral and conceptual reasoning. Significant positive gains in learning, performance, and moral judgment reasoning were achieved" (p. 597). Mentoring had a bidirectional benefit for both novice and mentor. The best plan for supporting instruction will require a position that is wholly, and singularly, focused on the processes of teacher development.

As a benefit to school cultures, mentoring in a developmental supervision model encourages conversation among teachers. In conversation we begin creating a school community characterized by sharing, supporting, and caring. It has become clear through research of Noddings (2002), Palmer (1998), Starratt (1997), and others that when teachers and students work in a caring and supportive atmosphere, they are more likely to take risks, experiment, and attend to each other's needs. It is just this type of collaboration that the process of mentoring can encourage.

## 2 Form: Three-dimensional structure or shape; geometric or free form.

The Artist's View:

Forms are shapes that are three-dimensional and are either geometric or free form. In two-dimensional works of art (that is, artworks that hang on a wall), artists use value on a shape to create a form. In other words when artists add value to the shape of a circle, the shape becomes a sphere and takes on the illusion of something that is three-dimensional – a form. Today artists refer to light and dark areas of a work of art as modeling or shading. Very dark areas of forms tend to recede into the artwork where very light areas appear closest to the viewer. In three-dimensional art works such as sculpture, all shapes are forms because they take up space in three dimensions. True forms occupy height, width, and depth in space.

ISLLC Standard #5: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.

A Leadership Perspective:

The difference in management and leadership is the movement from shape to form, from two-dimensional perspective to a three-dimensional one. Leadership in many cases is a matter of perspective. Effective leaders find ways to recognize different perspectives in general through effective communication and more specifically through active listening. Truly gifted communicators can discern surface messages and distinguish them from the very important, but embedded, messages. What is the speaker saying? What is the speaker communicating? What is the speaker feeling? The answers are often wide-ranging.

The form for effective school-based management comes as effective communication. In other words, effective management requires one to be able to see individuals, events, and cultures from three dimensional perspectives. Communication has as its prerequisite trust. Without a sense of trust between two people, both in terms of content and confidentiality, there is little hope of meaningful conversation. An obvious example might be that if teachers trust their colleagues to work with them and not reveal their weak teaching areas to the general public, and certainly not to supervisors, then they might be more inclined to share deficiencies with colleagues. In so doing, teachers might be able to find help toward improving pedagogical gaps. If, on the other hand, teachers do not have the confidence in others' genuine concern for their professional development, they will certainly not engage in conversation with people about any professional areas of need. It is through active listening that principals can communicate trust and genuine interest that might lead to collegial interaction and growth.

Fortunately, active listening is a skill that can be developed. Though many people might think they are good listeners, in fact, without concentrated and frequent practice, and perhaps training, few people are effective listeners. It is only through intentional practice that one can develop into an effective listener. And the truly good listener recognizes that communication comes in verbal and nonverbal forms.

Effective leaders also recognize that through empathic writing, a sort of active listening through writing, the content of a message can begin to have depth along with breadth (Kelehear, 2002). In other words, leaders see the message from the front, from the side, from the inside. In so doing, the effective leaders recognize the multi-dimensional dynamic, the three-dimensional reality that comes with effective communication.

Research on the role of effective communication and the role it plays in successful leadership proclaims that that there can be no leadership without communication. In fact, it is communication that helps school leaders build trust and integrity in organizational cultures. Robbins & Alvy (1998) assert that today's principals are expected to be much more than simply instructional leaders. Among the multiple roles principals assume beyond instructional leadership are chief financial officer for the school building, student and teacher counselor for both professional and personal matters, and community contact for topics ranging from dress codes to the bus schedule. Embedded in all the principals' responsibilities, both the de jure and de facto assignments, is the requirement that they be clear and accurate communicators (Cousins, 1996). In fact, one might easily make the case that, above all else, effective principals must be skilled communicators (Stevan & Blumberg, 1986; Zigler, 1994; Tauer, 1996; Cousins, 1996; Reiman & Thies-Sprinthall, 1998; Reiman, 1999).

In the spirit of skilled communicator, effective school leaders are able to articulate the vision and mission of the school and school system, establish norms of behavior for both teachers and students, and communicate high expectations for teaching and learning. There can be no effective leadership, it would appear, without effective communication (Persell & Cookson, 1982; Buffie, 1989; Barth, 1990; Prestine, 1993; Blase & Blase, 1994; Stolp & Smith, 1995).

Particularly fascinating for today's principals is the possible role that technology, and in particular e-mail, might play in contributing to successful communication. With the infusion of technology into schools, computers and e-mail have become part of the daily routine for principals and teachers. In interviews with twelve principals representing elementary, middle, and high schools, it became clear that both teachers and principals relied heavily on e-mail to communicate with each other (Kelehear, 2001). One principal commented that she no longer used the intercom, but depended on e-mail to reach teachers and students. She reduced faculty meetings from once a week to once a month and disseminated all daily and weekly information by e-mail.

Several principals also found that face to face contact with some teachers seemed to diminish through the use of e-mail, if not in qualitative terms, certainly in quantitative ways. Two principals had actually removed the sign-in sheet and had teachers sign in from their rooms via e-mail. They commented that by moving the sign-in sheet they inadvertently lost contact with half of the staff. Several other principals commented that if it were not for the mail boxes in the front office, they would likely not see many of their teachers. Or, as another principal lamented, "I was talking with a teacher I had not seen in a few days when he told me that he had been absent for two days. I did not even know he was not there!"

And finally, there emerged the expectation on the part of principals and teachers alike that an immediate response to e-mail was not only preferred, rather it was expected. When teachers and principals sent messages, they became annoyed when the response was not returned quickly. When pressed by what was meant by "quickly," the teachers expected the principal to respond within three or four hours. Principals were more exacting. They anticipated a response from teachers within the hour! Several of the schools conducted faculty meetings whose agenda items focused on establishing norms and expectations regarding e-mail.

Given that e-mail has so completely become interwoven into the fabric of the school culture, it is interesting to note the reaction of staff when "the system" goes down or crashes. One principal recounted her and her staff's reaction to such an event:

Last week the system stopped working. I sought out our technology specialist in an attempt to find the source of the problem. Almost simultaneously, teachers began drifting by my office to tell of the problem and

find when it might be fixed. When I discovered that the system might be down for several days, immediately my daily routine began to change. I traveled the halls listening to teachers teaching and I talked with students as they moved on to their next class. During the transition to classes, I sensed that teachers were more likely to come to their doors and visit with each other and with students than they were when the system was working. For certain, I was in the halls more frequently doing the things I think a principal should be doing.

It is far from certain whether e-mail alone has encapsulated many teachers, but it is interesting to ask if a reliance on technological communication necessarily detracts from interpersonal conversation. Let it be clear, however, that not all schools with e-mail become cloistered communities. In almost countless ways, student academic achievement is augmented through the proper application of technology. Nevertheless, there is a possibility, as seen in the example above, that e-mail might reduce the important informal contacts between principals, teachers, and students.

Several studies support active listening as an important set of skills for authentic and accurate communication, especially for people in supervisory roles (Tauer, 1996; Cousins, 1996; Reiman & Theis-Sprinthall, 1998; Reiman,1999). This research applied active listening concepts to the medium of e-mail correspondence, thus creating the notion of empathic writing. Once principals recognize the pervasiveness of e-mail, they are left to grapple with establishing effective communication habits through that medium. Empathic writing might speak to this need.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that when the principals paraphrased content or feelings with empathic writing, teachers frequently responded with additional information, thus developing the original message more fully. Teachers commented that they appreciated the principals' taking their comments seriously and seeming to care about what the teachers were trying to say. Interestingly, it became immediately clear that empathic writing was rarely responded to in any substantive way if there did not already exist a significant relationship of trust and open communication between the principal and teacher. One possible conclusion of this condition is that empathic writing is rarely successful without a preexisting basis of interpersonal communication. But, where that relationship was present already, empathic writing by e-mail tended to enhance and affirm the communicative relationship. Where that empathic precondition did exist, teachers commented that the principals' willingness to respond to e-mail in an obviously meaningful way did indeed engender trust and collegiality.

Some real limitations to empathic writing by electronic communication emerged. With the loss of non-verbal signals inherent in face-to-face communication, some of the power of the principals' message was lost. More specifically, some messages sent by principals were misunderstood because the teacher was not sure of the principals' actual intent. One principal noted that many times silence or pauses communicated important, albeit subtle, messages and that component was lost in e-mail. There was just no way to display the "thoughtful pause" that might come in a genuine, caring conversation.

Another principal acknowledged some benefit to empathic writing, but was not willing to take the time, and risk, that this type of electronic engagement required. With this revelation as a backdrop, the writer stumbled upon a shocking finding. Principals were literally overwhelmed by the volume of e-mail messages that arrived daily. On the average, these fourteen principals received 63 e-mails within a 24-hour period. If the principals responded to every message utilizing empathic writing skills, there would be little time to do anything else. Two principals went on to say that they were reluctant to miss school for professional travel because they so disliked the many messages awaiting them upon their return. One principal put it very directly:

This e-mail is killing me. When I arrived in the morning there were always several messages from teachers, parents, and central office personnel waiting on my computer. I found myself arriving at work earlier and earlier each day so that I could deal with these messages before teachers and students began to arrive. Additionally, I stayed later in the day to catch up on e-mails and other business that should have been handled during the day when I was managing other e-mails. As a last resort, I began taking my laptop home to respond to e-mails and found that there was little time for me to be away from the affairs of schooling. Managing these e-mails was burning me out. I was working fourteen and fifteen-hour days.

As in many jobs today, it is interesting to note that technology aimed to helping people work more

efficiently and therefore have more time for themselves has achieved the opposite effect. The principals' work is following them everywhere and they feel overwhelmed. Today, there is a severe shortage of prepared leaders to fill the leadership positions in schools across the nation. There is the real chance that the very technology that intended to make lives better is, in fact, draining the energy of principals, and thus creating an increased leadership vacuum in our schools. It would be important for further research to examine the relationship of principal resiliency to e-mail management.

In the interviews conducted in this study, another area of possible inquiry became clear. Do principals who communicate well with personnel on an interpersonal basis find it easier to engage in empathic writing than those principals who do not relate well to staff members? From these few interviews, there appeared to be a positive correlation between principals who engaged in successful active listening and those who were comfortable with empathic writing. Principals who had previous training in active listening seemed comfortable translating those skills to the writing medium. This is an area where closer study needs to be conducted before any conclusions might be drawn, however.

In reviewing material for establishing e-mail messages, a potentially disturbing trend appeared. Under the perceived urgency to respond to e-mail immediately, many teachers found their lessons being interrupted by the frequent "beep" of the computer, notifying the teacher of a new e-mail. As one teacher put it, "We have replaced the intercom interruptions with computer ones." Several teachers and principals set their computers to check for new e-mail every two or three minutes, also saying something to researchers about the school culture and technology. Have we exacerbated an already fractionated, episodic school day with the inclusion of e-mail technology in schools? It would be very important, also, to examine to what extent teachers are responding to e-mail during instructional time. Finally, how much time are principals spending responding to e-mail versus their time conducting instructional supervision?

Another area of concern for schools and technology emerged from these interviews. Several principals related that they believed that contact with central office staff was decreased because of a heavy dependence on e-mail. Instead of seeing the personnel director, or the superintendent, or the curriculum coordinator, the principals and teachers received memoranda via e-mail "almost exclusively" and the e-mail technology actually did little to remove barriers or psychological distances between central offices and schools. Several principals commented that this separation might seem just the opposite of what ought to happen with e-mail. Principals believed that the schools' morale suffered from this exclusive reliance on technological communication. Central offices often are accused of being disconnected from students and teachers. There is a need to examine this possible separation broadened by technology. Further study is underway to clarify this apparent "entrapment" of central office personnel by e-mail technology.

In conclusion, communicating by e-mail is not likely to replace qualitative, interpersonal contacts. In many ways, words without physical context can be hollow. Empathic writing, however, can have many of the same benefits that effective interpersonal communication has. It can provide another means for principals to paraphrase teachers' feelings and content and, in so doing, enhance a sense of efficacy and trust among their instructional staff. Empathic writing tells teachers that principals care in significant ways about what is going on in the teachers' lives. Teachers can never have too many messages like that from principals. It would seem prudent that principals work to communicate well and often with their staffs through both personal and technological contacts. Given that effective communication is central to the form of effective building management and given email continues to be an important technology for communication, it stands to reason that building capacity for empathic communication, either electronically or in person, is an important part of successful leadership in today's schools.

## 3 Space: Area around, between, above, below, or within an object

The Artist's View:

All the area that exists around, between, above, below, and within an object is considered to be space. Forms and shapes are considered to be positive space and space that occupies the area in and around the form and shape is called negative space. Artists that utilize large negative spaces may express loneliness or freedom. Crowding together positive space reflects tension or togetherness. Depending on each other,

positive and negative spaces interact with one another to create meaning. Space in three-dimension is considered to be the area that is over, under, around, behind, and through. Sculpture, jewelry, architecture, weaving, and ceramics are three-dimensional art forms. They are artworks that take up real space.

ISLLC Standard #2: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.

A Leadership Perspective:

When a teacher works alone he often has fewer skills for problem solving than when he works with an older or more experienced person (e.g., mentor). The mentor can help the teacher explore different, and often new, ways to solve problems through trial and error or through approximations of existing schema. For example, if new learning is conceptually close to what the new teacher already knows and understands, then he can more readily internalize the information. If, however, the new learning is significantly different from what is already known, then the teacher will likely encounter more difficulty in capturing the new information. In this case, a mentor can assist the teacher in identifying new pathways of understanding. Mentors can enhance the ability to internalize new and difficult material. The simultaneous effort of support and challenge on the part of a mentor offers a productive model for learning. For example, the mentor might support learning by first presenting material that the teacher already understands and then challenge him with information that is an extension of that understanding. Put more directly, a teacher learns best when learning is connected to existing understanding; teacher learning is social in nature.

Understanding the role of space can help leaders create learning places that are at once challenging and supporting. Teaching assignments and the pedagogy that come with them help create challenge. Leaders help teachers grow and stretch by challenging them to take on different subjects, different age groups of students, different roles. Additionally, leaders create positive moments as they encourage teachers to use a wide range of pedagogical techniques in order to reach more students. Left alone, these challenges can create negative working conditions as teachers feel stretched but not appreciated. Effective leaders find a way to balance challenge with support. Much as space in art is constructed with positive and negative dimensions, successful learning space is constructed with a balance of support and challenge. The appropriate balance might include new teaching methods, but at the same time might include opportunities for team planning or for coaching. Through sustained, long-term, coaching, and support, leaders can offer teachers a safe environment where risks are valued and mistakes are acknowledged as part of the growing process.

School-based management, in part, is successful to the degree to which that learning, amidst an environment of support and challenge, is present for both students and teachers. But bringing individuals and organizations to higher levels of effectiveness is a daunting task. It is the position of the author that organizational change can not happen without individual change, and vise versa. A first step in making such significant changes is to begin seeing teachers in a new way. That new way is a view rooted in an arts-based perspective and methodology.

The notion that school-based leaders can assist teachers improve their effectiveness in supporting student achievement is central to schooling. One of the most specific ways that leaders can support teaching is through instructional leadership and supervision. The author develops some of this discussion in an earlier part of this monograph under shape. But more needs to be addressed in terms of the possibility of leaders capturing successful teaching and stretching growth of teaching from an arts-based approach. Specifically, the author offers a mechanism for applying the conversation of art to the art of teacher development. Put differently, one might ask "How might a leader build the art of reflective practice into the daily practice of schooling?"

Reflection as a method for making meaning out of the teaching experience remains an important part of instructional supervision (Glickman, 2002; Pajak, 2003; Rucinski, 2005; Sullivan & Glanz, 2005). Reflection as a method of making meaning out of experience remains an important part of art criticism (Feldman, 1995). Reflection as conversation is central to making meaning out of the art of teaching. In as much as the supervision of teaching becomes art, then some understanding of the language of art is in order. In so doing, instructional supervisors can begin to utilize reflection, as in art criticism, as a mechanism for reflecting on teaching in a much broader and possibly more profound way.

Focusing specifically on how teachers and supervisors can reflect and discuss teaching behaviors, scholars have readily acknowledged the role that reflection and feedback can play in supporting teacher growth (Beebe & Masterson, 2000; Bennis, 1989; Bolman & Deal, 2002; Dewey, 1938; Glanz, 2002; Good & Brophy, 1997; Kelehear, 2002; Lambert, et al., 2003; Nolan & Hoover, 2004; Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004; Schon, 1987; Sullivan & Glanz, 2005, 2006; Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002; Woolfolk & Hoy, 2003; Zepeda, 2000). The manner in which supervisor and teacher talk to each other reflects the capacity of both parties to recognize that teaching is about supervisor and teacher as well as teacher and student. The relationship that emerges from the conversation is beneficial to both the teacher and the supervisor. In other words there is a bidirectional benefit (Kelehear & Heid, 2002; Reiman, 1999; Reiman & Theis-Sprinthall, 1993). But in order to understand this bi-directionality, some consideration must be given to the nature of conversation and how it can move from concern about self to concern about others. The Concerns Based Adoption Model (CBAM) provides such a theoretical understanding.

For several years, emerging in large part from Fuller's (1969) original study published in the American Educational Research Journal, researchers in staff development have provided an important mechanism for framing and supporting organizational change through the CBAM (Hall & Loucks, 1978; Hord, et al., 1978; Hall & Rutherford, 1990). The stages of CBAM are Awareness, Information, Personal, Management, Consequence, Collaboration, and Refocusing [See Table 3].

Table 3

Typical Expressions of Concern about an Innovation

| Stage of Concern | Expression of Concern |
|---|---|
| 6. Refocusing | I have some ideas about something that would work even better. |
| 5. Collaboration | How can I relate what I am doing to what others are doing? |
| 4. Consequence | How is my use affecting learners? How can I refine it to have more impact? |
| 3. Management | I seem to be spending all my time getting materials ready. |
| 2. Personal | How will using it affect me? |
| 1. Informational | I would like to know more about it. |
| 0. Awareness | I am not concerned about it. |

This theory recognizes that when individuals come into contact with innovations, they necessarily travel through the levels of concern (i.e., starting with awareness and moving up the scale) based heavily on how "new" the innovation is. A profoundly important distinction between the first four stages and the last three is that the focus of the individuals moves away from themselves and more toward the effect an innovation has on others. Art conversation has some interesting parallels as well.

Edmund Feldman (1995) provides a paradigm for discussing art publicly, i.e., art criticism. His four-step, (description, analysis, interpretation, judgment) approach offers students a specific process for undertaking aesthetics or critical theory. When an observer engages an artwork using the Feldman Method, that individual will first describe the piece. The goal in this step is to describe objectively what one sees. An essential part of this step is to delay any judgments or conclusions. The second step in the Feldman Method involves analysis. In the process of analysis one begins to describe different elements of the art, like the use of color, or line, or value. The third step in the Feldman Method calls for interpretation. The goal is to try to find meaning in what one sees. The final step in the Feldman Method is for the observer to begin making judgments about the artwork. This step is the first one that calls for evaluation on the part of the observer. Thus, if there is an art of reflection for teachers and an art of reflection for artists, then there clearly is a message for instructional supervision rooted in an arts-based theory.

If an instructional leader begins to describe teaching behaviors as art, one can observe that the same movement from concern about self to concern about others also happens. To put it differently, initially the conversation focuses on the technical dimensions and afterwards addresses the aesthetic elements of the lesson. In the first two steps the instructional supervisor observes the lesson in its technical dimensions. The observer describes and analyzes the lesson and these pieces are very important. In fact, without first establishing that the learner outcomes are met and that classroom management supports that achievement it is premature to consider any other portion of the instruction. If, on the other hand, the supervisor describes and analyzes the lesson with a teacher, and they both feel comfortable with those steps, then they can begin discussing the instruction in qualitative or aesthetic ways. As in the description of the Feldman Method above, teachers and instructional leaders can readily engage in "describing" and "analyzing" a lesson but it is quite a different story to "interpret" and "evaluate" the lesson. The final two steps require the instructor and observer to attend more carefully to the feelings, the consequences and the subtleties of the lesson (Heid, 2005). But the final two steps are the essence of beginning to observe teaching as an art and supervision of such teaching as also an art. To ignore those steps is to continue reducing class observations to inspection and "fact finding" rather than enlarging the observation to the aesthetic possibilities of excellent teaching. Given the important role that all four steps play in promoting the art of teaching and the art of discussing teaching, it is instructive to observe how using the Feldman Method makes sense [See Table #4].

Table 4

Typical Expressions of Instructional Leaders Using Art Conversation.

| Level of Criticism | Expressions of Criticism |
|---|---|
| 4. Evaluation | Was the lesson successful? In what ways might it have been improved? What recommendations might be useful to improve the next lesson? |
| 3. Interpretation | How did the methodology affect students? How did the methodology interface with the subject matter? How did the lesson match or mismatch the learner needs and styles? |
| 2. Analysis | Were the learning outcomes met? How did classroom management affect the attainment of the learner outcomes? |
| 1. Description | Objectively, what do I see? Withhold evaluation of the lesson or teacher. |

Applying the Feldman Method to artwork was new for the instructional leaders and that newness helped remind them of the power, intimidating power, of innovations. Applying the Feldman Method in teacher observations was also challenging as it was innovative for the administrators and for the teachers. The author asked the same eight students to take their new knowledge of the Feldman Method and apply it to teacher observations. Using the chart above (See Table 4), the students began to be comfortable with the different steps in the method. In pre-observation conferences at their schools, they discussed with teachers the specific points for observation and the structure of the observation instrument. After each lesson, the observed teachers were asked to apply the Feldman Method as they reflected on their own lessons. In the post-observation conference, the instructional leader asked the teacher to lead the conference by moving through the Feldman Method. One of the instructional leaders came to class one week and remarked: "I can not get my teacher to do the last two steps. All the teacher wants to know is if he passed or not! We just have nothing to talk about after we finish the technical part." Other participants also reflected similar concerns. In a culture of high stakes assessment, of both students and teachers, it is easy to lose sight of the aesthetics that impact learning and to reduce learning to the technical or immediately observable elements of a lesson. Toward the end of the term several of the instructional leaders commented that their teachers, after they began to trust the leader's intentions, were becoming more comfortable with discussing the aesthetic

steps (i.e., steps three and four) in the Feldman Method.

With each attempt to apply the Feldman Method to instructional supervision, the students became more comfortable applying the conversation of art in conferences. An especially exciting part of this growing confidence and in keeping with the CBAM stages of consequence, collaboration, and refocusing, the students began considering different approaches to using art language in observing teaching. As the students became comfortable with the innovation later in the term, the author and students began discussing the consequence the Feldman Method might have on student learning and teacher growth. Their concern moved from concern about self to concern about the innovation's impact on others. They also moved quickly to collaborate on possible alternatives to the standard format the author proposed. And finally, as a final project in the class, they were asked to refocus the Feldman Method and formulate a new format for critique so that they could make the assessment instrument meet the needs of teachers and students at their schools.

Introducing school leaders to the language of art, and in this case the Feldman Method, reminded the author and students that innovation can be overwhelming. In order to come to terms with innovation, school leaders must also recognize the teaching the CBAM theory offers. A particularly exciting connection for the participants and authors, and an unanticipated one, was the link they made between concern for self and concern for others in both the CBAM and Feldman Method. The message was clear: when school leaders and teachers, in parallel fashion, begin attending to the art of teaching, then they necessarily begin to move beyond the important and necessary technical dimensions of teaching to the crucial and essential aesthetic considerations that make a classroom a place for academic achievement and personal development. And in this context, creating learning space for teachers invited experimentation, risk-taking, and a culture built on teacher professional growth and student learning.

## 4 Color: Property of objects coming from reflected light

The Artist's View:

Color is the most dynamic and exciting element of art. It is also the hardest element to describe. Color comes from reflected light. When light reflects off of an object such as a red ball, the red ball absorbs all light waves except the red light waves. The red light waves reflect into our eyes and are interpreted by our brain as the color red. Often, we represent colors along a spectrum– primary (red, yellow, and blue), secondary (violet, green, and orange) and tertiary or intermediate (red orange, red violet, blue violet, blue green, yellow green, and yellow orange). When these spectral colors are bent into a circle, we form a color wheel. White and black are not considered colors at all. Black is the absence of color and white is considered to be all colors.

ISLLC Standard #6: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

A Leadership Perspective:

As different colors contribute to the whole beauty of the art and people's different styles, different gifts support successful schools. One of the ways leaders can celebrate differences is by first acknowledging that diversity is valued. This diversity can be in terms of gender or ethnicity, of course. What might also be noted is that the diversity of ideas, teaching styles, or perspectives is important to the successful school. Successful leaders consider learning styles and personality types as they seek out teachers' help. Building a successful committee is as much about "who decides who decides" as it is about who is in the group. In other words, successful leaders help bring together individuals with acknowledged differences so that a true exchange of ideas can begin. The negative approach might be leaders who select the "right" ones for committees knowing before the work begins what the conclusions will be. Where leadership is successful there are shared values and goals coupled with an appreciation for the different paths one might take to reach those goals. One of the more notable examples of these shared values amidst diverse approaches can be in a principal's role as instructional leader at a local school high school. Specifically, how might the principal support a shared value through staff development initiatives that also celebrates diverse approaches to effective instruction?

No Child Left Behind (NCLB), for better or for worse, has school leaders across the nation looking

carefully at staff development, especially as staff development affects the notion of "highly qualified teachers" and "school improvement." Two questions that continue to arise among many school leaders are, "How can we be sure that our money spent on staff development has measurable results?" and "How can we sustain any benefits so that our good intentions might last longer than just to the end of the training session?"

Historically, leaders have created mission statements and vision statements to help provide organizations a means to articulate what they value most. As noted earlier in this monograph regarding "space," some schools have adopted a core values approach school leadership. Core values help schools communicate to the community, students, teachers and administrators what is most important. It would stand to reason that the daily activities within the school would support those values as well. Principals have an especially important role in making certain that what the teachers are doing is supportive and consistent with the articulated core values. Additionally, in a time when much staff development is being eliminated because of diminishing budgets, initiatives must be able to communicate to various audiences their value with specific and understandable assessments. And as leaders begin to "justify" their expenditures for staff development in light of NCLB, then they might return to what matters most, helping children learn.

Even when a staff development program adopts a core values approach, it will continue to find challenges to implementing successful professional development. If on the other hand school leaders couple core values with an intentional, on-going reflection process, then they can greatly improve the chances for successful staff development. One way that professional development efforts can achieve desired results is by the principal, teacher-leaders, and teachers answering affirmatively the following seven questions about the staff development initiative:

Given the core values of the school, have we done the following successfully?

1. Have we made all involved aware of the initiative?
2. Have we provided information about the initiative and how it supports the core values of the district?
3. Have we communicated the personal impact the initiative has on people affected?
4. Have we provided strategies for managing the initiative within the current realities?
5. Have we communicated what consequence the initiative will have on student achievement?
6. Have we provided opportunities for collaboration among those affected?
7. Are we willing to provide opportunities for the affected parties to work together to further extend and refocus the initiative beyond its present form?

In order to achieve desired results of a given staff development initiative, principals will answer, in order, all the questions above. Only after one is answered adequately can the next question be asked. Skipping or avoiding a question will prevent the successful implementation of the initiative.

At a local high school, the principal was considering various scheduling initiatives to support improved standardized test scores. Early in the school year, before students arrived, the principal and teachers agree upon the following core value: "We value knowledgeable, reflective, and thoughtful students." At the school a committee, facilitated by the staff development leader, then examined various scheduling models that would support the articulated value. With district-level support, the high school team committed to team teaching for math-science and English-social studies.

The first order of business was for the principal, with the collaboration of the high school committee, to make the entire staff aware of team teaching. The leader then provided information that clarified in what ways team teaching supported the core value. Once the faculty had the team teaching information, it began asking questions like, "What does this have to do with me?" Individuals quickly moved to decide if the idea affected them personally. Again, the leader shared with the faculty how team teaching affected them. The faculty then imagined how it, collectively and individually, would absorb or adopt team teaching into its existing schedule. In other words, how would each teacher manage team teaching? Up to this point, questions focused on the teachers. When the faculty began to consider the impact of team teaching on student achievement, however, then their concern about the initiative moved from inward looking to outward looking. The discussion about team teaching moved to the consequence on student scheduling or student achievement. The phase revealed a significant shift in the focus of the faculty. The faculty (principal

and teachers) ceased to think primarily of itself and more towards the students. It is important to note that the faculty could not be asked to consider the needs of the students until the first four phases were addressed.

An especially exciting moment was when the faculty moved to the next phase of concern and began asking questions about how it might collaborate to further enhance the positive benefits of team teaching. This level of concern represented the best elements of site-based management and shared decision-making. This level, however, served to remind reformers that systems change is a multi-year challenge and that there are few shortcuts. Finally, in very rare instance, this faculty began to imagine how team teaching could be refocused or reconstructed to be an even better strategy for enhancing the quality and quantity of student learning.

For school leaders the message from the example above was that as schools engaged in professional development, they must attend to the needs of those caught in the change in specific and intentional ways. And only after individuals began to understand how they would manage the change could the staff development move to its most important point . . . student achievement. Understanding this process could help reduce frustration and ambiguity amidst the storm of change. As NCLB begins to disappear on the political horizon and the next "miracle plan" arises, then school systems can be confident that they are already attending to what matters most, helping children be productive, reflective, and knowledgeable citizens in a global society. Indeed, staff development can support high standards while also supporting a range of approaches. When staff development, as well as other school-based decisions, allows for shared values and diverse approaches, then those efforts support the diversity of ideas . . . the color of successful schools.

Element #7

## 5 Texture: Feel or appearance of an object or surface

The Artist's View:

Texture is the art element that refers to how things feel or look as if they might feel. Touch and vision are how we perceive texture. One can use tactile sensitivity by using skin receptors to feel texture but one can also experience visual texture by looking at the illusion of a three dimensional surface. Once again the element of value comes to the forefront. Without the relative lightness and darkness of the surface arrangement, the illusion of a surface texture could not be seen. Texture is important to every art medium.

ISLLC Standard #4: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.

A Leadership Perspective:

Successful school leaders recognize that schools are a tapestry of people, interests and communities. Weaving those very different, and very important, stakeholders is a delicate and intricate process and will almost always result in some degree of stress and anxiety for all concerned. When bringing the various constituencies together, the school can become a seamless fabric of diverse perspectives that agree to celebrate student achievement. Or, if leadership does not effectively connect the various stakeholders, the school can begin to unravel into patches of angry parents, frustrated teachers, and misbehaving students. Successful leaders take the time to invite participation by all stakeholders. This invitation, then, would be offered to parents, community leaders, students, teachers, administrators, and support staffs. To the level that these constituencies are included then there would be more commitment by all concerned and less opportunity for subterfuge and negative energy. The notion that we are all in this together would serve to elevate the commitment for all and help create a fabric that embraces and supports rather than a blanket that smothers creativity and individuality. In many ways, the effectiveness with which leadership brings together the many constituencies that comprise the school can be measured by the safety and care that students feel in the day-to-day activities. In other words, when we can imagine a school environment that celebrates diversity of thought, perspective, and pedigree, then we can draw comfort that the stress of expectations (e.g., standardized tests, NCLB, AYP) will not tear at the texture of the school.

Watch a child enter a classroom for the first time and one can see real stress. Observe a middle school student "fumble" with the combination on a locker and one will see frustration and sadness. Consider the

novice teacher after his first day teaching and one will see exhaustion. And then watch a new principal conduct her first conference with angry parents of a special needs child. She looks all over the desk for the child's folder (that is right in front of her) and then becomes embarrassed when the parents point it out to her! Signs of stress again!

Everything we do involves some level of stress. We wake up with it. We live with it during the day. And then we try to sleep in spite of it. About the only way we can avoid stress is to do nothing, engage no one, and think of no new ideas. But it is Mark Twain who reminds us that the most tiring thing to do is nothing because we can never stop to rest!

If we can assume for a moment that stress is a necessary part of the school leader's life, that it is in fact a central fabric of the schooling process then we can begin the process of embracing the energy that comes with stress and thereupon help students learn, teachers teach, and principals lead. Addressing stress for leaders in schools today, let us consider three questions:

1. What are the possible consequences of stress on leadership style?
2. In what ways can stress affect morale and productivity among principals and teachers?
3. What are some possible strategies for helping principals and teachers manage change, and its accompanying stress, so that they can support learning amidst difficult times?

In a recent article, Jerry Patterson and Kelehear (2003) acknowledged that leaders create culture and that they have a responsibility to change it. When leaders are in a high state of stress, their leadership styles necessarily create a culture that is under stress as well. Schools that function in an atmosphere of unmanaged stress regularly begin to be dysfunctional and unhealthy. Teacher attitude and morale deteriorate. Leadership and teachers cease communicating. Students feel ignored and unsafe. The whole place becomes "tired," filled with frustrated and angry teachers and students.

School cultures in tough times, like the people in them, lose the ability to reflect and self-evaluate. The negative energy associated with stress creates "blind spots" so that what is clear to an outsider is ignored, or at least not noticed, by those inside the culture. When the leadership's stress begins to change, however, then the school culture reflects that shift. People are more open to critique. They communicate more often and more accurately. Teachers and principals pay attention to student needs more easily. Leadership absolutely affects a school's sense of wellbeing and efficacy.

It does not take us long to recognize the source of much of the stress that many principals and teachers face. Given the various calls to address safety, overcrowding, drugs, gangs, low teacher pay, teacher retention, schools' personnel can feel overwhelmed. Add to that stress the competing demands of increasing assessments and reporting in a world of decreasing funding, and we begin to see a prescription for emotional, professional, and economic collapse. Specifically, consider the pressure many principals and teachers are under as they try to come to terms with being "highly qualified" and achieving "adequate yearly progress " (AYP) coming from the federal mandate, "NCLB." These are not easy times for schools. Leadership style, school culture, teacher morale, and student performance all suffer in a community where tensions are high and emotional support is low. Uncontrolled, unidentified stress can drain the life-blood of even the best schools.

When one walks into schools, the stress level reveals itself almost immediately. One can watch a principal and teachers and see that the way they interact with each other and with students communicates the cultural undercurrent. Specifically, the leadership style this author finds most often amidst stress begins to be more about:

- Fixed and authoritarian vs. flexible and democratic
- Narrow and uninviting vs. original and embracing
- Vertically focused vs. collaboratively aligned
- Concrete and objective vs. abstract and subjective
- Judgmental vs. encouraging
- "My way" vs. "Our way"
- "Hurry up and do" vs. "slow down and think"
- Talking vs. listening

When the author examined morale in effective schools, he quickly found the same sort of indicators in the research literature as in anecdotal observations in the neighborhood schools. The teachers talked to students and to each other. Students felt safe and adults knew their names. The principal was in the halls, talking to students and teachers. One of my favorite places to visit had a principal who walked about with an index card in his shirt pocket. As teachers and students offered comments or ask questions, the principal took notes and the next day, without exception, returned to the person with a response.

As an instructional leader, another principal engendered trust and understanding when she gave all her teachers a "wild card." The wild card was a small, colored index card that stated: "This card entitles me to a day, free from observation, without reasons or rationale." The principal knew that there were some days that, for reasons beyond the teacher's comprehension and control, things were not going well. When the principal appeared for an observation, the teacher had the option of presenting the card and the principal "turned on a dime" and departed the room. All teachers received one wild card for the year. They appreciated her realistic understanding and her support for their teaching.

In coming to terms with the attributes of good places to work, Buckingham and Coffman (1999) identify 12 questions that receive a strong "yes" in organizations where employees have high morale:

- Do I know what is expected of me?
- Do I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right?
- Do I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day?
- In the last seven days, have I received recognition or praise for good work?
- Does my supervisor, or someone at work, seem to care about me as a person?
- Is there someone at work who encourages my development?
- Does my opinion seem to count?
- Does the mission of my company make me feel like my work is important?
- Are my coworkers committed to doing quality work?
- Do I have a best friend at work?
- In the last six months, have I talked with someone about my progress?
- Have I had opportunities to learn and grow?

The message is clear: people want to work where their humanity is acknowledged and celebrated. Likewise, teachers perform better and feel more nearly positive about students in schools where the principal takes a personal interest in their professional development. And, when tough times come along, then the principal, teachers and students draw strength from relationships built on trust and empathy.

As leadership and teachers begin coming to terms with stress and its related, albeit often unanticipated, consequences they first notice that stress can destroy morale and enthusiasm in the schoolhouse. In other words, unmanaged stress debilitates teachers, students, families and dismantles their learning communities. Leadership can, however, create and sustain a school culture where student and teacher learning is the heart of the matter. There are two, very specific elements for building community within the varied texture of schools: Trusting Relationship and Caring Communities.

Over and again, when I asked teachers what they wanted in a principal they responded that they needed someone whom they could trust. Leadership can build trust in a variety of ways. Through effective and authentic communication, principals engender trust by paying attention to the needs of teachers. One principal with whom I visited recently devoted one half-hour of the monthly faculty meeting to conversation. In that part of the agenda, teachers discussed their needs, celebrated successes, and then outlined goals for the coming month. The principal verbally paraphrased the teachers' comments and feelings, and in so doing, checked his own perceptions of what was being said. Later that night, he sent his notes in an email to the staff making sure he had captured accurately what was said. Within two days, the teachers delivered an email to the principal outlining one goal for the month and the accompanying plan for achieving that goal. Also, the teachers suggested one strategy that they would request of the principal so that he could support their pursuit of the goal. One caveat, and this was the really exciting part in the author's estimation, the principal encouraged teachers to include personal goals in their plans. Although strategies for student achievement and teacher effectiveness were always part of the discussion, the principal also encouraged private or personal

goals. The message from the principal to the teachers: I value you as a professional and as a person. In the end, a relationship built on trust emerged and the morale and enthusiasm of principal and teacher alike were bolstered.

Not unlike trusting relationships, schools that are caring communities also support diversity and achievement. Anyone who has taught in middle school recognizes the folly of thinking that putting people into teams, alone, creates a community. Even scheduling shared planning, although necessary, is not sufficient for bringing teachers together. Creating a community requires intentional acts in an atmosphere of caring amidst shared needs and concerns. Leadership that provides teacher ownership of the schooling process invites the cultivation of community. Specifically, when teachers are given significant and real responsibilities for running the school, when they are expected to be aware of each other's needs and to support each other, then they begin to share needs and concerns. At one elementary school, teachers began a process of deciding what mattered most to them as a staff and then committed to supporting that belief in an atmosphere of collaboration. It became clear, however, that collaboration was not an option for everyone as some teachers were working just to "stay afloat." Recognizing this harsh reality, the staff met again and reflected on what it was, specifically, that got in the way of their being able to collaborate. In teams of three, an individual teacher identified one obstacle and then two other teachers committed to help address that obstacle. The teachers took time to listen to each other. They, in their teams of three, committed to helping each other address challenges each month. Much of the conversation and support during the month came in the way of emails and "accidental" contact during the normal schedule of the school day. The threesomes did agree, however, that some sort of contact was necessary at least three times a week. At the end of each month, the threesomes gathered to assess their status and to make plans for the next month. And all these monthly meetings occurred as part of the regularly scheduled faculty meetings. Although there were different levels of success in becoming a school of collaborators, a sense of community and caring clearly became the most important product of the initiative.

Leading is a lonely and stressful job. Given that school leaders are daily handed increased accountability amidst decreasing resources, it is no wonder that many are managing stress that is compromising their personal and professional health. The schooling we are doing today is far too demanding to go it alone. When we can create school cultures that emphasize trust and caring, places where teachers and principals see a shared responsibility for what is going on in the school building, then we can begin to survive the many harsh realities. Ultimately, it comes down to celebrating a place where everything is about relationships . . . about our individual "threads" of life that contribute to the fabric of the school. If we as principals, teachers, and students can tend to each other in a trusting and caring atmosphere, then we can begin to attend to what matters most, the children in our schools. And when that middle school child fumbles with the combination on her locker, she will look to the adults in her school as trusting and caring people who will help her through this tough time

Conclusion on the Elements of School Leadership

The elements of art juxtaposed to leadership provide us with symbolic language for understanding what makes for successful school leadership. As might be perceived in viewing different art forms, some of the elements are more obvious or more significant in one instance versus at another moment or place. Such is the case with the elements of school leadership. Line, value, shape, form, space, color, and texture all contribute to quality schooling. Given one school with a certain set of needs, we might find that shape is the leading element. At another school with very different needs, however, we might find that texture is a focus. But just as in playing a piano or singing in harmony, there are individual strikes of the keys or notes of the harmony but it is the collective, simultaneous action that elicits an effect that is full, coherent, and complete. The successful school leader has all seven elements at her command, albeit at different levels. Because she understands the interrelated nature of the elements, she is able to orchestrate a successful learning and teaching experience for her students and teachers.

Using an arts-based approach to understand the nature of successful school-based leadership helps craft an enlarged view of what schooling might look like. It is not so much that this approach is the answer to understanding all schools, but such an approach offers one the capacity to view typical schooling in a new and exciting light. When one continues to see the world through the same metaphorical lenses, then one is

likely to continue seeing the same things in the same light. When, however, one considers seeing schools from an arts-based approach then that observer may very well gain a new insight into perplexing and persistent problems. And in the final analysis, just as effective teachers learn to see different students from different perspectives effective leaders can see different teachers in light of their different contributions. Maybe by considering the use of line, shape, form, space, value, color, and texture one can open his/her eyes to a new reality.

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