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Leaders' Influence on School Reculturing: A Case Study of an International School

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LEADERS' INFLUENCE ON SCHOOL RECULTURING: A CASE STUDY OF AN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

by

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ABSTRACT

Organizational theorist and even practitioners are beginning to use the construct of organizational culture to analyze and characterize the complexities and challenges of organizational life. The construct has been used to metaphorize, frame, interpret, and understand various aspects of organizational life, including leadership and the change process. The literature indicates that leaders can influence an organization by attending to its cultural dimensions. Much of this literature, however, is theoretical and speculative, and the empirical work has focused, for the most part, on business.

The overarching purpose of this qualitative study was to enrich understanding of the culture construct and its relationship to leadership and change by examining how leaders in a highly atypical, outlier organization employed the notion of culture during a three-year change process. Specifically, this study focused on the reculturing process in an international school environment, which was especially appropriate because the new superintendent had repeatedly used the notion to promote change.

The primary research method utilized in this study was interviewing; participant observation and document analysis were employed to triangulate interview data. Data analysis involved the use of two quite different strategies, which Polkinghorne (1995) calls *narrative analysis* and *analysis of narratives*. Narrative analysis involves reconstructing the data as a chronology that tells the story of what occurred. Analysis of narratives involve a more traditional coding approach that organizes the anecdotal information gathered during the data collection phase into predetermined and emergent categories.

The following findings are implicit in the story resulting from the narrative analysis process and made explicit in the analysis of narratives results: (a) Culture had become part of the "native language" for most—but not all—members of the administrative team. (b) Those who used the construct attached somewhat different—though not radically inconsistent—meanings. (c) An array of reculturing mechanisms were identified by those interviewed. (d) The effectiveness of the identified mechanisms appears to vary, although in most cases, interviewees suggested variability had more to do with implementation issues rather than with the adequacy of the mechanisms themselves. (e) Interviewees identified a range of resistance strategies that members of the organization employed.

Dedication

To Rosemary

Thank you for your unconditional support, exceptional perseverance,

and lifelong love and friendship.

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There is nothing so practical as a good theory. (Kurt Lewin)

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

After moving to the Middle East to work at an American School, I quickly learned that the Consular Sections of both the Canadian and American Embassies regularly issued "Warden Messages," which are advisory messages about safety and travel issued to western expatriates working in the region. At first, I read these official Embassy notices with wonderment and trepidation. Soon, however, they became a normal, taken for granted part of expatriate culture in the region.

After the tragedies of 9-11, the Kuwaiti and Bali bombings, and the war in Afghanistan, these official notifications, along with "world-wide" travel cautionary warnings, not surprisingly, began to increase in number and receive more attention than typical cultural routines and artifacts. Even so, like so many similar messages in the past, they were, for me, mostly just a continuous reminder of the political instability that dominated the Middle East and beyond. Thus, I never envisioned that the escalation of these messages and the regional tensions that led to this escalation would have an impact on my life, especially in terms of my dissertation studies.

The contents of the Wardens' messages began to change as my data collection work was coming to an end. Initially, the messages had been general in nature about "unspecified threats," "the need to remain vigilant," and, "general travel warning in the region." However, by April 23, 2003, the U.S. Embassy sent the following message:

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This supersedes the Worldwide Caution dated March 19, 2003. It is being issued to remind U.S. citizens of the continuing threat of terrorist actions that may target civilians and of the need to remain vigilant....Tensions remaining from the recent events in Iraq may increase potential threat to U.S. interests abroad, including by terrorist groups. Terrorist actions include, but are not limited to, suicide operations, bombings and kidnappings. Terrorists do not distinguish between official and civilian targets. These may include facilities where American citizens and other foreigners congregate or visit, such as residential areas, clubs, restaurants, places of worship, schools, hotels outdoor recreation events or resorts and beaches (Warden Message #18).

This message represents one of the first times that I had noted specific references to threats to schools and residences. Not surprisingly, therefore, there was growing concern among my colleagues about the nature of these messages in our expatriate community. I, however, continued to be rather cavalier about the messages' contents and in no way believed that they would foreshadow my premature departure from the Middle East.

One evening at around midnight, a few days after the arrival of the message alluding to specific threats to schools and residences, a fellow administrator knocked on our villa door to inform us that terrorists were attacking nearby expatriate housing compounds. By that time, three western compounds had been bombed, and we began hearing that our compound may be next. By 1:00 A.M., military helicopters were flying overhead with spotlights shining down onto our compound. By 1:30 A.M., we had gathered our staff and their families in the recreation center in order to wait out the night.

By 2:00 A.M., military tanks and personnel were stationed outside of our housing complex.

As my colleagues and friends huddled in the recreation center of the compound, talk of evacuation, mandatory departure, and closure of companies and international schools echoed throughout the night. By the next morning, after a long night of initiating our emergency crisis procedures, the administrative team met at the school to share information and plan next steps.

After the meeting, and at some point during the repeated busy signals I heard as I sat in my office and worked my way through my part of the school's "telephone tree" that had been established to communicate information in emergency situations, my mind drifted to my dissertation materials scattered throughout my office and home. Suddenly, a doctoral student's worst nightmare was about to become a reality, and realizing the potential loss of over a year's worth of work, I frantically began to collect and pack all the necessary documents, books, transcripts, tapes, and folders that I would need to continue my dissertation in a safer environment. As evacuation was a real possibility at that time, I began to envision trying to explain to military evacuation personnel that my extra baggage containing dissertation materials was indeed "essential belongings." Thankfully, there were no further bombings, but our school year ended sadly in light of these events, and we did depart earlier than anticipated. With the contents of my overweight baggage safely stored in North America, I now acknowledge some of these fears.

I began this dissertation about leadership and school reculturing at an international school by recounting the events described above for three reasons. First, the

story highlights the unique nature of international schools, and therefore, the school that was studied. The school—American International School of the Middle East ("AISME")—was selected in part because it was atypical. Outliers can often display certain phenomena in bold relief and, hence, the atypical has the potential to shed light on the typical (Donmoyer, 1990).

Second, the story demonstrates in a rather dramatic way an important point made by theorists who write about organizational culture: cultural change is prompted not only by internal crises but also crises in the external environment. Although the focus of those who were interviewed was more often than not on the internal workings of the school, the anecdote used to begin this dissertation reminds us that the school was never an island unto itself and many of the concerns, actions, and reactions that were portrayed by participants as having only an internal origin often may, in actuality, also be linked to the unique external environment.

Third, the findings from this study about leaders' perceptions of school change and reculturing, which are presented in an "emplotted story" (Polkinghorne, 1995) in Chapter IV, outline similar terrorism events that began seven years ago. I therefore found this commonality to my own situation in a Middle Eastern international school as helpful in providing insight in terms of how to frame the findings section.

The dissertation, then, examines the perceptions that members of an administrative team had of a three year reculturing (Fullan, 2001) process initiated by the school's newly hired school superintendent. The dissertation describes what they did and their perceptions as they worked through this process. This first chapter sets up the study, articulates the problem that the study addressed, and describes the study's specific

purpose and the research questions that flowed from that purpose. In addition, the chapter

provides a brief overview of the methodology and discussions of the significance and

limitations of the study being reported here. The chapter concludes with a review of

topics to be addressed in subsequent chapters.

Background to the Study

For theorists, researchers, and practitioners, the concept of organizational culture

is becoming an important and critical construct in analyzing and understanding the

complexities and challenges of organizational life (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Fullan, 2001;

Hatch, 1997; Morgan, 1997; Peterson, 2002; Robbins, 2001; Schein, 1985). The idea of

organizational culture implies that "organizations are mini-societies that have their own

distinctive patterns of culture and subculture" (Morgan, 1997, p. 129). Theorists often

view organizational culture as "elusive, intangible, implicit, and taken for granted" (Deal

& Kennedy, 1983, in Robbins, 2001, p. 515). Within the literature, however, researchers

generally agree that organizational culture refers to a system of shared meanings,

assumptions, norms, symbols, beliefs, values, understandings, and knowledge held by

members within a group (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Morgan, 1997; Robbins, 2001; Schein,

1992). Hofstede (1991) summarizes this agreement by defining the essential definitional

elements of organizational culture as being:

- *holistic* (referring to a whole which is more than the sum of its parts);

- *historically determined* (reflecting the history of the organization);

- *related to the things anthropologists study* (like rituals and symbols);

- *socially constructed* (created and preserved by the group of people who

  together form the organization);

- *soft* (although Peters and Waterman assure their readers that 'soft is hard');

- *difficult to change* (although authors disagree on how difficult) (pp. 179-180).

A more concise and less formal definition of the construct of organizational culture is encapsulated by the catchphrase, "the way we do things around here" (Deal and Kennedy, 1982, p. 4). The standard operating procedures and standard ways of thinking alluded to by this phrase are often different from the typical information displayed on an organizational chart, formal mission statement, or strategic plan. At the very least, *the way we do things around here* often goes beyond what organizations and organizational members espouse. Rather, the construct of culture encompasses not only espoused theory but also what Argyris and Schon (1974) refer to as a theory-in-use, that is, a theory (or collection of theories) that may overlap somewhat with espoused thinking but also may, at times conflict with it.

Researchers suggest that the organizational culture construct is in the early stages of its conceptual development (Ashkanasy, Wilderom, & Peterson, 2000; Hatch 1997; Reichers & Schneider, 1990; Robbins, 2001). Historically, the term was associated with ideas of land cultivation, human refinement (i.e. "being cultured"), and nationalistic identity (Morgan, 1997). The term was also the central organizing construct of the discipline of anthropology, which used it to help "explain the origins and cultural development of the human species" (Hatch, 1997, p. 203). By the middle of the twentieth century, "organizational culture" emerged in the literature on business and other sorts of organizations, in its initial stage, as a term more or less synonymous with organizational climate (Hofstede, 1991; Reichers & Schneider, 1990). However, by the 1980s, researchers began to differentiate the notions of culture and climate (see Pettigrew, 1979).

At this time, because of the growing interest in "Japanese management techniques and Japan's superlative economic prowess" (Brannen & Kleinberg, 2000, p. 387), the introduction of the concept of "corporate culture" into the literature further helped distinguish the two concepts (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Reichers & Schneider, 1990). At that point, the corporate culture construct alluded to the multiple and sometimes hidden— or at least not formally acknowledged—aspects of corporate life such as shared values, symbols, rites, rituals, and myths that normally were not incorporated within the climate notion (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Schein 1992; Reichers & Schneider, 1990; Trice & Beyer, 1993). Climate may result from culture, but culture was a much more inclusive concept (Schein, 1992).

In recent years, organizational theorists have continued to explicate the notion of organizational culture and use it to metaphorize, frame, interpret, and understand both leadership and change in organizational life (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Hatch, 1997; Hofstede, 1991; Morgan, 1997; Robbins, 2001). In recent literature on organizational culture, there also has been an increased focus on cultural leadership and management by those who hold formal positional authority. This research suggests that leaders/managers can have a significant impact and influence on the creation, stabilization and/or change of an organization by attending to and consciously attempting to alter an organization's culture (Fullan 2001; Peterson, 2002; Robbins, 2001; Sathe, 1985a; Sathe, 1985b; Schein, 1999; Trice & Beyer, 1991). For example, Schein (1985) argues that leaders' primary focus needs to be on the creation, maintenance, and change of culture:

> Organizational cultures are created by leaders, and one of the most decisive
> functions of leadership may well be the creation, the management, and—if and

when that may become necessary—the destruction of culture. Culture and

leadership, when one examines them closely, are two sides of the same coin, and

neither can really be understood by itself. In fact, there is a possibility—

underemphasized in leadership research—that the only thing of real importance

that leaders do is to create and manage culture and that the unique talent of

leaders is their ability to work with culture (p. 2).

Here, Schein suggests that there is a direct relationship between culture and leadership

and that each of these concepts must be understood in conjunction with the other.

Furthermore, depending on the maturity of the organization, leaders need to focus on a

variety of cultural strategies in order to reform and improve the organizations they head,

according to Schein (1992). After an organizational culture has been established and the

organization is functioning well, for example, a designated leader must allow himself or

herself to be shaped by the culture he or she is leading because "at this stage the culture

defines leadership more than leadership creates culture" (Schein, 1992, p. 255). At later

stages, especially when standard operating procedures and standard operating ways of

thinking become less functional, the leader must be the agent of cultural change.

The construct of organizational culture and the notion of cultural leadership also

have been applied to organizations that function outside of a business context. In

particular, in recent years the notion has begun been applied to schools (Bolman & Deal,

1997; Deal & Peterson, 1999; Fullan, 2001; Peterson, 2002; Sarason, 1971; Sergiovanni,

1995). Much of the literature on school culture focuses on the importance of

understanding culture and cultural leadership as a means to change, improve, and reform

schools (Dufour & Burnette, 2002; Dufour & Eaker, 1998; Firestone & Wilson, 1993;

Hargreaves, 1995; Keiffer-Barone & Ware, 2002; Maehr & Buck, 1993; Pardini, 2002; Peterson, 2002; Richardson, 1999; Sarason, 1996; Sergiovanni, 2000). While many researchers agree that school culture is becoming an important concept that needs to be understood and addressed by educators, there is also some research to suggest that cultural dimensions often are overlooked when change or improvement undertakings are initiated in schools (Wagner & Masden-Copas, 2002; Levine & Lezotte, 1995; Peterson & Deal, 1998). Wagner and Hall-O'Phalen (1998) describe this neglect as the "missing link" to effective school improvement (in Wagner & Masden-Copas 2002, p. 42).

Clearly, one response to the missing link phenomenon is leadership, and those who study and write about *school* culture, like those who study and write about the organizational cultures in non-school settings, have begun to attend to the relationship between culture and leadership. Fullan (1993, 2001, 2002), for instance, characterizes one of the most important elements of the leadership process in schools as 'reculturing'. He notes, for instance, that, "transforming the culture—changing the way we do things around here—is the main point. I call this reculturing. Effective leaders know that the hard work of reculturing is the sine qua non of progress" (Fullan, 2001, p. 44). Thus, for Fullan, "leading in a culture of change means creating a culture (not just a structure) of change" (Fullan, 2001, p. 44). In saying this, Fullan (2001) aligns himself with Schein (1992) and a growing cadre of organizational theorists both within (Barth, 2002; Deal & Peterson, 1999; Peterson, 2002; Saskin & Saskin, 1993; Sergiovanni, 2000) and outside (Deal and Kennedy, 1999; Hambrick & Mason, 1984; Sims, 2000; Trice & Beyer, 1991) of education. Indeed, within the organizational literature in general and the literature on school organizations in particular, the process of reculturing—or changing the culture—is

portrayed as one of the primary purposes of leadership in mature organizations that are somewhat out of step with changing times.

Various educational theorists and researchers (Barth, 2002; Bulach 2001; Deal & Peterson, 2002; Hargreaves 1995; Noe, 2002; Peterson 2002; Peterson & Deal, 1998; Richardson, 2001; Sergiovanni, 2000) have begun to unpack the notion of reculturing by suggesting ways that leaders can be proactive in reading, assessing, and shaping culture within schools. For example, Peterson and Deal (1998) have extensively researched school culture and leadership (Deal, 1993; Deal & Peterson, 1990, 1994, 1999; 2000, 2003; Peterson, 2002). Based on their research, they suggest that leaders can influence, reinforce and shape the culture of schools in a number of ways including: (a) reading the culture—its history and current condition; (b) communicating core values in what they say and do; (c) honoring and recognizing those who have worked to serve students and the purpose of the school; (d) observing rituals and traditions to support the school's heart and soul; (e) recognizing heroes and heroines and the work those exemplars accomplish; (f) eloquently speaking of the deeper mission of the school; (g) celebrating the accomplishments of the staff, students, and community; (h) preserving the focus on students by recounting stories of success and achievement (p. 30). They also suggest that leaders can help establish certain roles within an organization that can support cultural leadership and the change process in general. These roles include historian, anthropological sleuth, visionary, symbol, potter, poet, actor and healer (Deal & Peterson, 1999).

While a variety of reculturing strategies are beginning to surface within the school culture literature, Sergiovanni (1995, 2000) reminds us that there is no exact panacea for

successful culture building and cultural leadership. Instead, "what works" will almost always be at least somewhat dependent on the individual school context. Nevertheless, there are several categories of actions that leaders can consciously undertake to assist in the reculturing process. As Fullan (2001) points out, "reculturing is a contact sport that involves hard, labor intensive work. It takes time and indeed never ends" (p. 44). Ultimately, when leaders consciously help to create and sustain a positive and healthy school culture, the result will be a better place for all members of a learning community (Dufour & Burnette, 2002; Peterson, 2002).

Statement of the Problem

Thus, culture is an important construct for understanding social life. In recent years, organizational theorists have appropriated this construct to describe organizational life, as well. These theorists have attended to various aspects of organizational culture including how leaders can shape—and are shaped by—their organizations' cultures. Theorists have also begun to link the notion of cultural leadership with the concept of organizational effectiveness. Although a number of studies have been done to begin to empirically ground this thinking, most of these studies have focused either on business (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Niehoff, Enz, & Grover, 1990; Peters & Waterman, 1982; Schein, 1992; Schrodt, 2002; Spector & McCarthy, 1995) or cross cultural organization culture analysis, such as the GLOBE Research Project, which investigates how "culture is manifested across organizations from different societies" (Dickson, Aditya, Chhokar, 2000, p. 447). This multilevel project examines the interrelationships of leadership, societal culture, organization culture, behavior, and effectiveness in multinational

corporations (Dickson, Aditya, Chhokar, 2000; see also, Brannen & Kleinberg, 2000;

Granrose, Huang, & Reigadas, 2000; Hofstede, 1991).

Even when schools have been systematically studied with a cultural lens, the

focus almost always has been on typical rather than atypical school organizations

(Barnett, McCormick, Conners, 1999; Datnow & Castellano, 2001; Deal & Peterson,

1990; Kardos, Johnson, Peske, Kauffman & Liu, 2001; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000;

Reitzug & Reeves, 1992; Sashkin, 1988; Saskin & Burke, 1990; Wonycott-Kytle &

Bogotch, 1997). Sometimes, however, we can enrich our understanding of a theoretical

construct by studying very different, even outlier organizations (Donmoyer, 1990; Glaser

& Strauss, 1967). Such study can make the familiar strange and problematize standard

ways of thinking. Thus, there is a need to expand the study of organizational culture and

the role of leaders in organizational life by looking at atypical organizations beyond the

business and traditional school realm.

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is an attempt to respond to the need articulated above by

exploring how the construct of culture was used by leaders in the highly atypical school

context of an international school (see Appendix A). There has been little systematic

study of international school contexts in general. Furthermore, an extensive review of the

literature on international schools revealed no studies that used the construct of culture as

an organizing construct. International schools, however, provide potentially rich

environments to develop empirically the notion of the cultural dimension of

organizational life and explore how leaders use the construct of culture in managing and

changing an organization. This type of rich environment is ideal for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that change is a constant in most international school contexts.

The forces and factors that make change a constant in international schools can be illustrated by examining the particular international school context that was be used in this study. For example, some of the change forces at this school include: (a) enrollment fluctuations (i.e. student data suggests that there is a declining enrollment pattern of up to 6 percent departing per year, with a changeover of approximately 300-400 students within a school year); (b) student and staff turnover (i.e. factors that have always existed but have been exacerbated recently by families returning to their home countries or other countries due to regional safety and economic issues); (c) administrative changes (e.g. over the past two to three years, nine of the eleven members of the leadership team are new to their current positions and/or to the school, including the school's superintendent; see Appendix A); (d) costs increasing dramatically (e.g. as a result of trying to recruit high quality staff in an unstable region, new financial incentives needed to be established); (e) educational vision shifting (e.g. establishing a new high school in 2001 and introducing a full International Baccalaureate "I.B."[1] program at the same time); (f) governmental constraints that are ever-changing (e.g. the Government has recently rescinded its "rent-free" policy for international schools); and, (g) economic and political uncertainty (e.g. local and world terrorism, oil price fluctuations, replacing expatriate with citizens, etc., have increased uncertainty for expatriates who comprise the vast majority the staff, students and parent community).

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[1] The International Baccalaureate program or I.B. is an extensive/full high school diploma program (similar to the American AP program). IB is often offered at international schools and many American Schools. Some universities/colleges offer advanced placement for IB diploma graduates.

The purpose of the study was to investigate how leaders perceive their role in influencing, developing, and changing school culture within the change-saturated environment just described. The school context to be studied is especially appropriate because a new superintendent has not only consciously promoted change in the school but also used the notion of culture in characterizing the change process. More specifically, he has talked in terms of reculturing and has used this term in a manner consistent with the way Fullan (2001, 2002) has used it in the change literature.

To summarize, contemporary organizational theorists suggest that "school leaders can nudge the process [of cultural change] along through their actions, conversations, decisions, and public pronouncements" (Deal and Peterson, p. 202, 2000). In addition, Schein (1992) suggests that leaders inevitably imbed their own assumptions into the fabric of an organization. This study, therefore, focused on how leaders perceive that they are helping to "nudge" and "imbed" this specific process within this organization and what they say about the effectiveness of these particular strategies. Specifically, this study investigated the possibilities and barriers that administrators face in a continuously changing international school and what their thinking and action suggests for theorizing about the relationship between leadership and school reculturing.

Research Questions

1. How do individuals with formal positional authority use the notion and/or language of organizational/school culture when describing change at the international school under study? If they specifically use the culture construct, what are the meanings they attribute to the notion, and how do these meanings relate to the literature? Whether or

not those leaders in the school use the construct, how do their actions relate to the literature?

2. How do leaders (i.e. those with formal positional authority) describe the current school culture at AISME? Over the past few years, have these individuals noticed changes in the school's culture?

3. What do leaders think are the possibilities and barriers of building a different/new culture at AISME? What culture-embedding mechanisms and change strategies are leaders consciously using to help shape the school culture? What other mechanisms and strategies are observed but are not coded by the insiders?

4. What formal and informal feedback mechanisms do leaders say they use to assess the impact of their change/reculturing actions and how is this feedback used? What other mechanisms are observed by outsiders, but not identified by the insiders? How consistent is the thinking of those with and those without formal positional authority?

Methodology

The research for this dissertation involved a qualitative single-case study of leadership reculturing at a large K-12 International School in the Middle East. This school site was selected not only because it is an outlier organization, but also because it is a rich environment for study due to the many changes that are unfolding in this organization. Individual interviews were conducted with nine leaders with formal positional authority in order to explore how these leaders perceive their role in influencing, developing, and changing culture in a highly atypical school. Prior to the interviews, an 'interview guide' was developed. This ensured that the interviews were somewhat structured, but allowed them to be conversational and situational (Patton,

1990). In addition to interviews, participant observation strategies were utilized throughout the study in order to corroborate and/or triangulate the interview data. All participants who were asked to be interviewed, agreed to be part of the study. Additionally, each participant reviewed her or his transcripts and afterwards, agreed to their use. Findings from the interviews were developed through a narrative analysis process of "emplotment" as described by Polkinghorne (1995). A more complete methodological description is presented in Chapter III.

Significance of the Dissertation

The primary purpose of this research was to understand the construct of school culture in relation to formalized school leadership. As outlined in the 'background to the research' section, there has been an increased interest in the culture construct within the general organizational theory literature (Ashkanasy, Wilderom, and Peterson, 2000). In addition, the importance of understanding school culture also has been noted within recent educational literature (Barth, 2002; Peterson, 2002; Sergiovanni, 2000). Moreover, understanding how leaders impact a school culture has also been identified as significant (Deal & Peterson, 1999; Fullan, 2001). As this area appears to be a focus for organizational theorists, this research appears to be most worthwhile and it could potentially add to the growing body of knowledge surrounding this topic. Additionally, such a study might provide practitioners with a further understanding about the relationship between school culture and leadership.

The secondary purpose of this research was to understand the construct of school culture and formalized school leadership in terms of the international school. There is very little research about overseas international/American private schools (Dean Paula

Cordeiro, USD, personal communication, July 24, 2001). While some research on school

culture has been conducted, mostly in North American-based schooling, I found no

specific research to indicate any in the area of international schools. For example, since

its inception in 1981, the International Schools Journal (published by the European

Council of International Schools) has not featured specific research about school culture.

In addition, the closest dissertation study on International Schools that appears to be close

to school culture focused on 'faculty integration' by investigating organizational health

and school climate (Larkin, 1994). Therefore, this research could open a doorway to other

studies about international school culture.

In addition, as this research focuses on the reculturing process in a changing

international context, it might be valuable to international school leaders, as a means to

understand some of the issues of building cultures in private schools around the world.

Also, the research might be valuable to the leaders at AISME in their attempt to change

the school's culture. Moreover, precisely because international schools tend to be

outliers, this study might contribute—in a sort of grounded theory sense—to a general

understanding of the problems and pitfalls of promoting culture in schools.

Limitations of the Dissertation

Through the course of this study, five major limitations of this dissertation were

identified. First, in an effort to produce trustworthy interpretations, I made every effort

throughout the research process to be aware of my own biases and subjectivity (Glesne,

1990). In order to do so, I used a variety of strategies as suggested by Peshkin (1988), in

an attempt to heighten awareness and effectiveness in this area. For example, during the

process of writing field notes about observations at meetings, interviews, artifacts, etc., I

also detailed some of my own perceptions, assumptions, and feelings. According to Peshkin, this process of "enhanced awareness" (p. 20), allows the researcher to "tame" the "subjective I's" and avoid misconstruing the data. Nevertheless, it is difficult for me to speculate how successful I was in attaining this goal.

Second, because the nature of qualitative research poses validity issues, I attempted to deal with these issues in a variety of ways throughout the research process, including, talking little and listening a lot during the interviewing, keeping accurate records, seeking feedback from participants and colleagues, and writing accurately (Wolcott, 1990). Again, it is difficult to speculate precisely how successful I was in this undertaking. A third limitation of the study concerns the issue of ensuring the confidentiality of study participants. At times, I believe it would have been valuable to share the participants' positions (i.e. specific job titles/descriptions) at the school because such insight may have been helpful to the reader in deciphering further their individual meanings and actions.

Fourth, due to the terrorist bombings in the region, I was unable to conduct anonymous grounded surveys as outlined in my dissertation proposal. These surveys were intended to assist in comparing information and finding plausibility of interview data. As a result, I relied more heavily on other triangulation procedures. While I was able to gather sufficient data through these other means, it is difficult to speculate if grounded surveys would have resulted in data that are more concise or whether staff members without positional authority viewed the change process in a similar fashion. A final limitation may be the result of utilizing culture as single "framing" technique (Bolman & Deal, 1997). While the primary focus of the study was to understand how

leaders perceive their role in influencing, developing, and changing school culture, using "multiple framings" or "reframing" techniques may have been useful in enhancing and explaining further the findings in this study (see Bolman & Deal, 1997; Hatch, 1997; Morgan, 1997).

Organization of the Dissertation

This first chapter provided the background to the dissertation. It discussed the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, and the importance of studying leadership reculturing and change. In addition, the research questions were articulated. Finally, the significance and limitations of the dissertation were discussed. The second chapter reviews the relevant literature in the field of organization culture, school culture, and leadership, which laid the foundation for the study and informed the research. The third chapter outlines in detail the methodological procedures that guided the research process for this study. The fourth chapter presents the findings of the dissertation through a narrative analysis framework. Finally, the fifth chapter summarizes the dissertation, provides succinct answers to the research questions, presents some methodological reflections, and reviews recommendations for practice as well as recommendations for future inquiry.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter reviews literature related to the topic of the study being reported

here. The chapter is designed to help the reader situate the work reported later in this

dissertation within a broader intellectual context. The review focuses on three broad

topics: (a) the development of the organizational culture construct, (b) the development

of the school culture construct, and, (c) the role of leadership in influencing, shaping and

changing culture. In each section, a discussion of conceptual work is followed by a

review of empirical studies relevant to the particular topic.

The Development of the Organizational Culture Construct

In this section, I specifically discuss the development of the construct of

organizational culture in the literature. Essentially, this discussion expands the discussion

found in the "Background to the Study" section of Chapter I. Because the concept of

organizational culture has had a "long and checkered history" (Schein, 1992, p. 3), has

been subject to "considerable academic debate" (p. 8), has had researchers disagreeing

"vehemently" about issues (Martin, 1992, p. 4), and continues to be "in search of a role"

(Pettigrew, 2000, p. xv), a major task to be accomplished in this section is to distill a

complex body of literature about the cultural perspective of organizational life. This will

be done by providing (a) a discussion of significant historical antecedents to the cultural

perspective of organizational life, (b) an overview and distillation of influential

definitions of the organizational culture concept found in the literature, (c) a discussion of

different approaches to the study of organizational culture, and (d) a review of influential empirical research within this field.

The Emergence of the Organizational Culture Construct

The construct of *organizational* culture emerged within the field of organizational theory, an interdisciplinary field that draws upon a variety of disciplines ranging from political economy to psychology to industrial sociology. The culture notion itself, of course, is associated primarily with the discipline of anthropology; in addition to work in anthropology, organizational theorists conception of organizational culture was heavily influenced by cross-national studies and studies of organizational climate (Ashkanasy, Wilderom & Peterson, 2000; Bolman & Deal, 1997; Deal & Peterson, 1982; Hatch, 1997; Hofstede, 1991; Morgan, 1997; Reichers & Schneider, 1990; Schein, 1985, 1992). Each of these areas played a significant role in the development of the organizational culture construct when it emerged in late 1970s (Pettigrew, 1979; Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Peters & Waterman, 1982). Since the 1970s, an extensive body of literature has developed to explore the many different and varying dimensions of the concept. Researchers today consider organizational culture to be more than a passing 'fad' (Hofstede, 1991; Schein, 1992, 1999): rather, talking about organizational culture has become an important way in which to frame and understand organizational life (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Morgan, 1997). Among other things, talk of organizational culture has focused attention on understanding "the ways organizational participants experience organizations" (Schneider, 2000, p. xvii). This has not always been the focus of those who focused their efforts on the form and function of organizations.

Early thinking in the developing field of organizational studies. Historically,

interest in organizations began formally with the emergence of western

industrialization—primarily because the factory system necessitated systems of

bureaucracy and social groupings (Hatch, 1997)—and two schools of thought influenced

the field of organizational studies and theory. Each school of thought can be traced back

to the political and economic ideas of Adam Smith (Hatch, 1997; Robbins, 2001).

One school of thought, sometimes referred to as the sociological stream, was

based mainly on the writings of Durkheim, Weber, and Marx. It "focused on the

changing shapes and roles of formal organizations within society and the broader

influences of industrialization on the nature of work and its consequences for workers"

(Hatch, p. 27). A second school of thought, the classical management stream, was shaped

by writers such as Taylor, Fayol, and Barnard; it "focused on the practical problems faced

by managers of industrial organizations" (p. 27). Although work by these earlier

influential scholars was, in many respects, quite different from the work produced by the

"cultural" theorists of organizational life who write today, these early "classical" writers

created the inspiration for current perspectives of organizational theory, including the

cultural perspective, by emphasizing the importance of searching for new ways to create,

manage, and change organizations (Hatch, 1997).

Furthermore, the transition from past to present can be seen as an incremental

one. New ways of seeing organizations, in fact, began to emerge over time. For example,

Mayo's famous Hawthorne studies in the 1920s and 1930s, deviated from a purely

mechanistic view of organizations to identify the "informal organization" of friendship

groups and unplanned interactions that form alongside the formal organizational structure

(Morgan, 1997). Among other things, Mayo identified the "the importance of social needs of the workplace and the way that work groups can satisfy these needs by restricting output and engaging in all manner of unplanned activities" (Morgan, 1997, p. 35). These studies provided the impetus for the development of systems theories, which suggested that organizations were "a complex web of structures, both formal and informal, with a multitude of organizational and interpersonal variables" (Larkin, 1994). In addition, these studies influenced thinkers to talk about the social construction of reality (see Berger & Luckmann, 1967), talk that can be seen as a direct precursor to the development of the organizational culture construct. Thus, with the expansion of organizational studies, researchers began to focus on a myriad of perspectives and activities in organizations, both formal and informal, and this expanded focus set the stage for conceptualizing organizations in cultural terms.

The influence of anthropology. The construct itself is a "borrowed concept" (Reichers & Schneider, 1990, p. 19), which was indigenous to the discipline of anthropology. The term itself can be traced back to the writings of German scholars (Morgan, 1997). In English-language literature, one of the earliest uses of the term was Taylor's (1871) discussions of "culture, or civilization...[as being] that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (in Morgan, 1997, p. 397).

As the field of anthropology developed, anthropologists focused on the shared "patterns of thinking, feeling and acting" in human societies (Hofstede, p. 5). Geertz (1973), a cultural anthropologist, for example, suggested that "man [sic] is an animal trapped in webs of significance he himself has spun" (p. 5). He argued that beliefs,

assumptions, and norms not only influence the ways in which individuals and groups act, but also, the meanings individuals give to events in specific settings.

Not surprisingly, given organizational theorists growing interest in the informal nature of organizations and in systems theory, therefore, organizational scholars were attracted to anthropologists' ways of thinking and the constructs they employed. Ashkanasy, Wilderom, and Peterson (2001), for example, write that "culture has been the domain of anthropology, so the study of organizational culture has brought ways of thinking holistically about systems of meanings, values, and actions from anthropology into organization studies" (p. 5). The anthropologists' approach to empirical research, commonly referred to as ethnography, also allowed organizational theorists to study empirically the impact of shared meanings within social groups by using "inductive intuition to describe an organization's culture" (Ashkanasy, Wilderom, & Peterson, 2001, p. 5).

The influence of studies on the impact of countries on organizations. Additionally, scholars suggest that the organizational culture construct was influenced by studies of the impact of nations on the organizations within them (Hofstede, 1980, 1991, 1994). In the 1970s, for instance, Hofstede examined the relationship between organizations and national culture. Specifically, he looked at influences of national cultures on the multinational corporation IBM. Hofstede statistically analyzed survey data from IBM's employees about values in the workplace and compared over 50 international subsidiaries. While Hofstede's (1991) sample was similar in almost all respects except nationality, he found evidence of national culture differences within IBM's organizational cultures based on dimensions of power distance, collectivism versus

individualism, femininity versus masculinity, and uncertainty avoidance. Hofstede's

work provides an important element to the organizational culture construct because not

only did he identify different elements between national cultures, he also found that

organizational practices are often dependent on culture. While Hofstede (1994) agrees

that national culture studies are only "partly useful" (p. 18) for understanding

organizational cultures, his work is often cited by scholars in providing further insight

into the organizational culture construct (Ashkanasy, Wilderom & Peterson, 2001;

Robbins, 2001; Schein, 1992).

The influence of studies of organizational climate. Scholars also suggest that the

organizational culture concept was influenced through the various "reconceptualizations

and empirical breakthroughs" (Reichers & Schneider, 1990, p. 14) produced by

organizational climate studies (Ashkanasy, Wilderom & Peterson, 2000; Hofstede, 1991).

While the construct of culture has its roots in anthropology, the climate construct

emerged from the fields of industrial and organizational psychology and organizational

behavior (Reichers & Schneider, 1990). Various early studies make reference to the idea

of organizational climate (see Litwin, Lippitt, & White, 1939; Fleishman, 1953), but

Argyris' (1958) case study of the group dynamics in a bank began to develop the

construct in a more systematic way. Interestingly, Argyris used the term interchangeably

with the term *informal culture* (Reichers & Schneider, 1990).

During the years after the Argyris study was published, many studies of

organizational climate were published in the literature (e.g. McGregor, 1960; Schneider

& Bartlett, 1968; Schneider & Bartlett, 1970; Schneider & Hall, 1972; Waters, Roach, &

Batlis, 1874). These studies articulated climate in terms of a wide array of dimensions,

such as, attitude, structure, responsibility, reward, warmth, risk, standards, conflict, identity, and support (see Tagiuri & Litwin, 1968). They also normally tapped the perceptions of participants to make sense of and assess the climate of an organization (Dennison, 1996; Reichers & Schneider, 1990).

Many of the ideas articulated in the climate literature overlap with the ideas associated with the construct of culture, and researchers continue to argue over whether the two constructs are similar (Schneider, 2000) or different (Trice & Beyer, 1993; Schein, 1992). Nonetheless, the two constructs appear to be conceptually linked in significant ways (Ashkanasy, Wilderom & Peterson, 2000). At the very least, there are sufficient similarities to count the earlier work on climate as at least in helping to set the stage—along with the more recent discourse about organizational culture.

A seminal article in terms of empirical research. Researchers generally identify Pettigrew's (1979) article entitled *On Studying Organizational Cultures* as the impetus for building empirical research of organizational life around the construct of culture. Reichers & Schneider (1990), for instance, write that Pettigrew "…introduced the anthropological concept of culture to a naïve organizational science readership and showed how related concepts (symbolism, myth, ritual, and so on) could be used in organizational analysis" (p. 19). In the article, Pettigrew (1979) discusses a study he conducted in which the research design was "built around the analysis of a sequence of social dramas" (p. 571) in order to introduce the importance of the symbolic and "man [sic] as a creator and manager of meaning" (p. 572).

Shortly after Pettigrew's work was published, the culture-based way of looking at organizational life was popularized by Deal and Kennedy's (1982) publication *Corporate*

Cultures: The Rites and Rituals of Organizational Life and the Peters and Waterman

book, *In Search of Excellence* (as discussed below). Today the literature on

organizational culture is voluminous, though Schein (1996) continues to argue that

culture is still the "missing concept in organization studies" (p. 229).

Summary. Thus, the publication of Pettigrew's (1979) work initiated a new way

to think about and study organizational life. The way was not entirely novel, however.

The fields of anthropology (and anthropologists' ethnographic approach to empirical

research), earlier studies of the impact of national contexts/cultures on cross-national

organizations, and studies of organizational climate helped set the stage for a new

approach to organizational theory and research exemplified by Pettigrew's work. And

even before this stage-setting work was conducted, a growing interest in such things as

the informal aspects of organizational life and the systems perspective had helped the

field transcend its initial focus on the mechanistic and purely structural aspects of

organizational life.

What is Organizational Culture?

As noted, despite the extensive use of the culture notion in both popular and

scholarly literature on organizations, Schein (1992) has suggested that the culture notion

remains, in essence, a missing concept with organizational theory and research. This

apparent contradiction can be explained by the fact that the construct has been difficult to

define. Indeed, it could be argued that, especially in the popular literature, the term has

been used in an exceedingly imprecise way, and even in the academic literature, the

meanings associated with the term vary. (Ashkanasy, Wilderom, & Peterson, 2000;

Reichers & Schneider, 1990). Hatch (1997), for example, suggests that "organizational

culture is probably the most difficult of all organizational concepts to define" (p. 202). Another researcher suggests that finding a precise definition for culture is like "trying to nail Jell-O to the wall!" (Schneider, 1990, p. 1). Ancona, Kochan, Van Maanen, Scully, and Westney (1999) sum up the situation by noting that culture "is without doubt one of the most complex and contentious concepts at play in everyday and scholarly life" (p. 65).

This section attempts first to review the various definitions of culture found in the scholarly literature. Then it attempts to look across these various definitions and distill from them commonalities that can be used to ground the discussion of research findings that is to follow.

Differing definitions. As noted, a variety of definitions (or partial definitions) have emerged even in the scholarly literature over the past several years. Meyerson (1991), for instance, indicates that culture is "the code word for the subjective side of organizational life" (p. 256), while Deal and Kennedy (1982) associate the construct with the catchphrase, "the way we do things around here" (p. 4). One researcher uncovered over 133 different definitions of the concept that had emerged in the literature by 1990 (Schneider, 1990). Table 1 summarizes some of the more influential definitions of organizational culture within the field.

Table 1. Seminal definitions of organizational culture

(a) Jaques (1952): "The culture of the factory is its customary and traditional way of thinking and doing of things, which is shared to a greater or lesser degree by all its members, and which new members must learn, and at least partially accept, in order to be accepted into service in the firm (in Hatch, p. 205);

(b) Pettigrew (1979): "Culture is a system of publicly and collectively accepted meanings operating for a given group at a given time. This system of terms, forms, categories, and images interprets a people's own situation to themselves" (p. 574);

(c) Siehl and Martin (1984): "Organizational culture can be thought of as the glue that holds an organization together through a sharing of patterns of meaning. The culture focuses on the values, beliefs, and expectations that members come to share" (p. 227);

(e) van Maanen (1988): "Culture refers to the knowledge members of a given group are thought to more or less share...A culture is expressed (or constituted) only through the actions and words of its members....Culture is not itself visible, but is made visible only through its representation" (p. 3);

(d) Schein (1985; 1992; see below);

(f) Trice and Beyer (1993): "Cultures are collective phenomena that embody people's responses to the uncertainties and chaos that are inevitable in human experience. These responses fall into two major categories. The first is the substance of a culture—shared, emotionally charged belief systems that we call ideologies. The second is cultural forms—observable entities, including actions, through which members of a culture express, affirm, and communicate the substance of their culture to one another" (p. 2);

(g) Hofstede (1994): "Organizational culture is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one organization from another" (p. 180);

(h) House et. al. (1999): "Shared motives, values, beliefs, identities, and interpretations or meanings of significant events that result from common experiences of members of collectivities and are transmitted across age generations" (in Dickson, Aditya, & Chhokar, 2000, p. 448)

Note. Adapted from Hatch, 1997

In search of commonalities and a distillation of definitions. While no definitional composite of organization culture appears to exist within the literature, most scholars do agree that organizational culture refers to a shared way of life, over time, within an

organization. Table 1 also suggests that most definitions, in one way or other, allude to shared meaning among group members (Denison, 1996; Hatch, 1997; Reichers & Schneider, 1990). Thus, researchers generally agree that organizational culture refers to a system of shared meanings, assumptions, norms, symbols, beliefs, values, understandings, and knowledge held by members within a group (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Morgan, 1997, Robbins, 2001; Schein, 1992).

Schein (1992) specifically argues that "culture is the result of a complex group learning process" (p. 5), and that this shared learning is often deeper than most scholars believe. Schein, in fact, argues that most definitions of organizational culture are "superficial" (p. 3), and the definition must therefore "build on the deeper, more complex anthropological models" (p. 3) of culture. Schein (1992) suggests that culture is:

A pattern of shared basic assumption that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems (p. 12).

Schein's (1985, 1992) definition is repeatedly referenced in the literature (see Ashkanasy, Wilderom, & Peterson, 2000; Dennison, 1996; Hatch, 1997; Reichers & Schneider, 1990), and, as will be indicated in the next section, has been extensively used to frame empirical studies using the culture construct (Pettigrew, 2000). Schein's conception of culture also is the definition that helped to structure the work being reported in this dissertation.

Approaches to Studying, Researching, and Analyzing Organizational Cultures

Diverse philosophical and methodological approaches. Alongside varying definitions of organizational culture, is a variety of approaches to researching and analyzing organizations from a cultural perspective. Scholars have identified a range of ontological and epistemological positions employed in culture-based studies of organizational life in addition to a range of research methods that have been employed. (see Ashkanasy, Wilderom, & Peterson, 2000; Dennison, 1996; Hatch, 1997; Martin & Frost, 1996; Meyerson & Martin, 1987; Rousseau, 1990; Schneider, 1990). The ontological perspectives that have been identified include discussions of structural realism, social constructivism, and linguistic conventions. Epistemological considerations discussed in the literature include, deductive (i.e. cultural dimensions), inductive (i.e. tacit elements), and radical (i.e. researchers produce constructions based on individual interests) orientations to studying organizational life (Ashkanasy, Wilderom & Peterson, 2000).

In addition, various methods for studying organizational cultures have surfaced; these include quantitative, qualitative, and mixed procedures including the use of surveys, interviews, participant observations, and artifact analysis (Dennison, 1996; Rousseau, 1990; Wagner & Spencer, 1996; Ashkanasy, Wilderom, & Peterson, 2000).

Differences and similarities in focus. In addition to operating from different philosophical orientations and using different research methods, scholars have focused on a number of different aspects of organizational culture. Most of these aspects, however, are related to explicating the extant meanings within the particular organizational settings that were being studied (Ashkanasy, Wilderom, & Peterson, 2000; Dennison, 1996;

Hatch, 1997). The meanings that are generated—and how meanings are generated in organizations at a holistic level—normally are the bottom-line focus of studies of organizational culture. The assumption is that "people take action on the basis of their situations and, most critically, on the basis of what their situations mean to them" (Ancona, et. al., p. 64), and that, cultural meaning is found in "…values, language, beliefs, founding legends, social norms, myths, rituals, mental frameworks or maps, metaphors, superstitions, and ideologies shared by a few, many or all organizational members" (Ancona, et. al., p. 64; Rafaeli & Worline, 2000).

Given this emphasis on meaning and meaning construction, how meaning is constructed and shared by group members, much research has focused on the values, norms and symbols that are shared within an organization (Ashkanasy, Wilderom, & Peterson, 2000; Bolman & Deal, 1997; Hatch, 1997; Morgan, 1997). Cultural values are generally considered to be the social, behavioral, and cognitive domains that reflect the shared experience of individuals in groups (Stackman, Pindar, & Connor, 2000). Basic or core values are usually found at the deepest levels of culture, and a search for these core values have helped scholars to understand "what the members of an organization care about" (Hatch, 1997, p. 214). Closely associated with values are norms, which are the "unwritten rules that allow members of a culture to know what is expected of them in a wide variety of situations" (p. 214). Essentially, "values define what is valued, while norms make clear what it takes to be considered normal or abnormal" (p. 215). Deciphering values and norms allow researchers to begin to understand some of the deeper levels of shared meanings, the ways in which members are socially constructed

within organizations, and to bring to light some of the cultural elements of an organization.

Additionally, the study of organizational symbols —physical, linguistic, and behavioral—is an important topic in the culture literature because they convey "powerful meanings" about organizational life (Rafaeli & Worline, 2000, p. 72). Hatch (1997) suggests that "a symbol is anything that represents a conscious or unconscious association with some wider concept or meaning" (p. 219). Rafeli and Worline (2000) argue that "symbols take on important meanings, meanings that are defined by cultural and social conventions and interactions" (p. 73). Additionally, they contend that symbols serve four functions in organizations: (a) they reflect underlying aspects of the culture (e.g. emotions and values); (b) they articulate norms of behavior and action; (c) they frame experience and communication; and, (d) they integrate the entire organization into one system of signification (p. 83-84). Thus, organizational researchers can interpret key symbols in an organization in order to decipher group meanings and how those meanings are communicated within the organization. With this approach, organizations are considered to be socially constructed realities where members give meanings to symbols in order to have a shared and commonly accepted reality (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Morgan, 1997; Rafaeli & Worline, 2000).

Martin and Frost's four perspectives for studying organizational culture. In order to help makes sense of the plethora of philosophical orientations, methods, and foci associated with the organizational culture construct, Martin and Frost (1996) have identified four distinct analytical perspectives within the field of organizational culture studies: integration, differentiation, fragmentation, and, postmodernism. This framework

focuses on how to analyze meaning in organizational cultures by differentiating perspectives that range from organizational culture unity to fragmented cultural disharmony.

The integration perspective on organizational culture primarily focuses on common values and consistencies from which meanings can be evaluated. This perspective suggests that all members within the organization share common meanings and exhibit consensus (see Schein, 1985, 1992). By contrast, the differentiation perspective starts with the assumption that different groups, or subcultures within an organization will exhibit different values and beliefs. According to this perspective, each subculture has consistency and wholeness, but consistency and wholeness does not characterize the organization as a whole (see van Maanen & Barely, 1984; Hatch, 1997).

The fragmentation perspective does not seek to understand consistency or coherence in an organization even at the subculture level; instead, it starts with the assumption that all components of organizational life are characterized by chaos and randomness. From this perspective, organizations are considered to be in a constant state of flux (see Martin, 1992). Finally, the postmodern perspective emphasizes and focuses on the multiplicity of meanings in organizations (see Martin, 1992).

Ashkanasy, Wilderom, and Peterson (2000) suggest that this framework has important implications for organizational culture research because it helps to structure and shape the debate about organizational culture due to the many competing perspectives within the literature. Undoubtedly, however, the integration perspective remains the most commonly employed viewpoint to guide research in organizational culture. This may have less to do with a "goodness of fit" between the perspective and

empirical reality than with the fact that it is often functional to think of organizations as unitary entities. Such ways of thinking tend to simplify complexity and, often, simplification is highly functional.

Edgar Schein, prominent example of the integration perspective. One prominent scholar who has employed the integration perspective in conceptualizing and studying the phenomenon of organizational culture is Edgar Schein (1985, 1992, 1999, 2000). Schein argues that the best way to think about and analyze an organization's culture is to understand the commonalities that exist at different levels in an organization's belief system, from the very visible artifact level to the tacit and invisible underlying belief level.

Schein, in fact, identifies three different levels at which organizational culture can be studied: the artifactual, espoused values, and the basic assumptions levels (see Figure 1). For Schein (1992), artifacts are the visual products and behaviors of a group at the surface level of the organization (e.g. architecture, clothing, stories told, ceremonies, etc.). While artifacts provide an immediate emotional perception of the organization, Schein argues, they cannot be fully understood until the "espoused values, norms, and rules that provide the day-to-day operating principals by which the members of the group guide their behavior" (p. 18). This second level of culture, the espoused values (i.e. espoused justifications), provides evidence of what the organization says that it values. Values are often espoused by leaders in an organization and can be found in documents, pronouncements, visions, and so forth. However, the espoused values "may predict well enough what people will *say* in a variety of situations but which may be out of line with what they will actually *do* in situations where those values should, in fact, be operating"

(Schein, 1992, p. 21). Schein therefore argues that in order to find congruence of values and to decipher the patterns of behavior, it is necessary to decipher the underlying assumptions.

While other organizational researcher often use 'basic or core values' to describe the deepest levels of an organization's culture (see Hofstede, 1991; Reichers & Schneider, 1990; Robbins, 2001), Schein (1992) uses the term 'basic underlying assumptions' because "they tend to be taken for granted and are treated as nonnegotiable" (p. 17). At this deep level, the underlying assumptions are "unconscious, taken for granted beliefs, perceptions, thoughts and feelings" (p. 17). Hatch (1997) uses an analogy to describe this aspect of Schein's thinking: "Try to imagine what a fish thinks about water and you get an idea of the levels of awareness cultural members usually have of their basic assumptions" (p. 210), she writes.

For Schein, then, basic assumptions form the cultural core of the organization. Schein argues that assumptions ultimately influence how members of an organizational culture perceive, think, and feel about a number of different issues including the nature of reality and truth, the nature of time, the nature of space, the nature of human nature, the nature of human activity, and the nature of human relationship (pp. 95-96). Schein argues that an organization's answer to questions about these issues are implicit in both the organization's adaptation to the external environment (as reflected in such things as organizational goals, control systems, mission and strategy) and in the mechanisms it has developed to promote internal integration (i.e. rewards and punishments, power relationships, group boundary definitions). Some of these external and internal adaptations may be consistent with the organization's espoused values and with the

artifacts one finds in an organization. One should not expect to find a one-to-one

correspondence among the three levels of organizational life, however.
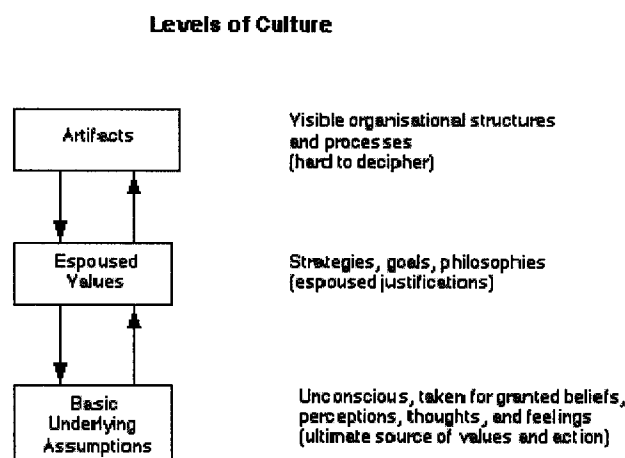
Levels of Culture

Figure 1. Schein's three levels of culture

Note. From Schein, E.H. (1992) *Organizational culture and leadership.*
San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers (p. 17)

Studies that Illuminate the Organizational Culture Construct

Several important studies emerged to popularize and focus researchers' attention

on the study organizational culture, specifically corporate culture. Heading the list in

terms of influence are Deal & Kennedy's (1982) *Corporate Culture: The Rites and*

Rituals of Corporate Life, and Peters and Waterman's *In Search of Excellence* (1982).

Both of these publications—but especially the Peters and Waterman book—were geared

toward non-academic audiences, but they also have been cited repeatedly within the

academic literature on organizations (Ashkanasy, Wilderom & Peterson, 2000; Bolman &

Deal, 1997; Denison, 1996; Hatch, 1997; Hofstede, 1991; Morgan, 1997; Reichers &

Schneider, 1990; Robbins, 2001; Schein, 1992). Hatch (1979), for instance, writes:

"These researchers were the first organizational theorists to jump on the corporate culture

bandwagon....the result was importation of the symbolic-interpretive perspective as a new approach to organization theory" (Hatch, 1997).

Deal and Kennedy's (1982) study of "corporate cultures" created an impetus for organizational researchers to focus their attention on something other than the more formal structural elements of business organizations. In their discussion of the symbolic and ritualistic aspects of corporations, they demonstrate that every business has a culture and, "whether strong or weak, culture has a powerful influence throughout an organization" (p. 4). They also claim that because a culture essentially affects all members, it must therefore have a "major" effect on the success of the organization.

In order to collect data to substantiate these assertions, the researchers surveyed and interviewed consultants from "nearly eighty companies" (p. 7), and at the same time collected supporting documents (e.g. biographies, speeches, documents, etc.). The researchers found that the companies that clearly and concisely articulated their beliefs and values, such as IBM did in its commonly-used catchphrase "IBM means service," were uniformly outstanding performers (p. 7). These "strong culture companies" (p. 16) were then evaluated as to how their values and beliefs were transmitted throughout their organizations. Deal and Kennedy created the following typology of components of "strong" organizational cultures as a result of their data collections and analysis: (a) the business environment (i.e. the marketplace or environment in which the business operates, such as technology, retail, etc.); (b) values (i.e. the existence and articulation key beliefs and basic concepts that are shared by members); (c) heroes (i.e. achievers who personify the culture's values and are role models for success); (d) rites and rituals (i.e. programmed ceremonies and behavior routines that reinforce the culture); (e) the cultural

network (i.e. "carriers" of gossip and stories which helps to communicate ideas about heroic myths and corporate values).

A second influential study by Peters and Waterman (1982) provided a similar impetus for organizational/corporate culture research. Peters and Waterman studied the components of successful American companies. Specifically, they examined 43 of Fortune 500's top performing companies and detailed attributes shared by most of them. They argued that the main key to success of a corporation was to focus on both the "hardware" (i.e. strategy and structure) and the "software" (i.e. shared values or culture). They reasoned that "soft is hard" (p. 11); by that they meant that excellent companies focus on people as well as structure. Their initial research, based on intensive interviewing, produced the 7-S Framework, which presented seven interdependent variables on which a company needed to focus to be successful: structure, strategy, management style, systems and procedures, strengths and skills, and guiding concepts and shared values (i.e. culture). The last component of the framework was, according to Peters and Waterman's analysis of their data, the most important. Indeed, Peters and Waterman placed culture at the center of their framework. They argued:

> Without exception, the dominance and coherence of culture proved to be an
>
> essential quality of the excellent companies. Moreover, the stronger the culture
>
> and the more it was directed toward the marketplace, the less need was there for
>
> policy manuals, organizational charts, or detailed procedures and rules. In these
>
> companies, people way down the line knew what they are supposed to do in most
>
> situations because the handful of guiding values is crystal clear (pp. 75-76).

As a result of their work on organizational culture, Peters and Waterman articulated eight attributes of excellence that emerged as the "secrets" of successful companies (e.g. value-driven, close to the customer, etc.). This influential study helped to solidify organizational culture as a critical construct in understanding corporations. The success of both Peters and Waterman and Deal and Kennedy's publications resulted in a new approach to the study of organizations.

The Development of the Construct of School Culture

In this section, I discuss the development of the construct of school culture within the literature. The notion of school culture is, in essence, a subset of the more general construct, organizational culture; just as organizational culture theorist use the notion of organizational culture to make sense of the complexities of organizational life in general, educational theorists employ the term to make sense of school contexts (Deal, 1993; Hargreaves, 1995). Deal and Peterson (1999) argue that the organizational culture construct is just as critical in understanding the dynamics of school contexts as it is to business organizations. In the literature, increased attention on the school culture construct resulted from the school reform movement in the latter part of the twentieth century (Fink, 2001). Nonetheless, Firestone and Wilson (1999) argue that this movement has not "inspired" (p. 297) sufficient research in the area and while "there have been several calls to conduct more research in the area...the empirical educational studies that explicitly focus on the topic remain limited" (p. 317). The purpose of this section therefore is to provide an understanding of emerging and relevant school culture research and some of the influential empirical studies utilizing the construct. This section of the literature review comprises four subsections: (1) the emergence of the school culture

construct, (2) what is school culture? (3) what kinds of school cultures are desirable? and, (4) studies that illuminate the school culture construct.

The Emergence of the School Culture Construct

At the backdrop of the emergence of the school culture construct was the educational reform movement in the United States, which began to focus its research energies in the 1980s and 1990s on school improvement, effectiveness, and excellence. While major cycles of educational/school reform preceded this time period—such as reforms resulting from U.S. competition with the Soviet space program in the 1950s, or the reforms resulting from issues of racism and poverty in the 1960s and 1970s—they were not organized around and, hence, did not help establish the notion of school culture (Murphy & Adams, 1998). Murphy and Adams suggest that reform during the period of the "excellence era," which was augmented by economic, political, and social forces in society, resulted in strategies of intensification (i.e. increased supervision of teachers and students), restructuring (i.e. organization and governance of schools), and reformation (i.e. standards and accountability). Thus, during this time period the literature "moved from emphasizing structures and formal processes such as school improvement planning to focusing on the less tangible and ultimately more significant aspects of schools such as school culture" (Fink, 2000, p. 2). Fullan (1993, 2001) and others (Barth 1990; Dalin, 1993; Deal & Peterson, 1999; Firestone & Louis, 1999; Hargreaves,1995; Stolp & Smith, 1995) argue that this shift, within the reform movement, from focusing on structure, and changing schools from the outside, to considering the culture of schools from within, is both critical and necessary for enduring change and improvement. In other words, reform

needs to be linked to a school's unique culture, otherwise it is likely to fail (Barth, 1990; Deal and Peterson, 1999).

Although the construct of organizational culture undoubtedly influenced the development of the notion of school culture, Deal (1993) actually traces the use of the construct back to a time that predates by several decades the discussion of organizational culture in business settings. He notes, for instance that in 1932 Waller wrote that, "schools have a culture that is definitely their own" and that "there are, in the school, complex rituals of personal relationships, a set of folkways, mores, and irrational sanctions, a moral code based upon them" (Deal, 1993, p. 4). On the other hand, it was not until the 1970s and 1980s that the idea of a school having a culture began to appear repeatedly in the literature (Deal, 1993). While some early educational researchers tried to understand the climate of schools (see Halpin and Croft, 1962), Waller's notion of a school culture was largely ignored in the literature until educational researchers began to take note of the symbolic side of schools (e.g. ethos, saga, ambiance, etc.) in the process of exploring why change within schools was so difficult to implement (Deal, 1993). For example, in a 1971 book Sarason, who also predates the popularization of the organizational culture construct, wrote:

> The problem [of change inheres] in the fact that history and tradition have given rise to the roles and relationships, to interlocking ideas, practices and values, and expectations that are the "givens" not requiring thought or deliberation. These "givens" (like other categories of thought) are far less the products of characteristics of individuals than they are a reflection of what we call the culture and its traditions....One of the most difficult obstacles to recognizing that the

major problems in our schools inhere far less in the characteristics of individuals

than it does in [the school's] cultural and system characteristics is that one cannot

see culture or system the way one sees individuals. Culture and systems are not

concrete, tangible, visible things the way individuals are (in Deal, 1993, p. 6).

Even with these early discussions, it was not until Deal and Kennedy's (1982) work was

published in 1982 that a significant number of scholars within the education field began

to unpack the school culture construct (Deal, 1993, p. 6). Even then, however, as noted

above, the work tended to be disproportionately conceptual rather than empirical (Deal &

Peterson, 1999; Firestone & Louis, 1999).

What is School Culture?

While schools are usually considered different entities from businesses, and the

pioneering work of Waller and Sarason not withstanding, much of the initial work on

school culture, as noted above was highly influenced by definitions and

conceptualizations of organizational/corporate culture found in organizational research

and theory (Dalin,1993; Firestone & Louis, 1999; Sergiovanni, 1995, 2000). Schein

(1985, 1992), for example, was highly influential in education scholars' attempts to

conceptualize and do empirical research about school culture (Firestone & Louis, 1999;

Stolp & Smith, 1995). Not surprisingly, therefore, the definitions of school culture found

in the education literature are similar to the definitions of organizational culture found in

the organizational studies field. Some of these definitions are summarized in Table 2.

In addition to the formal definitions summarized in Table 2, however, education

scholars have also developed what might be referred to as slogans or catch-phrases to

sum up what is meant by the notion of school culture. These include "the way we do

things around here" (Deal, 1993) and, "how things work when no one is looking" (Fink,

2001, p. 7).

Table 2. Seminal definitions of school culture

(a) Deal and Peterson (1990) define culture as the "deep patterns of values, beliefs, and traditions that have been formed over the course of [the school's] history. Beneath the conscious awareness of everyday life in any organization there is a stream of thought, sentiment and activity" (p.7);

(b) Heckman (1993) suggests that school culture is "the commonly held beliefs of teachers, students, and principals" that give meaning and guide actions" (in Stolp & Smith, 1995, p. 13);

(c) Stolp & Smith (1995) define school culture as "historically transmitted patterns of meaning, that include norms, values, beliefs, traditions, and myths understood, maybe in varying degrees, by members of the school community" (p. 13);

(d) Barth (2002): "A school's culture is a complex pattern of norms, attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, values, ceremonies, traditions, and myths that are deeply ingrained in the very core of the organization. It is the holistically transmitted pattern of meaning that wields astonishing power in shaping what people think and how they act" (p. 6-7);

(d) Peterson (2002) defines school culture as "the set of norms, values and beliefs, rituals and ceremonies, symbols and stories that make up the "persona" of the school. These unwritten expectations build up over time as teachers, administrators, parents, and students work together, solve problems, deal with challenges, and, at times, cope with failures (p. 10).

As with organizational theory definitions of culture, however, there does not

appear to be an agreed upon or singular definition of school culture within the education

literature (Firestone & Louis, 1999; Maehr & Buck, 1993; Stolp & Smith, 1995).

However, most educational scholars agree that school culture refers to a shared way of

life, over time, within a school. As illuminated in Table 2, most definitions allude to the

notion of shared meaning among group members (Deal, 1993). Thus, researchers

generally agree that school culture refers to a pattern of shared meanings, values, beliefs,

assumptions, norms, rituals, ceremony, traditions, and symbols that are held by members within a school (Deal & Peterson, 1999; Sergiovanni, 2000).

How meaning through cultural elements (i.e. shared meanings, values, beliefs, assumptions, etc.), is constructed, shared and influenced is of central importance in the school culture literature (Stolp & Smith, 1995). By utilizing the organizational culture literature and research, educational scholars have begun to unpack these elements as applied to schools. Deal and Peterson (1999), for example, argue that these elements, which often overlap with a school's mission and purpose, provide the "symbolic glue that holds a school together" (p. 26). Additionally, Sergiovanni (1995) suggests that these elements govern "what is of worth for [a] group and how members should think, feel, and behave" (p. 89). Deal and Peterson suggest that "much research, across many different types of organizations—including schools—shows that institutions work best when people are committed to certain commonly held values and are bonded to one another and to the organization by means of key symbols" (1990, p. 9). School culture research therefore is beginning to indicate that the interplay of these elements can have either a positive or negative impact in the functioning of a school's effectiveness (Levine & Lezotte, 1995), learning capacity (Senge, 1990), and, ability to change (Fullan, 2001; Hargreaves, 1995; Sergiovanni, 2000). Thus, for researchers, it is imperative to understand how these elements of culture influences school functioning.

The significance of shared values, beliefs, assumptions, and norms within schools is a primary focus within literature of school culture (Deal & Peterson, 1990, 1999; Sergiovanni, 1995, 2000; Stolp & Smith, 1995). Ott (1989) suggests that values are "the conscious expressions of what an organization stands for. Values define a standard of

goodness, quality, or excellence that undergirds behavior and decision-making, and what people care about," and beliefs, "are how we comprehend and deal with the world around us...consciously held, cognitive views about truth and reality" (in Deal & Peterson, 1999, p. 26). Additionally, Ott contends that assumptions are a preconscious "system of beliefs, perceptions, and values" that guide behavior, are deeply embedded in "the cultural tapestry, and they shape thoughts and actions in powerful ways" (p. 26). Finally, norms, which according to Deal and Peterson, bring together a groups assumptions, values and beliefs, are the unstated "expectations for behavior, dress, and language" (p. 27). Ott describes norms as the "behavioral blueprints" and "organizational sea anchors providing predictability and stability" in organizations (in Deal & Peterson, p. 27). Essentially the interplay of these primary elements, and the ways in which they are shared, create the culture of a school. Deal and Peterson suggests that while these elements develop differently in each school—based on their individual mission and purpose—similar values, beliefs, assumptions, and norms are often exhibited in positive and successful cultures (as discussed in the following subsection).

In addition to these primary cultural elements, other elements are also identified in the literature as important in the understanding of school culture, they include: ritual, ceremony, and traditions (Deal & Peterson, 1990, 1999; Glickman, 2003; Sergiovanni, 1995; Stolp & Smith, 1995). While shared values, beliefs, assumptions and norms, help to create the "mythology" within a school, rituals, and ceremonies, are the elements that help researchers and practitioners visualize "culture in action" (Deal & Peterson, 1999, p. 31). Rituals, according to Deal and Peterson, are the historical "procedures or routines that are infused with deeper meaning....[which] can be connected to a school's mission

and values" (p. 32). While rituals are usually daily interactions within schools (e.g. daily attendance, morning greetings, etc.), ceremonies are "more complex social gatherings that build meaning and purpose" (p. 35), which include activities such as opening day ceremonies, seasonal or community gatherings, etc. Deal and Peterson suggest that ceremonies are "complex, culturally sanctioned ways that a school celebrates successes, communicates its values, and recognizes special contributions of staff and students" (p. 35). According to these authors, rituals and ceremonies help to create traditions (e.g. school professionalism, annual recognitions, etc.), which reinforce cultural ties and become symbolic in schools. By evaluating a school's rituals, ceremonies and traditions, not only does it help us to understand what is important and valued in a school, but also to help understand how cultural values are developed.

Finally, several other cultural elements are also identified as significant to understanding and deciphering a school's culture, they include, history, stories, architecture and artifacts (Deal & Peterson, 1990, 1999; Glickman, 2003; Sergiovanni, 1995; Stolp & Smith, 1995). Because past events and activities influence present day functioning of an organization, understanding the history and stories that have developed over time about a school helps to decipher the patterns and traditions of the culture. Following Schein (1992), Deal and Peterson (1999) suggest that a school's history and stories affect the culture because:

> The elements and character of organizational culture are initiated at inception [of a school], shaped over critical incidents, forged by controversy and conflict, and crystallized by use and reinforcement...the culture becomes what it is over time as people cope with problems, establish routines and rituals, and develop

traditions and ceremonies that strengthen and sustain the underlying norms,

values and beliefs. Over time the core assumptions become norms... (pp 50-51).

A school's history and stories are kept alive both through formal processes (e.g. written

accounts, rituals, celebrations, etc.) and by the informal "cultural networks" (e.g. priest

and priestesses or keepers of the values, storytellers, heroines, spies, gossips, etc.) (p. 5).

These disseminators play a critical role in the cultural transmission process. Additionally,

the architecture and artifacts tell a story about a school because often they are "symbols

that represent intangible cultural values and beliefs [and] outward manifestations of those

things we cannot comprehend on a rational level" (p. 60).

Like Schein (1992) and Dennison (1996), many school culture theorists and

researchers (see Deal and Peterson, 1991 & 1999; Firestone & Louis, 1995; Glickman,

2003; Saphier & King, 1985; Sergiovanni, 1995; Stolp & Smith, 1995) analyze the

symbolic side or "code" of organizations to begin to see how meaning is created, shared

and developed. According to theorists, symbols and symbolism are often the window to

beliefs, values and assumptions within a school. Peterson (2002) suggests that symbols

are "outward signs of inward values" (p. 11). All schools have various symbols that help

to unify a group and provide meaning, purpose and direction, these often include: mission

statements, displays of study work and past achievements, banners, awards, mascots, etc.

(p. 60-63). In addition, school leaders often convey symbolic messages, informally and

formally, in their actions, words, and deeds, and therefore help to create, maintain, and

change shared meaning within a school (Deal and Peterson, 1990, 1999; Sergiovanni,

1995). This leadership aspect of school culture will be discussed in one of the next

section.

What Kinds of School Cultures are Desirable?

As scholars and researchers moved away from suggesting that changes in organizational structures were the primary vehicle through which school reform might be realized, new ideas emerged in the literature about how to improve and change schools. As a result, scholars began to embrace new conceptualizations about schools and their cultures, such as, school community development (Sergiovanni, 1994), collegiality and collaboration (Little, 1990), and, professionalism (Louis, Kruse, & Marks, 1995). These new conceptualizations and the empirical research that followed, assisted school culture researchers to see what kinds of school cultures are desirable.

Educational scholars have begun to suggest that the reason why some schools are more successful than others can be attributed to the kind of culture that has developed in the school (Cheng 1993; Firestone & Louis, 1995; Peterson, 2002; Stolp & Smith, 1995). Sergiovanni (1995) and others (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Louis, Kruse, & Marks, 1995; Sarason, 1996), for example, propose that cultures that are more understood, integrated, and cohesive (less fragmented) are better suited to change, improvement, and effectiveness. In such schools, a clear focus targets organizational members' energy and when problems do arise, it is easier to recognize and change problematic features of the organization (DuFour & Burnette, 2002). While the literature does not recommend one definitive type of culture for a school, there is a growing amount of evidence about the characteristics or types of cultures that are "positive," "strong," and/or "healthy" (Cheng, 1993; Peterson, 2002; Stolp & Smith, 1995). Such cultures evidence a concern with optimizing student motivation and achievement and do this through establishing norms of

collegiality, collaboration, high expectations, etc. (Cheng, 1993; Deal & Peterson, 1990; Saphier & King, 1985; Stolp, 1994; Stolp & Smith, 1995).

Alongside the research to suggest positive schools exhibit stable, long-term characteristics, there is also evidence about negative school cultures. According to Peterson (2002), and others (DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Fullan, 2001; Hord, 1998), positive school cultures exhibit characteristics such as shared values, collegial relationships, professionalism, collaboration, commitment to student learning, purpose, reflective practices, stories of success, etc. Whereas, negative or "toxic" cultures or subcultures within schools, have norms that reinforce negativity, blame students for poor achievement, discourage collaboration, do not have a common purpose or goals, and exhibit nonprofessional or hostile relationships (Deal & Peterson, 1999; DuFour & Burnett, 2002; Peterson, 2002; Saphier & King, 1985). Hargreaves (1992) argues that problematic school cultures often arise as a result of the isolated nature of teachers work to which he calls cultures of individualism (i.e. teachers working mainly in isolation, rarely engaging in professional dialogue or collaboration) and balkanization (i.e. teachers work in small subgroups or departments, but in relative isolation). He thus suggests that these traditionalized cultures stifle collaboration among teachers and must be addressed if change in the school's culture is going to occur. As discussed later in this literature review, research is beginning to suggest that school cultures can be improved and changed, especially through leadership reculturing actions (Fullan, 2001).

A caveat to all the positive "versus" negative school cultures is provided by Schein (1992), in the organizational studies literature, and Sergiovanni (1995), in the education literature. They both emphasize that, while strong cultures are optimal, cultural

entrenchment may constrain innovation and change. Thus, Sergiovanni argues for schools that are resilient and where "loyal opposition" keeps the culture dynamic and fluid (p. 111).

Empirical Studies that Illuminate the School Culture Construct

Although, as noted above, scholars who write about school culture have complained that not enough empirical work has been done utilizing the school culture construct, it is also the case that the empirical literature has been growing. Consequently, decisions had to be made about which studies to discuss in this section. The decision was based on two criteria: (a) whether the study was especially relevant to the topic of this dissertation, and, (b) whether it was frequently cited in the literature. Based on these two criteria, I first review Molinaro and Drake's (1998) case study about educational reform and cultural change in schools. Second, I discuss results from a qualitative study by Staessens (1991) who examined several schools in order to uncover the primary aspects of their organizational cultures. Third, I discuss a qualitative case study by Hord (1998) about creating a culture of change through collaboration and leadership. While these studies are not exclusive in terms of relevancy to this paper, they are repeatedly cited throughout the literature on school culture (see for other comparable examples, see Berg, 2000; Cheng, 1993; Firestone & Louis, 1999; Fullan, 1998; Fyans & Maehr, 1990; Goldring & Knox, 2002; Henry, 1993; Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinback, 2000; Newman, 1996; Rossman, Corbett, & Firestone, 1988; Stolp,1994; Thacker & McInerney, 1992; Wagner & Masden-Copas, 2002). In addition, these studies provide evidence consistent with the theoretical ideas about the elements of school culture, change, and reform as outlined above and throughout this dissertation.

Molinaro and Drake (1998) conducted a case study of educational reform through reculturing and restructuring in a climate of continuous change. In their study, the authors examined how a new Canadian high school implemented reforms using innovative strategies. Over a three-year period, the authors conducted in-depth interviews with principals, teachers, and members of schools advisory councils on several different occasions in order to understand school reform and change. The authors found that successful reform and change resulted from creating a culture of change, valuing collaboration, and sharing leadership. First, in terms of creating a culture of change, the authors found that the school staff, students, and leaders viewed change as a "friendly constant" (p. 2) because principals hired people who shared similar values and beliefs. Second, in terms of valuing collaboration, the researchers found that workrooms were organized for teamwork, teacher desks were not isolated, and curriculum committees were established to create and promote effective relationships. Third, in terms of shared leadership, the school set up a non-hierarchical structure for "key process areas" and leadership was shared among administrators, teachers, students, and members of the advisory council (e.g. parent, teacher and student advisory groups). Essentially, the study found that the school engaged in a two-pronged approach of reculturing (changing the norms, values, and beliefs) and restructuring (changing practices through fostering collaboration and shared leadership). The authors conclude that their findings are consistent with the literature on educational reform and change; they link their findings with the more conceptual work of Fullan (1991, 1993, 1996) and Hargreaves (1994).

A second related study to this dissertation was conducted by Staessens (1991) who examined nine European elementary schools in order to uncover the relationship

between culture and innovative change. Based on Schein's (1985) work on basic values, assumptions and shared meaning, Staessens' conceptual framework was based on the following three primary cultural domains: the school principal as builder and carrier of the culture; consensus on values and goals; and professional relationships among teachers. After interviewing teachers and principals in nine schools, and conducting a cross-case comparative analysis, Staessens found three general "cultural types" of schools that emerged from the data: the "family school," the "school as a professional organization," the "living-apart-together school."

First, in the family-type schools, an informal culture of congeniality and informality was evident where the principal acts like a friendly grandfather figure. At these schools, the goal is simply survival and teacher relationships are more personal than professional. Also, educational innovations are neither encouraged nor discouraged. Second, in the professional organization schools, the culture is one of proficiency and efficacy. The principal was viewed as a well-read architect and leads teachers to interact professionally like a fine-tuned "professional football team" (p. 13). The culture here is highly compatible and innovative. Third, in the 'living-apart-together school,' the culture is one of mediocrity where there is a distanced "non-entity principal" (p. 14). In this type of school, there is no innovation or vision of the school's future and teachers function separately as individuals, not as a team. Staessens argues that the family and living-apart school typed offered little possibilities for innovation, whereas, in the professional organization, the culture was a catalyst for change and innovation. Staessens concludes that the norms and values of different school types do have an impact on school improvement, innovation, and change.

A third frequently-cited relevant qualitative case-study that is especially relevant to the dissertation work being reported here was, conducted by Hord (1998) and, focused on trying to understand the developing professional learning culture at Cottonwood Creek School (a pseudonym) in the United States. Cottonwood Creek School was chosen because it had developed a reputation as a successful and effective school culture characterized by norms of high student achievement, cohesive staff relations, shared beliefs, and so forth. In order to study this culture, Hord used the following literature-based dimensions of a professional learning community as a priori categories: supportive and shared leadership, collective learning and application of learning, shared values and vision, supportive conditions, and shared personal practice. Hord interviewed teachers, principals, and community members as a means to decipher how these dimensions of culture and a community of learners evolved among the professionals at the school. Hord found that because of a close association with a local university and shared decision-making structure at the school, teachers were empowered to learn collaboratively and develop professionally as a team. In addition, the teachers believed there was a high level of administrative support and open communication. This process allowed for developing trust, collegial relationships, and "norms of continuous critical inquiry and improvement" (p. 5). In each area of analysis, Hord found evidence of shared values, meanings, practice, and vision. She concluded that a positive and successful culture was a result of a "collage of collective action" (p. 7) by all professional members at the school.

The Role of Leadership in Influencing, Shaping, and Changing Culture

In this section of the literature review, I discuss the role of leaders in influencing, shaping and changing organizational and school culture. Here, I once again develop more

fully ideas that I introduced in the 'background to the study' section. In this case, the

purpose is to provide the reader with an understanding of applicable theory and some

influential empirical research into the ways in which leaders influence, shape, and change

culture. In addition, to situating the role of leaders in schools, I provide a background

overview about the general nature of leadership, cultural leadership, and change. The

subsections include: (1) the study and concept of leadership; (2) what is cultural

leadership?; (3) how leaders influence, shape and change the culture in organizations; (4)

studies that illuminate organizational cultural leadership; (5) school cultural leadership

and how leaders influence, shape and change the culture in schools; and, (6) studies to

suggest how leaders influence, shape and change school culture.

The Study and Concept of Leadership

Implicit in much of the literature presented in the sections above is the powerful role of

leadership in organizations. While leadership is considered to be one of the most studied

aspects of organizations (Bass, 1990; Burns, 1978; Horner, 1997; Rost, 1991; Trice &

Beyer, 1993), it is, at the same time, according to Burns (1978) one of the "least

understood phenomena on earth" (p. 2). Nevertheless, few would challenge the claim that

leadership is a "driving force" in organizations (Kotter, 1996, p. 31).

Historically, scholars have examined leadership by creating various classification

systems and studying the concept from a variety of perspectives and across academic

disciplines and professions (Bass, 1990). Additionally, a variety of theories and models

emerged in the literature; these include: trait theory (e.g. the 'great man theory'); group

and behavior theories; contingency theory; and situational theory (Rost, 1991). In his

extensive study of leadership, Rost (1991) contends that these models, most of which are

business oriented, rarely captured the essence of leadership because they were based on the "peripheries" of leadership, such as personality characteristics or management (p. 6). Rost therefore contends that the study of leadership in most of the twentieth century can be summed up as "leadership as good management" (p. 94). However, over the past twenty years or so, new conceptualizations of leadership have emerged; these have augmented in significant ways the discourse about this highly debated topic (Bass, 1991).

Among the new topics that have begun to be discussed include the notion of transformational leadership (Burns, 1978), the concept of cultural leadership (Schein, 1985), the ideas of shared (Slater & Doig, 1988) and vision-based (Bennis, 1990) leadership, the construct of collaborative leadership (Koehler & Baxter, 1997), the notion of activity-oriented leadership (Heifetz, 1994), and primal leadership (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002). A major theme in at least some of these discussions has been the difference between leadership and management. Bennis and Nanus (1985), for example, suggest that "managers are people who do things right and leaders are people who do the right thing" (p. 21). Burns (1978) describes managers as transactors and leaders as transformers. In this sense, managers are primarily concerned with managing an organization and following organizational rules and regulations, whereas leaders attempt to transform organizations through a process where "leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of morality and motivation" (p. 20). Heifetz (1994) points out that the difference might also be in the authority relationships because persons without formal authority may in fact exhibit leadership in an organization. While a debate continues over the leadership/management distinction and its overlapping aspects,

scholars generally agree that leadership and management can be differentiated (Burns, 1978; Fullan, 2001; Kotter, 1996; Rost, 1991; Zalznik, 1998).

Additionally, a wide-variety of definitions of leadership have emerged in the literature. Rost (1991) for example, cites 221 major definitions of leadership that could be found in the literature up to 1990 and argues that one of the main obstacles in developing a field or discipline of leadership studies has been the problem of "definitional ambiguity and confusion" (p. 6). While scholars might agree that this lack of definition causes problems, many nonetheless repeatedly cite—and often take as a given—Burn's (1978) definition of leadership: "Leaders inducing followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and the motivations—the wants and needs, the aspirations and expectations—of both leaders and followers" (p. 18). Rost (1991) adds to this definition the concept of influence relationships by defining leadership as "an influence relationship among leaders and collaborators who intend significant changes that reflect their mutual purposes" (Rost, 1991, p. 102).

Another influential definition comes from Heifetz (1994), who suggests that leadership is about developing people's capacity to perform an "activity," which he calls leadership. For Heifetz, leaders must mobilize "people to tackle tough problems" (p. 15) in a process of adaptive work. Finally, but not exclusively, Kotter (1996) focuses on the change capacity of leaders by suggesting that "leadership is a set of processes that creates organizations in the first place or adapts them to significantly changing circumstances. Leadership defines what the future should look like, aligns people with that vision, and inspires them to make it happen despite the obstacles" (p. 25).

While further definitions and conceptualizations could be cited here, this literature is too vast to review fully within this study. Horner (1997) suggests that "to date the objective of defining successful leadership has not been satisfactorily accomplished" (p.5). Regardless, Bass (1990) argues that enough about the meaning of leadership is known to create a "rough scheme of classification" of conceptions. This classification scheme, according to Bass includes the following focus on group process, personality, influence, persuasion, compliance, behavior, power, goal-achievement, interaction, and structure (p. 11). Spitzberg, (1986) suggests that decisions about the precise meaning of the term *leadership* may depend primarily on the kind of organization to which it is attributed (in Bass, 1990, p. 11). Although somewhat elusive, leadership appears to be critical for organizational success and cultural change.

Cultural Leadership

The concept of cultural leadership builds on many of the concepts from leadership studies and organizational theory and research (Sergiovanni & Corbally, 1984; Schein, 1985, 1992; Trice & Beyer, 1991, 1993). Nonetheless, Trice and Beyer (1993) suggest that the role of leaders/managers in the cultures of organizations has received only scattered attention because most applications of leadership "emphasize the instrumental consequences of leadership—how leaders influence the accomplishment of work organizations" (p. 255). They argue that a culture approach to leadership is different from the traditional instrumental conception because it helps to "illuminate the other side of leadership—how leaders influence the development and expression of culture in their organizations" (p. 255). Cultural leadership, therefore, helps to explain, "how leaders influence the understandings and networks of meanings" of organizational life (Trice &

Beyer, 1991, p. 150). Furthermore, Deal and Kennedy (1999) suggest that "the key to effective leadership in corporations is reading and responding to cultural clues" (p. 3). As illuminated further in the following subsection, Schein (1985) too calls for cultural leadership by suggesting that, "the unique and essential function of leadership is the manipulation of culture" (p. 317). In comparison to various theorists, such as Trice and Beyer, or Deal and Kennedy, this emphasis on manipulation is more pronounced in the works of Schein.

Trice and Beyer's (1993) offer an extensive analysis about how leadership affects the culture of organizations. Essentially, they argue that leadership will look different depending on the stage of an organization's cultural development. As a result, they offer four different types of cultural leadership: leadership that creates cultures, leadership that changes cultures, leadership that embodies cultures, and, leadership that integrates cultures.

The first type of leadership suggests that cultures are created as leaders' visions in new organizations are set into motion and become the substance of organizational cultures. While all types of leaders can create organizational cultures, the authors suggest cultural creators often exhibit charismatic traits. The second type suggests that cultures move toward change when the change is actively sought and consciously intended by the leader. The authors suggest leaders who promote cultural change often exhibit characteristics of transformational leadership; by that they mean leaders who are innovative and change-oriented. The third type suggests that cultures are maintained and preserved when the leader attempts to sustain the mission, roles, commitments, and values of the organization. Here, leaders often exhibit what Trice and Beyer call

institutional leadership; by that they mean "long-term members who know their cultures well" (p. 277). Finally, the fourth type, which focuses on organizational integration, suggests that leaders attempt to integrate and balance power among different subcultures. In these contexts leaders practice consensus or transactional leadership, which is the process of balancing and coordinating "diverse value systems and interests" to reach goals (p. 286). Trice and Beyer argue that each of these types is not necessarily distinct because cultural leadership can often manifest itself through different types. In addition, they suggest, cultural leadership is frequently shared by many members, formally and informally, and sometimes at cross-purposes, which might create organizational disharmony.

How Leaders Influence, Shape, and Change the Cultures in Organizations.

While most organizational scholars agree that a culture and/or subcultures exist within organizations, there is a growing debate in the literature that questions whether cultures can actually be managed and changed (Hatch, 1997; Sathe & Davidson, 2000; Schein, 1985, 1992; Trice & Beyer, 1993). Wagner and Spencer (1996) believe that it is possible to manage and change an organization, but it "is a formidable and complex task, one that requires long term commitment from everyone" (p. 67). Changing culture is perceived as difficult and limited because people's norms, values, and beliefs are rooted at the deepest levels of culture, which often provides stability, meaning, and identity (Hatch, 1997; see for extensive analysis, Sathe & Davidson, 2000). Nevertheless, several organizational scholars argue that a leader/manager, equipped with the necessary understandings, can create, maintain, and change an organization's culture. Over time, change in an organization's culture is seemingly inevitable, but planned cultural change,

according to Trice and Beyer (1993), is deeper; they define intentional organizational

change as being as:

> Planned, more encompassing, and more substantial kinds of changes than those
>
> which arise spontaneously within cultures or as a part of conscious efforts to keep
>
> an existing culture vital. Culture change involves a break with the past; cultural
>
> continuity is noticeably disrupted. It is an inherently disequilibriating process (p.
>
> 395).

Due to the dynamic nature of organizations, understanding change has a

prominent place in organizational theory and research (Hatch, 1997). While several

change models exist in the literature that help students of cultural change and those who

would lead the cultural change process understand how to bring about change in

organizations, Lewin's (1951) work has been especially influential among organizational

culture theorists (Sathe & Davidson, 2000; Schein, 1992). Lewin's (1951) "unfreezing"/

"moving" /"refreezing" model of planned organizational change suggests that change

occurs as a result of disturbances in the stabilizing force field of an organization (p. 228).

In other words, when the forces of change are greater than the resistance, change will

result. For Lewin, planned changed requires unfreezing of the organizational equilibrium,

an influx of change, and then a refreezing to the new equilibrium. Various scholars have

used this model to begin to understand cultural change in organizations (see for example,

Gagliardi, 1986; Hatch, 2000).

Utilizing Lewin's change ideas, Schein (1985, 1992), as noted in Chapter I of this

dissertation, argues that leaders' primary focus needs to be on the creation, maintenance,

and/or change of culture. Schein (1992) suggests that an organization's culture emerges

from the beliefs, values, and assumptions of a founder; the learning experiences of a group; and, new beliefs, values, and assumptions brought in by new members and leaders (p. 211). For Schein, the biggest impact on culture comes from founders because, during the creation and building stage of the organization, they teach, impose, and actively socialize the group with their own assumptions. Essentially, founders and leaders embed and transmit culture through various means, such as what they pay attention to, role modeling, recruitment, etc. These "embedding mechanisms" clearly communicate the leaders' priorities, goals, and assumptions. Over time, these assumptions become accepted by organizational members and create the deepest layers of the culture.

As organizations mature, according to Schein, the cultural dynamics emerge through the process of midlife, maturity, and potential decline. Over time, an organization's culture forms as members interact and as they solve problems, ideas and solutions become embedded in their culture. During this process, leaders must be sensitive to subcultures, develop an understanding of how to work across subcultural boundaries, and make efforts to keep the culture integrated by encouraging common goals, common language and common procedures for problem solving. Here leaders often are managed by the culture. However, often they need to become change agents to change cultural assumptions. As a result, utilizing a construct from Lewin's change model, Schein suggest that, when unfreezing of the culture is necessary, the leader must be a visionary and present enough disconfirming data, anxiety and/or guilt, and psychological safety, to cause disequilibrium. After the unfreezing process, the change or 'cognitive restructuring' process begins. Table 3 outlines some of Schein's change mechanism at different organizational stages. Finally, once the change mechanism has

been introduced and accomplished, a refreezing, or new behaviors or set of cognitions, is

reinforced.

Table 3. Schein's (1992) cultural change mechanisms

Organizational Stage	*Change Mechanism*
Founding and early growth	1. Incremental change through general and specific evolution 2. Change through insight from organizational therapy 3. Change through promotion of hybrids within the culture
Midlife	4. Change through systematic promotion from selected subcultures 5. Planned change through organization development projects and the creation of parallel learning structures 6. Unfreezing and change through technological seduction
Maturity and decline	7. Change through infusion of outsiders 8. Unfreezing through scandal and myth explosion 9. Change through turnarounds 10. Change through coercive persuasion 11. Destruction and rebirth

Note. From Schein, 1992, p. 304.

Although Schein's work on cultural leadership has been and continues to be

highly influential, a number of other scholars also have begun to study and write—often

extending or complimenting Schein's work—about how leaders influence, shape and

change the cultures of organizations (see for example, Bolman & Deal, 1997; Conger,

Spreitzer, & Lawler, 1999; Hatch, 2000; Michela & Burke, 2000; Sathe & Davidson,

2000; Trice & Beyer, 1993). Kotter (1996) for example, provides a roadmap for

leaders/managers to lead change in organizations as a means to influence and change the

culture. Too often, Kotter argues, change initiatives fail because leaders ignore norms and

values of an organization's culture. He proposes that "cultural renewal" can be the result of working systematically through an eight-stage change framework, which includes: establishing a sense of urgency, creating the guiding coalition, developing a vision and strategy, communicating the change vision, empowering broad-based action, generating short-term wins, consolidating gains and producing more change, and, anchoring new approaches in the culture (p, 21). For Kotter, any successful change effort must be "anchored" with an understanding of the organization's culture (p. 151). Kotter believes that cultural renewal is the result of a successful change effort. As such, he argues in a related article, that,

> In the final analysis, change sticks when it becomes the way we do things around here, when it seeps into the bloodstream of the corporate body. Until the behaviors are rooted in social norms and shared values, they are subject to degradation as soon as the pressure for change is removed" (Kotter, 1995, p. 67).

Studies that Illuminate Organizational Cultural Leadership

In this subsection, I explore some of the empirical studies that illuminate some of the themes in this section of the literature review. First, I review Tichy and Sherman's (1993) study of Jack Welch at General Electric. Morgan (1997) suggests this is one of the major studies of corporate transformation and change that illustrates "the pivotal role of leadership in reframing culture" (p. 400). In addition, I review Kotter and Heskett's study about cultural strength and organizational performance, which is considered a significant study about organizational culture (Fullan, 2001). Finally, I review a study about changing an organization's culture under new leadership (Sims, 2000), a study that

utilized Schein's thinking about culture and leadership as a data collection and analysis frame.

Ticky and Sherman (1993) used qualitative research methods to study Jack Welch's transformative actions at General Electric. The researchers interviewed both Welch and G.E. managers, and utilized G.E. documents, speeches, etc., to evaluate Welch's "revolution." The research study found that G.E., led by Welch, facilitated transformative changes in the organization, which grew from a slow growth, bureaucratic company with a scientific management style, to a highly successful global industry empowering leaders by stressing shared corporate values. Through his long tenure at G.E., Welch's transformative cultural strategies included communicating a vision of a new culture at G.E., listening to all stakeholders, building shared values, and empowering employees by seeking their "big ideas." In order to change the corporate culture, Welch believed that "quantum" or bold change is necessary. Thus, Welch began a organization-wide "dialogue of ideas" (p. 68) so that employees would be empowered to think for themselves about how to change the organization. He also initiated a ten-year corporate-wide program called "work-out," which gathered employees together in open forums—regardless of "rank"—to "gripe," brainstorm, formulate, and drive the "shared values" of the organization (e.g. openness, ability to face reality, honest communication, etc. (p. 245)). Once established, these agreed-upon espoused values became part of the measurement criteria for employee evaluations. Finally, Welch's change strategies, or what he calls the "big idea" rules (including the rule, "control your destiny or someone else will"), became the catchphrases and slogans for people in the organization, symbolizing how the business was transformed into a successful organization.

A second study that is often cited in the literature is Kotter and Heskett's (1992) *Corporate Culture and Performance.* These researchers provide longitudinal evidence, based on four empirical studies, linking organizational culture, and financial performance. Through a synthesis of these four studies, the authors analyzed the impact of cultural strength, using both qualitative and quantitative measures of all levels of customers, employees, and managers, by examining over 200 corporations. The research had four main findings: corporate culture can have a significant impact on an organization's long-term performance; corporate culture will be very important in determining success of a company into the future; corporate cultures that inhibit financial performance are not a rarity but, rather, they develop easily; and, corporate cultures can be changed and made performance enhancing (pp. 11-12). Essentially, the researchers found that the kinds of cultures, or 'strong cultures,' that enhance long term performance and success have, among other things, employees and managers who embrace a shared set of values, goal alignment, business methods, and organizational behaviors and norms. In terms of cultural change, their research indicated that effective leaders are needed "on top" (p. 101), who are open, communicate widely, create the need for change by pointing to potential crises, and share their visions and strategies in both words and deeds.

Finally, a third study that provides evidence of the influence of leadership on organizational change is Sims' (2000) qualitative study about the Salomon Brothers' organizational culture. In his study, Sims investigates what is needed for an organization to transform its culture from one that does not support or "encourage" individual ethical behaviors to one that embraces ethical behaviors. As a result of a Wall Street bond trading scandal at Salomon Brothers between 1986 and 1991 (i.e. 30 illegal bids of

government securities), new leadership emerged at the organization that attempted to change the organization's culture. Upon arrival, the new leadership began carefully to "craft a new corporate culture" by placing "a commitment to ethical standards" as a "top priority" (p. 67). As a framework for analysis of this culture crafting, Sims categorized the leadership strategies into Schein's (1985) primary mechanisms available for leaders to embed and reinforce culture (i.e. attention, reactions to crisis, role modeling, allocation of rewards, and, criteria for selection and dismissal). Sims found that in each area, the new leadership was able to alter "drastically" the existing culture that had produced the bond fiasco. The new leadership, therefore, effectively used the five cultural strategies that align with Schein's thinking about cultural leadership, and produced positive effects to the organization's corporate culture as indicated by public pronouncements, new procedures and policies, whistle-blowing mechanisms, corrective financial measures, and role modeling by leaders.

Cultural Leadership in Schools and How Leaders Influence, Shape and Change the Culture in Schools

The literature on cultural leadership in schools draws from a variety of academic fields. Consequently, parallels can be drawn with the more general organizational literature reviewed above.

For instance, a review of the early scholarly literature about school leadership/administration suggests there was a heavy emphasis on the technical and managerial competencies of administrators. Later, this literature expanded to include a focus on human relations (Reitzug & Reeves, 1992). Recently, the field of school leader/administration has moved toward viewing the role of leaders/administrators as

multiplicitious in nature, to include, for example, the instructional/educational, symbolic and cultural aspects of leadership (Sergiovanni, 1995).

As a result, Sergiovanni (1995) sees school leadership comprising of a set of "forces" that assist administrators, especially the school principal, in thinking about different aspects of how to move the school toward effectiveness.

Sergiovanni's framework integrates various strands of thinking—which he refers to as "the forces of leadership" (p.84)—have surfaced in the literature: technical, human, educational, symbolic, and cultural. He suggests good principals and organizations are competent at technical, human, and educational forces, whereas, excellent leaders and organizations utilize all five forces effectively and, in fact, use the symbolic and cultural to "help rise schools to levels of extraordinary commitment and performance" (p. 84). Sergiovanni's symbolic force allows the leader/principal to model important goals and behaviors through actions and communication, which in turn, signify what is important and valuable in the school (e.g. downplaying management issues in favor of educational issues). In turn, the cultural force challenges the principal to build a unique school culture through cultural leadership actions that define and practice the values and beliefs that give a school its identity (e.g. telling stories, reinforcing myths, traditions, symbol development, etc.). Thus, according to Sergiovanni, the symbolic and cultural aspects of leadership allow the principal to tap into deeper meanings and values, and therefore, help to create a successful school culture.

Deal and Peterson's (1999) also discuss the role of leadership in shaping school culture. They argue that leaders, both formal and informal, are an important part of "harnessing the power of school culture to improve schools" (p. xiii). As discussed

above, Deal and Peterson argue that leaders and schools must focus on the critical elements of culture—the purposes, traditions, norms, values, etc.—to build a successful school culture. Leaders, especially those with formal positional authority, have a role to play as "symbolic leaders" and "culture shapers." Effective school leaders, according to Deal and Peterson, need to ask three questions:

(1) What is the culture of the school now—it's history, values, traditions, assumptions, and ways?

(2) What can I do to strengthen aspects of the culture that already fit my idea of an ideal school? and,

(3) What can be done to change or reshape the culture, when I see a need for a new direction? (p 85).

After reading the school's culture, leaders need to begin to assume several symbolic roles to help change and re/shape, such as historian, anthropological sleuth, visionary, symbol, potter, poet, actor, and healer.

Finally, Fullan (2002) argues that school reculturing is a necessary task of the principal/leader of the future. Fullan argues that the literature suggesting that principals' central role of instructional leadership does not go far enough. Instead, the "cultural change principal" must change or reculture the school for the future. As leadership is key to reculturing efforts, Fullan (2001) offers a framework for leadership and cultural change, in which he suggest five essential leadership components, including: moral purpose, an understanding of the change process, the ability to improve relationships, knowledge creation and sharing, and coherence making. Primary to the cultural change principal is moral purpose, which suggests that school improvement and student learning

is paramount to awaken people's intrinsic commitments and values. In order to increase effectiveness, leaders must work toward this goal, alongside the four other components, with energy, enthusiasm, and hopefulness. According to Fullan, "change can be led, and leadership does make a difference" (p. 34).

Empirical Studies that Suggest How Leaders Influence, Shape, and Change School Culture

In this final part of the literature review, I will look at three studies in order to illuminate some of the research about school cultural leadership. First, I review Deal and Peterson's (1990) U.S. Department of Education's publication entitled *The Principal's Role in Shaping School Culture*. Secondly, I will review Reitzug and Reeves' (1992) research, '*Miss Lincoln Doesn't Teach Here*,' which is a descriptive narrative and conceptual analysis about how cultural and symbolic leadership is practiced by principals. Thirdly, I will review a doctoral dissertation by Bond (1998) who qualitatively examined the influence of school leadership and culture.

In their influential study of school cultural leadership, Deal and Peterson's (1990) analyzed five case studies to explore how five principals go about the task of understanding, shaping and changing the culture of their schools. The authors used case study data (primarily from previous studies by Peterson, and also, other published studies). Through data analysis, the researchers uncovered commonalities in tactics used by each principal they studied. They found that all principals strived for excellence by focusing on values and norms at their schools. Based on the evidence, the researchers concluded that effective cultural leaders identify what is important in their schools, select compatible faculty, deal successfully with conflict, set a consistent example, tell illustrative stories, and use ceremonies, traditions, rituals, and symbols to display the

school's common values and beliefs. They also found that principals play a number of different symbolic roles at different times (which Deal and Peterson characterize with metaphorical terms such as potter, poet, actor, and healer) and rely heavily on symbolic strategies and tactics to nurture an effective school culture.

Reitzug and Reeves' (1992) conducted an extensive qualitative study about the cultural and symbolic leadership behavior practiced by an exemplary principal at an premier elementary school. The researchers used Sergiovanni's (1984, 1995) "forces of leadership" framework (as described above) to discuss how symbolic leadership is practiced by school principals. Based on their findings, these researchers created a taxonomy of symbolic/cultural leadership forms (i.e. heroes, rituals, ceremonies, stories, and, cultural network/artifacts). The researchers found that several interrelated beliefs, values, and assumptions informed the culture of the school (e.g. belief that both process and products are important in learning). In addition, the researchers demonstrate that symbolic and cultural leadership are inseparable and, in fact, work hand-in-hand. Furthermore, symbolic/cultural leadership is a result of values, beliefs and assumptions and how these are shared during routine, daily actions and behaviors, and through communication to staff.

Finally, Bond (1998) qualitatively examined the influence of school leadership and culture in change processes. Bond interviewed staff members in two large urban schools about their perceptions of formal and informal leadership and conducted a cross-site analysis between schools undergoing change initiatives. She examined the nature of school leadership and cultural influences, based on shared attitudes, behaviors and assumptions. Bond found that leadership was an integral part of cultural changes within

the schools examined. She also found that school leadership and culture were interactive and interdependent. The study concluded that that meaningful change in the culture is possible. However, change takes time and that attitudes, behaviors, and assumptions can be influenced through social interaction, staff involvement and shared leadership in the change process.

Summary

This review presented some of the seminal ideas in the literature in the areas of organizational culture, school culture, and leadership that are relevant to this dissertation. The theories and studies outlined represent some of the classic theories and illustrative studies about each of the relevant topics to my study. In addition, the literature presented above informed my study about leaders' influence on school reculturing throughout the research process. In general, the literature provides evidence that there is a growing body of knowledge pertaining to cultural leadership, and the relevancy of my study. Furthermore, the literature suggests that little research has been conducted in this specific area and no studies appear to have been conducted in the area of leaders' influence on school reculturing in an outlier or atypical school organizations. Thus, an overview of the relevant literature appears to support the rationale for my study about school reculturing. While this chapter examined previous research that is of particular relevance to this study, the following chapter provides the methodology that guided my study.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a detailed overview of the research design and methodology for the study conducted at AISME. Information is presented about the site and respondents, the procedures used to get access to the school that was studied, the researcher's role in the study, data collection, and analysis procedures that were used, and the procedures that were used to ensure trustworthiness.

Site and Respondents

The qualitative study was conducted in a school that is being referred to here by the pseudonym, American International School of the Middle East (AISME). AISME is located in a major city in the Middle East. It is a K-12 college preparatory school with an American curriculum. AISME was established in the 1960s primarily for western expatriate children seeking an English-language education similar to the education provided in United States schools. Since the school opened, admission has been based on "verifiable need" of expatriate children (i.e. North American passport holders are prioritized for admission purposes), but registration is open to all nationalities (citizens of this country must be granted permission by the Ministry of Education in order to attend). Almost all teachers and administrators are North American educated and certified; there are no nationals working in these positions.

Interviewing was the principle data collection method employed in the study. The interviewees were selected *purposefully* because "the logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in the selection of information-rich cases for study in depth" (Patton, 1990, p. 169). Here, I used the technique that Patton calls "criterion sampling." He states that the logic and purpose of criterion sampling is to "review and study all cases that meet some predetermined criterion of importance" (p. 176). Because my primary focus was on leaders' (i.e. those with formal positional authority) thinking, I selected interviewees using the following criterion: respondents were on the school's administrative leadership team and, consequently, had formal positional authority in the school. This criterion netted nine interviewees. Specifically, I attempted to interview the people who hold the following positions: Superintendent (School Head); School Principals (2); Dean of Academic Programs; Director of Educational Services; Director of Technology; Director of Financial Services; Director of Personnel; Director of Facilities & Services. All of the people on the administrative team agreed to be interviewed. They also agreed to review the transcripts of their interviews for accuracy and completeness.

The transcript review was done primarily for trustworthiness purposes. To further add to the study's trustworthiness and, more specifically, to triangulate the data collected from members of the administrative team, I had planned to survey faculty without formal positional authority (i.e. K-12 teachers) to determine whether their perceptions were more or less consistent with the perspectives of administrators. However, due to the bombings that occurred in the region and the resulting evacuation at my worksite, I was unable to return to the school under study to complete the surveys, and this component of the research design that was articulated in the proposal had to be jettisoned.

Access

In order to gain access to an organization, Glesne (1999) suggests researchers

contact its "gatekeepers, the person or persons who must give their consent

before...[researchers] enter a research setting, and with whom...[the researcher] must

negotiate the conditions of access" (p. 39). At this school, that "gatekeeper" is the

Superintendent, Dr. C. Hange (a pseudonym). In February 2003, I gained permission, in

writing, from Dr. Hange to conduct research at AISME.

After my proposal was approved by my dissertation committee and I was granted

permission to conduct the study by the Institutional Review Board (I.R.B; see Appendix

B), I met individually with all potential respondents to explain my work and ask them to

be part of the study. All nine individuals immediately agreed to participate. Once these

individuals agreed to be part of the study, they each signed an informed consent form (see

Appendix B). This informed consent outlines the conditions for the participants in the

study.

Researcher's Role

Glesne (1999) suggests that the researcher's role is "situationally determined" (p.

41). In this situation, therefore, I played the overlapping roles of researcher, interviewer

(conversational and situational (Patton, 1990)), and participant observer. As a researcher,

I attempted to be "ever conscious of [my] verbal and nonverbal behavior" in order to

ensure that I authentically communicated to others "how a researcher acts" (Glesne, p.

41). As an interviewer, I attempted to access the perceptions and perspectives of the

interviewee using an interview guide approach (Patton, p. 288). When I visited this

school, I was a "full participant" (Glesne, p. 44) and therefore I utilized participant

observer techniques such as observations, document and artifact collection, and extensive field notes. These data sources were used to corroborate and/or triangulate interview answers.

During the research process, I also viewed my role in a similar way to what Glesne calls "researcher as learner" (p. 41). That is, as a researcher, I approached the interviews and participant observation process as "a curious student who comes to learn from and with the research participants" (p. 41). In other words, I did not approach the participants as an expert on the topic at hand, but as a learner interested in leadership, change in organizations, and the construct of culture. In all cases, I attempted to build rapport and trust with the respondents. As a result, I believe the interviews were mostly conversational and situational, and at times, quite animated and good-humored.

Data Collection Methods

Utilizing the interview guide approach. As highlighted in the previous section, interviewing was the primary data collection method employed in this study. In an effort to learn about the ways AISME leaders perceive their efforts to build and change school culture, I utilized the "interview guide approach" (see Appendix C) as discussed by Patton (1990, p. 283). With this approach, I outlined, in advance, topics to be covered, but made sequencing and wording-of-questions decisions as the interview unfolded (p. 288). Patton indicates that this strategy provides the following advantages: it uses the interview time effectively; it assists with making interviews more systematic and comprehensive across several interviews by pinpointing the areas to be explored; it allows for gaps in data to be anticipated and closed; it allows for flexibility during

individual interview if new topics emerge that are applicable to the study; and, it ensures that interviews remain mainly conversational and situational (p. 283-288).

The interview guide approach, as opposed to a more rigid interview schedule approach (i.e. the standardized and closed instruments), seemed especially appropriate here because the leaders being interviewed have different responsibilities and roles. For example, the Superintendent provides leadership to the entire K-12 administration and faculty, whereas the principals provide leadership primarily to their school-level teams (e.g. Middle School faculty). Thus, flexibility was needed to ensure that questions were geared to the individuals' particular roles and responsibilities and explored appropriately.

At the same time, the interview guide approach was more appropriate than a 'informal conversational interview' approach because it allowed me to retain some degree of structure in order to pursue a similar line of questioning with each participant. In addition, because the conversational interview is considered less systematic and comprehensive, some areas of interest, I believed, would not arise "naturally" (p. 288). Patton also suggests that one of the major weaknesses with the conversational interview is that data organization and analysis may prove to be "quite difficult" (p. 288).

The content of the interviews. As for the content of the interviews, I pursued a range of questions based on opinions/values and perceptions (Patton, 1990, pp. 290-293). I first asked the interviewees to discuss briefly their initial impressions upon arrival at AISME. Afterwards, I asked participants to discuss change at the school. At this point, I was also specifically interested to know if leaders used or mentioned the construct of culture and/or if they had internalized the concept in their daily vocabulary.

The next part of the interview focused on the construct of school culture. Through these questions, I inquired how each leader defines school culture; how each views the current culture at AISME; if she/he witnessed any changes in the culture since arriving at the school; how he or she perceives his/her role in helping to shape school culture; what she/he sees as the possibilities and barriers of building school culture at AISME; and, what kinds of formal and informal feedback mechanisms are used to assess the impact of their actions, and, how this feedback is used.

Provisions for follow-up interviews, interview times, locations, and transcriptions. As Patton (1990) suggests, I planned for one round of interviews, and I left open the possibility for a second round if new ideas emerged from the data. However, after conducting all nine interviews, I believed that I had more than sufficient data to tell the reculturing story at AISME, and therefore, I did not feel it was necessary to conduct a second round of interviews with any of the participants.

Eight of the interviews were conducted in various leaders' offices on the AISME campus and audiotaped. With the exception of Dr. Hange, the interview times ranged from 45 minutes to under two hours. The ninth interview was with Dr. Hange. He requested for the interview to be conducted at his home because he believed that it would offer a more relaxed and reflective type of environment. This interview took place throughout a mid-week evening and included several breaks for informal discussion. The recorded interview time was approximately 2.5 hours. The researcher transcribed all interviews.

Participant observation. For triangulation purposes, I was a full participant during the research process. In this role, I collected community newsletters, school documents,

and artifacts, Minutes from leadership meetings, etc. I also kept detailed field notes, in journal form, about general observations, perceptions and impressions, meetings I attended, etc.

Data Analysis Methods

Originally, I had intended to analyze the data using only established content analysis procedures. Such procedures are designed to uncover possible themes by identifying, coding, and categorizing the primary patterns of the data (Patton, 1990, p. 381). However, as the interviews were concluding and I initiated transcription processes, I began to notice that a "story" of culture, change, and reculturing was emerging from the data. Hence, I began to believe that a more traditional qualitative analysis did not necessarily fit the data very well and may not bring out the richness and uniqueness inherent in the material that had been gathered. As a result, as discussed briefly in the introductory chapter of this dissertation, I used process of data analysis referred to by Polkinghorne (1995) as "narrative analysis." In essence, this analysis approach allowed me to organize and present the data in a storied form.

In recent years, there has been increased interest in narrative inquiry in qualitative research (Polkinghorne, 1995). Polkinghorne suggests that this attention is "merited because narrative is the linguistic form uniquely suited for displaying human existence as situated action" (p. 5). For Polkinghorne, narrative refers specifically to "texts that are thematically organized by plots" (p.5). He thus suggests that researchers can use a process of "narrative configuration" to draw "together diverse events, happenings, and actions of human lives into thematically unified goal-directed processes" (p. 5). The thematic thread that emerges is referred to as the plot and the "plot's integrating operation

is called emplotment" (p. 5). As a result of configuring or emplotting happenings,

Polkinghorne suggests that narrative meaning is the outcome.

Polkinghorne builds his argument about narrative meaning based on the work of

Bruner (1985). Bruner's work is significant because it expanded, "ways of knowing

beyond the singular mode advocated by the received tradition to include the narrative

mode" (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 9). Bruner (1985) argues that narrative knowledge is more

than "emotive expression," but is, rather, a legitimate form of reasoned knowing. Bruner

proposes that there are two distinctive modes of thought, or ways in which to know about

the world. We can order experience either through "paradigmatic cognition" (i.e. the

traditional logical-scientific mode of knowing), or, through "narrative cognition" (i.e.

storied knowing). Polkinghorne notes that "narrative or storied discourse communicates

worthwhile and thoughtful knowledge, although the form of this knowledge differs from

that advocated in the received tradition" (p. 9). Essentially, Polkinghorne argues that

qualitative researchers have relied too heavily on paradigmatic analysis and therefore,

"by necessity, underplays the unique and particular aspects of each story" (p. 15).

Thus, following Bruner's (1985) distinction between paradigmatic and narrative

modes of thought, Polkinghorne (1995) distinguishes between two types of narrative

inquiry: analysis of narratives and narrative analysis. Polkinghorne suggests that analysis

of narratives conform to Bruner's notion of paradigmatic cognition because it involves

"classifying a particular instance [in this case a story told by an interviewee] as belonging

to a category or concept. The concept is defined by a set of common attributes that is

shared by its members" (p. 9). In other words, analysis of narratives refers to "studies

whose data consists of narratives or stories, but whose analysis produces paradigmatic

typologies or categories" (p. 5). By contrast, narrative analysis conforms to Bruner's notion of narrative cognition, and refers to "studies whose data consists of actions, events and happenings, but whose analysis produces stories (e.g. biographies, histories, case studies)" (p. 6). Polkinghorne argues that "paradigmatic knowledge is focused on what is common among actions, [whereas] narrative knowledge focuses on the particular and special characteristic of each action" (p. 11). In essence, narrative analysis proposes that "human actions are unique and not fully replicable" (p. 11).

Narrative analysis therefore does not require coding of data to conform to generalized "notions." Instead, Polkinghorne suggests that the process of narrative analysis allows researchers to "collect descriptions of events and happenings and synthesize or configure them by means of a plot into a story" (p. 12). This process of synthesizing and configuring the data results in an "emplotted narrative." Polkinghorne notes that,

> The researcher's task [in narrative analysis] is to configure the data elements into a story that unites and gives meaning to the data as contributors to a goal or purpose. The analytic task requires the researcher to develop or discover a plot that displays the linkage among the data elements as parts of an unfolding temporal development culminating in the denouement" (p. 15).

In narrative analysis, data can be drawn from a variety of sources, including interviews, observations, documents, and journals. The defining property of narrative analysis is not where the data comes from. Rather, it involves how the data that have been gathered—from whatever sources the researcher has used—are organized. With the narrative analysis strategy, these data are organized in story form. Here, the primary goal is to

develop a story which fits "the data while at the same time bringing order and meaningfulness that is not apparent in the data themselves" (p. 16).

In Chapter IV, I present my findings in a storied format. In order to construct this story, I took several steps that allowed me to systematically analyze the data, create a plot, and present the findings. Polkinghorne suggests,

> The subject matter of stories is human action. Stories are concerned with human attempts to progress to a solution, clarification, or unraveling of an incomplete situation....Plot is the narrative structure through which people understand and describe the relationship among the events and choices of their lives. Plots function to compose or configure events into a story by: (a) delimiting a temporal range which marks the beginning and end of the story, (b) providing criteria for the selection of events to be included in the story, (c) clarifying or making explicit the meaning events have as contributors to the story as a unified whole (p. 7).

The storied narrative in the findings therefore seeks to present the story about the experiences and perceptions of nine leaders in addressing the cultural changes that were initiated at AISME.

In order to create a plot and order narrative meaning, I worked through several steps to create an "emplotted narrative," and to analyze and present the data. Following Sykes (1998) attempt to make Polkinghorne's thinking more procedural, I utilized these steps in developing the emplotted narrative presented in Chapter IV:

- Specify the outcome or denouement to which the story will lead
- Arrange the data elements chronologically
- Identify which data elements are contributors to the identified outcome

- Construct a plot outline

- Fill in the outline with detail from data elements

- Adjust outline, where necessary, to better fit the data

- Collect additional data, where necessary, to fill in "gaps" (p. 77).

In terms of collecting "additional" data to fill in the "gaps," as suggested above, I was able to use the data that I collected for triangulation purposes. For example, several participants mentioned Dr. Hange's first staff meeting where he introduced his ideas about "building a professional learning community." As a result of these interview comments, I was able to request from Dr. Hange a copy of his Power Point presentation. This additional data therefore allowed me to report a fuller picture about this significant cultural event.

Finally, one challenge that I encountered while using the narrative analysis strategy has to do with the emplotment process. Here, I was challenged with the best way to configure diverse events, happenings, and ideas into thematic threads for plot creation, analysis, and reporting (i.e. not all actions or happenings in my data were chronological). In order to uncover some of the thematic threads, I needed to rely, on occasion, on more traditional analysis techniques (i.e. analysis of narratives). In other words, I would utilize content analysis strategies as a means to identify some of the primary patterns of the data, and uncover some repeated themes (Patton, 1990, p. 381). Essentially, based on my data, this secondary analysis technique assisted me in constructing a more cohesive plot, it helped me to make some within-case generalizations through the story about what was occurring in the school's culture, it ensured that the data was triangulated, and it assisted me in terms of reporting the findings.

Trustworthiness

As it is critical for the researcher and others to have confidence in the rigor of both the study and the results (Merriam, 1998), I employed a variety of strategies in order to heighten the trustworthiness/research validity. Glesne (1999) suggest that "the use of multiple data collection methods contributes to the trustworthiness of the data" (p. 31). This method of research, which is commonly referred to as "triangulation," is not "the simple combination of different kinds of data, but the attempt to relate them so as to counteract the threats to validity identified in each" (Berg, 1995, p. 5, in Glesne, p. 31). Thus, I collected data by interviewing, participant observation, and document collection, and also, utilized several additional strategies to increase the validity and reliability of the research. Such methods assist to "indicate that the more sources tapped for understanding, the richer the data and the more believable the findings" (Glesne, p. 31).

First, as the primary data collection instrument for this research, I used in-depth individual interviews of leaders with formal positional authority at the school being studied. Through the use of interviews, I explored how each individual understands and uses the culture construct within his or her role in the school. I used this method in order to seek the "richness" of data that is possible in qualitative research (Glesne, 1999; Merriam, 1998; Patton 1990).

Second, I utilized a variety of participant observer strategies, such as observations, detailed field notes, and document analysis to triangulate what I heard and to identify any apparent words/deeds discrepancies. As no apparent discrepancies appeared, I did not conduct a second round of interviews as a means to clarity these findings.

Third, as discussed above, I planned to use "grounded surveys" with faculty at AISME, for purposes of triangulation so that I could compare data provided by leaders. After I had completed the interviews and constructed the survey from information provided from the leaders, I was unable to return to AISME in light of the regional conflict. While I noted this as a possible limitation in Chapter I, I do believe that I had sufficient supporting documents (i.e. I had well over one thousand pieces of participant observation data) to assist in corroborating and/or triangulating interview data.

I also employed a variety of additional strategies in order to improve validity and reliability of the research. For example, I engaged in some of the recommendations that Wolcott (1990) suggests to "satisfy the implicit challenge of validity" (p. 127), such as: talk little, listen a lot; record accurately; begin writing early; let readers "see" for themselves"; report fully; be candid; seek feedback; try to achieve balance; and, write accurately. As these suggestions provide a less definitive and more relaxed avenue to Patton's advice on credibility (see Patton, 1990, p. 461), I made a concerted effort, to follow all of these suggestions, and I therefore believe that they assisted me in "strengthening" validity.

Finally, throughout the research process, I sought to be conscious of how my own subjectivity shapes the research (Peshkin, 1988). Issues such as gender, class, race, and positional power provided a subjective frame from which I viewed my research. Because subjectivity "operates during the entire research process" (p. 17), I tried to identify systematically subjectivity as to what was happening. Peshkin (1988) reminds us that personal qualities "have the capacity to filter, skew, shape, block, transform, construe, and misconstrue what transpires from the onset of a research project to its culmination in

a written statement" (p. 17). As a result, I kept track of what Peshkin calls the "subjective I's" through extensive field notes. When taken into account, I was able to begin a process of "taming" where "enhanced awareness" enabled me to manage the data throughout the research process (Peshkin, 1988, p. 20). In addition, I was very aware that I do not like negative school cultures—ideally, I "want" school cultures to be positive and cohesive places for all. Regardless of such biases, I attempted to ensure that these issues did not obscure my research.

Summary

This chapter provided a detailed overview of the research design and methodology that guided my study. I presented information about the international school site that I chose to conduct the study and the nine leaders with formal positional authority who participated in the study. In addition, I discussed the procedures that I used to obtain access from the school's Superintendent and my subsequent role in the study as researcher, interviewer, and participant observer. I also reviewed the interviewing process as the principle data collection method employed in the study. Moreover, I discussed how I utilized Polkinghorne's (1995) narrative analysis strategy for data analysis and reporting. Finally, I presented the procedures that were used to ensure trustworthiness. While this chapter detailed the methodology that guided my study, the following chapter presents the results of the procedures that were outlined in this chapter.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings of a case study about perceptions of nine

members of an administrative staff who attempted to change radically a K-12 school by

reculturing it. The school will be referred to as the American International School of the

Middle East (AISME). As was indicated in Chapter III, the findings in this chapter are

being presented as an "emplotted narrative," which was developed through the narrative

analysis process as described by Polkinghorne (1995). Polkinghorne suggests that the

process of narrative analysis allows researchers to "collect descriptions of events and

happenings and synthesize or configure them by means of a plot into a story" (p. 12).

Polkinghorne further suggests that "the task of narrative analysis is an explanation that is

retrospective, having linked past events together to account for how a final outcome

might have come about" (p. 16). While the story of reculturing at AISME may not, as of

yet, have a "final" outcome, many of the most important chapters have been written, so to

speak, and they are presented in narrative form below.

Throughout this narrative, I have used pseudonyms for both the school and the

central character, the superintendent, who is referred to here as Dr. Clark Hange. The

superintendent is the protagonist in much of this story because his arrival at the school

and his subsequent leadership actions set in motion the series of events chronicled in the

story being told here. For Institutional Review Board (IRB) issues related to

confidentiality, the eight other members of the leadership team who participated in the study are not mentioned by name or position. Instead, the information they provided—along with the information provided by Dr. Hange, and gleaned from the analysis of documents, and generated by participant observation in the school—was synthesized and "emplotted" (Polkinghorne, 1995) into one story. The multiple data sources used to construct the case "story" presented below helped link events chronologically and thematically and also made it possible to triangulate data and the interpretations of data implicit in the story.

The Story of Leadership Reculturing at AISME

This story is about administrators' perceptions of change and reculturing at the American International School of the Middle East. While several members of this group—"the leadership team"—arrived at AISME at different points within this story, they each identified, to varying degrees, the hiring of the new superintendent as a critical cultural event and turning point for the organization. According to the three members of the team who had been at the school prior to the hiring of Dr. Hange, a clear distinction can be made about the "before and after" story of the school.[2] Even those administrators, who were hired after Dr. Hange, repeatedly acknowledged that the school had dramatically changed because of Dr. Hange. These new administrators arrived at this conclusion based on their original impressions of the school, the stories they heard "by the water fountain," and what they noticed about some of the missing structural

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[2] For plausibility and triangulation purposes, whenever possible, I use those elements, ideas, and sentiments that are repetitious in the interview data. Unless otherwise indicated, the account can be supported through others' accounts and/or participant observation data. If the information can only be supported by one participant, than this will be indicated accordingly (e.g. "referred to by one of the participants")

elements —that they would have attributed to be a "normal" part of any good school (e.g. staff meeting times, school improvement initiatives, protocol for staff evaluations, etc.).

This before and after distinction, which was humorously referred to by one of the participant's as "the BC-AC effect at our school" (i.e. 'before and after' the arrival of Clark), provided a natural demarcation to share the reculturing story of AISME. The first section of the narrative begins at a time when the "BC" period—often referred to as "Camelot" by those in the school who tell the legend of the school's distant past—was abruptly interrupted with terrorism in 1996, and ends with the arrival of a new superintendent. This part of the narrative describes events and issues that influenced the development of the school's culture over time. The second part of the story begins with the superintendent's arrival, referred to by one of the participant's as "the day the school changed." This part presents how some critical changes and reculturing actions were initiated at the school, over a three-year period. The story ends—or perhaps just interrupted—just as it began, with heightened terrorist activities throughout the Middle East region.

BC: "Camelot" and "Legends of Times Gone Past."

Overview of part one. In February 1996, at the time when one of the current administrators was hired through an international recruiting fair, he had heard of AISME's reputation as "a great school, a great place to live, [and] a lot of good people working there." He had also heard that the school was nicknamed "Camelot." However, almost immediately after his arrival at the school in August of the same year, this administrator found that Camelot and "the good ol' days" had been disrupted with

terrorist attacks within the region; these attacks were, in his words, "significant in changing the school forever."

This administrator remembered that during his first few years, the staff lamented for "the good ol' days," which in their view was before the bombings. He also remembered that the staff celebrated the "legends of times gone past," such as the former superintendent who had left AISME with hero status in 1995. In addition, he heard that before the bombings, Camelot was a cohesive K-9 school culture, where teachers "really got along" and stayed for unprecedented periods of time for expatriates, "ten, eleven, twelve years," and, the school had "more money than they knew what to do with…[with] no limit on budget, [so you got] whatever you wanted."

Thus, as described in detail below, the participants who were at the school during the time period prior to the hiring of Dr. Hange characterized the next several years with phrases that included, for example, "status quo leadership," "poor staff relations," "financial instability," and "traditional educational practices."

The Years Leading to the Hiring of Dr. Hange

The bombings: "Changing the school forever." The bombings in 1996 took Camelot into an uncertain time period, which in one participant's perspective, "put the school in a spiraling downward motion [and] major issues began to build." Several participants suggested that regional terrorism does have disruptive results for international schools because it has a tendency to drive expatriates back to their home countries. However, most expatriate families get used to living under such conditions, and if they leave, they usually come back quickly because things seem to normalize quickly after a few months. But, according to one of the participants, these bombings and

the subsequent political environment that developed in the region, might have been used

by administration and staff as "an excuse to hide some of the problems of the school" or,

"a way of keeping status quo…when nothing else stayed the same." In other words,

according to one of the three administrators who were at the school during the post-

bombing period, school members wanted to maintain the myth of Camelot and used the

terrorist events to prevent a process of "moving forward" to create necessary changes in

the organization that would help the school move along with the changing times.

Ultimately, according to another participant, nostalgia and a "living for the moment

mentality" put the school in "rough shape" because administration and staff were in

"denial about what needed to get done, [which] put the school near bankruptcy."

Despite a perception that the school had a high reputation in the community

during this time period—which one interviewee suggested this perception may have

resulted from the school being "the only show in town" —various major spiraling issues

and events were identified by all three of the participants from the period between the

bombings and the hiring of the current leadership team; these included: "vagueness" and

a "lack of vision" on the part of administrators, "financial difficulties," "lack of school

identity," and "uncertainty about the future of the school."

Leadership at AISME in the post-bombing period: "All nice guys who didn't

want to rock the boat." During the years that followed the 1996 bombings, the

administration of the school was characterized by one participant as "status quo

leadership." Another participant, described this administration's leadership style as

> more of a corporate style: these are the rules, these are the policies, these are the
>
> procedures…[It was like] the boss-worker relationship: I'm the boss, this is your

job, I will let you do your job the way you want to do your job if you don't cause

me problems, that is better, but don't come to me if you want to change what goes

on out there.

The administration's mechanistic style of leadership also sent a "no collaboration with

the faculty" message, according to one of the members of the current administrative team

who was also an administrator during this earlier era. Besides one or two "quick"

welcome sessions a year, there were no regular staff meetings, except, perhaps, "around a

grade-level table" or an occasional "stand-up meeting" which was, quite literally a very

brief meeting held literally, while participants were standing.

Not surprisingly, school improvement initiatives or actions were not a high

priority during this era of limited meetings; even the officially sanctioned strategic plan

and formally established curriculum council, both of which were built around the ideas of

shared decision-making and collaboration, "went nowhere," according to one of the

current administrators who was part of the school during the post-bombing period.

Essentially, the individuals on the team that led the school in the post-bombing period

were characterized, by one of the interviewees, as "all nice guys who didn't want to rock

the boat." The other two interviewees who were at the school at the time said similar

things.

This leadership style was very difficult for some of the teachers or "old dogs"

who had lived through the Camelot days and were used to being part of decision-making

process in the pre-bombing regime. At the same time, it was also difficult for some of the

newly hired staff members who could see many areas that needed improvement.

According to one of the participants, new staff was signaled very quickly, "this is what

we do, this is how we do it, we're a great school. Something like: let's just keep the ship going."

Finally, there was also a perception that the administration did not communicate what was going on. Although the school had just adopted its second formalized strategic plan, and mission statements were on display in every classroom (which, for one reason or another, was no longer the case at the time of the interviews), there remained a perceived "lack of vision" and "vagueness" about the direction and future of the school. One interviewee suggested that teachers "felt that the Admin team was closed-mouth on issues, and did not communicate—[they communicated] only when it was necessary." As a result, according to two of the participants, the staff "rumor mill" operated on overdrive and the school was filled with stories of "us-versus-them," "layoff speculation," "package and salary cuts" and "school closing." One interviewee remembered that this general lack of communication and vision also created a group mentality of "why try to change anything if Admin doesn't care if things get changed." Therefore, this same participant suggested, over time, teachers generally became "disillusioned, self-centered and did not trust administration." However, one participant said that many staff members began to "enjoy the freedom associated with doing as little as possible outside of their classrooms." Another participant reaffirmed this idea, he suggested that over time people enjoyed the school, and while

> there were the usual minor moans, like there hadn't been a salary increase for a while…you could probably say this was good or bad, but [teachers] were basically, not given carte blanche, but they were given the freedom to do want they did, which was to teach…there was no pressure to do anything else.

Declining student enrolment and fragmentation of staff. One of the most significant events during the post-bombing period came within two weeks after opening the school in the August after the bombings. At this time, student enrolment suddenly dipped from over 2000 students during the previous June, to less than 1300 when the school was reopened. This drop-off created a "severe panic" with staff because, according to one respondent, "30% of their kids had not shown up" and the teacher and community "rumor mill" began speculating about the likely implications of this dramatic decline in enrollment. Even though, the same respondent remembered, "financially the school wasn't in a bad place because it had been banking [money] for years," the administration still made the decision to close classes and "layoff teachers two weeks after the school had started." According to another participant, this was highly problematic for teachers because they had already spent two weeks of "bonding time, so just imagine the kids at the school and all of a sudden your teacher is gone." It was also controversial because they decided to lay-off only "locally-hired staff" (i.e. entirely female expatriate staff—at that time—who were not visa sponsored by the school, but sponsored through their spouse's company).

While the local-hire and overseas-hire distinction is most apparent at international schools because each group is usually hired on a different contract, the layoffs of locally-hired teachers at AISME created a further fragmentation in staff relations. During the lay-offs, one of the participants recalled that the administration chose to discredit "seniority issues....[thereby] forcing veteran local hires to lose their jobs," while maintaining all newly hired overseas-sponsored staff. This action by the administration sent a clear message to each of these groups that they were different and would be treated differently.

"Overseas hire-only" parties, as well as special photo sessions, picnics, and benefits for the overseas hire group also reinforced this mentality.

While the school saw increased enrolment the next year to about 1800 students, a declining enrolment trend began the following year, and continued over the next five years. According to one of the participants, this trend in enrolment was not "sufficiently addressed and placed the school close to bankruptcy" by the time Dr. Hange arrived at AISME. Even though, according to Dr. Hange, there were efforts at "rightsizing" in the year before he arrived at the school, the school was "almost bankrupt" and had "depleted [its] reserves." In other words, Dr. Hange suggested that during this time period the school had "been misgoverned in financial ways by underwriting their capital projects with operational funds."

Security changes: The "long-walk to school." Another happening that occurred after the bombings was a change in security at the school. While the school already looked like an "army barracks," with "corrugated walls" and only "one green area," "one tree,"—essentially "a dump"—according to several of the participants, new cement walls and security checkpoints were implemented and the "old junky gate at walk through" was replaced by a steel gate in order to provide further safety for students, staff, and community members. These changes, according to one of the interviewees, "infuriated" some staff members because they could no longer park their cars within the school compound and instead, "you had to park out where we park now and do the quarter mile walk as opposed to being able to park right out front." Beyond the feeling of being inconvenienced, the new security measures, which many people saw as unnecessary, made people, according to one participant, "think a little bit differently" about the school

and living in the Middle East. While much of the added security was put in place to protect the school in response to external forces and to protect those who worked and studied in the school, it also reinforced a belief within staff that they were "owed something extra" (a sense of entitlement) from the school because they were working under conditions that were not part of the western workplace experience or ideology.

Initiating a high school. Another event that was significant during the post-bombing period was the decision by the School Board (see Appendix A) to create a new high school. Traditionally, the school had been a K-9 school, and students often went off to boarding schools for grade 10. However, because of changes in the national laws governing international schools, the School Board decided that the school needed to include grades 10, 11, and 12 as well. One interviewee recalled that this decision was "controversial" because the administration "openly" disagreed with the idea of high school, and the faculty generally believed that western children should not be going to high school in an Islamic country. Instead, according to this same participant, teenagers should "enjoy the freedoms [associated] with the western high school experience." As a result, this participant continued, the administrative team "placed little effort or resources on the opening the high school." Even so, another participant remembered, there was a perception among the non-administrative staff that the high school was "built at the expense of the [K-9] school," which meant that other areas of the program would suffer. Beginning in 1999, grade nine—which was traditionally part of the junior high (grades 6-9)—was moved to the high school and a tenth grade was opened, and each year thereafter a new grade level was added.

The way we do things around here. Over this time and prior to the arrival of Dr. Hange, a set of strong teacher values, attitudes, and beliefs had emerged at AISME. Besides the "very traditional teaching styles" and "teacher centeredness" of most teachers that were identified by several respondents, one of these participants said that there appeared to be "two types of teachers [at the school during this time]: one type who helped children and another type who did not." Another interviewee who had been part of the school during the post-bombing period, saw little evidence of the first type of person working in the school. He said, "When I first got here you would be hard pressed to find anybody talking about kids and learning in the hallways. If they were talking about kids and learning, it was largely to complain." This "whining" attitude was especially clear in the admissions process at the time that assumed that the school was "for high ability kids only." While the belief statements in the strategic plan at this time included statements such as: "people learn in different ways at different rates," "all people have worth," "education is a shared responsibility," etc., one participant said that upon his arrival, which was prior to Dr. Hange, staff members often heard comments such as, "our school doesn't serve kids like that," or, "we don't take kids like that," or "we don't differentiate," or "that child was a no-program [i.e. withdrawn from the school], " or the line to a parent, that made one administrator recall that he "just about fell out of [his] chair," was: "you know children need an ability score of 110 [on the Otis Lennon School Ability Test] to be successful here…to a family [whose] child has an ability score of 95." In other words, what was espoused through the mission statement was not what was necessarily practiced at the school, a fact that was obvious in both teacher and counselor comments to the participants about the norms that guided the admissions process. One

participant suggested that new arrivals, both parents and teachers, got the "message that it was a private school for certain types of kids."

"AC": The "Beating of the Drums" Began

Overview of part two. In part two of this story, the "after-Clark's" arrival effect began when Dr. Hange was hired by the School Board after an extensive international search process. According to one of the participants, Dr. Hange's hiring by the School Board—a Board, which by many accounts was considered to be very conservative and status-quo—was both a "shock" and "surprise" to the faculty. Nonetheless, this same participant called the School Board "very brave" because they had hired a much needed "change agent." As several of the participants suggested, the difference in leadership style and school direction was "very clear" from the onset, because "he [Dr. Hange] stands up and it is a beating of the drums. Every time, you can you hear we are here for kids and what are the best interest for kids. So you hear that message throughout." This was a very different leadership style than what the staff and community was accustomed.

As discussed in detail below, Dr. Hange had a mixture of first impressions of the school, and he heard conflicting stories about how things were done at the school. In his first year, Dr. Hange began the process of trying to understand the organization and began to move forward with several change initiatives. From the very onset, he communicated his values and beliefs about education with staff and the community in a variety of ways. He also collected data through formal and informal meetings, communications and feedback in order to understand the school's culture. In addition, he said he experienced an initial round of resistance and support because, in his words, "the writing [was] on the wall" for some faculty and administrators, which resulted in all but

two of the administrative team resigning—including the high school principal who indicated he would be resigning in the following year with the first high school graduating class—alongside several of the "old dogs."

After some changes in his first year—which might be summarized as mostly symbolic to "show" what could get done—the second year and third year, with a mostly new leadership team, was a time of initial cultural change. The new administrators' first impressions are telling of the work that they faced and generally reinforced many of the perceptions about the school's culture that are outlined in part one of this narrative.

Through the first three years of Dr. Hange's tenure at AISME, 'the AC effect' unfolded as the leadership team began to change and reculture the school. Through Dr. Hange's journey, alongside newly hired administrators and the other administrators who stayed at the school after Dr. Hange was hired, the initial reculturing chapters were written. One of the participant's suggested that this journey was "only beginning," and another suggested that it was analogous to "the student writing process," where leaders and learners go about writing a new story of AISME, while being "challenged" along the way with "continuous editing and redrafting."

Dr. Hange's Interview Visit to AISME: "A Mixture of Impressions"

The "legend" about the hiring of Dr. Hange: The "need for a change agent." Dr. Hange, and two other candidates, were short-listed for the superintendent's position at AISME. The two other candidates were considered to be "arm-in-arm" in contention for the position, while Dr. Hange was considered to be the long shot. Each candidate separately visited the school for several days of interviews and social gatherings with the School Board, meetings with administration, staff, parents, and classroom visitations.

During this visit, Dr. Hange formed a mixture of impressions about the school. He said, "my impressions from the perspective where I was as a candidate, so [I'm] looking at the school for some sense of a match. What's this place about. Was it going to fit? Am I going to fit? What are the needs? What am I hearing from people?" Dr. Hange recalled his first impression as he entered the campus as being "surprised and truthfully, probably shocked at the condition, at the physical layout, just the visual image that I got...[the school] looked like an old military camp." After he discussed the rundown facility in the interview, he also vividly recounted other initial impressions of the school. For example, his first impression of the Administrative team instilled "a lack of clarity or a lack of direction. Very much the message of status quo." However, from the Superintendent at the time, "there was a difference, he recognized change was needed. He recognized that the Board was going to go for a change agent. And I think, though he never said this to me, I think he recognized that in me, and saw me as distinct from the other two candidates." From the faculty, he noticed, from a "meet the candidate meeting," that there "was a lack of what I would call substantive questions...they got their agendas out real fast....Again, in my view very few questions were about what do I believe, where would I lead the school?" On the other hand, he noticed that the parents, who attended another meeting, asked more educational questions such as "what type of school do you want to run?" and, "what do you believe about children."

As for his meetings and the interview with the School Board, Dr. Hange said they were very different because, in his words, "[the Board] very much focused on who I was as an educator." He recalled telling the Board that, "I'm an educator first and foremost and that's what you'll get if you hire me as Superintendent....I think the term I used with

the Board was 'to the marrow of my bones, I believe this is about children. Making the school better for kids." At the interview, Dr. Hange said he promoted himself as a change agent because

> each administrative position I've had…It was about change…I believe I
>
> understand the change process. I believe I understand the importance of direction,
>
> of vision. I sold the Board on that if they wanted a status quo person then this
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> would not be a good match, and frankly, I wouldn't be very interested in that, and
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> I think they wouldn't be very interested in me.

In terms of sharing his vision for the school with the Board, he said that he told them that this would result from gathering data, which would be "empirical data about our school and research data about transformation and what's good for the school; from these two pieces then we combine to develop a vision." With this, he also said that he discussed his experiences and some critical research that would inform his vision of the moving toward, for example, a "community of learners," such as the work of "Roland Barth, Sergiovanni, Michael Fullan as change agents that I hang my hat on as an administrator and their bodies of research are of the things that I think make a difference in schools. And that's what I'm committed to."

Other administrators—those who were at the school and those who came later— speculated that Dr. Hange was hired because the "Board recognized a need for change" and, "The Board was very brave in hiring a leader who was completely opposite" to his predecessor. For example, one participant suggested that Dr. Hange was hired not only from a "financial standpoint," but also from an "educational standpoint," because the Board had started to recognize that,

The perception from parents was that this was not an open and welcome

place…parents got together [over educational change issues], put pressure on the

School Board…the Board formed a committee which opened up for more parents

to come in and sort of have a place to sort of pound on the table and want some

change. Eventually when it [was] time to replace [the Superintendent], the School

Board's mentality had shifted. People always asked what type of school are we

going to be, the day Clark[3] was hired the battle was won. Those who wanted a

more open school, a more inclusive school, a school that was going to be

responsive to children and families was decided the day that Clark was hired

because that was what Clark believes in. The only question was, how fast can we

get there?

Another administrator suggested that Dr. Hange was hired to change the "elitist attitude"

of the school, which had "forced the creation of a competitor school [that enrolled] all the

children who were not good enough for our school." Finally, another leader, who was

hired by Dr. Hange, reflected,

Clark's getting hired here is becoming a legend in the international school circuit.

Here's this powerful money school, with big name administrators—some of the

ol' boys of the circuit—and then there's speculation that another candidate was

already hired even before the interviews. Then you hear that Clark gets the job

because the Board realized how screwed up the school is and, out of the finalists,

he was their only hope to save the school; it was a miracle.…I got here and saw

how [expletive] the school was and I understood the scenario: if the School Board

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[3] In cases where participants used real names of people or places, I will substitute a pseudonym (e.g. AISME, Dr. Hange, Clark, etc.).

hired one of the old boys, there's no way I would have this job and there's no way the school would exist today. [The Board] needed someone to totally change it and rid the school of negative attitudes and all this teacher-centeredness. Clark is doing this.

As Dr. Hange departed the school after the interview, he recalled his overall impressions were something like: "probably a status quo school, that's resting on its laurels, and in some cases we're still promoting a myth that 'you know we're a good school, there's nothing wrong.' But I think deep down inside people knew we aren't where we should be."

Year One: Challenging a Culture of Status-Quo

Leadership and change: "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." As a result of being hired will full support of the School Board, Dr. Hange began a process to try to understand what was going on at the school and as a means to formulate his vision for the school. In terms of his general leadership approach as he began this process, he suggested,

The leader sets the weather and the climate for the day, and for the year, our outlooks are very, very important...by nature I'm not an extremely extroverted as a person. But I do feel I have a role to play particularly a vision, setting expectations for people, articulating the rationale for change. I think one of the biggest things I have to do and I do it consciously, which is why some people find me somewhat wordy, is we have to help everyone understand the big picture through their personal lens. We have to help the teacher who teaches third grade, understand the big picture of the whole school organization.

In addition, he reviewed his mandate and assessed the many stories he was hearing. Dr. Hange reflected on his mandate in this way,

> In my first year as Superintendent, I feel like I've been brought in and I had a mandate if you will from the Board, certainly not from the faculty or administration. But I had a mandate that I'm supposed to be a change agent and the Board has basically laid it out, [they said] "Okay pal, you show us where you're going to go and as long as it makes sense we're going to support you."

Moreover, Dr. Hange had approached AISME with the belief that "schools are dynamic organizations that change. Whether you direct the change or not, they're changing." As such, he believed that as a change agent and leader, he needed to begin a process of moving toward developing a plan to change the school. And while he was clearly hired to change the school, Dr. Hange said he believes in the importance of change as a "process," and "finding a rationale [and a need] for change." About the topic of initiating change, Dr. Hange said,

> Even before I involve myself in the change process, I have to truly believe that this change is merited, that it's going to result into something better. In other words, there has to be a need. Well, I say it's the old classic, people won't change unless they understand why their changing, "if it ain't broke don't fix it" type of thing. So, I think you always have to start with that. What we have? What are the concerns about it? Why should we change? If you cannot articulate the strong rationale why something should change then you're probably starting off on shaky ground. I don't believe in change for change sake.

With a strong rationale or reason for change—which, he said he began quickly to see and hear evidence at AISME—he suggested that the next step is to begin the communication process, "get people's input…go through a collaborative process." While he discussed change, he also referred to a Michael Fullan article about staff resistance to change, which focuses on the importance for leaders and

> moving to the resistance, which is very hard to do because it is counter intuitive…[but] we have to be willing to go to the __ room [a room named after the "Camelot" Superintendent]…and sit down with people and say, "tell me why you're unhappy?" We have to move to change…I did a lot of that in my first year. I had all those open forums. I listened.

Ultimately, the purpose for this whole change process, Dr. Hange argued, is a desire and belief that change will affect student learning and success.

Stories about the way we do things around here. After arriving in his first year, Dr. Hange heard many stories about the way things were done at the school. He remembers, "[I heard] conflicting stories, which I am sure is true in any organization that's having a change in leadership." Through these stories, initial discussions and observations, he said he generally got a feel for the culture of AISME. For example, he felt the "faculty story" projected at him might be summarized as,

> There was a faculty story and I think the faculty message that, "You know this is a great school. We don't have to do anything, except what we're doing, and what's really been great about this school is it's been great for teachers. This school knows how to take care of teachers and teachers are well cared for at this school that's why we love it here and we sure hope you're gonna continue that."

Then, Dr. Hange recalled what he thought was the administrations' story, he said,

> The team was split, there was the status quo folks who really were focused on
> "we're a good school, keep the teachers happy," and, there were some
> administrators who were chomping at the bit for some direction, some
> instructional direction. And, I can tell you that three or four times in that first year
> sitting down with…the director of Ed. [Educational] Services, and I'd said, "So
> why don't we do this and this?" and she'd just smile and she'd go to her filing
> cabinet and pull something out, "You know, I proposed that four years ago, but
> I've given up because there was such resistance from the principals' group."

He thought the student story for Dr. Hange was a little different, he said,

> The student story, I think all along and I think this was the real success story. I
> think the student story was a good one, kids are happy in our school. Whether we
> were status quo and stagnant or whether we are vibrant and changing, we've
> always got it right by the culture for kids. I think people here try to do well by
> kids and try to do well by creating a supportive environment for kids. Having said
> that, I think the other complex part of if was the story of a new High School that
> was really struggling and that would be the only exception about what I just said
> about students.

> Finally, he recounted, what he thought was "a very different story" from the

Board. He reflected that the Board's chair, who was "a very thoughtful person [was] tired

of the myths…[he] felt that there were things that needed to be addressed in the school

that were being swept under the rug." So overall, the Board story was, "there needed to

be some changes, 'this isn't a great school, [it is] a good school that should be a lot better

given the resources that it has,' and I think, 'a school that's resting on its laurels and maybe even on some false laurels." These stories helped Dr. Hange frame his ideas about the kinds of short-term and long-term changes that were needed at the school to become a great, effective organization.

School culture: "Collaborative organizations." As he heard stories about the way things were done at AISME, Dr. Hange said he assessed the cultural direction that was necessary for the school. He suggested that he learned about school culture through his own studies and teacher experiences in many schools and through many different educational leadership positions. When directly asked about the concept of school culture—after had repeatedly used the construct of culture to discuss various ideas in the interviews—Dr. Hange referred to various cultural theorists and some of his own ideas that have assisted him in understanding the construct:

> Terry Deal talks a lot about the symbols and rituals of culture, which are the outward expressions of the inward norms. He talks about the priests, priestesses, scribes, and all of that. There are some people who will say culture is "the way we do things around here." That's not good enough for me. I think, in my personal definition, culture is, it is the way we do things around here, but it's the conscious way we—everyone in the organization—do things around here that is part of being a reflective practitioner. That's the culture I want in a school...So, for me culture is broad enough to embrace; I hope a lot of voices, but at its essence is a belief that schools are collaborative organizations. Schools are most effective when teachers work collegially and are part of the community. Schools are dynamic organizations that change. Whether you direct the change or not, they're

changing. So, I think the culture is the beliefs system and values, if you will, around some of those points that I've just mentioned.

With this understanding of culture and a belief in building effective schools, Dr. Hange introduced several of these ideas and expectations to the staff at AISME at his very first all-staff meeting in August of his first year.

Introducing a vision for the school's culture: The first staff meeting. Several weeks after his arrival to the school, Dr. Hange had prepared for the annual all-staff meeting, which took place on teachers' first contractual day in August. At that meeting, he said he introduced his initial vision for the school to a "naïve" staff audience about the collaborative change partnership and process he was envisioning. After his introductory comments to welcome the group to a new school year, Dr. Hange discussed his views of leadership, change, and the kind of school culture that he had envisioned (i.e. an integrated culture of professionalism, collegiality, collaboration, etc.). During that meeting, as evidenced in several cultural artifacts, Dr. Hange initiated a Power-Point presentation about "Building a Professional Learning Community" and discussed the following slides in detail. He did so, referencing several of his favorite educational theorists (i.e. Barth, Sergiovanni, and Fullan) and discussed his ideas of educational change, collaboration, professionalism, and school culture. His first slide read:

- "A good school is not a place where Big people who are learned teach little people who are learners...(Dr. Hange's emphasis)
- Rather a good school is a place where everyone is learning simultaneously under the same roof." Barth (1990)
- Learning is at the heart of everything the school sets out to do.

This slide was followed by several others, presenting, in sequence, ideas about, "characteristics of a learning community," "risk taking and learning," "collaborative

practices," "collegiality and educational change," and, "professionalism." These slides

were then followed by a series of slides focusing specifically on "school culture and

collaboration," such as:

• <u>Collaborative culture is essential and is characterized by...</u>
• A close linkage between student assessment and teacher pedagogy & instruction
• Development of assessment literacy of faculty as a means to improve instruction

After several related slides, the final slide focused on the following questions:

• Today at AISME, I will ask you
• Do you see yourself in this landscape view of teaching and learning?
• Do you see your colleagues in this picture as it relates to our school?
• To what degree are each of us contributing to a professional learning community in our school?

After some general discussion and noticeably few questions, at the end of the

meeting, Dr. Hange introduced an "I BLEW IT" slip, to symbolize and encourage

professional change and growth, based on the ideas he proposed throughout his

presentation. Upon departure, each staff member was handed a blue "coupon," that read,

I tried something new and innovative and it didn't work as well as I wanted. **I BLEW IT!** This coupon entitles me to be free of criticism for my efforts. I will continue to pursue ways to help our school be successful

One participant referred to Dr. Hange's first meeting (and subsequent meetings)

in the following way: "he stands up and it is a beating of the drums. Every time, you can

you hear: 'we are here for kids and what are the best interest for kids.' So you hear that

message throughout." Another participant remembered that at the end of Dr. Hange's first

staff meeting, "you could hear a pin drop," because, traditionally, this annual first-day get-together had been relatively formulaic with a "quick message of welcome." However, Dr. Hange's address suddenly infused new educational language and ideas into the school at an annual meeting that, according to same participant, "didn't ever focus on education." This same participant reflected, "it *was* pretty clear this guy *was* an educator who *was* going to change the school" (heavy emphasis placed on italicized words during interview). Finally, another participant recalled that people walked away from the meeting "whispering and looking a little shocked; I think I was shocked, or maybe I was scared, who knows."

"Moving forward." After he introduced some of his initial ideas to the staff about his collaborative vision to the staff, Dr. Hange elicited feedback from faculty and administration and began to create a plan to build a culture of collaboration. He said that over the first few months, he met with staff through "open forums, once a month for the whole first semester," "informal meetings," "visiting with teachers" in the hallways and classrooms, and "branching out of social relations." He also met with students, parents, and community members in order to collect data, to assess organizational problems, and to be responsive to each group's needs. Dr. Hange said that his goal in the first year was to show the staff and community what changed looked like:

> So I thought there were a number of things that had to happen to show everybody, Board, parents, students, teachers, and everybody, that the school was now going to start moving forward, that we would no longer be status quo…And so I felt then that had to be addressed on all levels. If everybody's going to believe we're

going be moving forward then everybody needs to feel the effect of moving forward.

As a result of the data collection period as was described above, Dr. Hange said that he realized he needed to address both structural issues and cultural issues simultaneously. He said his first challenges were improving the facilities, communicating with all stakeholders, unifying the faculty, introducing collaborative initiatives, training the School Board, and a variety of other issues relating to the next school year, such as the accreditation self-study, administrative and staff hiring, and some major financial issues.

Initiating a "collaborative culture." Dr. Hange said that the educational program was not sufficiently addressed within his first year because he believed that other elements needed to be in place prior to evaluating fully the educational program. He also realized that the accreditation self-study in the following would be a natural change agent and focus all stakeholders on the educational program. However, in his first year, he did address some initial educational issues, which emerged from comments in meetings from faculty, and also, based on the need to begin to build a collaborative culture. He said, "one significant change [in education] was redesigning the curriculum council into task forces…[the task forces] were formed around the things that teachers were complaining to me about." According to a published report based on the task forces that year, the things people were complaining about, included issues related to special needs, professional development, admissions and retention, and facilities. For example, the task force on special needs was implemented because, according to Dr. Hange, "some

teachers felt we shouldn't be letting kids into our school and the other teachers felt we weren't differentiating enough."

Dr. Hange said that he and a few of the other administrators began to address issues of collaboration by designing "work groups around those issues which gave faculty a venue to be involved, to effect change in a positive way should they choose to so." Dr. Hange said he believed the task force venue began to develop "a culture of collaboration....[and] show the change; it showed the way people could get involved, and if they got involved, they could make recommendations that would make a difference." Another participant suggested that some of the early collaborative initiatives, such as the voluntary task forces, "proved that Clark was going to do what he said, [but also], told staff that they would have to work in helping in changing the school."

Improving communication. Dr. Hange also believed that he needed to communicate directly with all stakeholders as a means to show how change would make a difference to the AISME community. In doing so, he said that these messages needed to embed the espoused beliefs and values of the school: "whenever given the opportunity to speak…in whatever I'm saying I will tie it to the mission or the core values, beliefs, of the school." Additionally, he said he communicated about his personal values and beliefs in written memos to staff and the community: "it's not just about what you say, it's often it's about how you say it, how you say it communicates the culture as much as what you say."

As evidenced in many written communications through the first year, Dr. Hange changed what was being said and how it was said. He suggested that the "goal was to get the community and all its constituents to believe the school can and will move forward

and will do so successfully." For example, he completely reformulated the school's weekly one-page parent communicator from a weekly "flash" that detailed information about events in the school, to a brochure-like, multi-page weekly "communicator" that focused on educational issues with articles written by members of the Administration. According to one of the participants, that new format and focus "suddenly highlighted education and reported to parents and teachers what was important educationally, and what educational issues we were working on at the school." Upon discussing the change of focus in the school's public communication, Dr. Hange recalled, "what I wrote to the community—and this was another piece of change—communicating the vision to parents. And what I wrote to the community was all about either now or either ten years from now is about—what is our vision, what is our future, etc." Several other participants mentioned the symbolic importance of written communication, such as the school's newsletter, and also the subsequent glossy school magazine that was introduced in year two. One participant said, for example, that these new pieces of communication were a "culture developer...[and they sent] a message to the community about who we are and what we believe in as a school."

Local and overseas "subcultures": "How poisonous that was." All participants, at some point during the interviews also discussed the ongoing issue with, in Dr. Hange's words, "the whole dichotomy between the local hire and the overseas hire [staff]." During his initial visit to the school and in his subsequent data collection phase, Dr. Hange quickly recognized "how poisonous" some of the issues were between these two groups. One of the biggest issues that emerged from the local-hire open forums, was the issue of parity in salaries between the two groups. Recalling that emotional time, Dr.

Hange said, "I mean really genuine anger in meetings with me [about this dichotomy]." Because the local hired faculty relayed to him "how harmed and hurt they were because they felt the school didn't included them in the picture," Dr. Hange not only convinced the Board for parity in pay for local-hires, but also included them in all school sponsored events, such as the annual "overseas-hired" BB-Q's and December celebrations. He said, "when it was a school sponsored event we made sure that everyone was invited and I also stopped doing specific [things] for overseas hires in school sponsored events and asked the faculty to pick up that ball on that. There was some disgruntlement around that."

Every single participant commented, in some way, about the ongoing issues between the local and overseas hires and often commented how important and critical it was for Dr. Hange to address some of the long-standing issues between, what several participants called, "subcultures." One participant, however, suggested that historically this distinction had created a "difference in expectations." Thus, when Dr. Hange created one salary scale and formed whole-school staff events, this sent out the message, according to the same participant, "we are one faculty and that means there are the same expectations for everyone." Another participant suggested it was symbolic because administrators could say, "look, you've got [parity] now, you've got the money and [now] you also have the same professional responsibility."

While all the participants believed that the parity issue needed to be resolved, as one interviewee suggested, "it makes sense: we are paying people with the same background and experience the same amount of money," two of the participants believed that a continued distinction between the local and overseas hires, especially in terms of separate events was necessary. One of these participant's argued that the "overseas hires

are sponsored by the school, but local hires spouses have their own sponsors and they have their own parties and events that we are not part of." However, along with several other participants, Dr. Hange disagrees with "those folks ...who feel like I let the pendulum swing too far the other way...[as that] what was needed to bring the pendulum back and try to unify the faculty."

Moving toward a "strategic School Board." Another area that Dr. Hange focused on during his first year was School Board training as a means to change this group from being less reactive to more strategic in their thinking and actions. In the past, the Board—whose membership was comprised of seven elected parents of children in the school—spent most of their time on minor issues related to parent and staff concerns. Dr. Hange cites what he called "a classic example" about how the Board would spend large amounts of time discussing issues such as "peanut butter sandwiches." Without elaborating, he smiled widely and said, "we were not going to do that anymore." In other words, he said he began to emphasize with the Board that their role was to "decide the direction for the school," and therefore he trained them "about how [they] are supposed to behave as a Board and what are really trustee issues and what are administration issues." Thus, Dr. Hange said that he "spent a lot of time working on what are best practices of Boards and what does the research base look like." He also invited an American School Board consultant to work on team-building and strategic thinking. He also said that he ensured that the Board training and subsequent changes were highlighted repeatedly in the weekly newsletter to "communicate the vision to parents [and to] reinforce the notion that the Board was responsible for the long term stability and future of this school." For Dr. Hange, the School Board training was another way to show change at the school.

Several participants concurred that the Board changes and strategic redirection was critical to the "viability" of the school and complimented the changes that occurred at the school. For example, when discussing the Board, one participant reflected, "When I first got here, I think Clark was challenging the Board to stop spending all their time thinking that my job was really their job."

While this Board transition process was, in his words, "a work in progress," Dr. Hange believed that the Board made some tough decisions (e.g. raising tuition after a four year freeze, implementation of a capital fee, focusing on long term financial issues, etc.) that would help to ensure that the school would not go bankrupt in times of political uncertainty and fluctuating enrolment.

Facility changes. Another major focus in Dr. Hange's first year was the creation of a long-term plan about the school's facilities. Regardless of when they arrived at the school, each participant, including Dr. Hange, discussed the "drab" or "industrial" appearance of the school and the "lack of real K-12 facilities." One participant said, "it just did not look or feel like a real international school." Beyond his own impressions of the facilities, Dr. Hange also heard this message from the focus groups with staff members. In addition, in an informal survey with students, Dr. Hange elicited from students some of the changes they would most like to see at the school. Regarding student input, he said,

> The number one thing was the swimming pool and the number two thing was food. And so I wasn't going for the swimming pool in this Islamic country with all of those issues. But I really felt kids shouldn't be eating in their classrooms, and out in picnic tables in 100-degree heat.

Additionally, Dr. Hange said that he believed that the facilities change "was a nice concrete way to show people you're moving forward. Everybody can see that." As a result, he convinced the School Board to put a capital fee in place because the school did not have monies for facility improvements. In fact, he said, the school had "been misgoverned in financial ways by underwriting their capital projects with operational funds." Although putting a new fee in place was controversial and created resistance from the community, he said that he believed that if "the next year when everybody came to school they could see 'Wow! We have this, the school's moving forward." With the capital fee in place, Dr. Hange said that he was then able to develop a concrete plan to improve facilities, which included, for example, two new cafeterias, a new performance theater, new science and art classrooms, etc.

Several participants acknowledged the symbolic importance of changing the facilities over Dr. Hange's first three years. One participant, for example, said "I think some of the most important changes have been in the facilities area...we are starting to become a real school."

Summary of Dr. Hange's first year: "Showing change." One participant recalled that Dr. Hange's first year was "not the typical honeymoon you usually hear about for a first year administrator." Instead, he challenged some of the status quo attitudes about change and improvement. He was also able to show that change at AISME was possible. By the end of his first year, Dr. Hange also introduced a new ritual—the recognition assembly—into the organization in order to recognize and celebrate both longevity of faculty and departing staff members. He said that he believed it was important for faculty to be recognized, and as a result, he received some positive feedback, such as: "I got

notes, e-mails, that said 'I've never been recognized by the school til now' and how much that meant to them."

Many of the initiatives undertaken by Dr. Hange (and his administrative team at that time) in his first year might be characterized as surface-level or symbolic of what change "looked" like. Dr. Hange said that these changes were primarily accomplished to show all stakeholders that change could make the school a better place for children. As Dr. Hange worked through the various changes outlined above, he had also made preparations for his second year. These preparations included, hiring an almost entirely new administrative team, organizing for the school's 10-year re-accreditation self-study process, creating new financial strategies such as passing an "unprecedented" technology budget, and, alongside local hire pay increases, creating a two-year plan for a significant salary raise for all of the faculty.

As discussed in detail below, in his second year, Dr. Hange, and his mostly new administrative team, attempted to address and change some of the deeper cultural elements of the organization. At the same time, they got resistance from staff and a few administrators, because, in the words of one participant, "people were being asked to do too much....[and] too much change was occurring."

Year Two: A New Leadership Team was Formed and A New Culture Began to be Built

Overview of Dr. Hange's second year. In his first year, Dr. Hange had articulated, and in modest ways, began to enact his change and his reculturing mandate. He also paved the way for future initiatives by inviting students, staff, and community to be part of this vision and change efforts. Moreover, he worked with other administrators who had been, in his words, "biting at the bit" for change prior to his arrival. However, he said that

it was not until his second year that he and his newly hired administrative team "really started focusing on what kind of school are we [and] what kind of school do we want to be." Dr. Hange also indicated that the second year was different because he had sufficient data—based on stakeholders' feedback, personal observations, and sufficient reflection time—to prioritize needs and envision the cultural change that was really needed.

In his second year, Dr. Hange also noted that the "leadership culture" changed because he had hired seven new members, mostly at international recruiting conferences, near the end of the previous school year. When these new administrators arrived at AISME, they were predisposed to support Dr. Hange's developing vision and mandate. Through this second year, Dr. Hange and his leadership team had spent a considerable amount of time working on the self-study accreditation process—a process that is designed for schools to self-evaluate their educational programs, based on U.S. and European accrediting agency criteria and standards. Dr. Hange viewed this process as an opportunity and a "natural change agent."

While Dr. Hange's second year, according to at least one of the participants, was categorized as a time where culture and change was discussed "at every turn," the tragedies of 9-11 temporarily forced many of these discussions and actions aside. However, they reemerged in a variety of ways.

Forming a new leadership team. As noted, during Dr. Hange's first year, several administrators resigned and he had the opportunity to create a relatively new administrative team and hire several new teachers. Thus, seven new administrative members were added in Dr. Hange's second year—two of whom were internal candidates, three of whom had worked with Dr. Hange in the past in other schools and

two whom were new comers. Five of these new leaders, had prior formal school administrative experience, while the other two had informal leadership experiences. Dr. Hange also hired a few teachers with whom he had worked with in the past and several people he had not worked with previously.

While the departure and hiring of several teachers was a normal part of the international school experience, the "massive departure" of administrators was, according to one participant, "a godsend [because it allowed] Clark to pick and chose a team with some of the same values about kids and education." Several members of the new leadership team agreed with this notion and suggested that they were hired because of their educational beliefs, values, and change ideas that ultimately complimented, according to one interviewee, what "Clark was trying to do at the school [in terms of] changing the professional culture and educational programs." For example, another participant said, "my interview was about how I would help to bring about change…Clark wouldn't [have] hired me if he thought I was going to be a deadbolt and not try to change things here."

While each participant in the study had his or her specific ideas and examples about change and the change process, many of their ideas aligned with Dr. Hange's statements about change (as discussed above). For example, seven of the participants described change in terms of a process, or a long-term commitment. One person, for instance, declared that, "effective change comes over time." They also discussed change as planned, shared, and difficult in terms of resistance, and ultimately, as a means to improve student learning. In addition, six of the participants described the importance of teacher involvement and collaboration and used very similar terms, such as "buying in"

or "buy in" by teachers in order to bring about effective and lasting change. Finally, one participant described change as,

> Falling into two categories…probably program changes, where you actually create and build a program and the other, I don't know if you call them culture changes or intellectual changes…really, it is culture change—it's how we deal with each other. How we deal with students. How we deal with parents. That is the focus of change.

Thus, these new leaders were hired not only for their expertise for specific positions, but also because their values and beliefs about change were seemingly aligned in some way to the needs of the organization.[4]

In addition, several participants posit that Dr. Hange "naturally" changed the culture of the school as he hired both administrators and teachers that he knew were closer to his philosophy. One participant, for example, said, "he is going to hire people who are more independent thinkers, who share his philosophy of teaching and learning and the way you treat kids. We are getting those people now." In addition, another interviewee who had been at the school prior to Dr. Hange, suggested that hiring new like-minded people helped to steer the direction of the school's culture. He said,

> So, the culture has inherently changed as the players have changed. Before you got people who were hired who could do a job, this was your job, go do your job, this was what we want. You found very traditional teachers under that old model, [now] you have more risk-takers…you might get some more cantankerous people cause they are used to asking why and pushing, but you get wonderful initiative

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[4] It is difficult to determine to what extent the participants had these ideas at the time of their job interview. At the very least, we know that after at least two years of working on the administrative team their thinking is similar to Clark's in a number of important respects.

and you get new classes, new teams, and new things because those people that is what they are used to doing. Clark has been able to pick all but two of his administrators. So in theory, that is going to translate back out, you know if you pick an administrator who thinks like you do, and it is interesting the two of us who [stayed] but [were] hired by [former Superintendent], neither one of us were like [the former Superintendent]. We were not like the other administrators that the [former Superintendent] had hired and perhaps that was the reason we stayed, we were closer to Clark's philosophy, that was probably why we have lasted. The ones who were hired by [former Superintendent] and believed in his philosophies, none of them are here anymore.

Loosening the "chain of command." In addition to personnel changes, Dr. Hange also made some significant structural changes. For example, to some modest changes to correct particular administrative problems (e.g. consolidating a number of non-administrative technology related positions into an administrator's position, creating an assistant principal position for the high school, etc.), he also, in essence, flattened the administrative hierarchy by opening communication to a larger number of administrators. The specific mechanism for doing this was inviting all administrators to the Monday Administrators meetings. Those who had been in the school in the past were aware of the significance of this structural change. They indicated that, in the past, there had been a "chain of command" and only the upper management was allowed to attend these Monday meetings. Another participant, who had not been part of this "inner circle," recalled, "These [inner circle administrators] were the only ones who knew what was going on [in the school]." Dr. Hange however invited all leaders, with formal positional

authority, to be part of a formalized shared decision forum. This change, which was part of his belief of a leadership team concept, was significant because, as one participant reflects, "I suddenly had more of a voice in what we were doing... [and it] established trust among the full team," and according to another participant, it created a "more inclusive team."

First impressions of new leaders. The new members of the administrative team reported in their interviews that, over the first few months at AISME, they had had "vivid" first impressions about the school. All participants, regardless of when they arrived, commented, in one way or another, about "being taken aback" by the "poor shape" of the school facilities. Even though some facilities changes had occurred prior to the arrival of these new leaders, including the addition of a large performing arts theater, two new cafeterias (which introduced food services to the school for the first time), new high school science and art classrooms, and hundreds of new trees, the grounds still had what one of the interviewees characterized as an "industrial look." Another respondent observed that the "classrooms were too small for creative activities." In addition, another participant said, "It was shocking, I was caught in an educational time-warp and I thought I was transported back to the 1970s."

Several participants noted that they were aware from the start that, overall, students seemed to be "happy" and they generally liked going to school. However, several interviewees also noted that the one exception to this impression was the high school students. For example, one leader said, "I noticed almost immediately that the high school kids were not happy...I remember thinking [the high school] was not a good place for kids."

In addition to sharing their first impressions about students, three participants said that they found that parents "loved the school," and used adjectives such as "happy," "content," and "pleased" in describing their initial impressions of how they thought parents perceived the school.

While most new administrators found teachers to be "very friendly" when they initially interacted with them, several commented that, over the first few months, they had a general feeling of "teacher-centeredness," but moreso, "teacher-selfishness," or even, "incompetence," which either "surprised," "shocked" or "confused" these new leaders. One participant said,

> The first several months when I came in, there was a lot of anger I felt, a lot of
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> frustration, concern, and worry on the part of teachers…in my first year as I
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> started to get into the philosophy of the school or the way teachers thought, I
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> realized then, that this was a very teacher-centered school: it was about the
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> teachers first, and somewhere down the end of the line was the student."

Another participant recalled, "I got into a lot of trouble at the beginning because I was like, this was good for students,' and many people said, 'Who cares, is it good for me?' and that was difficult."

The leadership retreat. As Dr. Hange's second year began, he had set the stage for major changes to occur. A new leadership team was carefully recruited and selected to reflect the superintendent's philosophy. There were also significant structural changes, the most notable being the change in who could attend the Monday Administrators' Monday meeting. This change in essence opened communication and in the process flattened the hierarchy. One of the first meetings with the newly formed team was a full-

day leadership retreat. The agenda document from this meeting outlines the activities for the day, which included, "leadership transition process," "functioning as an effective team," and, "defining our school culture." During this day, the team got to know one another, according to one participant, "through team-building activities, discussed philosophies, hopes and dreams...and thinking about what kind of school culture [we wanted]." Another document, reviewed by the leaders that day, outlines the "operating principles for the AISME Admin Team," which included Dr. Hange's expectations of leaders:

- Engage in open communication

- Build trust and support each other individually and as a team

- Support decisions publicly & privately

- Engage in flexible thinking and think out of the box as we consider practices and approaches being employed

- Commit to the belief that kids come first in all decision making

- Set & communicate clear expectations

- Employ humor appropriately

- Work collaboratively

- Make every effort to realize and act on the positive aspects of leadership change at AISME

When one of the participants discussed this meeting, he said that the team "talked about all sorts of things, the kind of schools we were from, what worked, what didn't, and the kind of school we wanted, and the kind of school we didn't want...we agreed that we needed to focus on kids." Another administrator remembered the following about the

retreat, "not only [did it] set some big expectations, but set the tone about what kind of school we wanted...we committed to [talk about] school culture during leadership team meetings."

School culture discussed at subsequent meetings. Dr. Hange had initiated the idea at the retreat about the importance of school culture by placing it as an agenda item. As a result of their discussions at the retreat, Dr. Hange and the team decided that they were committed to talk about school culture, "whenever given a chance," according to Dr. Hange. Therefore, the construct was placed as the topic on several of the Administrators' Monday meeting agendas. Dr. Hange recalled,

> We use culture in Administrative meetings when we talk about beliefs. We use the term "professionalism" a lot. I think our Administrative team, maybe with a few exceptions, one or two, share pretty much the common belief about what was a professional....we talk about teacher behavior. We also talk about our expectations...maybe connected to our belief systems. Another way we've talked about culture in the Administrative meetings, [when we talk about] a culture of collaboration and wanting to promote that for faculty. I think we all know that teaching is an isolating profession. And unless you make a conscious effort to avoid that isolation, then you know you have a bunch of parts that aren't working together. So, that's another way we talk about culture, which is related to collaboration.

Almost all other participants remembered that school culture had been discussed at meetings, and as one participant noted, "[culture was] often a focal point of our

discussions." In addition, several agree with Dr. Hange, that culture often addressed in terms of "staff collaboration."

A few others saw it differently. One participant suggested that "we used to talk about it at the Admin meetings, but I think it's moved more to Principals' meeting discussions because they're about the educational side of the school, and I think that's really where we need to focus on the culture." Another interviewee suggested that the idea of school culture needed to be discussed further, he said,

We have discussed it; I believe it is a very important topic. My concern is that we spend a lot of time in administrative meetings on day-to-day operations and the problems that come up and I would like to be able to spend more time on the philosophy and the reasons behind decisions—I would like to see more of that, I believe that is important.

Another participant said, "I don't recall talking about culture…maybe one or twice." While another interviewee said, "he [Dr. Hange] has probably talked about it, but I fell asleep." Perhaps one explanation here is that of the seven participants who discussed culture explicitly, six worked in jobs directly related to the educational side of the school, whereas, the two who did not recall the discussions—although they were most likely at those meetings—worked on the management/non-academic side of the school.

While there were mixed memories about discussions of school culture, the Monday meeting Agendas and Minutes clearly document that "school culture" appeared formally, at various times, six times, after the leadership retreat. The documents outline that the discussions revolved around "defining our school culture," and documented

discussions about "building a professional learning community," "community of learners," "shared governance," "school climate," and, "shared beliefs and values."

A plan of collaboration "to find out about our school's culture." One of the participants recalled that because of one of the Administrative meetings he was "charged [by the Dr. Hange] to create a plan...to see how [the team] could find out about our school's culture...that would use the collaborative process." As a result, this participant drafted a plan to create, in his words, "open forums [specifically] about our school's culture with parents, students and faculty." This plan, as outlined in document entitled "Defining Our School's Culture," showed that the Administrative team had planned to conduct "open forums" specifically about school culture with each of these groups. Essentially, the plan outlined how the administrative team would meet with different stakeholder groups and provide focus questions for discussion about school culture. The staff focus questions, for example, included, "What kind of a school do we want?" "Where do you see evidence of our strategic plan and mission?" and, "How does our teaching and student learning compare with our mission and strategic plan?" These questions were designed to elicit understanding about the school culture at the time.

While much of this plan revolved around bringing the community's beliefs and values out for discussion, the plan did not move forward for two reasons. First, the tragedies of 9-11 in New York City redirected the team to focus on more structural elements of emergency procedures. Second, it was decided that the school's self-study/accreditation process would be more of a natural avenue for these kinds of discussions. As one participant recounted, "we decided that what we wanted to get done

in this [defining a school culture] process would be captured in the accreditation process."

The wake-up call of 9-11 and its aftermath. Much of what was described in the previous sections about Dr. Hange's second year occurred between the administrators' start of school in early August to the tragic events of 9-11. According to one of the interviewees, the topic of school culture was "pushed to the side with 9-11 [and moved] to future topics on the agenda." In the aftermath of the 9-11 period, the administration, according to one of the participants, had "a wake-up call...because, well, we had started working on the crisis emergency plan, [but] we had not taken it seriously enough...I guess, along with all the other issues at the school." Thus, as another interviewee recalled, "I think that 9-11 moved us far away from that [school culture] discussion and it was a while until we started to talk about it again, but we did [talk about culture again]."

In addition to placing culture on the sidelines, the impact of 9-11, according to one respondent, "was major, the world changed, we changed, especially because the terrorist were from [this region] and it made staff and families wonder if they should be here." Another participant suggested that it had a "permanent effect on teachers, on the way people feel and sort of responded to life at the school...Ever since that day, the stress level went up and it never really came down."

Self-study and the accreditation process. While 9-11 temporarily halted the administration efforts to begin to define the culture of the school, the self-study process to re-accredit the school refocused the team and all stakeholders on discussing many aspects of the construct. Thus, in his second year Dr. Hange, alongside the Director of Education, focused primarily on leading the school's self-study/accreditation process.

Accreditation was quite significant for AISME because, according to one participant, "[it] totally exposed our entire school, staff, programs [and] practices to outside criteria…we could no longer say we were great…we now had to evaluate our school based on national and international standards that we didn't conjure up." It was also significant according to another interviewee because "many parents view this as status when choosing a school…a school must be accredited for their kids to get into a good U.S. university."

Dr. Hange acknowledged the importance of the self-study process in several ways. In terms of school culture, he said it was a chance for "everybody" to compare and challenge some of the educational norms, values and beliefs that were part of the established culture. He also suggested that it was "the perfect change agent" because it offered a natural way to reflect, change, and improve the school. He recounted,

> Then we come into year two and you know Humda'Allah ["thank Allah" in Arabic], here's the self-study. I mean, there's the perfect change agent. Where we have to reflect now, everybody, no choices allowed team, everybody was involved…Everybody has to be on a self-study committee that's your professional responsibility. And guess what? Now we have some standards by which we need to compare our school. And so that self-study then in year two provides a tremendous impetus for change within the educational program.

Other participants agreed that the self-study was a natural or perfect agent of change, because, as one participant noted, "it challenged…the culture by virtue that people had to meet and discuss some of their beliefs about how kids learn and how they teach."

In terms of the importance of this self-study as a vehicle for change and school improvement, one participant suggested,

> From the point of view that there was a focus on improving the school, making it a better place and I think a lot of that flowed out of the accreditation study...the idea of attempting to do an accreditation study that would focus on areas we identified [i.e. the culture] which needed improvement. You highlight your strengths but you also focus on areas that need to be improved.

Another participant recounted,

> I think that self-study was an eye-opener for a lot of people...the Admin saw that self-study just validated it [i.e. the problems with the culture]. It brought it to the top, the things that we should be working on. And you know, once you put those out there and either people start picking it up...but when people see the need, then you see some people stepping forward, but you'll still see some people dragging their feet....Some people are going to be the change agents, they are going jump on for any change that comes about.

The self-study was an important step therefore that brought to the surface for analysis and discussion some of the assumptions, norm, values and beliefs, including an examination of some of the artifacts (e.g. written curriculum, instructional planning, etc.) within the organization.

Developing professional expectations. While the staff and administration placed much of their energies on the self-study process, Dr. Hange and the Principals' group also drafted a series of professional expectations for staff. The principals' group, according to one of the participants, "thought that we needed to create written expectations for staff

because, like so many other things, nothing was written down...somehow, magically, staff had to know what was expected [of them]." These expectations were introduced to staff in the second year, alongside an updated document about the school's performance appraisal system.

According to one of the participants who was in the school prior to Dr. Hange, the performance appraisal system was "never taken seriously and didn't really matter." But the principals' group wanted to change this perception, especially because they had heard teachers say things such as, according to one participant, "[evaluation] doesn't mean anything ...or [conversely] I want [an evaluation system] that helps me in the classroom."

As a result, the principals' group, reviewed research and best practices in the area of staff evaluation, and outlined, in writing, professional expectations for the staff (a further change would come in the following year.). The process resulted in the development of five professional expectations for faculty. An evaluation document outlines these expectations as follows:

> AISME teachers will receive a written Summary Evaluation based upon progress towards Professional Expectations of the school. Those expectations are:
> 1. Teachers will be responsible for the learning of all of their students.
> 2. Teachers will use a variety of assessments to inform and affect their instruction.
> 3. Teachers will work collaboratively to ensure similar learning outcomes for their students.
> 4. Teachers will develop positive relationships with their students

5. Teachers will actively engage parents in their children's education with an

     emphasis on proactive communication.

As discussed below, when these expectations were introduced to staff, alongside a "self-assessment instrument," the administration team began to recognize that resistance to the many changes was escalating within the organization.

Other initiatives in Dr. Hange's second year. In addition to the many changes that had begun to shape expectations for the K-12 staff and the educational programs, there were also a number of other initiatives that helped to influence the school's culture. For example, a major initiative was the formation of the Parent-Teacher-Student Association (PTSA). The PTSA was an especially important change at the school because—after being disbanded ten years earlier—it was reformed, according to one of the interviewees, to "bring the community together to socialize and celebrate." The PTSA initiated events such as an international dinner, staff recognition, student celebration, etc. In addition to the creation of the PTSA, several building-based initiatives were enacted in each of the three schools. For example, among other things, the Elementary School was, according to one participant, "revamping its early childhood program to be more responsive to the needs of young children." Whereas, the Middle School, according to another participant, was undergoing a

     process of moving this from a departmentalized junior high to a "true" team-based

     middle school concept [by focusing] on educating and re-educating the teachers

     about the characteristics of a middle school learner, what do they need to see

     happening, what a middle school teacher needs.

Finally, the High School, according to several participants, was going through "the biggest changes in the school [and was] the most problematic part of the school's culture" (as will be discussed in the "year three" section).

Resistance: It was like breaking "through a knot." Over a two-year period, since the arrival of Dr. Hange's, several participants identified that resistance from staff brewed because of the many changes that had occurred or were occurring in the school at that time. The resistance first appeared in Dr. Hange's first year, according to one participant, in the form of "quiet grumblings.... [and] frustrations." Another participant who had worked at the school prior to Dr. Hange, suggested that "during Clark's first year, teachers were sussing-out [sic] the new Head and I think they were pretty much on their best behavior in public settings." However, the same participant suggested, that wasn't the case "behind closed doors or when people had a few drinks." However, by the second year, resistance escalated due to the variety of changes that had occurred at AISME. Virtually all participants discussed, to varying degrees, the growing resistance in the organization, because of, in their words, "new expectations," "all the changes," "the stress," and "the increased load of work for teachers."

Several leaders, who had worked with Dr. Hange in the past, considered that he, in one participant's words, was an "authentic educator." They also said that they realized early on that some of the "grumbling" that they heard when they first got to AISME was natural because he had "high expectations for everyone," and he "believes in the power of education." One participant suggested,

> I know at that time it had been the second year that Clark had been in the school
>
> and there was a lot of grumbling about change and doing things differently. There

was a lot of frustration by a lot of people because their comfort-zone was being

challenged and I think it was the beginning of a shift from teacher-centered to

student-centered and so, it was a very difficult time for teachers.

Similar to Dr. Hange's first impression, the new leaders also heard stories about

"how things [were] done" at the school. For example, one participant said,

Teachers thought the school was great…teachers were saying things like, 'where

was this place going?' 'This place was going downhill,' 'it was not the way it

used to be,' 'the administrators left us alone, you didn't have to go to meetings,

now we're having to go to meetings, they are changing everything, nothing was

the same.'

Another participant found a similar situation at the school, he said he got a "message…

indirectly," as people told him things like, "this was the way we've done it, this was how

we do it at school, this was what we should be doing," or, "Why are we doing it that

way? It's not the way we've done it before."

While Dr. Hange easily acknowledged that there were "varying pockets of

resistance" in the school (and in any organization for that matter), other participants were

surprised how deep this resistance was and how the large amount of frustration they

heard and saw resulting from asking teachers to participate in the self-study. One

participant said, "I've never been in any school system where you couldn't set up

curriculum development or staff development…It was just, you know, like 'to break

through a knot,'…but it seems to me a very big resistance in [the meeting] area." Another

participant, who had been at the school for many years, said, "on the one hand we've

been hearing for years that the administration was top-down and teachers have no voice

in decisions, but, as soon as we ask them for their voice [with the self-study], they don't have time to give it." Additionally, another new leader discussed his surprise when learning that,

> Teachers showed up at twenty minutes before the bell went in the morning and left five minutes after the bell rang in the evening. I was used to a culture in the school where I get there at six-thirty and I would be late. Here, at two-forty [end of school time], in my first year, many people were gone. There were a few sporting things that happened in the afternoon but a lot, or majority of [people in] the school were not here.

One of the first events that galvanized teachers into "complaining outright" about the changes in the organization was the expectation of staying after school for self-study afternoons in Dr. Hange's second year. For this self-study, all teachers were required to be on at least one self-study committee, and according to one of the interviewees, they were "suddenly forced to stay after school [twice a month] to meet with these teams [but they did] not get paid." While other participants referred to these meetings simply as the new expectations by a new leadership team that are part of being an effective school, traditionally there were very few meetings, and as one participant who had been at the school for many years suggested, they were "never after school." In addition, teachers had traditionally been paid for all after-school activities, such as sports or clubs. Thus, this initial resistance came from an unwritten rule that said something like, according to one of the participants, "teachers are paid until 2:40 and should get a stipend if they stay longer."

Another issue of resistance that was repeatedly discussed in the interviews was the issue about the "fight" of moving from—what several participants termed—"a teacher-centered school to a student-centered school." One participant suggested,

> I know at that time it had been the second year that Clark had been in the school and there was a lot of grumbling about change and doing things differently. There is a lot of frustration by a lot of people because their comfort-zone is being challenged and I think it is the beginning of a shift from teacher-centered to student-centered and so, it is a very difficult time for teachers.

A specific example of this type of resistance resulted from a major technology change. With the passing of a large technology budget in year one—and consolidating various technology positions into a director of technology—technology initiatives began to move quickly. Huge resistance came from staff because the administration decided to move away from a "teacher-based" system to a "community-based system." While Dr. Hange acknowledged that the decision needed to be made quickly, and he noted that it could be seen as "top-down" because consensus building would have taken too long. According to one of the participant's, there were "major outcries of how could you do this to us." This participant noted,

> A specific event would be when I tried to launch an online [program]. For example, teachers had used products like Outlook Express, which was very individual-centered. It is geared toward the individual, it is a process for receiving and sending email out as an individual. I wanted to launch an [online] concept, which is a community bulletin board, which goes beyond the individual and looks at communication amongst a community of student learners, teachers, etc., and I

got huge resistance because I was selling it as "this how students can use it, this how you can use it with students, this was how it will benefit students, this was how it will benefit student learning" and I got resistance because, "It won't do this for me." "It won't do that for me." "I can't do this." "I can't do that." There was a lot of resistance because they were coming from the point of what will it do for *me* [heaving emphasis on the italicized word in interview]. So I had to shift back and shift my direction to say "OK, here is what it will do for you as a teacher," after I ran into that roadblock for a while.

Finally, another form of resistance that was often identified in the interviews was about the people who were hired at the school. Several of the participants said that upon arrival (or change of jobs within the school), the "new-hires" were negatively termed as "FOC's" (i.e. friends of Clark's). One of the participant's suggested that people thought that Clark "imported some of his friends [and] favored them because *he* hired them" (heavy emphasis placed on word in the interview). This longstanding member of the team felt that Dr. Hange's relationship with these newcomers was "working against" members of the staff because they had not been hired by Dr. Hange (he included himself in this analysis), and therefore they were not, in his words, "one of the chosen few."

Professional development: "Another way to share culture." Throughout the second year (and in the third year), Dr. Hange also introduced and challenged the administrative team to read about educational research, change and culture through articles shared, formally and informally.

Several of the participants suggested that the team discussed and "learned about school culture" through sharing research about education and leadership. One participant

said, "Clark has given us articles on leadership and all sorts of things. We sit around during some Admin meetings and discuss them and share our ideas about how to apply [the ideas in the articles] to our school." Articles shared about changing school culture, specifically addressed culture (e.g. toxic cultures), these included, for example, "Ideas & Perspectives" by Independent School Management, and "Positive or Negative" by K. Peterson (2002). There were also broader articles, which also addressed the culture of schools, by Barth, Fullan, Glickman, and Sergiovanni about leadership, resistance, professionalism, and school community. Based on this "challenge" by the superintendent to keep learning, one participant suggested, "Clarke is always learning and challenging us to be thinkers and doers too...he wants us to believe in the change and understand why we are changing."

Leaders' explanations of school culture. Throughout Dr. Hange's second year, the culture notion was embedded in the day-to-day life of the administrative team. Not surprisingly, therefore, that many of the administrators seemed to internalize the concept and make it their own.[5] Seven of the nine participants used the word "culture" prior to being asked about the construct. The phrases they used to discuss culture included, for example, "I know we are moving in the direction of a culture of collaboration"; "ultimately, I'm responsible for the culture that exists here"; "I think we are changing our learning culture"; "a goal is to find a balanced, positive school culture"; "we are trying to move away from the teacher-centered culture that has dominated this place...to [a] student-centered [culture]," etc.

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[5] It should be noted that it is difficult to speculate to what extent the administrators knew about the culture construct prior to arriving at the school and/or working with Dr. Hange.

When specifically asked about culture, there was a wide-range of explanations from Dr. Hange's in-depth reference to Terry Deal's notion of culture and the need to get deeper than "the way we do things around here," to the other end of the continuum, where one participant said that he knew "almost...nothing" about the construct. Of the two administrators who reported that they did not know much or could not define the construct, they both suggested, in different ways, that this might be due to the fact that they worked in jobs that were in the non-educational/management side of the school.

Other participants explained school culture in a variety of ways. One participant, for example, said that prior to arriving at AISME, he had "never really talked about it [explicitly]...but...maybe [at other schools we] talked about it in other ways, things like staff morale, the mission." Another participant discussed the idea of school culture in the following way,

> What is that line Clark is always using [long pause]...from...[long pause] Fullan, oh ya, "avoid fragmentation, promote integration"...I think, maybe, this is really what [school] culture is all about...making sure that we're not working in little groups, but we are integrated, one community.

In addition, three leaders related the following phrases when discussing school culture: "common values and beliefs," "what we value and believe," "the feeling in the school and what we believe in." A fourth leader suggested,

> To me school culture is sort of the – it is not written down anywhere, you are not going to find it in the handbook, or a policy manual. It is basically, what is talked about in the workrooms, in the hallways, the old-fashioned sort of water cooler

talk. Schools, you measure their culture in many ways by the conversations that go on in the school to how related are they to kids, learning and education.

Several of the participants also discussed culture in terms of their experience. For example, one said,

> I've seen many times a culture in an Elementary School [that] will be very nurturing and you'll nurture these kids along and you'll do this and all of a sudden they get to middle school and this is pulled-back, sometimes rightfully so, up to a point, and then you get to High School and you got kids in High School but they're like kids you meet in college, it's kind of like a college environment.

For this new team the conversations about kids, learning, education, change, and school culture, became part of the formal and informal discussions and actions at AISME.

Summary of Dr. Hange's second year: Will the Dr. Hange "problem...go away?"
One participant said that was the question that was being asked by many staff members as Dr. Hange's second year drew to a close. Essentially, according to several participants, there was mixed reviews from the staff about what was going on at the school. On the one hand, there were some staff members resisting the changes, and on the other hand, according to one of the participants, there was a group saying, "we love this collaborative stuff, this is great, keep going, we love this, we finally have a voice, this is good for kids." In other words, according to another of the interviewees, teachers began to "experience and feel what a collaborative culture was like," but also, "resistance was quite apparent, especially from the older ones [i.e. teachers who were at AISME before Clarke]." Nevertheless, at the end of Dr. Hange's second year, the organization was in flux and according to one of the respondents,

I think it was a fascinating time at AISME. I was excited about all the change and what was going to happen [the next year]. We finished the self-study. Wow, I think [the study] diffused a few super egos around here. We learned we are not the greatest, the best and [therefore] we do need to change to get better...I think we learned we were good and that is...just mediocre...so, I finished my first year learning that we [had] just begun...we had documents [that was] evidence [about] where we needed to go.

During Dr. Hange's third year, there were discussions by the participants, among other things, about how the self-study action plans were transformed into a new school improvement plan and how the staff appraisal system was updated. At the same, most participants commented on the problems facing the high school and how the new principal faced, according to one participant, a "high school culture that was damaging to kids."

Year Three: "Lord of the Flies" or Cultural "Utopia?"

Overview of Dr. Hange's third year. At the beginning of Dr. Hange's third year, the highlight was an on-site visit by the school's accrediting agency to award the school re-accreditation status. Along with this approval came many commendations and a few recommendations for improvement of the school. One participant recalled that the re-accreditation award was "something to be celebrated [and] heralded as a significant achievement from where we began."

Based on the accrediting agency's recommendations and also the action plans that were developed in the previous year through a year-long collaborative effort by staff, students, and community members, the administrative team drafted and began to

implement a comprehensive K-12 school improvement plan. As discussed below, this plan enacted new initiatives, such as the piloting of a faculty appraisal system. The plan also ensured that the faculty would continue their high level of collaboration and involvement.

The faculty's reaction to some of these initiatives and involvement was mixed. According to several participants, the newer faculty (who had been hired Dr. Hange and his team) and other change-oriented members, celebrated these changes and initiatives. However, the faculty who had been at the school for a longer period than Dr. Hange, according to one participant, "were upset because our change efforts did not stop with accreditation, [the administration] continued to expect the same [level] of collaboration and commitment."

While several of the participants discussed various initiatives that resulted from Dr. Hange's the third year, all participants commented on the problems facing the high school. These comments focused primarily on the challenges that were facing the new high school principal as he entered his first year in that position.

By the end of Dr. Hange's third year (and thus, the end of this narrative), the story focuses on what various participants suggested were the cultural changes that occurred through their reculturing efforts. Finally, this narrative ends with the reculturing efforts, according to several participants, gaining momentum; as one participant noted, "the future of AISME is looking brighter...not yet a utopia...we have a long road to travel before we find that school; I believe we are starting to unify our community of learners."

Initiating a school improvement plan. After the accrediting agency departed, Dr. Hange and the leadership team began to draft a school improvement plan. This K-12 plan

was based on recommendations from the accrediting agency and a composite of 'areas of improvement' from the self-study action plans that teachers had developed throughout the second year (e.g. recommendations for improvements in curriculum, student needs, facilities, early childhood, etc.). As part of this plan, a committee structure was established. Each committee had individual goals and procedures, as a means to review the assigned portion of the school's plan. For example, a professional development committee was established because it had been identified as needing improvement. This committee was then formed to decide the future direction of P.D. at AISME including external training (e.g. regional and international conference participation, etc.), internal inservicing (e.g. inviting consultants, technology training, etc.), how monies were to be allotted (e.g. summer stipends, regional conferences), etc.

Once the overall school improvement plan was developed and committee priorities were established, teachers were required to join at least one school improvement committee or choose an alternative appraisal cohort group (discussed in next subsection). In this process, fifteen new groups were established for the purposes of school and professional improvement, they included: (a) regional initiatives (e.g. regional learning groups were established to train teachers in 6+1 Traits Writing, student assessment, the National Board Certification process, etc.); (b) in-school improvement committees (e.g. meeting student needs, technology development, professional development, etc.); and, (c) staff appraisal pilot groups (e.g. professional portfolios, action research, peer coaching, etc.). The impetus for establishing these groups and committees was to ensure that all teachers continued professional learning, collaboration, and shared-decision making.

Improving the staff appraisal system. The school improvement plan also recommended changes to the staff appraisal system. These changes included developing a sixth professional expectation to be added to the other five outlined above (i.e. teachers will be responsible for the learning of all of their students; teachers will use a variety of assessments to inform and affect their instruction; etc.). This sixth expectation was: "teachers will actively contribute to the school outside of the classroom." After this expectation was shared with teachers, it became part the performance appraisal process in the third year.

For teachers to fulfill this sixth expectation, they were expected to join at least one school improvement committee (discussed above) or join an appraisal cohort. These cohorts were created because teachers consistently told administration (informally in discussions and formally through the self-study) that they wanted appraisal that was meaningful, helpful, and job-embedded—not simply the traditional clinical model that existed in the school. Thus, the cohorts were researched, designed, and lead by administrators as an alternative means to staff appraisal. One participant who lead one of these cohorts suggested, "[the administration] wanted the cohort groups to show staff that we [the administration] too could teach and we too could learn.... plus, the old evaluation [appraisal system] was ineffective, we wanted something that was progressive."

The high school: "Houston, we've got a problem." A major event at the school during Dr. Hange's third year was the change in leadership at the high school level. This changeover brought a new leadership style and philosophy to the high school. Several participants suggested that this changeover was necessary because they high school was

suffering, and according to one of the interviewees, prior to the change in leadership, it was "a school in crisis."

As discussed at the beginning of this story, several stakeholders in the community did not support the introduction of a high school for western teenagers in a Middle Eastern country. Thus, prior to Dr. Hange's tenure, few resources and support systems were in place that would normally ensure success of a new school or program. In order to increase support to the high school, Dr. Hange had created a new assistant principal position, among other things, at the end of his first year. As a result, he was able to hire for this position early, with an understanding that that person would assume the principal's role when the first high school principal departed in the following year.

In hiring this new (future) principal, Dr. Hange said he recognized that the culture of the high school was problematic and was in need of change. As reported earlier in the story, he had felt that the high school students were really struggling and therefore he recruited a leader who would move the culture from what he, and others, considered a teacher-centered environment, toward, what several interviewees termed, 'a student-centered philosophy.' In reflecting on this high school culture and the challenges for the new leadership, he said,

> [In terms of] culture, it befuddles me at this point, I think this was where our
> present principal really has his work cut out, how quickly a traditional High
> School mind set culture settled in. Within two years we had a culture that was
> twenty years old and we are trying to take it the other way and said, 'No, no, no,
> the High School too can be student-centered'....in hindsight we probably didn't
> have enough administrative support at the time to develop the systems, so because

we were developing the system administratively we weren't tending to the faculty, kind of like 'Lord of the Flies,' I am afraid. That's a part of our faculty that took hold.

Several of the participants discussed the high school in terms of this leadership transition. For example, in the previous June end-of-school period, the AISME community celebrated their first-ever graduating class, which took place in the new performance theater, with a reception afterwards in the new high school cafeteria. One participant recalled that, "all energies [in the high school] focused on making it to that day, we knew there were many issues, but we knew they couldn't be resolved until [the new principal] took over at the helm." Another participant said that the graduation "was a very important step for AISME [because] we were finally a K-12 school, [the first principal] should get credit for getting us that far, but we really needed someone to have a vision that went beyond this graduation." Another leader, humorously added,

> It was an accomplishment...we sat there watching the high school take off...but we knew, behind the scenes the engines were malfunctioning, and [the high school] was beginning to spin out of control...all I could think was, Houston, we've got a problem.

What was needed in the high school, according to one participant, was "a major change because [the former principal] was a thoughtful, nice, grandfather figure, but he was too traditional and thought that the school would run itself as soon as he put [a structure] in place." Instead, according to another participant, "the teachers took over and thought they ran the [high] school." This was a real issue, according to same participant,

because it became "a culture of teachers who were only about teachers and what was good for them."

This reoccurring theme of teacher-centeredness in the high school echoed throughout the participants' responses. For example, one participant suggested that the fact the a vast majority of students in the first graduating class were accepted by major U.S. universities was, in his words,

A miracle, because many [high school] teachers were saying that the students would never make it, they were not prepared for the rigors of the I.B. program. I don't know how many times I heard that none of our students were 'I.B. material;' [which was] laughable considering the families they came from, but they bantered this mantra about like a ping- pong ball…it seemed nobody could be good enough for their teaching…it was exactly the opposite message that Clark was giving… [i.e.] we are here to help kids be successful.

As the new principal began his year—alongside a new assistant principal who was hired internally—he initiated a collaborative process to bring to the surface for discussion some of the values and beliefs that high school teachers held and also to challenged some of the established norms. One participant suggested that the approach of the new principal was "the opposite to [the former principal], because he introduced a vision of placing kids in the drivers seat, and asked teachers to help kids learn how to drive." The new leadership team at the high school began this process by creating an open-forum for students, teachers, and parents and invited them to be visionaries about what kind of high school they wanted. This process was enacted through an open letter to the community, where the principal wrote, and "The next 3-5 years will be defining years. That is,

defining what ASIME will be: its culture, its values, and the climate that will set us apart as an international school and a learning community."

Finally, another participant who had been at the school prior to Dr. Hange reflected on the beginnings of the high school reculturing story, he said,

I think [the principal] is trying very hard in the high school to make it a collaborative process; he is fighting a real clash of culture or belief system. There are two camps up there – and we're not sure who is going to win that fight yet— that one was still to be decided because there is a lot of underground resistance there. I think [the principal] is going to change his culture there by taking some teachers dead head on... [by saying] "it was not right to treat kids this way, it was not right to treat colleagues this way"...having sixty percent of your kids get a failure progress report is not acceptable and he is trying to take them on, one-on-one and either he dismisses them or lays out a series of clear, corrective action....it is a clash of philosophies.

Staff reactions in Dr. Hange's third year: The 2:40 rule reemerges. Alongside the underground resistance in the high school, the development of the school improvement plan and subsequent committees and cohort groups, elicited a variety of reactions from staff at AISME. On the one hand, there was resistance from some of the teachers because, as one participant recalled,

Some [teachers] believed that this [improvement plan] came out of nowhere and no matter how many times we explained that it was a result of the accreditation process, some just didn't want to hear that. We learned later that the real problem was not if the decision was shared or if the alternative stuff was a good thing...the

real problem was that we had professional expectations about bettering [teachers']

educational practices, and that meant that they had to stay past student dismissal

[2:40 P.M.].

Another participant suggested, however, that newer staff members saw this simply as a

component of an effective school, and it was really the long-standing employees who

"were upset because they thought that that after-school meeting structure was going to be

a one-year only consequence of the self-study process...[and] they continued to believe

that they should be paid for after school activities."

Even with the "small pocket of resistance," the administration held open meetings

to introduce the process and obtain feedback. Eventually, the administration pushed

forward with this initiative because they believed, according to one participant,

> We were sending the message [to staff], maybe it is a continuous message, a
>
> message that meeting together to dialogue, to talk about our beliefs was
>
> important...the message was, and still is, this is what a collaborative culture does,
>
> this is shared decision making, and this is our direction, this is how we can learn
>
> together, and is not going away, so come on board.

The Culture at AISME During Year Three of the Hange Regime

All participants in the study generally acknowledged that there were changes in

the school's culture over the three-year period since Dr. Hange's arrival. Their comments

about the culture of the school in Dr. Hange's third year included, for example, "a

healthier place for kids," "a new focus on learning for both children and adults," "staff

who are more committed to student success," and, "staff who are now collaborating with

each other and working on common goals." Some leaders suggested, that these cultural

changes were evident because of the type of staff who were staying, leaving, and being recruited, and also, because of the type of "conversations that are going at meetings and in the hallways." Another participant, suggested his overall impressions about the culture in this third year was as follows,

It's like a cattle-drive where you're taking your cows to market; you've got to get them somewhere. For years, they've been roaming the range free. And your job was to round them up, point them in a direction and to move them. We're talking about moving a hundred and fifty people. So we had to round them up. And we had to said "we're going to market and this was where it is." Often, there will be some who will get on the path, walk straight, and do exactly what you want. And there are others who will take off and somebody has to go out, and round them up, bring them back into the line. And maybe at some point if it just doesn't work you just go, go your way, and we'll be done with you, and they find another herd to run with.

Similarly, another leader noted that "as leadership has changed [in the school], so have teachers, [they are] more open, better problem solvers, and more collaborative than ever before."

Another participant, who had been at the school for the longest period of all the interviewees, suggested that the biggest cultural change in the school since Dr. Hange's arrival centered on a more open and responsive philosophy. He said,

The biggest change is that the [school's] philosophy is a more open one...originally, when I first came we were an American school to serve the American and Canadian population. Others were allowed in but that was our main

mission. You could come into our school if you were willing, if you wanted an American styled education, designed for Americans, and you weren't [an American], but that was what you wanted, you could come. Under Clark, it has now changed to, "we are a school for anyone who wants an American-style education," and that American style is actually changing as we...now have an I.B. high school, and now we are accredited by the European Council of Independent Schools, and there is a bit more international flair in us. We now have a program and a language program for native speakers for our host culture. Previous times, the idea of having a [native] language program in itself, signifies the change in our population, because before we never offered it because American kids did not need that, so why offer it?

Five of the participants, who all worked in jobs related to the educational side or "front lines" of the school (e.g. Principals, Director of Education, etc.) noted that one of the biggest cultural changes was with many of teachers' values, which appeared to be moving toward student-directedness. As one leader suggested,

> Two years ago I was having conversations with teachers about why students were not being successful and they would tell me that the kids shouldn't have been accepted in our school, they didn't belong...they didn't meet our standards...now I am having conversations with some of the same teachers about how they are helping the same type of student to be successful...they are now talking about strategies they are using to differentiate or alternative assessments that are working...I would wager that they didn't even know what [those terms] meant two years ago.

Along the same lines, another participant suggested,

> I see changes in staff values: It was a relatively recent change but we have gone
> from saying this my program and you either pass or fail, you get it or you don't
> get it, to the burden being placed on the teacher by sharing the responsibility, the
> teacher and the child bear that responsibility and you see it now. We have
> professional expectations that say the teacher is responsible for the learning of all
> their students; there are kids succeeding now who never would have passed
> before.

In addition, several participants discussed the changes in the educational philosophy that had changed in the school. According to one of these participants, cultural change was "occurring at a number of levels, especially in many of the classrooms, in teaching instruction and what teachers are actually doing with children." For example, this participant said,

> When I got here, one of the main uses of the computer was for the teacher. In fact,
> if you went through the elementary classrooms, the position of the computer
> described a lot about how it is used. It was on teacher's desks, facing away from
> students, being used solely by the teacher. If you go around now in the elementary
> classrooms, the position of the computer has changed, not in all of them, but in
> many of them. The position of the computer now is facing toward the student, not
> necessarily on a teacher's desk—on another desk maybe beside the teacher's
> desk. If you would go around when I first got here and looked at who was using
> computers, many times, it was only being used by the teacher. Now, when you go

around, you see that the individual computer is being used by the student. I think

it is a change in the culture.

While all participants indicated that there have been changes in the school's

culture—as outlined above—several leaders found it difficult to determine the extent of

change. Often, they would discuss the "feel" or "focus" of the school as having changed,

but the exact cultural changes, according to one of the participants, was "difficult to put

into words." At the same time, several participants were very clear that they believed that

the school was in a transitory state, and there was much work to be done. Finally, several

of the participants suggested that the individual schools at AISME—Elementary, Middle,

and High School—were at different cultural points on a timeline of cultural change.

Although one leader thought that the school was beginning to see a K-12 identity emerge,

he believed, that different subcultures (e.g. local-overseas hires, different nationalities,

etc.) needed to be addressed before an integrated community could be realized.

Conclusions—The Future of the AISME Culture: "We Know Where We Need To
Go…The Only Question Is, How Fast Can We Get There?"

This final part of the story focuses on respondents' perceptions of the future of

AISME. In this regard, all participants, in some way, suggested that the cultural changes

were just beginning or were slowly becoming more apparent to them as they reflected on

the happenings in the school. Dr. Hange suggested that the culture was "in a

transition…we're like the snowball at the top of hill that may have come down ten yards

and it's getting bigger, it's got a long way to run." Another participant provided a similar

comparison,

> You know when I look at our goals, our school improvement initiatives,
>
> everything that we are doing…our culture…that's not a two-year goal…it's not a

three-year goal. I see them as a five to ten year goals. And it's not saying that

some little things are not going to happen, and they're going roll over and unfold

and something else was going come into place. But it's going be a feed-off from

what we've started.

Additionally, several participants discussed that it was important to step back, take a look

at what was going on, and in some way celebrate some of the successes of the cultural

change efforts. At the same time, it was also important for several of the participants to

move forward and create new initiatives that would compliment and build upon some of

the cultural expectations that had been established.

All participants, at some point, discussed Dr. Hange's leadership and his impact

on the culture, each suggested, in some way, that the "BC/AC effect" was somewhat

dramatic. Most participants discussed how it was primarily through Dr. Hange's vision,

focus on children (i.e. the "beating of the drums"), and overall cultural leadership

strategies that empowered them to lead in a culture of change (this idea will be elaborated

through research questions in Chapter V). One participant reflected upon Dr. Hange in

the following way, "I came here in 1998 and I have seen a lot of these changes....The

attitude now is yes 'we can' rather than 'no we can't.' I now think the attitude is, 'we can

do these things'...they are worthwhile and we will pursue them and that's because of

Clark." Moreover, when the participants were asked to share any heroes, heroines, or

legends in the organization's history, a vast majority of participants speculated that Dr.

Hange will soon become part of the unwritten mythology of AISME.

Finally, this narrative ends with the ideas that the participants shared about their

hopes, fears, and dreams for the future of AISME. Overall, most of the participants were

optimistic about the future of the school and believed that a partnership with the students, staff, and the community was being formed. They also believed that the internal environment of the school would continue to thrive and change—as long as the external world around them maintained some stability—and as a result, the culture would become more collaborative and unified. They also cited various barriers and problems to building this culture, such as, symbolic priorities, changing leadership, School Board membership transitions, declining enrolment, etc. (these will be discussed through research questions in Chapter V).

When asked to recount a story they would like to hear about AISME in the future, eight of the nine participants shared a story that was about success. The ninth participant could only assume that the school would be in a dire crisis due to continued regional conflicts. In the stories that were optimistic, the school's culture was healthy and vibrant, with shared norms of collaboration, collegiality, and high expectations for a community of learners. For example, Dr. Hange proposed the following story for the future of AISME:

> I think some of [the stories] are already being told. I think people recognize that the change is in the wind, it is taking place. I want the stories [of the future] to be that the school belongs to the parents working together with the teachers to serve children and that teachers bring in a good deal of expertise, but parents know their kids. And the teachers have their kids for ten months and the parents have their kids forever. And I don't feel we should ever lose sight of the fact that in parents who are also very important in effective schools. I'd like the story to be told that AISME is a dynamic place that what happened five years ago might not be

happening five years from now. But in each time and each iteration, it becomes better and better and more and more effective. I'd like the story to be told that AISME is a place where children learn to live together, they learn the core values of our belief system: tolerance, respect, appreciation, academic inquiry, integrity. That these are values that they'll take with them for the rest of their lives and you know ten years from now, the kids will say, "Well, I learned that at AISME. I am who I am because I went to AISME and I went to an international school and it had a big impact on me because of the people there and what we did there, we did good things there." ...on the educational side, I want the story to be, this is an innovative place...that we continue to focus on ways to improve, that children who go through our school are indeed, as our Mission states, life-long learners who think creatively, reason critically, communicate effectively and that distinguishes us from the crowd...And I'd like the story to be told that AISME is a school where visionary people work, where leaders of the school were visionaries, and not only what they did today but how they prepared the school for success tomorrow and for the next generation for kids. That's what I feel we're trying to work on.

Summary

This chapter presented the findings of the case study of how the members of an administrative team, under the leadership of Dr. C. Hange, initiated reculturing efforts at the American International School of the Middle East. The findings were presented as an "emplotted narrative," which is a narrative analysis strategy developed by Polkinghorne (1995). The findings of the study were based primarily on nine interviews of leaders with

formal positional authority at the school. In addition, secondary data analysis of

documents, artifacts, participant observations, made it possible to triangulate the data and

enrich the story. While this chapter detailed the implicit findings in narrative form, the

following chapter utilizes the data to answer explicitly the four research questions for the

study. In addition, Chapter V presents a brief overview of the purpose, the methods of

study, reflections on the methodology utilized, and implications for practice and further

research.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, I will briefly review the purpose of the study, methods of the study, and the major findings. In addition, I will reflect upon the methodology that was used in this study. I will also discuss the implications that the study has for theorizing about organizational culture and I will make recommendations for practice and further research.

Brief Review of Problem and Methods of the Study

As was discussed in Chapter I, organizational theorist and even practitioners are beginning to use the construct of organizational culture to analyze and characterize the complexities and challenges of organizational life. The construct has been used to metaphorize, frame, interpret, and understand various aspects of organizational life, including leadership and the change process. The literature indicates that leaders can influence an organization by attending to its cultural dimensions. Much of this literature, however, is theoretical and speculative, and the empirical work has focused, for the most part, on business. The few studies of school culture reported in the literature were conducted in traditional school settings.

Thus, the overarching purpose of this qualitative study was to enrich understanding of the organizational culture construct and its relationship to leadership and change by examining how leaders in a highly atypical, outlier organization employed

the notion of culture during a change process. Specifically, this study focused on the reculturing process in an international school environment. The school context studied was especially appropriate because the school's new superintendent had repeatedly used the reculturing notion to promote change over a three-year period.

As was discussed in Chapter III, the research for this dissertation involved a qualitative single-case study of leadership reculturing at a large K-12 International School in the Middle East. This school site was selected not only because it was an outlier organization, but also because it was a rich environment for study due to the many changes that unfolded in this organization over a three-year period. Individual interviews were conducted with nine leaders with formal positional authority in order to explore how these leaders perceive their role in influencing, developing, and changing culture in a highly atypical school. In addition to interviews, participant observation strategies were utilized throughout the study in order to corroborate and/or triangulate the interview data.

Data analysis and presentation of the findings for this study involved the use of two quite different strategies, which Polkinghorne (1995) calls *narrative analysis* and *the analysis of narratives.* Chapter IV presented the findings through a process of narrative analysis, which involved reconstructing the data into an "emplotted narrative" to tell the story of what occurred. The next section of this chapter provides succinct answers to the research questions using strategies of analysis of narratives. This strategy involves a more traditional coding approach that organizes the anecdotal information gathered during the data collection phase into predetermined and emergent categories. In other words, Chapter IV brought out the implicit answers to the research, the following section brings out the explicit answers to the research.

Review of the Major Findings in Terms of the Research Questions

The organization for this section is around the research questions that were articulated in Chapter I and answered implicitly in Chapter IV. Here, the implicit answers will be made explicit.

Research Question #1

> *How do individuals with formal positional authority use the notion and/or*
>
> *language of organizational/school culture when describing change at the*
>
> *international school under study? If they specifically use the culture construct,*
>
> *what are the meanings they attribute to the notion, and how do these meanings*
>
> *relate to the literature? Whether or not those leaders in the school use the*
>
> *construct, how do their actions relate to the literature?*

In terms of research question one, evidence suggests that Dr. Hange has succeeded in making the construct of organizational/school culture part of the native language for most of the administrators at the school. As noted in Chapter IV, Dr. Hange used the term culture almost from the start to characterize the change process he would be implementing in the school (e.g. on meeting agendas, during the administrative retreat and subsequent meetings, at the first meeting with entire staff about building a professional learning community, etc.). Furthermore, he defined the term in a manner that was consistent with the way the term has been defined in the academic literature (i.e. pertaining to the deeper levels of culture—beyond "the way we do things around here"). In fact, when Dr. Hange defined the term, he specifically referenced the literature as follows:

Terry Deal talks a lot about the symbols and rituals of culture which are the outward expressions of the inward norms. He talks about the priests, priestesses, scribes, and all of that. There are some people who will say culture is 'the way we do things around here.' That's not good enough for me. I think, in my personal definition, culture is, it is the way we do things around here, but it's the conscious way we—everyone in the organization—do things around here that is part of being a reflective practitioner. That's the culture I want in a school…So, for me culture is broad enough to embrace, I hope a lot of voices, but at its essence is a belief that schools are collaborative organizations. Schools are most effective when teachers work collegially and are part of the community. Schools are dynamic organizations that change. Whether you direct the change or not, they're changing. So, I think the culture is the beliefs system and values if you will around some of those points that I've just mentioned.

At other points in the interview, Dr. Hange also referenced additional school cultural theorists as a means to illuminate further the reculturing process (e.g. Sergiovanni, Fullan, Barth, etc.).

Most of those interviewed, liberally used, and, peppered their conversations with references to the school culture construct and the reculturing process. They employed the term even before the researcher used the term. Here are some examples of the sorts of things that they said prior to being specifically asked about the culture construct: "I know we are moving in the direction of a culture of collaboration"; "ultimately, I'm responsible for the culture that exists here"; "I think we are changing our learning culture"; "a goal is to find a balanced, positive school culture"; "we are trying to move away from the

teacher-centered culture that has dominated this place…to [a] student-centered [culture]," etc.

There are two exceptions to this conclusion. Two individuals did not mention the term prior to the researcher using the term. Even when they were asked about the term, these individuals were unsure about its meaning. For example, one person said, "I know almost…nothing about [school culture]. I am sure Clarke has talked about it, but I am not sure what it means." A second person said, "[I] don't know much…can't define it….I'm sure he [Dr. Hange] has probably talked about it [in meetings], but I fell asleep." It is important to note that both these participants suggested, in different ways, that their uncertainty and/or lack of understanding about the term might indeed be the result of working in positions that are considered to be on the "non-educational" side of the school.

Even among those who used the term freely, they often seemed to be defining the term in different ways. Here is a sense of how different people defined the term school culture:

> To me school culture is sort of the – it is not written down anywhere, you are not going to find it in the handbook, or a policy manual. It is basically, what is talked about in the workrooms, in the hallways, the old-fashioned sort of water cooler talk. Schools, you measure their culture in many ways by the conversations that go on in the school to how related are they to kids, learning and education.

A second participant's definition,

> I think school culture describes the atmosphere or the feeling of the school as a whole. How do the students fit into that? How do the teachers fit into that? How

do parents fit into that? How does administration fit into that? How does our group work together?

A third participant noted,

> What is that line Clark is always using [long pause]…from…[long pause] Fullan, oh ya, 'avoid fragmentation, promote integration'…I think, maybe, this is really what [school] culture is all about…making sure that we're not working in little groups, but we are integrated, one community.

A fourth participant suggested,

> I think [culture] means how- I will give you a very vague answer to that question. How do you define yourself in school, what's important to you and what are you trying to accomplish; and how do you do that? Maybe it goes back to educational passion. What are you passionate about? What kind of place do you want to work?….I think probably it goes back to the whole idea of what is it that you value? What is it that you find important? What are some of the core beliefs [of the] school? It is partially driven by your mission statement.

Upon discussing definitions and/or ideas of the school culture construct, most participants alluded to, or specifically noted, ideas about culture based around common or shared values and beliefs. For example, participants articulated ideas of school culture as, "common values and beliefs," "what we value and believe," "the feeling in the school and what we believe in," "we share these things in a school," and "I think probably it goes back to the whole idea of what is it that you value." However, most participants did not appear to differentiate between the levels of culture (i.e. the artifacts, values espoused, and the basic underlying assumptions, which were discussed in Chapter I and

II). While there were differences and things left out, each person's definition certainly overlapped with the definitions used by others in the school, and overall, they bore a family resemblance in the same way organizational culture is used in the literature.

Finally, for the most part, people's actions seemed to be consistent with what they said and also with the literature. For example, most of the leaders' actions were consistent with some of the suggestions outlined by Peterson and Deal (1998) about the symbolic steps that leaders can take to influence, reinforce, and shape the culture of schools. Here, the AISME leaders, for example, attempted to: (a) read the culture—its history and current conditions; (b) communicate core values in what they say and do; (c) begin to honor and recognize those who have worked to serve students and the purpose of the school; and, (d) speak of the deeper mission of the school. However, as will be discussed in the following section, several leaders reported that some reculturing actions—although they accomplish these tasks periodically—were often problematic to them and/or the leadership team, these included: (a) observing some of the rituals and traditions to support the school's heart and soul; (b) recognizing heroes and heroines and the work those exemplars accomplish; (c) celebrating the accomplishments of the staff, students, and community; (d) preserving the focus on students by recounting stories of success and achievement.

Research Question #2

> *How do leaders (i.e. those with formal positional authority) describe the culture of the school prior to the arrival of the new superintendent. In what ways do they believe the culture has changed since his arrival. Over the past few years, have these individuals noticed changes in the school's culture?*

Those who were at the school prior to Dr. Hange's arrival, characterized the school at that period in a number of different ways, including: (a) lack of leadership vision and direction; (b) status quo leadership; (c) poor communication between administration and staff; (d) lack of all-school identity; (e) local and overseas-hired differences (i.e. fragmented subcultures); (f) financial instability and potential bankruptcy; (g) poor quality of facilities; (h) high reputation in the community (according to one participant, this may have resulted from the school being "the only show in town"); (i) traditional style education and teaching; (j) "a good place for teachers" and/or verging on teacher-centeredness; and, (k) happy children.

The characterizations above are basically consistent with what those who arrived later saw, with the exception of the "status-quo" leadership perceptions because Dr. Hange had already begun some reculturing activities—new leaders did mention however that they had heard stories about the mechanistic leadership styles of former administrators at the school. Another difference was in reference to "happy students." Several participants noted that while the Elementary and Middle School students appeared to be happy with school, the high school students generally appeared to be unhappy about the school. A third difference might be characterized as to the extent of teacher-centeredness within the school. While individuals who worked at the school prior to Dr. Hange generally characterized the school as "a good place for teachers" or "the Admin's job was to keep teachers happy," almost all of the new leaders suggested that the teacher-centeredness verged on teacher-selfishness, especially at the high school level.

The general tenor of the responses to questions about the current culture was that changes were at best embryonic. All participants in the study generally acknowledged that there have been changes in the school's culture. Their comments about the current culture included, for example, "a healthier place for kids," "a new focus on learning for both children and adults," "staff who are more committed to student success," and, "staff who are now collaborating with each other and working on common goals." Some leaders suggested, that these cultural changes are evident with the type of staff who is staying, leaving, and being recruited, and the type of "conversations that are going at meetings and in the hallways." Another leader noted that "as the leadership has changed, teachers have become more open, better problem solvers, and more collaborative than ever before."

A participant who had been at the school prior to Dr. Hange's arrival suggested that the biggest cultural change in the school was the philosophy that appeared to be more open and responsive to the needs of the community. He said,

> The biggest change is that the [school's] philosophy is a more open one...originally when I first came we were an American school to serve the American and Canadian population. Others were allowed in but that was our main mission. You could come into our school if you were willing, if you wanted an American styled education, designed for Americans, and you weren't, but that is what you wanted, you could come. Under Clark, it has now changed to, 'we are a school for anyone who wants an American-style education, and that American style is actually changing as we...now have an I.B. high school, and now we are accredited by the European Council of Independent Schools, and there is a bit

more international flair in us. We now have a program and a language program for native speakers for our host culture. Previous times, the idea of having a [native] language program in itself, signifies the change in our population, because before we never offered it because American kids did not need that, so why offer it?

In addition, a majority of the participants, who are all on the educational side of the school, noted that one of the biggest cultural changes were in the teachers' values, which appear to be moving toward a more student-directed philosophy. For example, one leader suggested,

Two years ago I was having conversations with teachers about why students were not being successful and they would tell me that the kids shouldn't have been accepted in our school, they didn't belong...they didn't meet our standards...now I am having conversations with some of the same teachers about how they are helping the same type of student to be successful...they are now talking about strategies they are using to differentiate or alternative assessments that are working...I would wager that they didn't even know what [those terms] meant two years ago.

Along the same lines, another participant suggested,

I see changes in staff values: It is a relatively recent change but we have gone from saying this is my program and you either pass or fail, you get it or you don't get it, to the burden being placed on the teacher by sharing the responsibility, the teacher and the child bare that responsibility and you see it now. We have professional expectations that say the teacher is responsible for the learning of all

their students; there are kids succeeding now who never would have passed before.

In addition, several participants discussed the changes in the educational philosophy occurring within the school. One participant suggested that cultural change is "occurring at a number of levels, especially in many of the classrooms, in teaching instruction and what teachers are actually doing with children."

As outlined above, several leaders found it difficult to determine the extent of cultural change. Often, they discussed the "feel" of the school as having changed, or the changes were "difficult to put in words." At the same time, several participants were very clear that they believed that the school is in a transitory state, and there was much work to be done. Finally, several of the participants suggested that the individual schools at AISME—Elementary, Middle, and High School—are at different cultural points in time. Although one leader thought that the school was beginning to see a K-12 identity emerge, he believed, that different subcultures needed to be addressed before an integrated community could be realized.

Research Question #3

What culture-embedding mechanisms and change strategies are leaders consciously using to help shape the school culture? What other mechanisms and strategies are observed but are not coded by the insiders? What barriers do interviewees identify?

The members of the administrative team identified a number of mechanisms that had been used to reculture the school. One of these included a personnel selection mechanism. Personnel turnover is a common phenomenon in most international schools.

But, the administrative resignation level during the superintendent's first year (and conceivably because this was the first year of a change-oriented superintendent) was especially high. Consequently, the superintendent got to hire seven administrators and over twenty teachers. He made the most of this opportunity, such as traveling to recruitment fairs to interview potential applicants, contacting former colleagues, creating a new advertising campaign and recruiting protocol, etc. As a result, he was able to select people whose beliefs were consistent with his own (e.g. change-oriented, collaborative, educational leadership, etc.), and in several instances he knew and/or had worked with some of these people in the past.

In addition to the personnel selection mechanism, Dr. Hange also altered structures during the reculturing process. Among the most significant structural alteration early on, was expanding the people who attended the weekly Monday Administrators' meeting. This had the effect of expanding communication and sharing information with all members of the team, instead of a select few. This opening of communication in turn, flattened, to some extent, the hierarchy because there was no longer a group of insiders who knew the score, and a lesser group of individual on the chain of command, who were uninformed. This minimizing of the importance of chain of command was an initial step in creating a more collaborative organization. Later, a number of other structural changes were instituted to promote further collaboration, these included, for example: creating open forums for parents, students, and staff; initiating task forces to investigate problems in the organization; instituting after-school meeting times for staff; and, ensuring all members of the staff were involved in the self-study process.

Dr. Hange and his administrative staff also took advantage of the steps required as part of the accreditation process and consciously used these to examine existing norms and develop new cultural ways of thinking and acting. As he saw the self-study as a natural cultural change agent and a process to allow for individual and group reflection, Dr. Hange's first step was to communicate this as a professional responsibility and expectation, and, as an opportunity for professional change and growth. In addition, he ensured that all individuals were on at least one self-study team and therefore, all members experienced some form of collaboration and had some input and/or voice in the process. Moreover, he created a bi-weekly after-school time for staff to meet and work collaboratively, and in order to do so, he cancelled all student post-2:40 activities for those days. He also utilized every public opportunity to discuss progress on the self-study, to present evidence of a collaborative culture in action, and to celebrate the emerging professional learning community. Finally, in his third year, Dr. Hange and his team used the self-study results to create a new plan for school improvement. At the same time, the plan outlined how staff would continue to meet after school as a means to collaborate on new initiatives.

The literature on organizational culture emphasizes the importance of the symbolic. Indeed more than anything else, the focus on celebrations, ritual, storytelling, etc., is the unique and defining characteristic of the cultural view of organizational life. Both the superintendent and most of the other members of the team alluded to these symbolic tools during the cultural process, and also, they could be observed. For example, in his very first meeting, the superintendent played the symbolism card when he introduced his ideas about building a professional learning community on Power Point,

and then proceeded to hand out "I Blew It!" slips to all staff members. This had symbolic impact because meetings about education, collaboration, community building, risk-taking, etc., had not really gone on in the past at AISME.

Dr. Hange and several of the participants suggested ways in which they attempted to incorporate symbolic pieces into their cultural change efforts, these included: communicating the school's mission and core values (e.g. newsletters, meetings, emails, memoranda, and informal discussion); recognizing individuals (e.g. longevity awards, formally at meetings, and through informal discussions, cards, etc.); maintaining rituals and traditions and creating new ones (e.g. staff picnics, baby showers, birthdays, longevity awards, International Dinner, volunteer programs, etc.); new facilities/architecture (e.g. new theater, cafeterias, trees, etc.); celebrating the accomplishments of staff, students and community (e.g. school newsletters; informal discussions, cards), and, preserving the focus on students by recounting stories of success and achievement (e.g. school newsletters, staff meetings, and data collection).

Although most people talked about importance of doing the symbolic piece, they all acknowledged not doing this well. They said, for example: "maybe we need to spend more time on [rituals, traditions, and celebrations]"; "I need to prioritize celebrating staff"; "teachers love to get cards from me…I know it means something…I wish I did more of this"; "I know how important [it is to recognize and celebrate staff], but I never seem to get to it…and if I do, I don't do a good job of it"; and, "I rush through meetings because there is so much to cover, to get done…after I realize that I did not convey any message of thanks, or education; this [expletive] me off." The point here is that a large number of people acknowledged problems in the symbolic area, but the problems they

talked about related to the implementation of symbolic action (e.g. not having enough time, not always prioritizing symbolic action, forgetting to complete these tasks, and, not having the "right moment") and not to the general idea that symbolism matters in organizations.

Although most members of the administrative team could describe in considerable detail the mechanisms that had been employed to reculture their organization, there were some mechanisms that were observed, but not explicitly mentioned during the interviews. Chief among these was the idea of storytelling, which according to Deal and Peterson (1999) is an important way to "reinforce cultural commitments and values...and [to carry] the rich meaning of what school is really all about" (p. 55). For example, at several meetings Dr. Hange and other leaders told personal stories about education that appeared to carry deeper messages of values and beliefs. And occasionally, they also publicly presented stories that others had told them about student success and achievement. This storytelling mechanism did not emerge in the interview process. Other mechanisms that were observed but not explicitly mentioned in the interviews, included, for example: discussions about changing cultural artifacts (e.g. school symbols, crest, school's name, mascot, etc.); staff departing through coercive persuasion; humor used at Administrative meetings and staff meetings; and, an emphasis on building trust between leaders and staff.

Interviewees did however identify a number of resistant strategies by people who seemed uncomfortable with attempts to change the school's culture. These included the following: (a) Resistance from staff regarding staying at school beyond student dismissal time (i.e. "the 2:40 rule"). This resistance came from many staff members, most of whom

had been in the school for a long time, who believed that their contractual obligations did not go beyond 2:40. In other words, if staff members were expected to stay beyond 2:40 to complete professional tasks, these members believed that this should be a choice and staff should be compensated for after-school work. (b) Resistance from staff regarding new professional expectations expected of them within regular school hours. Staff believed that the administration was taking them away from focusing on students during the day because they were expecting staff to take part in initiatives during "planning time," (e.g. staff appraisal systems that had accountability requirements, professional inservicing, etc.). (c) Resistance from staff regarding the "need" to change (i.e. "things are just fine the way they are," or, "why change, this has always worked in the past"). (d) Resistance regarding perception by teachers that leaders were trying to change "too much" simultaneously and therefore they were increasing stress and workload of teachers (e) Resistance from staff regarding who got hired by Dr. Hange (i.e. FOC's).

Research Question #4

> *What formal and informal feedback mechanisms do leaders say they use to assess the impact of their change/reculturing actions and how is this feedback used? What other mechanisms are observed by outsiders, but not identified by the insiders? How consistent is the thinking of those with and those without formal positional authority?*

The mechanisms that were used to assess particular reculturing strategies and the reculturing effort as a whole were almost entirely informal. No surveys were administered and student achievement was not examined.

The failure to examine student achievement data is understandable. The impetus for change was never students' poor performance on tests. Indeed, the students who attended the school—and who made it through a relatively rigorous admissions process—were likely to perform well on tests no matter what their school did or did not do. Rather the impetus for change was a more informal sense of that the school was not doing all it could do for its students. It made sense therefore, that assessment strategies used to evaluate the change process were also informal. However, Dr. Hange did suggest that one of the next steps in the reculturing process would be to collect data as a means to evaluate the effectiveness of the change efforts and to see if student learning and achievement is being impacted.

Also, the fact that members of the administrative team, held nearly identical views of what the school was like before the change effort had begun and what was happening as a result of the change initiative, made more formal data collection about the impact of the change effort almost unnecessary. In the parlance of researchers, there was high reliability among the view of leaders within the school. Notice the similarity between three different people's comments about how the cultural change effort was unfolding: "I don't think teachers are as focused on themselves," "I believe we getting to be more student-centered," "two years ago I was having conversations with teachers about why students were not being successful ....now I am having conversations with some of the same teachers about how they are helping the same type of student to be successful," and, "we have gone from saying this is my program and you either pass or fail....[to] sharing the responsibility."

Unfortunately, the final part of this research question cannot be answered because of the bombing incident described earlier in this dissertation. The survey that planned to determine whether teachers' views were consistent with members of the administrative team could not be administered. This is a significant limitation of the study and has been acknowledged as such in the limitations discussion of Chapter I.

Implications for Theorizing about Organizational Culture

The purpose of this dissertation was to contribute some empirical grounding to the theoretical literature of organizational culture construct by studying an outlier organization in which change is a constant. As it turned out, the constantly changing environment of the international school studied, at least in one respect, made the reculturing process easier to accomplish. Within the international school community, it is customary for most faculty and administrative members to move from place to place on a fairly regular basis. In this case, the degree of movement was accelerated—especially for several members of the administrative team—after the first year of Dr. Hange's tenure (and conceivably because of it). The resignations provided an opportunity to bring in people who were sympathetic to the superintendent's reculturing agenda and his vision of what a recultured school would look like, he maximized this opportunity.

In most other respects, the uniqueness of the site does not appear to have been especially significant in the reculturing process that went on within it. Most of the tactics employed could be easily employed in other schools and some might comfortably translate to strategies that could be used in non-school organizations. The specific structural mechanisms that were employed in this change process, for example, may be somewhat unique to this school. However, the idea that changing structural aspects of the

organization should be part of the reculturing effort is not unique. Similarly, non-educational organizations do not necessarily go thru processes like accreditation and even in school settings, accreditation is not normally an every year occurrence. However, the idea of hijacking required or existing standard operating procedures—whether a strategic planning process or a required needs assessment initiative or a goal setting process or some other kind of mandated initiative—to further a reculturing goal is an idea that most certainly can be transferred to a wide variety of settings.

The findings about difficulties associated with implementing the symbolic component of the change process also seems generalizable and a potentially significant contribution to the theory of organizational culture. Most of the literature to date has treated the symbolic aspects of organizational life as something that leaders could rather easily manipulate to bring about change. At least in the site that was studied, such manipulation was not as easy to accomplish as the literature suggests it will be. Interviewees identified a number of problems, such as the lack of time, resistance, prioritization, forgetfulness, too many administrative tasks, and not finding the "right" moment to initiate symbolic action.

Implications for Practice

Many of the theoretical implications outlined above, are also implications for practice. This study, for example, sensitizes leaders in other schools to think in both personnel and structural terms. The structural mechanisms seem especially important since leaders in other schools—especially public schools—will not necessarily have the same opportunity to replace personnel that Dr. Hange had (i.e. faculty in most international schools are employed on either a one or two year contract; non-renewal of a

contract is not unusual at many international schools but highly unusual in most public schools with strong union contracts). The structural mechanisms that were employed in the site studied include the following: changing who participates in meetings, changing access to information, broadening communication, creating open-forums for all community members, designating times and expectations for staff meetings, and, changing/creating newsletters to focus on educational issues. Additionally, the study highlights the important role that staff socialization might play in reculturing efforts. Here a major part of the socialization effort was carried out in both informal and formal induction programs; in schools with less staff turnover and fewer new employees, socialization efforts undoubtedly would have to take somewhat different forms and would have to be geared more toward resocialization.

The study also dramatizes the benefits that can accrue from recoding a process like accreditation as a process that is focused on reculturing. Here, the accreditation process was utilized as a mechanism to place change on the organization's agenda. If we kick this finding up a notch or two in terms of theoretical abstraction, we can say that this study demonstrates the utility of rethinking mandated procedures in any organizations as opportunities to promote cultural change by using such mandated procedures to get change items on the organization's agenda..

Another implication for practice is found in the context of the organization. The particular school studied was an outlier organization and therefore had it own challenges and opportunities. International schools are unique in the sense they are not normally governed by state and school district bureaucracy and policy. However, both systems have the ability to hire the type of leadership and/or change agents that are necessary. In

the case of AISME, the elected School Board saw the need to hire an agent of change to reculture the school. Boards of public schools also can do this, and, in most states, it should be remembered, administrators do not have tenure in their administrative positions.

Finally, this study alerts leaders in other settings to the fact that "working" the symbolic aspects of organization life will not be easy. As noted above, administrators' intent on using symbolism to change the culture of the school, or any other organization for that mater, may encounter a host of difficulties that include: not having sufficient time to focus on the symbolic, staff resistance to change and, hence, unwillingness or inability to respond to symbolic gestures as the leader expected; an inability to prioritize activities according to their importance and, especially, to rise about the many daily administrative tasks that need to be done to "keep the trains running" to attend to the symbolic; and, problems with finding the "right" moment to initiate symbolic actions.

Implications for Further Research

This study focused on only one school, one superintendent, and one administrative team. Consequently, it has the inevitable limitations that all "n of 1" studies have. Eventually it would be useful to have other case studies of other international schools, which are mounting reculturing processes. When a number of such studies are completed, a cross-case analysis can be conducted and a grounded theory about reculturing in international school settings could be developed. Such theory might shed even more nuanced light on the general construct of organizational culture, leadership, and change.

This study also suggests the need to focus, in a more direct way, on the difficulties associated with exercising the symbolic function of leadership. To date, this function has been treated in the organizational culture literature as a tool that leaders can easily use to reculture their organizations. At least in this setting, it was not always easy to play the symbolism game. What we do not know, without further studies, is whether the problems observed in this setting, are unique to this setting. Further study would provide insight to this point and conceivably greater insight into the sorts of problems that are likely to arise and which leaders who want to play the symbolism game should anticipate.

In addition, other studies could be conducted at AISME that investigate the longer term impact of the three-year reculturing effort described in this dissertation. Because the real significance of a cultural change can only be gauged if we assess its sustainability over time, a longitudinal study might illicit further understanding about the leaders' actions at this school. Such a study about sustainability might also uncover whether the reculturing efforts resulted in changes to the deepest layers of the school's culture or whether most of the changes were at the surface level and, consequently, were easily dismissed as key players move on to lead other organizations. Other follow-up studies at AISME might focus in a more detailed and deeper way on the leadership team; the impact of the political, social, and economic forces of the region (including the recent regional bombings) on the reculturing efforts in particular and the culture of the school in general; the induction process and its impact on either sustaining or undermining the cultural changes that have been put in place during the past three years. As will be suggested in the methodological postscript section that follows, this study—or studies

like it—might be constructed a little differently with fuller consideration being given to data analysis and presentation.

Methodological Postscript

Overview of the Postscript

As was discussed briefly in Chapter III, I originally did not intend to use *narrative analysis*—as that term has been defined by Donald Polkinghorne (1995) in an article entitled, "Narrative Configuration in Qualitative Analysis"—to make sense of and display the data I had collected. In fact, I had originally proposed to use a more traditional social science-like coding and categorization approach in analyzing my data, an approach that Polkinghorne calls the *analysis of narratives* and juxtaposes with his story-oriented narrative analysis strategy. During the process of data collection and, especially during the early days of data analysis, however, I began to rethink my data analysis and display plans. I began to rethink what I had written in my proposal about data analysis and display in part because of some gentle prodding by my dissertation committee and especially my dissertation chair to consider alternative modes of data display in general and more narrative modes in particular. The major impetus, however, was the realization that a "story" about the reculturing process was, indeed, emerging in my mind, despite all of my attempts to chop my data into bits and pieces that were not connected chronologically. More than anything else, this realization led me to rethink how I would approach data display and, by implication, data analysis. I reread the Polkinghorne article (as my committee had suggested I do more than a year earlier) and decided to give up my attempt to chunk my data into non-linear categories. Instead, I decided to employ the narrative analysis approach to analysis and display that, according to Polkinghorne,

involves reconfiguring the data into an overarching storyline with characters, a plot, and literary-like themes.

Over the next several months, I discovered that the data analysis process was not as easily dichotomized as Polkinghorne's analysis of narratives/narrative analysis binary implied. I also discovered other things about what it means to analyze and report data in story form. In this section, I want to reconstruct and reflect on my attempt to turn my back on traditional social science coding and categorization and reconfigure my data as a compelling story instead. In order to do this, I have used my researcher journal, discussions with my committee, and the insight that only comes with hindsight.

Preconceived Notions about Qualitative Analysis

My reconstruction/reflection begins with my entry into the doctoral program. Early on, I was attracted to qualitative research because I realized it would allow me to address the messy problems of practice that interested me. I quickly understood that using qualitative methods did not require that the complex problems of practice be transformed and simplified (possibly beyond recognition) so they could fit into an elegant, a priori research design, the standard operating procedure in quantitative research.

Despite my enthusiasm for qualitative research, however, I also worried about its academic merit, especially at the doctoral level. Therefore, although I learned a great deal about—and was very much intrigued by—more creative and cutting edge approaches to qualitative inquiry (including Polkinghorne's notion of narrative analysis), I decided to stick with more traditional qualitative methods—methods derived from social science disciplines such as anthropology and sociology—when I designed the dissertation study that has been presented here.

In addition, during the process of writing my dissertation proposal, I had not given extensive thought to data analysis and presentation. Rather, I included rather pat (and somewhat generic) descriptions of traditional procedures like content analysis and coding in the proposal I drafted. My failure to give analysis its due should not be surprising given that much of the literature about qualitative research gives surprisingly little attention to analysis and even less to the matter of data display. Instead, methods texts tend to focus attention on data gathering techniques such as interviewing and various forms of participant observation fieldwork strategies (Polkinghorne, 1995). Thus, in preparing my proposal, I treated interviewing—my main data gathering tool—as the critical part of the methods section of my dissertation proposal.

It's All in the Timing

During my proposal defense, however, I was challenged by my committee to think differently about data analysis and presentation. At this defense, committee members asked me to consider further the nature of the subject that I was researching, what kind of data might be produced, and what might be the best way to make sense of, and especially, to display the data I was likely to gather. Committee members especially urged me to consider whether Polkinghorne's notion of narrative analysis might align well with the data I would likely collect. Because my committee did not require that I do any of the rethinking about analysis and display they believed might be useful, I began my dissertation work planning to follow the traditional content analysis and coding procedures I had alluded to in my proposal. My focus at the outset, after all, was on data collection. I assumed that decisions about data analysis could be deferred to the subsequent stage of the research process after data collection was nearly completed, or at

least underway. I did, however, keep my committee members' suggestion in the back of my mind.

In retrospect, I see that it would have been prudent to focus more clearly on the issues of data analysis and presentation at the outset of the project. As noted above, I did eventually decide that the data virtually required a storytelling approach if the reader was to make sense of the complexity and interrelatedness of the phenomena I had been studying. At that point, I regretted that I had not constructed my "interview guide" with my newly embraced storytelling goal in mind. In other words, I feared I had missed collecting some useful data in the interviewing process because I was not gearing my data collection to a story construction goal, the goal I eventually embraced, but only after data collection had been completed (the circumstances described at the outset of this dissertation precluded extending the data collection period).

If I had made the decision to do a narrative analysis prior to interviewing participants, I almost certainly would have modified my interview questions as a means to illicit more details about events, actions, and happenings. For example, I believe that I would have sought detailed and time-specific information about the faculty and administrative meetings (i.e. how was the school's changing culture communicated); asked interviewees to describe specific cultural events at the school (e.g. BBQ's, recognition assemblies, etc.); asked participants to create a timeline of memorable events and/or differentiate between the three years under study; etc. Many of these details undoubtedly would have been irrelevant—maybe even unwanted noise—in a study geared toward generating categories and subsuming specifics under the categories that had been developed. Nuanced storytelling, however, requires the use of telling details.

Also, if I had known that I was going to construct a story that revolved around Dr. Hange, I may have asked him questions that were more explicitly about some his actions as the Superintendent and the motives behind the actions. I also, undoubtedly, would have attempted to trace the actions and motives to earlier events in Dr. Hange's personal and professional life. Had I known then what I knew during the data analysis phase, for example, I almost certainly would have asked Dr. Hange about his leadership development and experiences (e.g. why/how he focused on the school's culture from the outset of his tenure at AISME); the development of his relationship with the School Board (e.g. an overview and timeline of their discussions about what was occurring in the school); and, if so, how he set out to recruit "like-minded" administrators and teachers.

Luckily, I had substantial amounts of triangulated data to help with synthesizing the data and configuring it in story form. In addition, Polkinghorne seems to suggest that narrative analysis does not require a different form of data collection (indeed, he explicitly argues that data should not be collected as a story). Nevertheless, I believe that, had I known that I would use my data to write a story rather than to construct social science-like categories, I would have probed more deeply for telling details, the motives behind actions, and the origins of these motives in my interviewing.

Aligning Data with an Appropriate Form of Representation

It was not until I returned to North America from the Middle East—in the sudden way described within this dissertation's introduction—that I even began to realize that Polkinghorne's work would be central to the product I would finally produce from the data I had gathered. On a sunny San Diego May morning in Peet's Coffee Shop, my advisor and I discussed at length my work and the various ways in which I may want to

analyze and present my collected data. The options we considered ranged from traditional approaches to storied analysis to matrices. Our discussion, however, kept coming back to the actual data that were collected and the dynamic nature of culture these data referenced. After reviewing the tape recordings of the interviews and rereading the transcripts, I realized a 'story' of reculturing at AISME seemed to be embryonic throughout. I therefore set out to understand further the techniques described by Polkinghorne (1995). After doing this, and after additional meetings with my advisor, I decided that Polkinghorne's narrative analysis techniques were the best way to analyze and present my data. In retrospect, I now realize how important it was for me to have these discussions and begin to understand the data that I had collected. This process allowed me to make informed decisions about analysis and presentation.

Confronting an Either-Or Distinction

As a result of this new understanding, I set out to follow the rather cryptic procedures outlined by Polkinghorne in his classic article and construct a narrative. I started by arranging the data elements chronologically. I first began with a process of "emplotment" by identifying all the important elements that were contributors to the outcome. With the help of index cards, I created a wall-size timeline of events, happenings, and actions that were described in the interviews. At the same time, I was able to use much of the data I had gathered for triangulation purposes (e.g. memos, agendas, meeting minutes, invitations, PowerPoint presentations, etc.) to not only triangulate interview data but to also add details and nuance to the story I was in the process of constructing. Finally, I wrote the reculturing story as a means to create

'temporal gestalt' in which "the meaning of each part is given through its reciprocal relationship with the plotted whole and other parts" (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 24).

During the emplotment and the subsequent writing processes alluded to above, I encountered a major challenge using the narrative analysis strategy: As I attempted to configure diverse events, happenings, and ideas into a plot, which was expressive of significant themes, I realized that not all elements in the story I was constructing were temporal and, consequently, that the decision to organize the material chronologically did not solve all analysis issues and presentation-related problems. For example, the idea of faculty "resistance" surfaced often in the interviews, in many different ways. For some participants, resistance was a "feeling" or "mood," whereas, for others, resistance was conceptualized as an activity or an event. In order to streamline and report on the various aspects of faculty resistance, I needed to discuss the multiple meanings of resistance that I had encountered in the site I studied. In order to prepare such a discussion, I needed to engage in an analysis process that bore a family resemblance to what Polkinghorne refers to as the analysis of narratives, an analysis strategy he juxtaposes with narrative analysis. The work entailed developing categories of resistance meanings and using these categories to code data. In addition, the most efficient way to present the results of this mini-analysis to the reader was in prose that resembled traditional social science discourse (see, for example, the section titled *Resistance: It's like breaking "through a knot"* on p. 134). Even if I had had the skills of an experienced novelist or short story writer, I doubt that I could have done justice to the task I had before me had I not temporarily switched from a narrative to a more expository mode of discourse.

Of course, all storytellers always must confront the problem of providing

necessary exposition without intruding too much on the progress of the story and, hence,

losing the reader. Here, however, the exposition problem I faced was not exactly like the

exposition problem faced by all storytellers, for here there was a need for *theoretical*

exposition as well as for the sort of story-based exposition that skilled storytellers can

skillfully embed in the narratives they create. Theoretical exposition is not so easily—and

may, in fact, be impossible—to integrate seamlessly into the narrative that is being

constructed.

What I realized at this point was that both in the analysis I was doing and in the

story that would eventually be Chapter IV of my dissertation, I would have to incorporate

procedures that bore at least a family resemblance to traditional social science

categorization and coding (i.e., what Polkinghorne calls the analysis of narratives). In

other words, I realized that I would have to utilize content analysis strategies as a means

to identify some of the primary patterns in the data and to uncover some repeated themes

(Patton, 1990). Furthermore, on occasion, I would have to stop my narrative to report to

the reader the results of the more traditional analyses I had performed in something

resembling a traditional social science discourse style.

This mixing of traditional approaches to analyzing and reporting data with the

narrative analysis approach to analysis and display assisted me in constructing a more

cohesive plot, it helped me to make some within-case generalizations through the story

about what was occurring in the school's culture, it ensured that the data were

triangulated, and it assisted me in terms of reporting the findings. In short, although

Polkinghorne (1995) suggests that there are two distinctly different and, in essence,

dichotomous ways to analyze qualitative data, for me, in this study at least, these two types of analysis did not appear to be mutually exclusive but rather complimentary. I could not have done either well without the other.

To state this point another way: I suspect that it may be more appropriate to portray Polkinghorne's analysis dichotomy (or binary or dualism) as the opposite ends of a continuum. In my study, I was closer to the narrative analysis end of the continuum both during the analysis process and in terms of the way the data were displayed. But I also, at times, relied on procedures that looked very much like what Polkinghorne calls the analysis of narratives to be able to tell the story I told. And even in the actual telling of the story, there were many points at which expository writing interrupted the narrative that had been constructed. Upon reflection, none of this is surprising. One need only read most narrative history to see narrative and expository forms of writing (and, by implication, narrative and more traditional social science forms of analysis) peacefully co-existing.

Whose Story is This Anyway? And Other Questions about Doing Narrative Analysis

Some other methodological reflections that I have had about narrative analysis revolve around the researcher as "story-teller," participants' possible reactions to this story, and the political/collegial issues associated with doing qualitative research— especially narrative forms of qualitative research—in international schools. My research journal, for example, includes several entries in which I raise concerns about how the participants might feel if they have the opportunity to read the dissertation. While I strived to be objective and tell the story accurately—i.e. in a way that reflected what I heard when I listened to the interview tapes, read, and reread the transcripts of these

tapes, and reviewed relevant documents—I wondered about whose voice was going to be represented. Was this my story; our story; or their story?

I also wonder about how Dr. Hange might react upon hearing that he is at the center of the story presented in Chapter IV. In other words, while Dr. Hange, just like all of the participants, agreed to be interviewed—and willingly signed the IRB consent form and checked the accuracy of his transcripts—would he have so willingly agreed to participate if he had known that he would be the central character in a story? Write-ups resulting from narrative analysis are no less human constructions than reports that result from content analysis and coding are; yet a good story gives the *illusion* of reality in a way that a listing of social science categories and a handful of exemplary quotes normally does not. I now wonder if I should have informed the participants about how I had planned to share their stories (i.e. whether I should have conducted a second phase of member checking, this one involving the actual story I had constructed) prior to letting others read the story I had written.

Finally, I wonder if a storied analysis opens the door to easier identification of participants (e.g. there are only a few heads of international school heads in the Middle East). Here, I question if people, especially those who might be able to identify the school, and also have worked in it (i.e. the old "status-quo" leaders who still work in overseas schools), would find the story to be controversial, so controversial, in fact, that it should not have been written. I therefore worry about the possible political/collegial ramifications that might result considering that the international school community is a close-knit network of educators.

Reflections Generated by Embedding Analysis of Narratives Bedded within Narrative

Analysis

In addition to the methodological reflections about doing the *narrative analysis*, I

also have a few reflections about doing *analysis of narratives*. After completing an initial

draft of an "emplotted" story, I proceeded with a more traditional form of coding and

categorizing the data. While I entered this phase of my work with an open mind, I found

the process to be slow, not as interesting as story writing, and at times, somewhat

redundant as I had already completed the primary Chapter IV analysis. Through this

secondary process, I was forced to think about the individual parts of the story I was

trying to tell, yet, often, the parts seemed quite distant from the idea of culture.

In addition, when engaging in an analysis of narratives process that was

embedded within narrative analysis, I began to wonder about the role and purpose of

generating research questions when using the narrative analysis technique. While the

research questions assisted me in my initial thinking about my inquiry, I am not sure they

were helpful as the research unfolded or if they helped generate new information that was

not presented in the initial Chapter IV analysis. I therefore question the role of research

questions when one is doing non-traditional analysis and data presentation. I even wonder

if they may unconsciously constrain the research during the narrative analysis process.

Other Methodological Issues

While writing this dissertation and later reflecting on the writing process, several

other minor methodological ideas and reflections emerged. For example, since

Polkinghorne's notion of chronology is not the only way to tell a story, I wonder whether

there may be other ways in which I could have told the story (e.g. separated each

interview into a distinct case, used different story telling techniques such as flashbacks and flash-forwards, making the story about my own sense making processes, etc.). In addition, I wonder what would be gained and what would be lost when different approaches to storytelling were employed. I do not have answers to these questions at this point, of course, but I hope to explore and discuss the costs and benefits of different narrative forms over the next several years.

Conclusion

In retrospect, I am not surprised that I ended up choosing a more non-traditional form of analysis considering the nature of my topic: organizational/school culture. Moreover, the only thing that is surprising is the absence of this approach within the organizational culture literature.

In terms of the empirical research on culture, I did know that the literature suggests that much of the work in this area has been done through qualitative processes (whereas climate is often been studied through quantitative measures; see for discussion, Ashkanasy, Wilderom, & Peterson, 2000; Reichers & Schneider, 1990; Rousseau, 1990). Furthermore, I was aware of arguments that suggested that culture needed to addressed using qualitative research not only because of culture's highly subjective (and inter-subjective) nature, but also because cultural contexts inevitably are idiosyncratic and unique (Rousseau, 1990). However, there does not appear to be much discussion in the literature about how to best analyze and display the somewhat amorphous phenomenon of organizational culture. Mostly, researchers who have studied the phenomenon of organizational culture have used traditional categorization and coding approaches to analysis and data display. I believe this dissertation demonstrates that using a more

storied approach to data analysis and display—while not totally ignoring more traditional content analysis procedures or more expository forms of displaying data—tends to bring out the richness of an organization's culture. When one works from the narrative analysis end of the narrative analysis/analysis of narratives continuum, one can delve—and help readers delve—more deeply into the human dimensions of organizational culture and into the complexity and interrelatedness that always are a significant part of intensely human activity.

Summary

This dissertation presented findings from a study about leaders' perceptions of school reculturing at an international school in the Middle East. Chapter I provided the background to the dissertation topic, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, and a discussion of the importance of studying leadership reculturing and change. In addition, the research questions were articulated. Finally, the significance and limitations of the dissertation were discussed.

Chapter II reviewed the relevant literature in the field of organization culture, school culture, and leadership. This literature review laid the foundation for the study. Chapter III outlined in detail the methodological procedures that guided the research process for this study.

Chapter IV presented the findings of the dissertation through a narrative analysis framework that also, at times, incorporated elements of the analysis of narratives. Finally, Chapter V summarized the dissertation and provided succinct direct answers to the research questions. This chapter also discussed implications for theorizing about organizational culture, implications for practice, as well as recommendations for future

inquiry. Methodological insights—especially insights related to Polkinghorne's narrative analysis/analysis of narratives distinction—also were discussed in this final chapter.

The overall results in this dissertation study—that were implicit in the narrative analysis presented in Chapter IV and made explicit in this Chapter, which employed a more expository discourse style associated with the analysis of narratives tradition— include: (a) The construct of culture had become part of the "native language" for most— but not all—members of the administrative team. (b) Those who used the construct attached somewhat different—though not radically inconsistent—meanings to the term. (c) Those interviewed identified an array of mechanisms used in reculturing the school. (d) The effectiveness of the identified mechanisms appears to vary, although in most cases, interviewees suggested variability had more to do with implementation issues rather than with the adequacy of the mechanisms themselves. (e) Interviewees identified a range of resistance strategies that members of the organization employed at different points in the reculturing process.

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Appendix A
Definition of Terms

Appendix A

Definition of Terms

- **International Schools/American Schools:** while often, but not exclusively, different in charter or mission, here they are used synonymously to describe private schools with a high percentage of North American staff and curriculum, located outside of North America. Student population is international.

- **School Superintendent or Head:** the leader or head of an international school with the most authority within the school.

- **Leadership Team:** consists of all administrators who hold formal positional authority: principals, directors (education, finance, personnel, facilities), academic dean, and superintendent.

- **The School Board:** seven parent volunteers who are elected, every two years, by the greater parent community to provide governance for the school. The School Superintendent is hired by the School Board to implement Board policies and procedures.

- **Expatriate:** a person who lives and works outside of their home country.

Appendix B
Informed Consent Form

Appendix B

Informed Consent Form

University of San Diego
Institutional Review Board
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Brian Matthews, a Doctoral student in the Leadership Studies Program in the School of Education at the University of San Diego is conducting a research study about school leadership and change. This research is part of a dissertation in partial fulfillment for a doctoral degree at USD; the research is being guided by Robert Donmoyer, Ph.D. (Chairperson). Below are the conditions under which participants in the study will work:

- No risks are anticipated other than those ordinarily encountered in daily professional life.
- Participants will be interviewed and asked to share their perceptions about school leadership and change.
- Participation in the study is voluntary and the participant may withdraw at any time. If the participant does withdraw, any data collected prior to withdrawal will not be used.
- The participant will be given the opportunity to ask questions regarding this research and that the researcher will answer all questions to the participant's satisfaction.
- There is no agreement, written or verbal, beyond that expressed on this consent form.
- Participants will be interviewed; the interviews will be taped and transcribed; tapes and transcriptions will be kept in a locked filing cabinet and/or a password-secured computer. The researcher will also observe and take notes on what is happening in the school.
- The maximum duration of each interview will be no more than two hours. The interview will be audio taped and later transcribed (by researcher and/or professional transcriber). At this point, one interview is anticipated, with a possible second follow-up interview. The follow-up interview will last no longer than one hour. The participant will be afforded the opportunity to review and edit his or her individual transcription prior to the end of the research.
- Although every attempt will be made to ensure the confidentiality of responses by using pseudonyms for both the school and those being interviewed, it is possible that those familiar with the school may guess the identity of the person who made a particular statement.
- The benefit for participation in this research is personal satisfaction in adding to the body of knowledge regarding this topic.
- If the participant would like to contact the chairperson Robert Donmoyer, for any reason, she or he may do so at: donmoyer@sandiego.edu and/or (619) 260-7445. Also, if the participant would like to contact the researcher Brian Matthews, for any reason, he or she may do so at: brian_matthews@aisr.edu.sa and/or (966)-1-491-4270.

I, the undersigned, understand the above explanations and, on that basis, I give consent to my voluntary participation in this research.

_____   _____   _____
Name of Participant (printed)   Signature of Participant   Date

_____   _____   _____
Location   Date

_____   _____   _____
Signature of Principal Researcher   Date

Appendix C
Interview Guide

Appendix C

Interview Guide

Interview Guide Outline

As per the content of the interviews, I will begin each interview by describing the purpose of the research. Once done, I will first pursue a range of questions based on background questions about the school. Here, I will be interested in engaging participants in a discussion about their initial impressions of the school. Second, I will ask questions about describing the changes they have seen at the school since their arrival. Here I will be interested to know if leaders specifically use or mention the construct of culture and/or if they have internalized the concept in their vocabulary and actions. Third, I will seek to uncover how each leader understands/defines school culture; how each leader views the current culture at AISME; if she/he has witnessed any changes in the culture since arriving at the school; how he or she perceives his/her role in helping to shape school culture; what she/he are the possibilities and barriers of building school culture at AISME and beyond. Finally, I will be interesting in gauging what kinds of formal and informal feedback mechanisms are used to assess the impact of their actions and how this feedback is used.

At the onset, the following topics will guide the study:

(A) Background Topics: Here, I will ask each leader to discuss briefly their first impressions about AISME. Some probes may include:
- Upon arrival, what were some of your first impressions about the school?
- At this time, what were some of the stories you heard about the school?

(B) Change Topics: Here, I will ask each leader to describe the changes that he or she has experienced since arriving at AISME. Some probes may include:
- What are some of the changes that are unfolding at AISME?
- What kind of changes have you initiated and/or participated in as part of the leadership team?
- When thinking about and/or trying to make changes at the school, what are some of the factors you consider prior to initiating the change? Do you consider specific models and/or strategies? If so, please describe them.
- What are some of the changes that you believe still need to be made at the school?

(C) School Culture Topics: Here, I will inquire how each leader understands/uses the term school culture; what they consider the "culture" of AISME; how he or she perceives his/her role in helping to shape school culture; what she/he are the possibilities and barriers of building school culture at AISME and beyond; what kinds of formal and informal feedback mechanisms are used to assess the impact of their actions and how this feedback is used.

1. General questions about school culture, some probes may include:

- Our superintendent has often used the idea of school culture. What do you think this term means? How is the idea of culture used at administration meetings?
- How would you describe the present situation of the school's culture? Since beginning to work at this school, have you noticed changes in this school's culture? If so, how has it changed? If not, why do you think it has not changed?
- In the future, what kind of culture do you envision at AISME? How do you think you can get there?

2. Questions regarding possibilities/barrier for leaders in changing school culture, some probes may include:
- Since your arrival at this school, describe the opportunities you have had to build/change/maintain this school's culture?
- What barriers have you experienced in trying to change the culture of the school?

3. Questions regarding leaders changing/shaping school culture, some probes may include:
- As a school leader, what do you think is your role in shaping, changing, and/or maintaining the culture of a school? If so, what are some of the strategies that you have employed and/or are using to change this school's culture?
- How do you communicate core values and mission of the school? How do honor and/or recognize staff and faculty? How do you celebrate the accomplishments of staff, students, and the community? What rituals and traditions are in place at the school? Have you introduced any new ones? Do you think the school has heroes/heroines? If so, who? How do you focus your energies on students?
- What are some of the strategies you have witnessed other leaders at our school use to develop culture?
- If the leader uses the language of organizational/school culture, I will proceed with questions such as: Where did you learn about culture; Are you familiar with specific culture researchers? If so, please discuss them and/or their work

4. Questions regarding feedback mechanisms, some probes may include:
- What are some of the formal and informal feedback mechanisms do you use to assess the impact of your change/reculturing actions?
- How do you use this feedback?