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School Leadership and Change: Bank Street Graduates and Their Approaches to Change Within Public, Independent, and Alternative School Settings

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SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND CHANGE:

Bank Street Graduates and Their Approaches to Change
Within Public, Independent, and Alternative School Settings

By

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Science in Education
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INTRODUCTION

It has been said that in schools, the more things change, the more they remain the same. Curriculum changes, new materials and activities appear, and school staff members spend a great deal of time talking about the results they expect to see, while the quality of life and learning experiences of the children remain the same. Controversy is usually focused on the content of failed programs, but issues concerning the process of changing are equally important.

Meaningful change takes place on both organizational and personal levels. New learning experiences occur for the teachers, parents, and administrators, as well as for the children. The introduction of a new textbook involves more than its adoption. Teachers must become familiar with the values, concepts, and skills inherent in the program and must develop new attitudes and teaching behaviors for themselves. Opportunities for staff members to meet in groups to share ideas, reactions, problems, and possible solutions is essential, and leaders must be able to accept and encourage diversity and creativity.

Good ideas, commitment, and enthusiasm are not enough to alter rules and traditions when people become comfortable with familiar, and often rigid, ways of doing things. Staff members rarely analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of their everyday routines, and change requires both stimulation and time. Changing the behavior, attitudes, and values of individuals within a system occurs gradually, and meaningful change requires step by step implementation. The first year of a new program will show superficial results and involvement. More thoughtful and meaningful growth will not occur until people are familiar enough with the routine aspects of the program to know what questions to ask, and to begin to experiment with their solutions.

Conflict and disagreement are inevitable as schools and people change. Even when people are in favor of a change, alterations will be necessary as they adapt a new program to their own styles. Teachers and parents need support and reassurance when they become frustrated and insecure as experimentation and mistakes occur.

Principals must be sensitive to the dynamics involved in the process of changing. Too much focus on the content of proposed changes can result in neglect of the personal and organizational aspects of planning for change, and strong commitment to a particular change may be a barrier to success. If the leader is unyielding and impatient, she may be less likely to set up the time-consuming procedures necessary for implementation, or intolerant of the transformations and delays which

will inevitably occur as people begin to work with a new program. The solution is not to be less committed but to be more sensitive, and to establish a process that allows good ideas to be used.

Leadership is critical in change, and in schools it is the principal who is responsible for such leadership. The most successful examples of change occur when a new leader, with a mandate for change, provides the coordination, opportunity, and support for staff development necessary to stimulate the implementation of needed programs. Research studies have shown that projects which have the active support of the principal are the most likely to be successful. When the principal supports the teachers, and is willing to provide assistance when it is needed, teachers are more likely to change their classroom practice.

Three main types of leaders have been identified--administrative, facilitative, and directive. Although half of all principals are administrative, facilitative or directive principals are more successful in implementing new programs. Facilitative and directive principals have been shown to be equally effective, as long as the direct leaders had, or could select, teachers who agreed about the direction of the change.¹

¹ Michael Fullan, The Meaning of Educational Change, New York: Teachers College Press, 1982, pp. 137-140.

The power to legislate change is no guarantee that it will occur. Influencing change in teachers' behavior is difficult, particularly if one feels isolated from classroom reality and curriculum variations. Principals can become overwhelmed with administrative or housekeeping tasks, pretending to be involved in the everyday workings of the school, while arranging situations so they are unable to do so. Life in a school is determined by ideas and values, and if the principal is not constantly confronting himself and if others cannot confront him, he is an educational administrator and not an educational leader.

What do individual principals who see themselves as change agents do? Where do they begin? What role do they take? How do they involve teachers and parents? How do they work with the system? This study looks at three principals who are filled with idealism, energy, and commitment to a particular vision for children. They are heads of relatively small schools, have the support of their board of directors or school superintendent and have not been asked to implement changes they do not believe in.

The leaders were chosen because they are all in their first two or three years of leadership in their schools, have strong backgrounds as teachers, and as graduates of Bank Street College have been trained in educational leadership as opposed to administration. The following data was gathered in a series of interviews and school visits. Classrooms in each school were observed in January, 1984 when preliminary contact was

made with each of the three leaders. During March, 1984 two hour interview sessions were tape-recorded with each participant. Comments and quotations reported in the paper were all taken from the interview tapes.

Alice, Frank, and Rick are now working as school leaders in Connecticut. Alice is the principal of J.L. School, a public elementary school in a small town. Frank is headmaster of St. T's independent day school, and Rick is teacher, director, and founder of C.S., a one room alternative school; St. T's and C.S. are located in the same neighborhood of a city. As heads of different schools they face a variety of problems, staff, populations, restrictions, traditions, and expectations; each individual also has his or her own personality, philosophy, and leadership style.

Alice began by trying to bring two staffs together into one and by focusing on discipline as a central problem. She helped everyone in the building to begin to interact with children's problems in similar ways in an attempt to help children take responsibility for their own behavior and the climate of the school.

Frank came to an independent parish school from an inner city public school. He tried to bring with him some aspects of the public school system which he viewed as positive, and made many changes very quickly. As he felt the social and emotional atmosphere of the school was intact, he began by focusing on curriculum and school structure.

Rick began by creating a new school to fill a particular need. As teacher, director, and founder, he finds his work to be very personal. His first priority was the daily growth of individual children and the continuing struggle of balances between wanting a utopian progressive school and wanting to help prepare children for the traditional skill-oriented schools they will attend in the future.

Each leader came to a new school with a vision of an educational environment that is best for children. Their learning and teaching philosophies all draw from an understanding of child development and experiential learning; Bank Street's School for Children and the British Primary Schools are used as models in all three of the schools, although in different ways and to differing degrees. Yet, each individual leader brings his or her own past experiences, specific goals and needs as a person, educator, and leader to these unique settings, and three very different schools are the result. What are the goals and needs of Alice, Frank, and Rick? How do they approach change in their attempts to shape their schools to fit the visions they each have for children?

THE SCHOOLS

J.L. SCHOOL

When Alice became principal of J.L. School three years ago, it was essentially a new school. The staff and population of two elementary schools with distinct learning styles and philosophies were combined within one building. One was an alternative integrated-day school using the British infant schools as a model where Alice was a teacher; J.L. was a traditional K-6 school serving the "poor population" of the town. Bill, Alice's predecessor, had been principal of both schools, traveling between the two buildings. The sixth grade, and later the fifth grade, went to a middle school and J.L. is now a K-4 school.

The schools were combined because of declining enrollment and the town's decision that it would be better to put the two programs in one building. Now that the school is half traditional and half integrated day, both parents and teachers are able to choose the learning style they prefer. "What was wonderful about this was the option" and combining the schools "has done a lot to dispel suspicion and hard feelings."

Alice was hired because there was a strong teacher lobby for her and she was "the only candidate who had a strong integrated day background without being biased toward it." Bill was someone whose goals and values she agreed with; "I may have had different strategies, but I believed in what he was doing." She finds it difficult to speak of what she did or someone else did, preferring to describe "what the school is." J.L. has a strong sense of community which depends on the energy and care of all its members; the change began under Bill's leadership and followed a natural progression which Alice calls "evolutionary."

There are many ways in which life at J.L. is enriched beyond that in most public schools. Special teachers are available in music, physical education, library, and special education. "Art permeates every classroom" and music lessons are offered for students and parents by the music teacher and children who have taken lessons for at least one year. The library is always open and has a large circulation of books, tapes, tape recorders, and musical instruments. Intramural sports take place after lunch and computers are used in all third and fourth grade classrooms.

Children in a self-contained class for learning disabilities or emotional disorders are mainstreamed into both traditional and integrated day classrooms as much as possible, according to their learning styles. Children in the gifted and talented program initiate

special projects that often involve and benefit other children in the school. When the children are exposed to something in the hope that some of them will be stimulated to pursue it further, the activity is used for every child in the school. "If a poet were invited to read poetry or show how to write a different kind of poem, that person may be asked to go to different classrooms or do it at an assembly so many children are exposed to it and if they take off, and have their own idea, then they're brought in, for just that short time, for that project." When a 4th grader wrote a dramatization of the first chapter of SUPERFUDGE, she opened her casting to the whole school; other children were involved in acting, making scenery, and props.

There's another whole dimension to life at this school that's extremely important, and it has to do with helping people to develop certain character traits as adults. The way you develop that is you start living that kind of life. We think of this as something like the Kohlberg "just community" where there are reasons for doing things and we have to accept the fact that we're not alone; we're living with other people and how is what we're doing affecting other people?

Children are involved in formulating school and bus rules:

Unlike other schools that may have a simple rule like don't talk when someone else is speaking, we have rules that really relate to other people and events. Don't leave a mess because you will make extra work for Bruce--Bruce is our custodian. The children personalize the rules. Try to ask for help on the playground rather than fight; it would be hard for the teacher on duty. They're thinking of how the other person needs you to behave.

Specific procedures are set up for implementing the rules, and parents are used as partners in the process. If a child has a pattern

of problems someone will help him to write out a plan, to figure out how he can work on his problem, saying: "This is a weakness of yours--how are you going to deal with it?" Alice feels, "The children are so in tune. They don't see it as punishment/reward, they see it as a process. Everybody in the building is involved in it; there's not an adult in the building who doesn't handle it the same way."

Personal interactions at J.L. School were not always this way; they used to have a blue book and when children misbehaved, their names were written in the book and they stood in the playground against the wall. "That was the disciplinary procedure and the kids were really very poorly behaved." Bill introduced the teachers to the new disciplinary ideas with a workshop. Some teachers liked the idea but didn't know how to do it and some hated it and said it would never work.

When Alice became principal, some teachers complained and wanted to go back to the blue book system.

I can't think of any other issue since I came here that was as closed as this. Mostly I say, "Let's listen, let's see what we can do to make you happy." On this I said, "I really believe this, I don't believe the other. I want you to prove to me that it doesn't work. I really want you to try it as best you can."

Alice led the staff in learning together, giving each other scripts and practicing what to say in order to help a child take ownership of his or her behavior. "It was artificial at first but eventually people came to internalize it and parents often come to

teachers and say, 'This isn't the way I raise my child, but I'm learning from you.'" Alice has provided a "time-out" place for children who need it and she is the one who helps solve problems that occur on the bus.

I think there's a little rumbling now but not the resistance we had before. The biggest reason we don't have the resistance is the support they get when they're sending the child here. I'll call a parent, I'll help them follow up so they don't really have that whole burden on them. I think that's reduced the rumbling. Philosophically, I don't think they've moved all that much. In fact I don't know that they think it works so well. It does. In fact, everyone who walks in the door sees it. But I don't know that they see it.

At J.L., if you hurt someone, you are immediately sent home for the day, "because the most serious kind of crime is bodily injury." Only one or two children are sent home in a year and they never do it again. "We've been just extremely lucky. I've never had a parent say, 'No, I won't come.'" Parents "almost totally love it," although there are two families that think the process is "wimpy." When some parents criticized Alice for being a "lady principal" and felt "the way to deal with things is to slug," her response was:

That's what you have to deal with. I am a lady principal. I am the principal. This is the way this school will run because we find it more conducive to learning. You're one of a hundred parents and you have a choice, you can move out of town, or if you're going to come here--you can raise your child the way you want to but when he walks through this door, there are 200 others who are affected by your child. He has to act a certain way.

ST. T'S SCHOOL

Before coming to St. T's, Frank was a sixth grade teacher in an inner city public school. Frank was eager to become principal of a city school and considering his interview at St. T's as "practice," he was very candid and critical of the school. The previous headmaster at St. T's had a secondary school background and the school's structure had become somewhat departmentalized in order to accommodate the special teachers; Frank felt the very elaborate schedule had begun to dictate the quality of the program. He was hired because he was the only candidate who was critical of the school and said he would change certain things immediately. "There was no way that I could function in an elementary school that was departmentalized to that extent."

Frank began by changing the school schedule in an attempt to facilitate a more self-contained classroom structure; there was a partial change the first September, and a major change the following September. "I needed the support of the staff and I really didn't know them. The day before school I came in with the schedule, and they hated it." Teachers were comfortable with things the way they were and the departmentalized schedule gave them a great deal of free time. Parents were apprehensive. The school had a positive social and emotional atmosphere, the children were happy, and parents assumed the curriculum was moving along. People wondered, "Why change something that basically works?" Despite the resistance, Frank feels the change was positive and immediate.

The whole school just slowed down. Kids were running all over with books and book bags, running from one class to the next. It was like high school, especially in grades 4, 5, and 6. It slowed the pace down which caused all sorts of other things to happen--children's needs were being met more on an individual rather than a group basis. I was a little uncomfortable because basically you should change the curriculum before you change the structure, but it was so blatant, so negative, that I dealt with that first.

St. T's still has not reached its potential, and Frank feels their greatest obstacle is that they offer too much. Although he agrees with those who want their children to have the opportunity to learn music, art, science, computers, and french, he feels the difficulty in scheduling so much into a busy day leads to a lack of integration. Ideally, he would like to see a totally self-contained structure but feels that will never happen; specialists are too much a part of tradition at St. T's. "With the quality of the staff I have, I think I'll be able to achieve my goals and objectives with a semi self-contained" structure. "The key is the staff and how they view the special teachers." Frank's goal is for teachers to begin thinking of the specialist as a resource rather than as the only person responsible for teaching a particular subject and hopes to develop a system where teachers can communicate with each other openly and regularly.

C.S. SCHOOL

C.S. is a one room alternative school that enrolls twenty children in the first through third grades. Two sets of parents joined Rick in founding C.S., which is housed in a converted carriage house adjoining L.D., a day care center where Rick used to work as a kindergarten teacher. As working parents, they chose L.D. because of a need for day care and an all-day kindergarten but "they saw their children were getting a different kind of education and wanted more of it"; they encouraged Rick to start a school which would offer the same child-centered teaching philosophy for older children. C.S. still has a strong relationship with L.D.; Diane, the assistant teacher at C.S., is also head teacher of the L.D. after-school program which uses the same building, and about half of the student population comes from L.D.

The core of the program at C.S. is to provide meaningful experiences for children.

So much interesting is happening inside their heads, and we want school to be a place where they can act on those things--find out more. I just get very excited when like this morning I looked around the room and Heather and Chris were typing a project about cats--very intense. Neil was working on the computer. Other children were working on their projects.

Most of Rick's concerns have been with the structure of the classroom and with individual children's growth and needs. It is difficult for Rick to reconcile the very real pressure toward academic skill development with the desire to have school be interesting and vital to

children. Recently he has been reading books containing running records by teachers in progressive schools during the 20's and 30's. "At moments I want the school to be like that, and it can't be. Our society's too different--I wouldn't let the school be. Some of the parents' concerns about schools are too legitimate."

The classroom structure has changed dramatically and continues to change. Some of the changes revolve around the dilemma of requiring children to complete certain tasks during the day and allowing them to initiate their own work. "For some children the structure was hard and restricting, because when they worked on what they wanted they had wonderful learning experiences, and we were stopping that from happening. While for other children, they were happiest when there was a set structure and were very lost when we had the open structure."

The board offered Rick complete autonomy in deciding the internal decisions of the school and felt they would share responsibility for external decisions, although when board members do not meet their responsibilities well, with bookkeeping for example, Rick has had to take that work upon himself. The board has expanded to include more people who want to see the school grow and believe in its philosophy, and Rick feels the new board, which has seven members, is now more of "a working board"; they are involved in writing a personnel code, looking into financing for a new building, and talking about expanding into a K-6 school.

When we started the school we thought we were extending L.D. in a sense, extending what L.D. does to a first-second grade. Right now we're trying to figure out how we can be what these children need for the next several years. It's funny how much we fall into things in life. When I started doing this school, I really didn't know how much pressure there would be on us to expand. I thought of myself more as a classroom teacher than as director of a school. Then I realized we have a responsibility to every child who comes here now, to find them a school where they can continue from here on.

DISCUSSION

As public, private, and alternative schools, J.L., St.T's, and C.S. meet different needs. J.L. must be accountable to the entire community, providing education to all its members. Special education for children with learning disabilities, as well as gifted children, is an essential part of the program. Classroom philosophy must be responsive to parental preferences, the learning styles of all the children, and the teaching styles of tenured teachers. Alice must work within the public school system, being answerable to the superintendent, school board, and her colleagues at other schools in the district. Alice capitalizes on this diversity, and works to build a rich school community which reflects these differences. She not only tolerates, but understands and nurtures, the varying goals, needs, values, and ideas.

St. T's does not need to meet the needs of such a wide community. Parents who do not agree with the school's learning philosophy will opt for another private school, so diversity is not as important. Acceptance to St. T's is somewhat competitive, and they are not equipped to meet the special needs of handicapped or learning-disabled children. Because the teachers are not tenured, changes can occur quickly. Frank is accountable to the board of directors, the church, and to the parents who have selected the school for their children. A private school is a business and if St. T's does not meet the educational needs of its community, they will cease to pay tuition and Frank will be replaced.

As an alternative school, C.S. is even more specialized than St. T's; it is a very small school which was created to fill a very specific need. Only some parents will choose the school for their children, and Rick does not need to try to please everyone--C.S. will attract those people who believe strongly in its philosophy. Although smaller than St. T's, C.S. is also a business that depends on tuition for its survival. Rick is accountable to parents, to the board of directors, and to the children since he is also their teacher. In a sense, Rick is the school. Without him, it probably would not exist and when he eventually leaves, there is no guarantee that it will continue.

Changes have occurred gradually at each of the schools. J.L. now has a new disciplinary system which Alice sees as working, but she does not feel that all the teachers understand it philosophically. Children

at St. T's no longer run from class to class, but Frank has been unable to achieve the self-contained structure which he prefers, and has had to settle for a semi self-contained structure. Rick still is not clear on exactly what he wants to see happening in the classroom, and knows that many things will continue to change if the school expands. Each leader is trying, to the best of his or her ability, to build a rich school environment that meets the academic, social, and creative needs of children. They began by focusing on blatant needs, but continue to work and plan and dream.

THE LEADERS

ALICE

Alice says, "I really do listen. You can convince me; I like to be convinced. I love a team, I don't just think a team is a good way to go. I want it. I think it's exciting because people really just support each other so much; you never feel alone." She "never assumes things are alright" but is always looking to see "how we can do it better." She invites input and suggestions and is very visible, spending a great deal of time in the classrooms. "I'm really around a lot. I know every child, not just their names, I know their favorite dresses."

Alice thinks that the children see her as she wants to be seen, while different constituencies of parents see her differently: "it's not what you do but who you are." Bill always wore a flannel plaid shirt and jeans, and Alice feels some parents tend to view her as a "business woman type" because she dresses in skirts. On the whole most integrated day parents see her as "pretty open" while she feels traditional parents are "still testing." She feels somewhat

uncomfortable with the way teachers view her because "I think teachers by and large aren't dealing with an individual, they're dealing with a role. Part of that is inherited, part of that is a cop out, part of it is real. This is the person who does your evaluation."

Alice would like to develop more of a support system for herself. "Lots of different people, both teachers here and people on the district staff, professional friends outside, have little pieces. I get a lot of feedback. That's different from support--someone I can bounce off and they'll say, hey you're doing that good, try that." Her family provides that kind of support to a certain extent: "my husband and kids know everything about this place."

FRANK

Frank feels that one of the advantages of a private school is that "you are the school, until you get fired."

As long as I'm here, I am the school, and basically the only accountability factor on me is financial; that's really what I share with my Board of Managers. As far as the actual running of the school, the curriculum, and hiring and firing, that's really all on me, for better or for worse. When you have that kind of power, it helps, but you can't abuse it.

"I don't think I have any outstanding administrative abilities. I think it's just sheer energy and commitment. Probably my greatest asset is that I'm not afraid to admit I've made a mistake."

Because he wanted to change the school rapidly, he began by meeting with parents grade level by grade level, either at the school or in someone's home.

I would listen to them and share some of my thoughts, and then I met with them a second time and did the same thing. When I met with them the third time, and this was the key, I told them what was going to happen. They disagreed with me in many cases, but basically they trusted me. The things that I thought were negative about the school, I told them. That's how I built up their confidence, by being very honest about the school and very direct. Some people felt I was too honest. Sometimes they didn't want to hear it.

Frank spent much of the first year meeting with parents and with the staff, reacting to and solving problems. Most of his time the second year was spent working through a very time-consuming NAIS evaluation. Although the evaluation process was difficult and kept him in a more administrative role than he would have liked to play, "in a sense, I was questioning everything when I first came here, and evaluating it. It gave us a structure to work on. I really think that's what caused us to be able to change the school at such a rapid rate. We turned it into a very positive thing."

As a teacher Frank had many support systems, a study group, the Teacher Center and his peers. Now his staff, and especially the teachers he hired are supportive as are "a few key parents who I trust." He felt alone the year he let people go. "I really felt lost." He hasn't utilized the support of other headmasters in the city although "they've offered. I haven't felt the need."

While he was a public school teacher, Frank was politically involved with parents, helped to create the city's Teacher Center, and was president of the teachers union. Someday he would like to become an inner city public school principal.

RICK

In Rick's job there are few clear boundaries between his separate roles of teacher and director of the school.

It varies but I think most of the parents are able to see me in both roles. I send out notices to people telling them when the tuition's due for next year, as well as notices saying we're going on a trip tomorrow. So in a way I reinforce the double notion of myself as opposed to being able to get completely into being the child's teacher.

In general, he tries to have a board member send out notices saying that tuition is overdue so that he, as the child's teacher, won't have to do that. In terms of how he would most like to be viewed, "I think I would want parents to see me as someone who's concerned about their children and someone who's open to hearing about their concerns. How they actually see me I think varies very much. I think that I'm seen as more knowledgeable than I am by them so sometimes they're intimidated. I don't feel intimidating."

While Rick loves being his own boss and "not having to worry that someone will have unreasonable expectations about what I'm doing in the classroom--besides myself," he doesn't really have anyone else to rely on or to insulate him. "I feel sometimes I'm the institution of the C.S. School so I think sometimes I take things very personally." There are "a lot of ups and downs" and Rick is finding it to be "very exhausting," having responsibility for the developmental needs of children in three grades and "there's so much to do in figuring out how to do this as I want to." He feels "dissatisfied" more of the time than he used to and thinks that has to change. "It's fine that we're doing this school but I want to take the pleasure out of teaching that I found when I got into it. Or else I'm romanticizing it looking back."

Some of Rick's frustrations come from the fact that "it's very hard to assess the results of this kind of program. The kind of things that we do are not susceptible to easy measurement." The standards of what he is trying to do vary and are sometimes "very unclear," so that "at some moments I buy our philosophy more than at other moments." Rick's expectations for himself and for the school are very high and "I'm harsh enough on myself, it's very far from how I want it. It's almost a day to day thing. We've been effective compared to some of the rest of the world, but we're not effective compared to what I want." Sometimes it helps "just not to worry about this place" or to work on plans for expanding the school. "I'm sure there will be changes as we

expand. There's a certain point at which I can't be director because the school will be too big. So I guess I'd have to hire someone to be director."

DISCUSSION

Alice, Frank, and Rick strive to listen, to invite suggestions and concerns, and to share their ideas and plans with others. Alice chose to focus a great deal of her energy in the classrooms, visiting daily, and knows both teachers and students very well. Frank spent most of his time meeting with parents and teachers in groups, or in his office. Rick focused most of his effort on the children although he seeks and welcomes communication with parents, Diane, and professional friends at other schools. Did personality, style, or school culture influence these choices?

Alice feels more comfortable in the classrooms than Frank does, since he does not see his teaching ability as one of his strengths. He was accustomed to organizing parents' meetings in the community, while Alice postponed her organization of a parents council. Both chose to begin in a role which was comfortable to them, and to postpone the one which was more foreign. Rick's double role of teacher-director calls for his immediate and continued focus on the children. This is not only

the role that he is most comfortable and familiar with; the school cannot function without a teacher.

All of the leaders speak of a need for support, for someone to talk to and to share their experiences with. School leadership is lonely, especially for former teachers who enjoyed an active and stimulating relationship with their colleagues. It is not appropriate for the principal to talk candidly with a teacher about concerns he or she may have about another teacher, or to complain to a parent about frustration he or she is feeling about the progress of change at the school. Who can principals talk to? Although the three leaders know of each other and live within the same city, they do not meet to talk together about issues they are facing. Support systems are needed and school administrators would benefit a great deal from the opportunity to talk freely and frequently with others who are experiencing similar situations, frustrations, and successes.

PHILOSOPHY

ALICE

Alice believes there is "more than one way to educate and a lot of what you do reflects your philosophy." It is important to "respect teachers' philosophies and let them teach according to what's comfortable to them," and to "respect parents' philosophies and let their child be in a classroom that's comfortable." J.L. has two distinct learning styles and philosophies, the traditional and the integrated day. "If we had four systems, we'd have four, but we have two programs that are comfortable in this community. Parents can opt for what they want, teachers opt for what they want. So far we've been lucky, we haven't had overflow. There isn't any anger or jealousies. Each person believes what they're doing is the right thing and they're respected by their peers."

The kindergarten is "not aligned. That's the year you learn about the school and decide the one you want." An experiential mathematics program "feeds the traditional and integrated day at the first grade.

Integrated day continues that approach through the fourth grade." In the traditional classes, "it ends at first and in second they go into workbooks so it's a natural transition." In language and reading, the kindergarten studies four fairy tales using the Addison-Wesley basal, and the teacher records the skills the children learn. The children in the traditional first grade go right into the basal; the integrated day teachers know what skills they have, and can build the individual programs accordingly.

Alice is involved in helping parents choose which program they want for their children, "as much as any private school." When children are registered for kindergarten, parents receive a brochure describing the options they will have the following year. Many opportunities are available--parent conferences, a slide presentation, classroom visits, and coffee in parents' homes. Alice, teachers, and parents answer questions and in March they have to make a decision. Not only does Alice respect peoples' differing needs and values, but she is able to help them make informed, and therefore meaningful, choices.

Alice describes part of her style of leadership as "chipping away--you keep doing it." For teachers who disagreed with the disciplinary system, "the more feedback they get from parents about how much they love it," the more they will come to accept it and understand. "You can't be all negative and you can't be all positive. Give people enough so they don't feel like throwing in the towel. The more people

feel like they're grownups and they are in charge of it, the more they're willing to take risks and change."

FRANK

Frank describes his educational philosophy as one that combines the ideas of Piaget, the British Infant Schools, and Bank Street's School for children. He came to St. T's intending to make many changes very quickly and,

I was out of synch with the staff. There were certain staff members [who] started to resist me right from day one. It was a struggle; I always had to work around people. Some of them were pretty good teachers but just wouldn't budge or rethink what they were doing.

Some staff members were so resistant to what Frank was doing, they went to parents and began to lobby against him. "They felt that if parents put pressure on me, I would back off. But I didn't; I just got rid of the teachers." He feels they were tired, and resented the amount of energy and effort that he was demanding. Two of the teachers were fired, and he put pressure on another two and forced them to retire. "As an administrator that's one of the most difficult things to deal with because you're dealing with someone's livelihood, but the bottom line is the children and that's my responsibility."

As a part of the NAIS evaluation process, the staff was involved in a great deal of meetings. As they discussed philosophy and curriculum goals, teachers became aware of how others were feeling and gained a better sense of understanding of where the school was going.

The last teacher to leave was my first grade teacher who by anyone's standard was a good teacher. There were other factors but one thing she said to me, "You know I respect you, I know where you're going, I just don't want to go in that direction. I've been doing this for fourteen years. 90% of the parents I deal with are satisfied with the way I teach," and she was right. She was being isolated. So she just left. There wasn't any animosity and it was best for both of us. I basically supported her and had she stayed, I still would have supported her. Where it became difficult for me--obviously the first grade is a very, very key grade and to have my approach, the philosophy of the school broken at that point, that was very, very difficult for me to handle.

Parents were involved in open dialogue with Frank, discussing problems, changes, and goals of the school. While he feels that parents have been very positive about his leadership and the school, "to this day, most parents don't understand what the actual philosophy of the school is. Although I've made every attempt possible to explain the philosophy, I don't really think they understand. Some do, but the majority don't." Instead, Frank feels that their support of the school is more of a reaction to the fact that their children are happy and are accepted into competitive secondary schools when they leave St. T's.

Many changes have been made, and many people have disagreed with what Frank has tried to do but he feels he "never had to change the philosophy of the school." The kind of changes that occurred "normally

would need a change in philosophy and general goals and objectives but we never had to do that." He sees the school as having drifted from its original purpose and that's what he told the selection committee when he was being interviewed. "I said, 'when I read your philosophy, I'm very comfortable with it, but I don't see it happening in the school.'"

Frank says he doesn't need people to agree with him all the time, but they have to "be willing to debate and to argue." Teachers "have to feel good about themselves and they have to believe in what they're doing; if a teacher has a strong feeling about a program or an approach, I'm flexible." But, "it's almost impossible to teach here without agreeing with me, because I won't hire you; you would have to convince me that you understood this philosophy. It's taken me two years but at this point in time, this is my staff and I really think this is the strongest elementary staff in this whole area. Now the school is changing at a very rapid rate because we're all one team."

RICK

Parents send their children to C.S. School for different reasons. They see the school as effective because it has worked for their children. "Because we have a fairly high tuition, most parents are beforehand pretty willing to trust what happens here. If they don't like it, they leave." When parents have questions or concerns they are encouraged to call or meet with Rick to discuss them. Although parents do contribute to Rick's "re-thinking" of the school's philosophy, C.S. is "not a cooperative. We're very interested in parents' concerns but when you send your child here, you're buying an established philosophy not buying a chance to influence that philosophy to change." Rick is beginning to see the school "as a place that believes in certain principles of what's good for children and helps educate parents to those principles."

Despite his efforts Rick says, "I don't think I've done as good a job as I would like to in letting parents know what the school's about." The New York Times recently published an article about the school in which the president of the board was quoted: "After looking at a public school for his son, he was 'turned off by the whole thing,' and 'wanted an alternative school that concentrated on teaching the ABC's.'" Rick was upset about this because he doesn't consider teaching the ABC's to be the "essence of our school." Over the course of one or two years, Rick feels that several parents are "coming to understand more clearly

what happens." Yet, "some of how the parents feel about the school doesn't necessarily relate to what we're doing, which is kind of sad." Parents of Sara, a girl who "just naturally learned to read on her own, are ready to credit the school with it." Paul is a child "who's struggling with reading and who would struggle with reading anywhere." His parents are concerned that he's not learning because of the school.

"Were I clearer on exactly what I'd like the school to be, then parents might judge it more on my terms." Although parents at C.S. School have deliberately chosen this kind of learning environment for their children,

sometimes they don't trust it. There's something in them feeling well, so far our children have learned. As long as they keep learning, we'll go with this way. As long as we can pull people along with us and show them that this is working, they'll become more and more open to it. It's a constant process of educating.

DISCUSSION

While there are many similarities in the educational philosophies of Alice, Frank, and Rick, their approaches to philosophical differences are varied. Alice supports both the traditional and integrated day approaches to learning at J.L. School, and helps teachers and parents decide which style will provide the best match for individual children.

Frank has a very strong philosophical preference which he saw as compatible with the school's written goals, but did not see reflected in actual classroom experience. Wanting philosophic continuity in the school, he even felt uncomfortable with a "good teacher" who did not teach in the way he prefers. Unwilling to wait the length of time necessary to change the attitudes and behavior of some of the teachers, he replaced them with other teachers that he knew believed in his philosophy. Rick also believes strongly in his philosophy, and feels a responsibility to help others better understand the reasons behind what he has chosen to do. He is constantly analyzing and evaluating the school's methods, and sometimes becomes insecure and confused in the process.

The administrative leader is "essentially a passive observer of the curriculum process," keeping track of what is going on, making suggestions rarely, and becoming directly involved only if there is a visible problem. Facilitative leaders are very involved in curriculum decisions and use a variety of strategies to organize and influence teachers; they establish priorities but rely "heavily on teachers to influence other teachers." Directive leaders decide on the nature of change themselves and attempt to get teachers to follow their decisions.² All three of the leaders would identify themselves as

² K. Leithwood, et al., "An Empirical Investigation of Teachers' Curriculum Decision Making Processes and Strategies Used by Curriculum Managers to Influence Such Decision Making," Unpublished Report,

facilitative, but Alice is the most so while Frank is more directive, and Rick is more interpersonally oriented.

All of the leaders speak of the difficulty parents have in truly understanding the philosophy of their schools. Parents at all three of the schools seem to be seeking a strong educational program for their children in a supportive and happy environment. Do they need to understand the underlying goals and methods of educators with sophistication? A certain amount of trust is involved, because most parents do not have the training and background in education that the three principals have. Parents at all three of the schools have made choices for their children, choosing between the two available options at J.L., or selecting St. T's and C.S. from among the private school options in the city. Being available and responsive to parents is important, as is providing them with the opportunity and information necessary to make informed and appropriate choices, but it is unrealistic to expect unquestioning support or sophisticated understanding of school programs. As partners in the care and education of children, parents and school staff members have different responsibilities, knowledge, and skills.

Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1978, pp. 66 and 71, cited in Fullan, p. 138.

DECISION MAKING

ALICE

As principal of a public school, Alice works within the district system. Alice feels the district superintendent is "extremely open and innovative." Decisions are "very, very rarely dictated from the district, or from me; the whole system works by consensus." The superintendent meets regularly with a teachers council, an administrators council, and a middle school and high school students council; they are "not for dress but working groups that decide everything that goes on in the district." Although he reserves the right to make final decisions, he says, "My decision would be an empty decision if I didn't have all this input from you."

The superintendent sets goals for the district which Alice has to try to implement at the school level; she sets her own goals for the school as well. During her first years at J.L., Alice set the goals herself; now the staff is involved in setting school goals for next year.

"The first year was arbitrary, I could think of five things that were wonderful things to work on. There were no glaring, terrible problems; this was a well functioning school. Curriculum, I believed, needed to be beefed up; it wasn't challenging enough for the children. Discipline needed support. School climate--the parents had always been kept out, accepted that; so that would have been nobody else's priority but mine.

Alice tried to evaluate:

What are the things that are not only my agendas but other people's agendas that I could bring them in on? What are the things that people feel so vulnerable about that you don't start with them? I really spent the first year just listening a lot, and looking, and deciding how I really felt things were going. I wanted to get that whole disciplinary structure set, and all the functions, the scheduling, the management kinds of things, so routinized that people didn't have to be concerned with that.

During that first year, Alice led many staff meetings, "trying to reach a consensus, trying to have the whole staff problem solve about things." Many discussions focused on how to deal with the problems of one extremely disruptive child. Alice says, "I really believe we saved this child; the family wanted to have him institutionalized." The process involved a great deal of time and energy and, "people weren't happy about that, especially if he wasn't in your classroom. What we learned from dealing with that child, we use for all the children, and what we learned in helping each other, has helped everybody. But it's not so easy to see at the time." Teachers complained, but Alice felt she needed the time to accomplish everything that needed to be done. "Now I don't need those meetings and it's very easy to back off and say,

'You're right, we only need one a month.' I couldn't run this building until we had a chance to talk to each other."

Some teachers had been very unhappy with an assembly program that Bill had started. Once a week the whole school would get together for a time when anyone could share something they felt proud of, in order to build motivation, pride, and self-expression. Some teachers really didn't like it, and wanted to use that time in the classroom; some teachers felt it was boring, and some felt it was like a religious service. They waited until Alice's third year before saying a word. She feels they must have been thinking, "here's someone who came from teaching, who's really sympathetic to us. Should we really attack her and kill her or should we give her a chance because we have more to gain than to lose?" But they were really unhappy, and the third year they said, "That's it, we don't want assembly." Alice spent almost three months talking with everyone in the building--aides, custodians, parents, teachers, kids--asking: Do you want it? Do you not want it? What are the strengths? What are the weaknesses? "Some weaknesses are real, some are personal preference; we negotiated it." Sharing is still an integral part of the assemblies but now "that's not all that it is." Teachers now share responsibility for choosing a focus for each week's program (square dancing demonstrations, teaching new songs, or a talent show.) It is not as rigid as it was. "Teachers who felt it was too much of a burden to have a theme or a display, are told, there's no

expectation; the expectation is that we all get together and spend time together. You shouldn't feel that you have to show off."

Alice feels the internal climate of the school is open and supportive, and the daily routine is smooth. Now she wants to develop "an academic program that's unbeatable," and to "get parents to know what we're doing and to like what we're doing." She is actively involved in developing a parents group. "I'm trying to have a parents' council, which is not done in the district and the parents are a little uneasy." She needs their ideas and their reactions and tells them, "It's not that you're going to have your way, not that you can come in and tell us what to do. That's not the purpose. The purpose is input and that's really what happens at all these meetings." Alice says she doesn't want parents "who are just yes people for the principal or just raising money; we're trying to create a school as a place in the community where the family gets its first supports."

FRANK

Although the Board of Managers has little to do with decisions about the day to day running of St. T's, Frank says, "I want them to be more involved. That's important to me." As a teacher in the inner city, "I always had a strong leaning toward high level parent involvement." When it came time for him to hold his series of parent meetings during that first year, he felt comfortable talking with them, listening to their feelings and concerns. Frank discussed problems and possible solutions with staff members also, and welcomed their involvement.

The key is to share all your responsibilities without giving up your authority. It got to the point where some of the teachers didn't want the responsibility. I know as a public school teacher I always fought for that. I wanted a piece of the action in terms of making the decisions. But I guess the situation here is different in that people are very comfortable. They trusted me, they knew that I was easy to talk to. I listened to what they said and I made a lot of decisions based on just what the staff told me. So they said, "Look, you do it, let us teach." But I always make that available to them.

Frank seeks open dialogue and the input of others but he makes the final decisions "because ultimately, I'm responsible." When he decided to eliminate french in the primary grades, "they disagreed, but I went ahead and did it. I explained it to them, I let it sink in for awhile, I let people use the phone saying, 'He's going to change the french! He's going to change the french!' And then I went ahead and did it."

Frank realizes that his leadership style caused other people to feel anxious. "There's a danger in being too honest and open. There's a danger in wanting to change things too rapidly." Talking with one person about a possible solution to a problem, he would leave them with the impression that he was going solve it in a certain way. Then he'd talk with another staff member and make the decision to do something else. "They were leaving here like, 'What is he doing? What is he doing now?'" In a small school, things spread quickly through the grapevine and there were many mixed messages going around. Finally at a staff meeting, the teachers got together and told Frank how they were feeling. "I was devastated. Some of them interpreted it as my inability to make a decision. That wasn't it at all. It's part personality, part style--I was thinking outloud."

"When you're a leader, you really have to be conscious of the emotional level of the staff." Frank was deliberately leaking out information and wanted it to circulate, but now he has made an adjustment. He feels the staff was asking him to be more of an administrator and that in the name of being so democratic, "I was just driving them crazy." Now, "I don't tell them everything. I'm very careful about how I throw information out."

Despite the turmoil, Frank feels, "So far the decisions I've made have generally been supported by the staff." He looks ahead to the next few years as a stabilizing period but, "even with that in mind, if I

find a better way of doing things, I'm going to do it." His goal is to create an atmosphere where communication is open. Some teachers will come to him when they are unhappy saying, "This is terrible, I don't feel comfortable doing this," and they will discuss it. "Some heads would be intimidated by that," but Frank wants to be seen as someone who will be supportive. He can also be very forceful and is not afraid to make a decision that he knows will be unpopular. Sometimes it isn't easy but, "I take certain stands and people respond to that and will respect you for doing that."

RICK

"There's a lot of happenstance in change." Rick had not really thought about expanding the school until his friend Karen, former director of L.D., called him in December and asked what he thought of their working together next year. "The fact that someone I thought was particularly gifted wanted to be involved in the school was too much of an opportunity to let go." She subsequently decided to go to social work school but, the "line of thinking that got started with her calling me led to our thinking let's expand the school. Let's get someone like Karen involved." Rick feels very comfortable with Karen's values and she would have been "someone to share this with."

When asked if he set long range goals and priorities for himself, Rick said, "Unlike most of my friends, I think I'm more intuitive. At the beginning of the year I don't know that I have a clear direction laid out for what we're going to cover in the classroom." There are many questions about the group and individual children that Rick cannot answer until he knows them well. The loss is that "sometimes we don't touch certain bases that it might be good to touch," although over the "course of a year I think we do."

Decision-making for the school as a whole is "casual." Rick will "sit down and have a discussion with someone and that will get me thinking, well, why don't we try to look ahead for awhile, figure out where we'll be in a couple of years."

It's a lot of balances and if I feel something is out of balance then over the weekend I'll be troubled or something and suddenly Sunday morning in the bathtub I'll think, well we really need to move in this direction. Part of that's my being teacher-director. I think were I someone who's main task was being director, I would do more long-range planning. But the director part of my job fits in when I have a chance between tasks as a teacher.

DISCUSSION

Open communication and discussion are used by all three principals as important tools in the decision making process. Alice and Frank led a great deal of meetings during their first years as principals, and Rick talks with professional friends and parents whenever possible. They all seek the observations and concerns of others, and while they prefer to come to consensus on most issues, as leaders they are responsible for making final decisions.

Alice's leadership style is compatible with that of her superintendent, so she is able to use the established district model within her school. Continuity of process at the school and district levels helps people feel comfortable, as familiarity often leads to greater trust and predictability. As teachers, parents, children, and principals learn to expect to be listened to, they become more willing to take risks and to invest energy and commitment into sharing their suggestions and concerns. Frank's leadership style was very different from that of St. T's previous headmaster, and that may have contributed to some of the unhappiness and frustration people felt as he began to make changes in the school. Teachers who were not accustomed to participating in school decisions did not enjoy the uncertainty involved in Frank's candidness. He shared too much information, and in being so eager to have everyone involved in the decision making process, caused some people to feel that their ideas were considered unimportant and

that Frank was changing his mind. Frank's original approach is probably more appropriately used at a school like C.S. Rick is able to be involved with people on a more personal level, to be more casual, and to flow more naturally with the events and happenstance of change. Not as many people are involved in C.S., and there are no previous leadership traditions to compete with.

All leaders make mistakes, and Frank sees his ability to admit his errors as one of his strengths. He has also been able to make an adjustment, and to change his behavior in response to the needs and feelings of others. The fact that the staff was able to confront Frank, and he was able to hear what they had to say, speaks for the degree of open communication that is operating at St. T's. Teachers at J.L. waited longer to confront Alice with the issue of assemblies, but she was also able to use the discussion process to advantage as she talked with every member of the school community and facilitated a process of negotiation as they changed the assembly structure.

CURRICULUM

ALICE

Alice feels J.L. is very successful in identifying children's special problems, meeting individual needs, and promoting social development; in terms of academic achievement, they have a "way to go. We have everything going structurally, but everybody could use some refined techniques and more knowledge about new materials--enriching what we have."

The district provides curriculum guidelines, but Alice feels they are "very diffuse." Grade level expectations provide a framework of skill strands in mathematics, reading and language arts; teachers are told what needs to be covered but not how to teach. Although the other elementary school in the district uses textbooks to teach math, social studies and science, the J.L. staff does not. Alice says, "I don't want a text, but I want some agreement about what kids are going to come out of here knowing. I really don't have a sense of what's happening."

Children at J.L. benefit from a rich variety of learning experiences. As part of the science program for example, many field trips provide opportunities to explore and learn about the woods, swamp, pond, ocean life, habitats, maple sugar, pumpkin patch, and apple orchard. "That's terrific but it's very uneven, not really thought out; I'm probably overstating it but it's not done to the depth that I'd like." Teachers work together in planning curriculum units and activities, but in small clusters, "not all the way up; it's loose." Alice feels, "Teachers work so hard that I don't think they see the forest for the trees. I think they think we are doing everything we possibly can and it's only time that's stopping us. It's more than time; it's really priorities and skills."

"I find that when you say things it doesn't happen, and I've been saying; I need to find some different strategies for making it happen." This year Alice identified writing as a weak area; they had a workshop, read books on writing, and invited a poet to talk with the whole school community. Eight staff members went to workshops outside the school and, "much more writing is going on in the school than has ever been done before." In the past, the first grade teacher felt writing couldn't be done with first graders--the children are so busy learning to form letters and "kids hate to write"; the second graders used to copy four sentences from the board each day--"they thought a sentence had to have a number." Now both classes have daily writing sessions;

they could be scribbling, drawing, using invented spelling or writing sentences, but every child is expected to "write." All of the traditional classroom teachers have made significant changes in their approach to writing. Two of the integrated day teachers "were always strong, and one hasn't moved"; the fourth teacher is "doing a lot, and it's being done beautifully." As the teachers have gotten more involved with writing, "there have been questions like, where should I go with this?" This has been "an awareness and trying things out year," and as people begin to identify their own needs, they move on "to the next level." "I set that goal and felt there was a lot of resistance to it, but here we've moved; with the resistance, there's been an honest movement forward, and as people have successes they like it better."

FRANK

Frank had been an inner city public school teacher before coming to St.T.'s and he found that in private schools,

There is seldom a written down, articulated curriculum. They just rely very heavily on the quality of the teacher. I was accused at many points along the way of turning the school into a public school. My position was they should be lucky because I really felt that many children based on their ability were not getting the type of education they deserved. What you had was very bright children graduating from here who had gaps in their skill development.

He chose two staff members to work with him in writing a language arts curriculum for the school. He selected the staff members with "just a gut feeling, people that I thought could do it." One was the curriculum coordinator who he had spoken with many times and he knew that, "philosophically we were both headed in the same direction." Using James Moffet's A Student Centered Language Arts Curriculum as a guide, they wrote an experiential curriculum that had a continuity of skills from the junior kindergarten through the sixth grade; they also adopted the Hartcourt-Brace basal reading program.

The more contradictions there are, the more dynamic the school is. Built into this very active, action-oriented child-centered type of curriculum, is a very traditional structured reading program. That's by design. To be quite frank, I just didn't want to take a chance with the reading. I'd had enough experiences in open situations where people have really gone bad with reading skills in the name of letting children grow. I just couldn't do that in this type of situation. I fought tooth and nail when I was in public schools to get rid of basal readers, and I can't believe that here I am advocating them, but the school really needed that kind of continuity. Right now I can take you to my JK [Junior Kindergarten] and make direct connections between what's happening there and what's happening in my sixth grade.

Mathematics in the primary grades is taught with a child-centered, experiential focus. In the fourth grade, they shift gears and become "more teacher directed, more chalk and talk, more textbook oriented." Frank feels that is a "basic contradiction" but he wants "that balance in the school because the reality for us is that most of our children graduate from here and go on to very competitive secondary schools."

The curriculum revisions depended to a great extent on the talents and energy of a few key staff members. With the language arts curriculum it was the curriculum coordinator who, "really pulled it all together in a very short period of time." A man who was originally hired to do a series of math inservice workshops was later hired as the kindergarten teacher. "He helped make a change that normally would take two to three years. He put into motion a new math program and has had a great impact in the school within one year." Frank has been able to replace teachers he let go with what he feels are very high quality people. "That's the ball game. You can have shelves filled with curriculum guides but the staff is the bottom line."

Frank's goal is to have the social studies and science curriculums written by the end of this year. When a new science teacher was hired in the past,

In a sense he would be the new science program; the science teacher who left took the science program away from the school and [with] all these changes all the time, there was very little continuity." Now, you would have to convince me that you could teach the science program. I think you can maintain the creative aspect of the teacher; most of our curriculum is written in a general way and there's a lot of flexibility. If you have a strong interest in some area, I encourage you to pursue it, but you have to convince me that the skills are maintained. Whether you are studying butterflies or whales, that's up to you.

The curriculum coordinator has been responsible for monitoring the curriculum; "I'm going to take some of that responsibility away from her next year because I'm going to be more involved in the classrooms on a

day to day basis." Frank's plan is that she will collect information and will meet with him regularly. "She'll say to me, 'Based on what I'm seeing, we're not doing enough in the third grade in developing problem solving,' and I [will] take that information and share it with my staff and make sure that it happens." Frank feels there is too much pressure on her in dealing with the teachers and, "It's such a small school that I don't need another administrative layer."

RICK

C.S. curriculum decisions are "changeable" and "very impressionistic." Although Diane will sometimes "take some areas that she'd like to try with the children," she has chosen not to have the role of an initiator. They will meet "every so often to talk about where curriculum is going," but Rick has sole responsibility for initiating, developing, and evaluating the curriculum. It is both informal and personal, based on "what seems to be working for me. Really a lot of it does happen in the bathtub or where I can write things down."

"Some people would call it flexibility, and that would be the nice term for it. We're very much an experimental school. I'm very influenced by Bank Street, by things I've read, and programs I've visited, but it's really eclectic." Rick feels as if he is "constantly

trying different things, some of that's just my personality"; if he sees that something isn't working, he will try something else. Sometimes he worries that things will be too changeable for the children; "predictability is important to me so that the changes are not always so dramatic but certainly the structure of the day has changed many times and will continue to change."

"I would love the work to be more exciting for kids. That's what this school is about. When kids are moaning and groaning I take it very personally and yet I know that sometimes I need to push kids into trying things that later they'll find meaningful. They judge themselves on more immediate terms--what feels fun." The children are happy to come to school each day and are encouraged to initiate their own learning experiences. Rick feels there are "certain basic principles of learning" that "you can bring in no matter what the theme is." Rick characterizes C.S. School's curriculum as somewhere in between the Bank Street and British Infant School philosophies. He has visited the integrated day classrooms at J.L. School and sees their goal as "meaningful involvement in experiences that are of individual importance to each child"; he sees Bank Street as "more interested in a group experience, as a progressive school as opposed to an open school, so there's more of a group endeavor."

"In a way I'm having to reexplore educational philosophy just like each child individually rediscovers the structure of math. I'm having

to rediscover for myself all the struggles that have gone on in education." Rick has put a great deal of thought and energy into creating his own math curriculum and hasn't been able to "come to peace with" how he thinks it should be done.

I feel like I'm doing a lot of experimenting and may some day figure out the right way to do a math curriculum and yet these kids are a victim of my exploring. The youngest children are getting a much more thought out math program than the graduating third graders. Personally, I think I feel doubly responsible because I'm the teacher and the director.

DISCUSSION

Similar threads of curriculum priorities run through all three of the schools. Writing is valued highly at all of the schools, with an emphasis on helping children learn to understand and use the writing process as opposed to an approach which emphasizes penmanship or punctuation at the expense of authorship. Manipulative materials are used in all of the schools' math programs, and the process of understanding mathematical problem solving is valued along with the accurate calculation of arithmetic facts. Concrete experiences are used as a basis for learning, particularly in the early grades, and an importance is placed on understanding and meeting the individual needs of children.

All of the leaders are concerned with the fact that experiential, integrated learning often takes place at the expense of continuous skill development. A great deal of teacher skill is required in running this type of classroom. How can they ensure an exciting, meaningful, yet measureable approach to teaching and learning in their schools? When Alice identified writing as a weak area, she provided a variety of opportunities for teachers to choose from. Working individually and in groups, staff members were encouraged to meet their own teaching and learning styles by attending workshops, studying books which she provided, and by experimenting in the classroom. Frank selected two staff members to work together with him in writing a language arts curriculum. Provided with a written package of skill sequences and grade level expectations, each teacher is asked to use the guidelines in planning and evaluating classroom activities and student progress. Rick must create and evaluate curriculum decisions daily, and must stimulate himself to grow and seek professional interaction and information outside the school. He must fill, for himself and the school, the roles that Alice and Frank and the teachers play at the other two schools. While he does not need to worry about fostering growth and correcting deficiencies in other adults, as Alice and Frank do, he carries a great deal of personal responsibility for the school's curriculum, without professional assistance or support.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND SUPERVISION

ALICE

Staff development takes many forms at J.L. School. On one level is the special training teachers have chosen to undertake in the arts. Teachers share their interests in square-dancing, pottery, calligraphy, photography, or linoblock and woodblock printing with their own classes; they work cooperatively, trading classes and sharing their knowledge with the rest of the school as well. Some have pursued these interests as hobbies, and some have asked to be trained. The staff has worked together for three years and some people have been together as long as ten years; "we're at a level now of trust and caring where people who have never touched anything are feeling comfortable enough to say, 'I need help with this.'" The first grade teacher came to Alice recently saying, "'I realize all I know about painting is putting up an easel and colors and there has to be more to it, to get a child interested, techniques to show. Is there anybody who can help me with that or should I take a course?' Usually, that kind of teacher feels defensive and would just say, 'That's not for me.'"

The school district provides five half days per year for inservice training, and a team leader in each school. The team leader is a classroom teacher who is freed one day a week. The new team leader is interested in staff development, and when another teacher expresses interest in something she has done, she will say, "I'm free one day a week, I can work with you on that." Alice feels this opportunity for weekly peer interaction is very important.

I have some of the skills. I'm especially strong in language arts and reading, but I've never been able to break through the fact that I'm the principal and I do evaluations; they're not going to trust me. They trust me pretty much for a principal but I'm still their boss. They're not going to risk as much; they don't want to be found making a mistake. They will with a peer who doesn't evaluate them."

Alice is responsible for daily staff development and she visits classrooms every day, talking with teachers about the children's behavior rather than their own. By focusing on individual children's growth and needs, she is able to suggest several possibilities for teachers to think about; "you need to think about that for him, not you need to change and learn." Her goal is to be a facilitator, to "help make the things you want happen, happen," although "once in a while you'll come up with something I think is so bizarre and crazy that I'll really fight you on it."

Alice keeps notes and "we meet formally every once in a while." In November she may remind the teacher about a problem they discussed previously, asking "anything happening with it?" In April, they will

meet again and, "I'll say, 'I mentioned that to you and I never see it. You either need to prove to me you've done it, or it goes in your evaluation. And usually it's done, but that's how you set the expectation." J.L. has a completely tenured staff and Alice feels some people have serious weaknesses, and there are people she has to come to grips with; but "one of the reasons I'm so lucky is I don't have anyone who's terrible."

If you're shouting at a child in the classroom, I will come in and say, we have agreed we don't do that; it's not you, that's just not done. Or, we've agreed that children won't sit in their seats from 9 til 3-- you can't do that. The person isn't told that they're an inferior person, they're told that they have a problem and it's theirs to solve.

FRANK

Frank feels the area of staff development and evaluation is "the weakest point in the school." At the end of Frank's first year at St. T's, he offered an assistant teacher in the junior kindergarten a position as second grade teacher for the following year. He felt "she had good instincts" and really cared about children but, "she failed miserably, which called into question my ability to make a judgement." His mistake was in not realizing that "she didn't anticipate that there is a big, big difference between four year olds and second graders." It

was a difficult year with the NAIS evaluation and new curriculum and, "we couldn't give her the support she needed." Although Frank said they didn't want to "we were putting a lot of pressure on her." When he met with second grade parents, "it was hard for me to argue because I knew they were right." He almost asked her to leave in the middle of the year although, "I knew deep down she was the kind of teacher I wanted and she turned out this year to be one of the finest teachers in the school,"

What I learned is that in a school of this nature, you really have to be careful not to hire teachers without experience. I would hire somebody right out of college but you really have to be careful because there's a lot of pressure in a private school, and to be fair to that teacher I shouldn't have hired her. I made a mistake.

Frank is just beginning to work on building a structure for staff development and staff evaluation. He has not found what he feels to be "many good models" and, "I'm confronted with what I feel is a very, very, dynamic staff. Some of them would fall in the top 2 or 3% of the teaching profession. What am I going to tell them to do? That's the dilemma for me." He is thinking about a peer evaluation process where staff members could choose to work together, observing each other and then meeting to share thoughts and ideas. "The goal is that people feel good about themselves and want to continue to grow. There's so much that we don't know."

The school is so strong, Frank feels, because of the high quality teachers he has been able to attract; he knew who he wanted to hire and, "I got myself into some trouble because people thought that I was hiring just friends." As a public school teacher in the city, he had helped found the local Teacher Center. The teachers he hired were also from that network so he "didn't need to call a teacher agency or college placement office. They agreed with the philosophy, they agreed with the approach. These are the kind of teachers who wouldn't have come here, but they came here because of me." Now that Frank knows so much more about the school he feels confident that he would be able to interview a group of teachers and hire someone who would be right for the school. "I couldn't have done that the first year. I didn't know where I was going. But now everything is sort of stabilized. I know the kind of teacher I need."

RICK

"Right now, I'm supervising myself. If I hired someone, I would want to hire someone who I had confidence in and give them quite a bit of autonomy. But what if I came to feel that this person weren't preparing the children for the schools they have to go on to?" If Karen had come to the school, Rick would have wanted to "share the

directorship with her." Another friend of his had thought about working with him. "I can't see supervising her--she's a master teacher. I think we would have taught together as colleagues." Rick's approach with Diane is to "encourage her when she expresses an interest in something and help her figure out how to go in those directions." Over the three years that they have worked together, their relationship has changed. "At first I treated her more like an intern might be treated at Bank Street and took a lot of responsibility for her learning and growth. More recently I've felt that it's important for her to take that responsibility herself so I give her fewer specific ideas and say, 'Would you like to develop this area?'" Diane is very enthusiastic about the school. She "looks to what's happened for individual children and sees the growth" they have made. Rick will encourage her, bringing in certain books for her to read. Supervision is a "very personal thing"; sometimes they will have a three hour discussion on the phone, talking about how the children are doing and what she might try differently. "It's hard that she works 2:30 to 5:30 in the after school program because we can't meet during the hours that I'm more awake"; he also likes to communicate by note because "it gives the person who gets the note a chance to reflect."

Rick cannot supervise himself as director to teacher. "It's a very internal process." In general Rick feels he is "authentic with children" and sensitive to the needs they have as individuals. He is

able to "turn kids toward experiences that they will find engaging and meaningful," and to "help them think out problems they're facing with each other or inner feelings about themselves." His own goals for development and change are "very personal issues in the sense that I have most of the skills I'd like to have"; it is "more a question of not always being able to call on them" when he wants to. Rick feels he would like to be more patient, to have more reasonable expectations, and to be more accepting. He would like to be better able to ask "the right question at the right time" and "help children to do more indepth thinking."

Rick sometimes feels isolated and lonely. "You want someone to give you a perspective." Rebecca is a teacher who used to teach at L.D. and now works at a local private school. "I visit her classroom and I feel very restored." Rick feels it is important sometimes to be able to go down the hall into someone else's classroom and "have the example of what they're doing." It is helpful to have someone to talk with "about specific things that come up, someone who knows the children and may have worked with them the year before--someone who can come in and observe." Also, "it's nice to see other people struggle."

There are a lot of difficult questions in running this kind of school. How do I approach the fact that children aren't as interested in certain kinds of work as in the beginning of the year? It's not the kind of question you can speak with most of your friends about. It's very specialized. When I'm feeling most doubtful, it's difficult to go to someone else and express candidly your uncertainty about yourself and teaching. Other people are sometimes very supportive and say,

"It's just fine what goes on in there," and I want to say "I'm terrible with them!" You need to be close to someone to go through that with them and have them work it through with you. Sometimes you go up to someone who's a very good teacher and say, "What do you do when children are resistant?" and they'll say, "Oh, children aren't resistant in my classroom," and you think, "Oh, my God," and you feel worse.

DISCUSSION

The three schools illustrate different stages in their leaders' approaches to staff development. Alice has reaped the benefits of time and continuity which do not exist to the same extent at the other three schools. Bill and the school superintendent put a staff development process into place which Alice has been able to use to great advantage. Opportunities exist at J.L. for teachers to receive assistance and support in their teaching on many levels--district inservice, optional workshops outside, peer-group interaction and sharing, ongoing observations and conferences with the principal, and peer supervision. The teachers have also been working together long enough that they are able to admit their weaknesses, to ask for help, to take risks, and to experiment. Rick is able to identify some of his own needs as a teacher, and to seek outside support and assistance, but C.S.'s small size prevents colleagial interaction on a direct and regular basis. St. T's is weak in staff development, and while Frank feels the teachers are

talented, they are not accustomed to analyzing their own teaching or to receiving the support and assistance that they need.

All three leaders identify peer supervision as an important issue. While it is not a process that is used at most schools, it is regarded by some educators as most beneficial in improving classroom performance. If meaningful change requires personal commitment, analysis and evaluation of attitudes, values, and skills, it is most likely to occur in a school environment that is open, supportive, and challenging. As teachers challenge each other and themselves, a rich learning environment results. Adults must grow and learn in many of the same ways that children grow and learn in schools. The principal fosters the growth of the adult learners and helps to see that individual needs and interests are accommodated. Questions must be asked and routines must be challenged, on both philosophical and practical levels. Creating an environment that values and provides time for meaningful peer interaction is essential in promoting the growth and development of teachers.

CONCLUSION

Alice, Frank, and Rick arrived at their schools with their own visions, past experiences, and needs. As leaders, they had to be aware of their own attitudes and values, as well of those of their teachers, students, boards, and communities. Sensitivity to the traditions and routines of the school, as well as to the styles of past leaders, was important.

Alice entered her role of public school principal with familiarity, agreement, and support. She had been a teacher in the district, knew people and procedures, was well-liked by teachers, and agreed with the goals of her predecessor and the district superintendent. She was able to facilitate gradual change that progressed naturally from those that proceeded her. Alice's attention to interpersonal relationships, in building a disciplinary system that reflected her vision of a diverse and cooperative community, benefited from her very active and caring participation as she involved all members of the community in dialogue, practice, and evaluation.

Frank entered his role as headmaster of St. T's from the outside. His past experiences had been within an inner-city public school system, and he had been very critical of St. T's during his interviews. At St. T's, the espoused philosophies of teaching and learning were not being enacted in the school and Frank was hired, with a mandate for change, to make many changes very quickly. Frank needed to be more directive, and he was unable to wait for gradual growth and learning in individual teachers. Frank arrived at his first staff meeting with a new schedule. He changed the structure of the day, began to write curriculum guidelines, and involved both teachers and parents in open dialogue about the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Conflict, frustration, and anger were inevitable, but Frank was committed to his vision, made some unpopular decisions, and replaced some staff members with people he knew could enact the teaching philosophy of the school.

Rick did not come to C.S., C.S. came from within him. C.S. is a very direct reflection of Rick's educational philosophy and methods, on both professional and personal levels. Rick did not need to compete with past tradition or leadership style, but he also had none to rely on. C.S. was, and continues to be, built in an ongoing process of discussing, experimenting, and dreaming. Very basic structural decisions were involved--negotiating with L.D. to convert and rent the building, establishing a board of directors, creating a budget, materials, scholarship fund, and admissions process. Each role of

founder, director, and teacher has its own set of responsibilities, and Rick attempts to fill them all with very little support or assistance. At the same time, he is able to effect change on both organizational and personal levels immediately, as he confronts himself in a process of dialogue, action, and evaluation and his vision of C.S. continues to grow.

Personality, individual interests and needs influence leadership style, as well as intellectual knowledge, skills, and values. Each of the leaders has chosen, for whatever reason, the type of school which most suits his or her leadership style. Alice thrives on the diversity inherent in a public school. She has built a supportive community which fosters and nurtures individual and group development and understanding. Frank's more directive style is well suited to an independent school, without the diversity, tenured teachers, or district system which would make his goals more difficult to achieve. Rick sees himself more as a teacher than a principal. He does not want to lose direct contact with children or to devote the amount of time necessary in leading a larger school. He is able to enact his vision for children at C.S., and has more freedom and autonomy than he would have as a teacher in another school.

The school settings and personal differences of Alice, Frank, and Rick are many, but similarities exist which illustrate many aspects of effective educational leadership within the process of changing. All of

the leaders welcome the participation of others. Alice loves the excitement of working within a team, Frank involves teachers and parents in honest dialogue, and Rick is always available to talk with parents about their children's progress or the future of the school.

In the process of dialogue, these leaders have learned a great deal. Alice sees that the teachers still need to grow in fully understanding the philosophy behind the school's disciplinary system, and she keeps "chipping away." She can respond to complaints about the assembly structure, and facilitate a process of negotiation and change based on the feelings of the school community. Frank can hear the frustration of staff members and respond by adjusting his method of circulating information. He can create an atmosphere where a teacher can come to him with a problem, and they can "debate and argue." Rick can respond to the valid concerns of parents about the skill demands their children will face at the schools they will be going to. He can also participate in the constant process of educating that helps people gradually begin to understand the underlying philosophy of the school.

Decisions are not made in isolation at any of the schools. Rick consults the board, the parents, children, and professional friends in planning C.S.'s expansion. Alice creates a parents council, and involves the staff in setting formal goals for the school. Frank meets regularly with staff and parents, sharing responsibility without giving up authority. A process of shared decision making is important in

creating a sense of ownership of the school for all members of the community. Teachers and parents who feel they have a voice in choosing a new direction for the school are more likely to invest their energy and support into implementing new programs. When people feel their concerns and preferences have been heard and considered seriously, they are more willing to listen and try to understand when a leader makes a decision they do not agree with.

In a stimulating school environment, leaders and staff members will continually confront themselves and others with ideas--analyzing their attitudes, practices, and values, and considering whether or not their espoused theories of learning and teaching are actually being enacted in the school. Rick continually studies and experiments as he creates a curriculum for C.S., but he feels the need for professional companionship and interaction. Many opportunities exist at J.L. for teachers to work together in planning and designing curriculum and the NAIS evaluation provided a structure at St. T's for teachers to meet in groups to evaluate the school's strengths and weaknesses. In this process, teachers begin to better understand what they and others are doing, and build a clearer picture of the school's focus and potential. All three leaders seek to build a meaningful, integrated, and experiential curriculum that fosters continuous and sequential skill development in their schools. Their active participation and support of teachers in an ongoing process of intellectual growth, questioning,

evaluating, and experimenting will be instrumental in helping them to reach their goals.

Meaningful change occurs on a personal, as well as an organizational level. Leaders must be prepared for conflict and disagreement, as individual school community members make sense of new programs in their own ways. St. T's needs a structure for staff development which allows teachers to receive the support and assistance they need when struggling to improve their teaching abilities. J.L. School provides a model which illustrates some of the forms this structure might take. A variety of opportunities for workshops, study, frequent classroom observations and conferences with the principal, and peer supervision are important. Teachers have their own strengths and interests and for staff development to be effective, it must be flexible and meet individual needs. Rick articulates the desire many teachers have for the opportunity to talk openly about classroom successes and disappointments with someone who can be trusted and helpful. By filling the head-teacher role which Alice illustrates and Frank intends to begin, and by providing opportunities for peer supervision, the leaders have started a process that should provide meaningful and effective staff development and support.

Meaningful change is slow, requiring gradual implementation and this study has not attempted to evaluate the actual existence or effectiveness of the changes the leaders have discussed. Alice, Frank,

and Rick were in their second or third years of leadership at the time they were interviewed, and significant changes usually take at least that long to be realized. This study looks closely at each of the three leaders as they share their goals, frustrations, and experiences during the important early years of leadership in their schools. Principals who are actively involved and supportive of teachers can effect meaningful change in their schools. Attention to the process of changing is as important as the content of proposed changes, since good ideas which can not be used provide nothing but frustration to a school community. The experiences of Alice, Frank, and Rick reflect individual differences in personality, school settings, and leadership style, but they also illustrate common goals in regard to active participation, open dialogue, shared decision making, cooperation, analysis, and evaluation which are important aspects of an effective process for change.

APPENDIX

The following questions were used during the interview sessions to obtain the information presented in this paper:

Describe your school. How has it changed during your leadership?

Have you set priorities? How do you go about doing this?

Describe your role within the school? How do others see you? How would you like for them to see you?

How does your leadership differ from previous leaders at the school?

Describe your school's philosophy toward learning. Is this a shared consensus? How are differences tolerated? How do you feel about this?

How would you assess the school's effectiveness? What do you see as its strengths and needs? How would others answer the same question--staff, parents, students, board?

How are policy decisions made? Who is involved? Who makes the final decisions?

How do you work with those who do not share your principles? Do you try to teach them, change them?

Describe your school's approach to curriculum? Who makes the overall plan? How is it formulated? Is it followed? How do you know?

Are your teachers continuing to grow as learners and professionals? How do you know? What is your school's system for staff development? (Inservice? Visits to other programs? Observation and feedback? Conferences?) How are individual needs accomodated? What is your role?

What do you do with ineffective staff members? How does this make you feel?

What do you see as your strengths as a leader? Weaknesses? How would you like to change or develop?

What changes have been most positive? Negative?

What are your support systems? Are they adequate?

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