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Developing a New Model of School Leadership for Teacher Learning

Recently, I've noticed talk about "the heart of leadership" in the press, in professional conversations between school leaders, and amongst researchers. Leadership, like teaching, is about heart—dedication and profound caring. There's a special kind of satisfaction and joy in supporting another person's growth. You *see* and *feel* that your efforts to support another human being have made some difference in his or her sense of self and ability to make a difference for a student or a fellow teacher. As one principal in this study said, "You see it. And it makes all the difference. Not just for the teacher. But for teachers and for students' learning, even if it's one student at a time. It makes all the difference for all us here at the school."

My work in support of school leadership and teacher development on behalf of children has taught me the power of heart in the form of paid attention. I like to learn what people think and how they tend to make sense of their learning and growing experiences. Over a recent dinner with student educators new to the Harvard Graduate School of Education master's program, I asked about interests and reasons that led the already successful professionals to decide in favor of additional study.

Marie said she came to Harvard to learn more about school reform. "I want to focus on how to support low-income students of color in my hometown. I want to learn more about issues of race and ethnicity, and how theory can inform practice. I want to give back to my hometown, to help kids there, to give them a model for what they can do. I want to lead a program that I design for teachers and students of color to help them achieve and learn—and grow." Bob offered that he was keen on what he was learning in a class he was taking on promoting students' academic achievement. Rose stated, "I'm working on this exciting research project where we're focusing on how to support teachers' professional development through technology." Teal shared with noted enthusiasm, "I came here to take a year away from my school to reflect on my work and next steps. I'm interested in finding better ways to support adult learning, so that teachers can more effectively attend to children's learning and achievement in schools." At this point, Jody chimed in, "I'm really enjoying my classes, but I miss my students so much that I've decided to continue teaching part-time while I take my classes. It's a lot to juggle, but the kids give me energy. So that's what I've decided to do."

And then, after a pause, Elizabeth, who was seated at the far end of the table, shared, "I remember crying one year after an August staff meeting when I realized I would not have any free time with the other teachers who taught U.S. history. I was so mad at my principal for not recognizing how important it is to collaborate with peers and to make it a priority in scheduling." She continued, "I really cherish my time here at Harvard if only because it is a breather from the last six years of teaching. I've always had my summers free to detox and reflect, so I thought it was weird how much I felt 'free' when August and September rolled around and I wasn't writing lessons. It is so hard to reflect on your teaching when you are in the thick of it."

As postgraduation plans were discussed, I was reminded of many other conversations I've had with teachers and principals over my own years of teaching, researching, and consulting to schools. For example, Bob's comments rang true for me as they echoed what I have learned from many. "I love teaching and I love my kids," he said. "But the new state regulations for permanent certification demand that I earn a master's in my discipline. I just can't see taking another year off, or managing part-time study while teaching in order to pay for another master's degree. I plan to attend medical school after this year." Rose added, "Teaching is tough work. I love it, and I love my kids. But it has become increasingly frustrating for me, and sometimes I feel like all I'm doing is jumping through hoops, hoops, and more hoops with no time to reflect on my teaching. My days are so full, that I rarely get the chance to talk with my colleagues when we're in school. That's what I'm really enjoying about my time in this program. I finally have time to think and talk with others about teaching. It's so stimulating, and while I think it will make me a

better teacher, I'm not sure that I'll go back to the classroom. I'd like to go for a doctorate and then become a principal."

Kristina, who had been listening carefully to the conversation, said, "My mother has been a second-grade teacher for 25 years, and she loves it. This year she's working toward national certification. It's an intense program, she says. It requires that she reflects on her practice, and she's finding it so satisfying. It's helping her stay fresh, and she feels it's making her a better teacher. That's why I'm here. To take some time to reflect."

These heartfelt stories and experiences of teachers, school leaders, and my own experiences resonate with stories from principals and teachers across the country. My students and many other school leaders I have met in workshops and conferences have helped me better understand their important work and their caring. The best educators love students. They care for them, and they care for their learning. They dedicate themselves— with BIG hearts and minds—to their vocation, and they also crave time to reflect on their teaching and leadership practices toward becoming ever better in service to students and each other.

Walking home from dinner that evening, I reflected on my own past experiences as teacher and administrator in middle and upper schools. What was it that made the difference for me in terms of working in a healthy school environment, one where I was able to support children's learning and achievement while also making time to reflect on my own practice so that I could be more effective? I have worked in schools where very few structures were in place for engaging conversations about teaching with my colleagues, where few faculty meetings were held for purposes other than administration or announcements. Outside speakers were occasionally invited to present their work, which was one form of important learning. The presentations offered good information and, often, new skills with promise to improve our teaching and leadership practices.

It has also been my privilege to teach in a school where many opportunities were made available for collaboration and reflection. I knew that I was growing in some important ways from participation in the conversations for learning. The faculty in this school was encouraged to visit each other's classes, so that we might learn from conversations about the work we were doing. Our principal also sat in on class meetings, and he joined in reflective discussions afterward. Teachers at the school were in mentoring relationships toward supporting and enhancing our teaching. We met often to discuss our practice—our craft—and to develop new ideas for improving student achievement and our school. Our principal, like those you will read about in this book, made support for adult learning a priority. He secured time for us to talk about our work, and he attended to adult learning with the same zeal he brought to student learning. He created structures for reflective practice among all adults in our school, structures that incorporated both challenges to and support for each other's

thinking. I believe that all of us working at the school during those years experienced profound learning that changed our ways of thinking about education. Those teachers, and especially a principal who made support for adult learning a demonstrated personal priority, made all the difference.

When I arrived home after talking with my advisees, I decided to e-mail them to ask if I might share some of their heartfelt stories and passions in this book. Within minutes, they replied. Rose was the first to respond, "If it helps to get the word out about how important it is to support teacher growth, please use anything you'd like." Julia explained, "I realize I was quiet at dinner tonight. I was listening, and beginning to learn that I was not alone. I have lots to share. Here are a few examples, if you need more, please let me know!" Elizabeth included three more stories in her e-mail about her thirst for time to reflect with colleagues in her school and how she "depended on [her] principal to create those" opportunities. It reminded me of my own life in schools in various roles, including as a university professor. Their enthusiasm for sharing resonated with my own. Most important, their energy resounded with the enthusiasm of the principals in my study as they voiced stories of supporting teacher learning and development. Their words also resonated with the principals' stories of both triumph and struggle and made me think about what I have heard from other leaders in workshops and conferences.

Recently, while delivering a workshop on how to support adult learning and development in schools, I had the privilege of talking with school leaders from a large district about their goals for the coming school year. One principal, Brisgal, expressed ideas that sounded so very much like what others had said. She passionately voiced her determination to "make this school year different" from the past 20 she had experienced in education. As Brisgal discussed plans for the coming year, her sixth as principal, I asked about the hopes she held for her teachers. After a pause, Brisgal explained that she wanted to teach her 33 teachers to "be confident, be able to handle conflict situations, and to present their views and take stands for the things they believe in, even when others disagree with them." While inspired by Brisgal's enthusiasm to "teach" new behaviors to her teachers, I could not help but wonder *how* she might go about doing this. Such behaviors are not a kind of content that can be mastered. Rather, they are capacities that adults can develop if they are provided with appropriate supports and challenge in order to grow.

After the workshop, Brisgal told me that she now understood that these behaviors she sought for her teachers were not simply skills to be taught but were expressions of certain developmental abilities or capacities that adults could grow toward. "Something more than teacher training is needed to achieve my hopes," she offered; she would have to create a stronger environment within which teachers would be supported in their own growth and development. This was why Brisgal attended the

workshop, and, essentially, this is why I have written this book: to share theories and practices of adult learning and development to help school leaders build school environments that are supportive of teacher learning.

This book illuminates the ways in which 25 principals make sense of the challenges they face as they work to support adult learning and development, the creative strategies they employ to overcome financial and human resource barriers, and the practices they courageously implement as they strive to support adult learning within their schools. Of course, they face significant obstacles in their efforts, such as the challenges of time and faculty resistance. While I will point these out, my primary focus in this book is to illuminate the practices that they employed to effectively support teacher development and growth. I focus on what works well in supporting teacher learning because my aim is to offer these practices to others who want to support students and teachers in their growth. Toward this end, I will present four specific leadership practices that are the core of what I call a new model of *learning-oriented leadership* and illuminate the principles of adult learning and adult development that inform these practices.

The study was inspired by the question: What would school leadership practices look like if they were designed to support adult development? In other words, how would a model used to support children's development appear if applied to adult learning? When thinking about how to best support children's development, we consider their developmental capacities, such as the capacity for concrete versus abstract thinking. We also keep in mind how they will experience our efforts to support learning, and how to offer developmentally appropriate supports and challenges. Just as children's development needs to be considered in this way, so too does adult development.

My work stems from three premises. First, principals have a key role in supporting teacher learning and a responsibility to develop a clear vision of how school contexts can better support this learning. While they certainly do not have the *only* role, they have an important one. Second, leadership supportive of teacher development makes schools better places of learning for children (Barth, 1990; Fullan, 2003; Howe, 1993; Kegan, 1994). And last, schools need to be places where *the adults as well as the children* are growing (Donaldson, 2001; Greene, 2001; Levine, 1989; Sizer, 1992).

THE STUDY

This work focuses on honoring the uniqueness of each participant's story while also identifying patterns of similarity and difference among the 25 school leaders' stories. It offers a new and meaningful perspective to the current conversation about how leadership practices can better

support teacher learning within schools. I hope that it furthers the current conversation.

ORIGINS OF THIS WORK

My first experiences working in schools were as teacher, program director, coach, and staff developer in several different K–12 school contexts. Having had the privilege of serving in different educational settings in these capacities and as a consultant, I have observed what wonderful places schools can be, and also the complex problems that exist in schools. My need to understand how I could help in making schools better learning places has long inspired my work. For nearly two decades, I have been studying teacher development and leadership in support of adult learning within schools through research, the teaching of K–12 and graduate students, and practice. The research questions informing this study grew from my own commitment to improving schools through attention to school leadership that fosters adult development. I bring these experiences to my listening and attention to the principal's stories reported in this book.

This particular study of 25 principals is built on lessons from a prior four-year ethnographic study (Drago-Severson, 1996) that I conducted with one school leader, Dr. Sarah Levine, to learn about how Sarah practiced leadership in support of teacher development. This type of leadership process in schools had not been studied previously. I invited Sarah to participate in this study because she had an explicit intention to support adult learning in her school. Her experiences represented an "ideal type" (Freidson, 1975) or "critical case" (J.A. Maxwell, personal communication, October 1, 1992) that demonstrated what seemed to work in the practices of a principal who actively supported adult development. This case also allowed for understanding practices that need improvement or were difficult to implement, even under ideal conditions. That is, they were implemented by a principal who had a developmental stance toward adult growth and assumed a strong leadership approach within a school.

In moving from the study of this one in-depth case to the study of a larger group of principals, I was able to develop a richer and more complex picture of school leadership and the support of adult development in schools. (Sarah has also participated in this current research as principal at a different school.)

My purpose in this current study has been to understand what a range of principals, who work in a variety of school contexts with strikingly different levels of financial and human resources, do in support of teacher learning and to understand why they believe the practices are effective. Put simply, I wanted to understand how these principals make meaning of their work in support of teacher learning so that I would be able to share their good work and stories of triumph and challenge with others.

METHODS

Participant and Site Selection

Marshall and Rossman (1989) maintain that "The researcher's question is the primary guide to site selection" (p. 54). My research questions were site specific. The 25 participants for this research were purposefully selected for their school leadership responsibility in support of teacher learning (see also Drago-Severson, 2002; Drago-Severson & Pinto, in press). Furthermore, each had served as a school leader for at least three years. As Table 1.1 indicates, this sample is diverse with respect to number of years as school principal, number of years at their current schools, gender, race, ethnicity, and educational background.

I selected school leaders serving in public, private, and Catholic schools that differed with respect to several factors, including level of financial resources (high, medium, and low). Financial resource levels were determined by using school Web site information, budgets, publication materials, and public school system financial reports (e.g., Boston Public Schools Fiscal Year Budget, 1999, as cited in Boston Plan for Excellence and the Boston Public Schools, 1999). In some cases, when these measures were not available, the principals themselves identified what they perceived to be their schools' resource levels relative to other schools of the same type in similar locations (e.g., urban Catholic schools). When determining a school's financial resource level, I did not include funding that resulted from principals' creative strategies to secure additional grant funding or funding from other sources (e.g., gifts or development funds).

I also made selections based on type of school (elementary, middle, high school, and K–12), populations served with varying degrees of racial and ethnic diversity, and location (urban, suburban, and rural). Human resource levels (i.e., how many people—faculty, staff, and administrators—worked at each school) were learned through Web sites, school documents, and principal reports.

Thirteen of the 25 leaders were recommended by professional colleagues as being known for their support of teacher learning, employing practices that create opportunities for different modes of teacher reflection (see, for example, Harbison, with Kegan, 1999). I sought to include principals who wanted to create contexts and opportunities *within their schools* for teachers to reflect on their practices. My goal was to achieve a sample that was diverse with respect to the school characteristic criteria listed above. I selected principals who were identified by professional colleagues or myself as leaders who:[1]

1. Provide various forums for teachers to discuss new theories and reflect on practice through writing and discussion

2. Seek out additional resources to provide professional development opportunities (e.g., ensuring substitutes for teachers when they are

Table 1.1 Characteristics of the Sample[1]

Type of School	Grades	# of Years Experience	# of Students	# of Teachers	Name of School/Location	Student Diversity	Resource Level/Endowment or School Budget (in Hundred-Thousands)[2]
Public Schools							
Mr. Kim Marshall[3]	K–5	13	600	28(31)[4]	Mather School Dorchester, MA: Urban	High	Low /$2.6
Mr. Joe Shea	K–5	20	607	55	Trotter School Boston, MA: Urban	High	Low /$3.0
Dr. Mary Nash	K–8[5]	25	120	15(27)	Mary Lyons Alternative School Brighton, MA: Urban	High	Medium /$1.5[6]
Mr. Len Solo	K–8[7]	26	370	22(47)	Graham & Parks Alternative School Cambridge, MA: Urban	High	Medium /$3.2
Ms. Muriel Leonard	6–8	18	690	60	McCormick Middle School Dorchester, MA: Urban	High	Low /$3.7
Ms. Kathleen Perry	9–12 +GED[8]	31	3,167	165(180)	Lake Worth Community High School Lake Worth, FL: Urban	High	Medium to High/$37
Dr. Jim Cavanaugh	9–12 +GED	22	768	60	Watertown High School Watertown, MA: Urban	Medium-High	High/$24.5
Dr. Larry Myatt	9–12 +GED[9]	19	300	35	Fenway Pilot High School Boston, MA: Urban	High	Low to Medium/$1.9

Type of School	Grades	# of Years Experience	# of Students	# of Teachers	Name of School/Location	Student Diversity	Resource Level/Endowment or School Budget (in Hundred-Thousands)[2]
Catholic Schools							
Mrs. Deborah O'Neil	K–8	10	235	13	St. Peter's School Cambridge, MA: Urban	High	Low /$800K
Sr. Barbara Rogers	5–12 (all girls)	20	325	59	Newton Country Day School of the Sacred Heart Newton, MA: Suburban	Medium	High/$6
Mr. John Clarke	9–12	8	910	67	Cardinal Newman High School West Palm, FL: Urban	High	Medium/$5.1
Sr. Judith Brady	9–12 (all girls)	35	283	24	St. Barnabas High School Bronx, NY: Urban	High	Low/$1.2
Mr. Gary LeFave	9–12	29	535	36	Matignon High School Cambridge, MA: Urban	Medium	Low/$3.2
Sr. Joan Magnetti	Pk–12	24	626	58	Convent of the Sacred Heart Greenwich, CT: Suburban	Low	High/$5.2

(Continued)

Table 1.1 Continued

Type of School	Grades	# of Years Experience	# of Students	# of Teachers	Name of School/Location	Student Diversity	Resource Level/Endowment or School Budget (in Hundred-Thousands)[2]
Independent Schools							
Mr. John (Jack) Thompson	K–9	40	352	45	Palm Beach Day School Palm Beach, FL: Suburban	Low	Medium to High/$3
Dr. Sarah Levine	Pre-K–6 7–12	30 30	200 840	26 ft/6pt 108	Belmont Day School Belmont, MA Suburban Polytechnic Pasadena, CA: Urban	Medium High	Medium High/$30
***Dr. Dan White*[10]**	7–12	20	391	41	Seabury Hall Maui, HI: Rural	Medium	Low to Medium $700K
Ms. Barbara Chase	9–12	21	1,065	218	Philips Andover Academy Andover, MA: Rural	Medium-High	Very High/$535
Dr. Sue David[11]	9–12	<10	Approx. 300	<75	Anonymous Suburban	Medium	High/<$60
Mr. Joe Marchese[12]	9–12	30	590	87	Westtown School Westtown, PA: Suburban	Medium	High/$60
Dr. Jim Scott	K–12	25	3,700	281 (334)	Punahoe School Honolulu, HI: Urban	High	High/$68
Mr. Scott Nelson	Pk–12	16	770	125	Rye Country Day School Rye, NY: Suburban	Medium	Medium-High/$13
Ms. Mary Newman	Pk–12	22	950	170	Buckingham, Browne, & Nichols Cambridge, MA: Urban	High	High/$30

Type of School	Grades	# of Years Experience	# of Students	# of Teachers	Name of School/Location	Student Diversity	Resource Level/Endowment or School Budget (in Hundred-Thousands)[2]
Mr. Jerry Zank	Pre-K–12	30	520	62	Canterbury School Fort Myers, FL: Urban	High	Low/$800K
Ms. Shirley Mae[13]	9–12	< 25	N/A	N/A	CA: Urban	High	N/A

Notes:

1. I thank Kristina Pinto for sorting through some of the materials I gathered and helping to compile some of the information depicted in this chart. I also thank Sue Stuebner Gaylor for her help with adjusting the format of this chart. A similar version of this chart appears in Drago-Severson (2002).

2. As mentioned, 2000–2001 financial resource levels were determined either by using school Web site information or publication materials (i.e., district financial reports), or in a few cases, the principals themselves identified their schools' resource levels in comparison to other schools of the same type in similar locations (e.g., Florida Catholic schools). This determination, for any school type, *does not* include the principals' creative strategies to secure additional external grant funding or funding from other sources (e.g., federal, state, development fundraising, or gifts). For the independent schools in this sample, including Catholic independent schools, I have listed their 2000–2001 endowments. In the case of the Boston public schools, I have also listed their approximated school budgets for the "General Fund [which] refers to money that is allocated to the schools by the city budget" (Boston Public School Fiscal Year Report, 2001, p. 203). For Catholic parochial schools, I have listed their 2000–2001 operating budgets. Reported numbers are listed in millions, unless otherwise noted, and have been rounded to the nearest half million. In places where no amount appears, information was not available, or the participant preferred not to share it.

3. Principals whose names appear in *italicized* font have left their positions as school principals, for a variety of reasons.

4. Parenthetical numbers indicate the number of teachers *and* support staff (i.e., assistants and specialists).

5. This school is designated as an alternative school for children with special needs.

6. Dr. Nash has a great deal of autonomy over her school budget, because it is an alternative school and because it was one of the first schools of its kind in the city. She also spoke about the ways in which she was able to negotiate with the district to secure additional funding for a needed after-school program for her students, which added to the available financial resources.

7. Graham-Parks school is an alternative school based on John Dewey's philosophy of education and constructivist thinking. The classrooms are multigraded, self-contained, and open. Learning is considered to be a social activity that transpires through social interaction. Len Solo, this school's former principal, served as interim principal of a public high school in Cambridge, MA, in 2001–2002.

8. Lake Worth Community High School is a magnet school with ROTC programs, bilingual programs, and day and evening GED programs.

9. Fenway High School, founded in 1983, became an alternative pilot school in 1995. This status gives the school freedom from the Boston Public School System. In other words, it is allotted some funding from the Boston Public School System but does not have to conform to all of the same guidelines as the other Boston public schools.

10. Principals whose names appear in **bold** font serve in boarding schools.

11. This participant preferred to remain anonymous; I have assigned a pseudonym.

12. Westtown is a Quaker boarding school.

13. This participant preferred to remain anonymous; I have assigned a pseudonym.

working on collaborative projects, encouraging teachers to attend and present at professional conferences and share their learning with colleagues at school, encouraging teachers to work together to implement their ideas for practice)

3. Provide opportunities for shared leadership (e.g., through mechanisms such as cross-disciplinary, or cross-functional, teams as defined later in Chapter 5)

4. Hold teachers accountable for creating high expectations for children while they (the principals) provide feedback and encourage dialogue to achieve these goals

For the sake of diversity, I also included a second group of principals who were *not identified* as exemplary in terms of their support of teacher learning. In other words, the principals in this second group were not identified as leaders who incorporate teacher learning as part of their *explicit* beliefs or mission. I sought a balanced sample, and selection was guided by balancing the following criteria: personal or colleague referral, school's financial resource level, school type, school level, and location.

Above, I explained that I focus primarily on the principals' successful practices to provide readers with effective ideas for their own work. Another reason I emphasize these principals' successful practices, rather than shortcomings, is because 23 of the 25 participants elected to use their real names in this book. Also, in fairness to my entire sample, I do not name which principals belonged to the group of leaders who were recognized for excelling in their work and which principals did not. It is important that readers bear in mind that the unreferred participants were not necessarily *unsuccessful* in their leadership.

Research Questions: What Did I Want to Learn?

These research questions guided my exploration of leaders' efforts to support teacher learning:

1. How do school leaders, who serve in different school contexts with varying levels of financial resources, exercise their leadership to promote adults' transformational learning (i.e., learning that helps adults to better manage the complexities of work and life)? How do they understand and experience their role in support of teacher learning?

2. What are the actual practices they use to support teacher learning within their schools, and why do they think that the practices are effective?

3. How do these leaders support their own development and sustain themselves in their complex work?

4. What developmental principles, if any, inform the practices that support transformational learning?

Data Collection: How Did I Investigate the Research Questions?

To better understand the questions guiding this research, I conducted in-depth qualitative interviews and document analysis. A grounded theory (i.e., an understanding derived inductively from their stories) was developed about how these principals support teacher learning within their schools by triangulation of data (i.e., examining different sources of data for alternative perspectives). Various literature cited in this book also informed my analysis.

Interviews

With the sample of 25 principals selected, I conducted 75 hours of semistructured, in-depth, qualitative interviews (tape-recorded and transcribed). On average, these interviews lasted two to three hours, though some were longer and others shorter.

Most often, before beginning the interview or after completing it, I toured the school with each principal to get better acquainted with the school context. In-depth interviews allowed for exploration of principals' goals for supporting teacher learning and what they experienced as the challenges and benefits of supporting teacher learning within their schools. They also articulated the kinds of practices they employ on behalf of teacher learning, how and why they believed these initiatives were effective, and what other kinds of practices they would like to implement. Finally, I was also interested in learning how these school leaders supported their own development. To make sure the data I collected were comparable, I asked participants very similar questions about these overarching topics; however, additional questions specific to each participant and his or her school context were included. For example, if a person wanted to talk about a certain topic raised during the interview (e.g., a special project in support of teacher learning that he or she was contemplating and the challenges associated with it), I encouraged the person to elaborate. Also, I did my best to let the participants stay with questions that seemed important to them.

I gave each school principal the opportunity to review and comment on the interview transcript. They were also encouraged to elaborate on their comments and to omit any comments that they did not want to have published (e.g., identifying features of their school if they opted to remain anonymous). Twenty-two of 25 principals reviewed their interview transcripts, and 6 of these made minor syntax changes to the transcripts. Any

additional comments that they offered at this time were incorporated into analysis.

Documents

Approximately 60 documents were analyzed, including written communications from principals, demographics, Web site information, school budgets, mission statements, speeches and letters (official correspondence written by the principals) to faculty members and parents, school self-study documents, published articles, and various other private writings by the principals. I also collected e-mails, letters, and memos the principals sent to me that contained their thinking about the research, as well as responses to additional questions I posed.

The documents were important because some were vehicles by which the principals shared their thinking with school boards, parents, faculty, and administrators. Many of the principals told me that they used these as tools for communicating their visions, policies, and priorities to various constituencies on whom they depended for achievement of objectives. Other documents produced by the principals that made public their thinking to educators, practitioners, and educational researchers were included. Weekly notices (written by some of the principals) and the self-study evaluation documents created by school community members helped me to better understand each school context and culture. These also helped me to better understand community members' activities and oftentimes parental involvement with and influence on the school and its practices and programs. Collectively, these documents served as important validity checks for the information gleaned in my interviews and provided alternative perspectives on data.

Data Analysis: Making Sense of the Learning

Data analysis strategies were developed to address each research question. Techniques included coding for important concepts and themes (from theory, and from the participants' own language—emic codes, Geertz, 1974), creating narrative summaries (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Maxwell, 1996), and crafting vignettes (Seidman, 1998). I built my understanding inductively from the participants' stories (i.e., a grounded theory approach) while informing analysis with the literature cited herein.

I undertook an early and a substantive phase of data analysis.[2] In the early phase, I wrote field notes immediately after each interview about the interview, my observations of the school context, and how the literature cited herein informed the principals' stories and vice versa. This initial analytic phase focused on creating a set of more than 60 codes that were employed to analyze data from all interviews, cross-checking codes from each interview, writing summary analytic memos (Maxwell & Miller,

1998), and identifying consistencies and discrepancies within and across participants' data.

In the substantive phase, I grouped interviews by school type and financial resource level to examine patterns across categories (e.g., principals' views about mentoring) within and across groups. I created detailed narratives and visual displays (Miles & Huberman, 1994) that were analyzed through a developmental lens.

Throughout analysis, I tracked the ways in which the literature on adult development and school leadership informed the data, through questions and the use of analytic memos (Maxwell, 1996). For example, how do the principals' reported practices serve as "holding environments" (Kegan, 1982, 1994) for growth? What developmental principles inform practices that these principals name as being supportive of teacher learning? How might teachers at different developmental levels, phases of their lives, and stages of their careers experience these practices? I used additional questions to explore themes in the literature of school leadership and organizational learning. For example, what features of these principals' reported practices appear to support reflection and the development of critical thinking (Brookfield, 1987; Schön, 1983; Senge et al., 1994)?

Last, I traced participants' descriptions of their roles and practices across groups to illuminate qualitative and developmental patterns. Profiles and narratives (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996) for each participant were created to explore patterns in 15 core categories and their subcategories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) within and across school type, resource level, and the sample as a whole. Looking particularly for similarity and contrast, I analyzed the factors (e.g., level of financial and/or human resources) that coincided with critical themes and developed cases of participants, whose stories served as examples. Having identified practices that were transformational and those oriented to informational learning (e.g., skill acquisition), I examined how principals described both kinds of practices and how they said they worked within each school. The learning-oriented model of school leadership that I present in this book is informed by data from the study itself, as well as the literature cited herein.

In interpreting the data, there are several ways I attended to their validity. Multiple data sources (e.g., interviews, documents, correspondence of principals) allowed for multiple perspectives on data. Myself and at least one additional researcher employed various strategies during all analytic phases. For example, coding, data displays, emerging interpretations, and other aspects of analysis were discussed with other researchers in order to incorporate alternative interpretations.

In addition, I worked to incorporate the principals' feedback and interpretations of the data in several ways. As noted, all principals received copies of their interview transcripts to check for accuracy, add to them, and/or clarify their statements. Their feedback was incorporated into analysis. All principals received and were invited to comment on a

dissemination packet and a detailed executive summary, which presented the overarching findings reported in this book. Each principal also received drafts of articles (Drago-Severson & Pinto, 2003, in press) that were written about this work (before publication in journals) and invited to comment on my interpretations of the data. These constituted opportunities to follow up on interviews and to further investigate their understanding of how they supported teacher learning. Their comments were incorporated into analysis.

Throughout analysis, I looked for and examined both confirming and disconfirming instances of themes (Miles & Huberman, 1994) to test both the power and scope of my developing understanding (Merriam, 1998). Finally, in this analysis, I have attended to various levels of data and multiple perspectives on their interpretation by attending to patterns that emerged from the individual narrative, from group level patterns (e.g., similar resource level and school types), case write-ups, and the sample as a whole (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). When data collection and analyses are continually integrated, analysis gains depth and focus (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This study benefited from this type of intentional and continual synthesis of data.

Strengths and Limits of This Study

This study illuminates what these principals actually pointed to with examples in terms of the specific practices they used in their schools to support teacher learning in practice (i.e., reported or expressed practices). Because I had a sample size of 25, I was not able to conduct in-depth observations at every principal's school, which would have helped me to see their practices at work in their school contexts. However, all but one of the initial interviews were conducted on-site, which allowed me to become somewhat familiar with their school contexts. In this study, I invited principals to tell me, concretely, the specific practices they use in their schools to support teacher learning. These principals told me about what they do, and, for the most part, I was not able to see their practices at work. I have been mindful of differences between espoused theory (reported practice) and theory-in-use (what they actually do in practice) (Argyris & Schön, 1974) when analyzing interviews, by noting gaps and possible inconsistencies in the interview material itself.

Since all principals interviewed offered to continue conversations with me, I did meet with many of them a second time to check interpretations and share findings. These conversations provided important validity checks on their meaning making and my interpretations. This study examined principals' support of adult development through a particular theoretical lens. Although other theoretical perspectives could also yield findings about school leadership and supporting adult growth (i.e., gender analysis), they were beyond the scope of this particular study.

A NEW MODEL OF LEARNING-ORIENTED SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

This book offers a new model of learning-oriented school leadership that facilitates transformational learning. I define *transformational learning* as learning that helps adults better manage the complexities of work and life. In contrast to *informational learning,* which focuses on increasing the amount of knowledge and skills a person possesses and is often the goal of traditional inservice professional development programs, transformational learning constitutes a qualitative shift in *how* a person organizes, understands, and actively makes sense of his or her experience. When transformational learning occurs, a person develops increased capacities (i.e., cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal) for better managing the complexities of daily life and work. This increase in capacities enables people to take broader perspectives on themselves and others—and on their work and life (Cranton, 1994; Mezirow, 1991, 2000). For this to occur, attention needs to be paid to shaping school contexts wherein adults have opportunities to examine their own assumptions (i.e., taken-for-granted beliefs that guide thought and action) and convictions in the learning process. In other words, we hold our assumptions as big Truths and rarely question them unless provided with opportunities to consider them.

Examining assumptions is essential for the development of lasting change and the successful implementation of new practices. While both informational and transformational learning opportunities are important, initiatives supportive of transformational learning can help us develop a heightened awareness of our assumptions so that we can examine their influence on performance. Doing so creates opportunities for development. My learning-oriented school leadership model presents the principal as professional developer and educator and employs adult developmental principles to inform leadership practices that support teacher learning.

The Four Pillars of the Model

The principals in this study employ four mutually reinforcing initiatives that support adult growth and development; they form the four pillars on which the weight of this new learning-oriented model rests. They are (1) teaming/partnering with colleagues within and outside of the school, (2) providing teachers with leadership roles, (3) engaging in collegial inquiry, and (4) mentoring.

Teaming

Working in teams enables teachers to question their own and other people's philosophies of teaching and learning, consider the meaning of the ways in which they implement the school's core values in the

curriculum and school context, reflect on the meaning of their school's mission, and engage in collaborative decision making. Teaming is a practice that creates an opportunity for teachers to share their diverse perspectives and learn about one another's ideas. This practice creates a context wherein teachers can explore new and diverse perspectives and grow.

Providing Leadership Roles

By assuming leadership roles, teachers share power and decision-making authority. A leadership role is an opportunity to raise not only one's own consciousness but also a group's consciousness with regard to ideas. These roles are a way for principals to share their own leadership and to practice distributive leadership, since the roles enable the school to benefit from teachers' expertise and knowledge. I use the term "providing leadership roles" rather than the commonly used term "distributive leadership" because of the intention behind these roles, which is to not merely distribute leadership duties. In contrast to assigning tasks, "providing leadership roles" offers supports and challenges to the person who assumes such a role so that he or she can grow from them.

Engaging in Collegial Inquiry

"Collegial inquiry" is an example of a larger developmental concept known as "reflective practice," which can occur individually or in groups. In this book, I define collegial inquiry as a shared dialogue in a reflective context that involves reflecting on one's assumptions, convictions, and values as part of the learning process. Collegial inquiry is a practice that creates a context for teachers to reflect on their practices, proposals for change, and schoolwide issues (e.g., developing a school mission). It enables principals to provide teachers and staff, and themselves as well, with opportunities to develop more complex perspectives by listening to and learning from one another.

Mentoring

When adults engage in mentoring, it creates an opportunity for each person to broaden perspectives, examine assumptions, and share expertise. The practice of mentoring invites teachers to share leadership. Mentoring takes myriad forms, including pairing experienced teachers with new teachers, pairing teachers who have deep knowledge of school mission with other teachers, and pairing experienced teachers with graduate student interns from local universities. Mentoring enables adults to explore their own thinking and contradictions, enhancing self-development.

Underpinnings of the Model: Adult Learning and Development

Scholarship on adult development and learning, like the staff development literature, discusses how principals can benefit from reframing their practices in a developmental perspective (Brookfield, 1987, 1995; Kegan, 1994; Kegan & Lahey, 1984, 2001; Levine, 1989; Mezirow, 2000; Osterman & Kottkamp, 1993; York-Barr et al., 2001). Adult developmental theory can be a strong tool for understanding *how* adults develop during engagement in professional development programs (Drago-Severson, Helsing, Kegan, Broderick, Popp, & Portnow, 2001; Drago-Severson, Helsing, Kegan, Broderick, Portnow, & Popp, 2001; Kegan, 1994).

Developmentalists have criticized current approaches to supporting teacher development (Kegan et al., 2001; Kegan & Lahey, 2001), arguing that adults at various stages of ego and intellectual development respond differently in terms of their understanding of the options provided by these programs. In fact, Kegan (1994) contends that much of what is expected and needed from teachers for them to succeed and grow within widely used staff development models demands something more than an increase in their fund of knowledge or skills (i.e., informational learning). It may demand changes in the ways they know and understand their experiences (i.e., transformational learning). In other words, the expectations intrinsic to some of the models may in fact be beyond the developmental capacities of those using them. Knowledge about theories of adult development can be a robust tool for considering how to better support the development of adults in schools. Yet the role of principals in supporting teacher development is only beginning to be explored.

Since this book draws centrally on the work of Kegan (1982, 1994, 2000) to shed light on *how* the practices employed by the 25 principals in this study support teachers' transformational learning, I will discuss his framework in the next chapter. There is a hopefulness in this new model of learning-oriented school leadership. It offers a way to support adult learning within schools—so that teachers do not have to leave schools to grow and have time to reflect. The simplicity and power of the model is the power of paid attention for the development of not only a skill set, but the person.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter introduced the study on which this book is based and presented its methodology, including sample selection, data collection, and analysis. The study was guided by three principles. First, principals are key to supporting teacher learning and envisioning how schools can better support this learning. Second, leadership that promotes teacher development also fosters the learning of children. Finally, schools need to be contexts for both adult and youth development. Based on these

premises, I investigated the following question: What would school leadership look like if designed to support adult development?

My findings inform a new learning-oriented model of school leadership, which is supported by four pillars: teaming, providing leadership roles, collegial inquiry, and mentoring. In practice, these tools contribute to the effectiveness of leadership in service of teachers' transformational learning and professional development. Through case examples, this book focuses primarily on successful leadership practices to assist school leaders in their efforts to better support teacher learning, growth, and development.

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

Please take a moment to reflect on these questions. They are intended to help you consider the ideas discussed in this chapter and can be used for internal reflection or to open up a group discussion.

1. What are two or three practices you engage in to support your own or other people's learning? How are they working?

2. In what ways does this chapter help you in thinking about the practices you named above? What, if anything, resonates with your own experiences?

3. If you were a participant in this research, how would you respond to the research questions presented in this chapter?

NOTES

1. Peggy Kemp, Director of School Partnerships at Harvard University and Dr. Millie Pierce, Director of Harvard University's Principal Center, assisted me in creating a list of principals who fit the selection criteria for supporting adult development in their school contexts.

2. I thank Deborah Helsing and Kristina Pinto for their contributions to different phases of data analysis. Collaborating with each of them at different points in the analysis was an invaluable resource that strengthened this work.