VOICES OF FOUR AFRICAN AMERICAN AND EUROPEAN AMERICAN

FEMALE PRINCIPALS AND THEIR LEADERSHIP STYLES IN A

RECOGNIZED URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

A Dissertation

by

CLARA THOMPSON TURNER

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

August 2004

Major Subject: Curriculum and Instruction

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Approved as to style and content by:

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ABSTRACT

Voices of Four African American and European American Female Principals and Their

Leadership Styles in a Recognized Urban School District. (August 2004)

Clara Thompson Turner, B.S., Texas A&M University;

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This research study was conducted as a case study method on four African American and European American female educational administrators. The qualitative research framework was adopted to gain an understanding of how these administrators in secondary educational leadership positions exercised and (re)interpreted (Dillard, 1995) their leadership. The intent of my case study was to broaden the limited research base relating to the lived stories and experiences of the principalship from those whose voices can inform others about pertinent issues of leadership through diversity. In order to develop a clearer understanding of the administrators' perceptions on diverse leadership as it related to student academic performance, this study investigated constructed meanings of the relationship between their lived experiences and the way they led, by employing the feminist and interpretive lenses.

This qualitative study used the actual words of the participants to tell their story, as it provided a rich representation of the ideas presented. Data was collected through in-depth, open-ended interviews, and semi-structured face-to-face interviews through

which the events, beliefs, and perceptions shaped the phenomenon under study. Analysis

of the data occurred immediately after each interview and observation. Analytic

conclusions were formulated by unitizing, coding, and then categorizing ideas or

statements of experiences from the data to ensure that important constructs, themes, and

patterns emerged.

The results of this study yielded the following as it related to the voices of four

African American and European American female principals and their leadership styles

in a recognized urban school district: (1) many forms or ways of leading were practiced

by the administrators; (2) their upbringing or developmental pathways were different,

however, they were determined to positively impact the lives of others throughout their

educational career; (3) mentoring played an instrumental part in the administrators'

leadership practices; (4) high student academic achievement was a result of effective

professional development initiatives for their faculties; (5) they held themselves

accountable for the outcomes of student academic performance; (6) they viewed

diversity in leadership as critical; and (7) three of the four administrators identified their

belief in a higher being as significant in their way of leading.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

"Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him" (Psalms 34:8). First and foremost, I thank God for His unconditional love and awesome power as I leaned on Him for strength and endurance. It is without a doubt that my accomplishment was His will and a blessing that only He could provide.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A tremendous effort to improve our nation's schools and raise student

achievement in the elementary and secondary grade levels has been demonstrated during

the last 20 years. Prominent national and state initiatives in school reform during these

times have been many, however, significant changes in student achievement in basic

school practices have been slow. One reason cited for slow progress is the need for

stronger leadership that will direct and implement changes in curriculum, instruction,

and school organization (Hoachlander et al, 2001). As scholars' thoughts on the

effectiveness for schools evolved, so did their understanding of the principal's role.

Findings from a number of research disciplines, particularly the investigations of

effective schools and successful school change, highlighted the importance of the

principal's leadership (Keller, 1998; Elmore, 2000; Blackman & Fenwick, 2001).

Principals were found to have played a key role at higher achieving schools by setting

realistic student achievement goals and planning ways to meet them, evaluating and

offering support to teachers, reaching out to parents, displaying a positive attitude, and

leaving no child outside the school's circle of concern (Keller, 1998). According to

Hallinger & Heck (1998), principals exercise a measurable, though indirect, effect on

school effectiveness and student achievement. Furthermore, their study concluded that

without the principal's leadership, efforts to raise student achievement can not succeed.

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This dissertation follows the style and format of the *Educational Researcher*.

Thus, the top priority of the principalship must include leadership for learning and academic success.

As the demands on public schools have become more centered around student achievement, women seem ready to meet the challenges of administration (Avila, 1993; Ryan, 1999). Women administrators in education have been cited as focusing more on instructional leadership in supervisory practices, students' individual differences, knowledge of curriculum teaching methods, and the objectives of teaching (Conner, 1992; Fennell, 1999; Terry, 1999; Tirozzi, 2001). In responding to the needs of children through reform efforts, female principals, who spent more time on curriculum and instruction than did their male counterparts, were more effective reformers and were viewed by their staffs as true instructional leaders (Andrews & Basom, 1990). Similarly, Gross and Trask (1976) stated that women principals have greater knowledge of and concern for instructional supervision. They added that students' academic performance and teachers' professional performance were rated higher under women principals. Funk (1993) described some of the advantages female administrators bring to school leadership roles, such as empathy, sensitivity, nurturing, organization, attention to detail, a willingness to listen, flexibility, and a strong work ethic. Regardless of the administrators' ethnic background, female leadership strengths have been proven effective in school communities that have become increasingly diversed (Funk, 1993).

Historically, African American women in school leadership positions have demonstrated characteristics of courage, strength, and perseverance as they face both racism and sexism along their journey to success (Jones & Montenegro, 1983; Lomotey,

1993; Bell & Chase, 1993). An African American female administrator participant in a study conducted by Hudson, et al (1998), spoke of her strength. "We (African American females) have been in situations where we had to struggle to survive… So, we are strong…We have a strong sense of accomplishment…We cannot simply be equal… we must be better" (p 47). Another participant believed that her cultural heritage was a strength she brought to her school community because she could relate to the children's background. A research study completed by Lomotey (1989) identified three qualities African American principals possessed: 1) a commitment to the education of all students; 2) confidence in the ability of all students to do well; and 3) compassion for all students. These qualities are significant for current school leadership. Wesson (1998) says the majority of African American female leaders are hired in troubled urban districts that have inadequate financial resources, among other social ills that impact schools.

The dilemma of urban education and unsuccessful attempts toward school improvement, have caused many to refer to city school problems as education's most serious issue (Lomotey, 1989; Carlin, 1992; Fredericks, 1992). However, research studies demonstrate that it is possible to nurture successful urban schools despite ongoing social ills in communities (Carter, 2003; Irvine & Armento, 2001). Research indicated that effective leadership practices for educating urban, students of color must include a strong leadership that will mobilize resources to support the acquisition of basic skills by all students (Cotton, 1991; Leak, et al, 1997). Studies show that high expectations for student learning, active participation on the part of administrators and

teachers, and active communication of these expectations to students are needed to enhance student achievement (Gibb, 2000; King, 2002).

Other researchers have found out that developing a multicultural climate is important because of the attitudinal impact it has on student learning (Carter & Larke, 1995). For example, culturally responsive pedagogy is a key concept in multicultural education because it lays emphasis on the ability of teachers to respond to their students by including elements of students' culture in their teaching (Carter, 2003). Gay (2000) defines culturally responsive teaching as using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant (p. 29). Culturally responsive teaching includes the following characteristics: 1) acknowledging the cultural heritages of different ethnic groups; 2) building bridges of meaningfulness between the students' home and school experiences; 3) using a wide variety of instructional strategies that are connected to different learning styles; 4) teaching students to know and appreciate their own as well as others' cultural heritages, and 5) incorporating multicultural information in all subjects and skills taught in schools. Research on numerous studies have found that teachers must have a strong background in multicultural education if they are going to engage in culturally responsive teaching (Carter & Larke, 1995; Nieto, 2000). According to Maeroff (1994), in order for urban schools to make schools places where students want to be, they must become involved in the lives of their students. Thus, when urban schools are effective, children can develop the skills, knowledge, and capacities needed in work and adulthood (Irvine & Armento, 2001).

Research strongly suggest that principals make a significant difference in shaping

teaching and learning, and are now being asked more stringently to be accountable for

school performance (Cooley, et al, 2003; Lashway, 2000). School districts in the United

States face the inevitable challenge of improving student achievement and fulfilling state

mandated requirements. Most states' accountability systems do not accredit and rate

schools and school districts based on their compliance with rules, or their

implementation of required or recommended processes, but on the academic

achievement of students (Johnson, 1998). Principals play a major role in these

processes.

Statement of the Problem

In the field of educational administration, leadership has been the central focus of

research with most studies focusing on the experiences of white males (Glazer, 1991;

Duke, 1998). Recently, research has expanded its literature on defining leadership and

examining character traits and qualities associated with effective leadership. However,

mainstream literature surrounding secondary school leadership has historically grounded

the school principal's work in technical theories of motivation and management

(Hertzberg, 1968; Sergiovanni, 1967), with little emphasis on socio-cultural or feminist

theories of leadership. Considering the increased diversity which exists in schools

today, it is imperative to visualize the principalship in more expansive ways, particularly

through the voices of women educational administrators. It is important for women to

verbalize personal insight about their character, which will enable them to think about

their inner values, beliefs, and leadership styles (Wesson, 1998). There is a need for

research to provide insight on women's personal and professional characteristics and attributes as female leaders, particularly in secondary, urban education. Hence, this study will attempt to fill the void by including the voices and lived stories and experiences of four African American and European American women administrators who can inform others about important issues of leadership in a recognized secondary, urban school district.

Statement of the Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine and (re)interpret (Dillard, 1995) the life experiences and leadership practices of four African American and European American women administrators in secondary urban schools. Discourse will be used to determine the constructed meanings of their personal and professional acts of leading as it relates to high academic achievement for secondary urban students.

Significance of Study

A substantial amount of literature has been written on defining leadership and examining character traits and qualities associated with effective leadership. Research has also included an abundance of literature on characteristics of effective schooling with great emphasis on theoretical and practical approaches in reaching all students. However, there continues to be a void that fails to include the lived stories and experiences of the principalship from female voices that can inform others about pertinent issues of leadership in education. These voices can provide an essential model and a better understanding of the construction of the leader persona and the way one leads secondary students toward successful achievement. Through a discourse on

leadership, this research study can also add relevant methods that have been traditionally excluded in the research on women leaders. As a result, the impact of female leadership on student academic achievement in a large, successful, urban school district can be acknowledged and appreciated.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to examine and (re) interpret (Dillard, 1995) the life experiences and leadership practices of four African American and European American women administrators in secondary urban schools. The following questions served as guides for the study:

1. What personal characteristics attributed to these African American and European American women administrators' success in secondary urban education?

2. How do the selected African American women administrators and European American women administrators exercise and interpret their acts of leadership?

3. What are these African American and European American women administrators' perceptions about leadership as related to student academic performance in a recognized, urban district?

Definition of Terms

African American – United States citizens who are non-Hispanic and classified as "Black" by the Bureau of the Census. African Americans include individuals descending from any of the Black racial groups of Africa. (Nettles & Perna, 1997).

Culture – The ideations, symbols, behaviors, values and beliefs that are shared by a human group. Culture can also be defined as a group's program for survival and adaptation to its environment, i.e., a social group's design for surviving in and adapting to its environment. It is the heritage and traditions of a social group. (Banks & Banks, 2003).

Ethnic Group – A microcultural group or collectivity that shares a common history, culture, common values, behaviors, and other characteristics that cause members of the group to have a shared identity. A sense of "peoplehood" is one of the most important characteristics of an ethnic group. An ethnic group also shares economic and political interests. Cultural characteristics, rather than biological traits, are the essential attributes of an ethnic group. (Banks & Banks, 2001).

European American – United States citizens who are of German, Irish, English, Italian, French, Polish, Dutch, Scotch-Irish, Scottish and Sweden descent. (Banks, 2003).

Exemplary Accreditation Rating – An accountability system which rates schools and districts as having at least 90% of all students, including African American, Hispanic, White, and low-income students pass each section (reading, writing, and mathematics) a specific standardized test.

High Poverty Schools – Schools in which 50% or more of students meet federal free or reduced price lunch criteria. (Johnson, 1998).

Leadership Styles – Leadership styles may include facilitative, instructional, transformational, visionary, and community. All are important, but for this study,

leadership for student learning and achievement are the priority that connects and encompasses all leadership styles. (Hallinger & Heck, 1998).

Recognized Accreditation Rating – An accountability system which rates schools as having at least 80% of all students, including African American, Hispanic, White, and low-income students, pass the reading, writing, and mathematics sections of specific standardized test.

Secondary Schools – A school that does not have a grade lower than the 7th. Middle school and high schools are considered secondary schools. (National Center for Education Statistics, 1995).

Urban School District – A school district that has more than 50,000 students. (Johnson, 1998).

Voices – Framework of detailed expressions of one's way of knowing. Voices include life experiences (personal and professional experiences) which may be expressions of one's values, beliefs, needs and concerns.

Assumptions

I assumed that all the participants would answer the questions to the best of their ability. However, because I am the instrument, there are automatically certain biases that are inherent in my study. I cannot separate myself from the data, and I realize that the findings are my interpretations of the participants' perspectives. Also, I am an African American, middle class female, and I cannot separate myself from the biases associated with that identity. Furthermore, I recognize that this research cannot be generalized to other situations. It is my interpretation of the experiences of these four

African American and European female administrators, specifically. If another researcher were to conduct the same study with the same administrators, the emergent process of the study would be influenced, and differing interpretations would possibly result.

Limitations

With regard to the nature of the establishment of transferability in a naturalistic study, there are some obvious limitations to my study. Through my case study of administrators' leadership experiences of four African American and European American females, I am only examining and (re) interpreting (Dillard, 1995) those four women. I do not make claim that all African American and European American female administrators will have the same experiences as administrators in my study. It is my hope, however, that parents, teachers, and researchers will discover for themselves ways in which the information in my study can be applied to other situations and perhaps be used to enhance ways of leading by other administrators.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

To understand the way one leads, it is important to understand "something about the developmental pathways those leaders have traveled" (Curry, 2000, p. 21). A leader's persona is a feature of identity whose main concern is centered around object-relations whereby the leader makes an effort to balance independence and belonging (Curry, 2000). Leadership personas, then, are unique and become apparent through a person's individual psychology, as they are part of one's developmental experiences. Consequently, effective leadership is not prescriptive, but is a part of the characteristic that creates the individual as it changes within the processes of development. Since people are socialized by their families and influenced by people they meet during different stages in life, their values, beliefs, goals, and commitments will also continue to change throughout their lifetime.

Leader Persona and Individual Identity

Leadership and leader persona influence the way one conducts him/herself throughout various occurrences in one's life. Leadership and leader persona also reveal an individual's values, goals, and beliefs. Importantly, the examination of leadership through identity development can provide life stories that bring about an awareness of one's own development. Marcia (1993) believed that development takes place in stages and set forth an identity that includes four stages: 1) identity foreclosure; 2) identity achievement; 3) identity diffusion; and 4) moratorium. Identity foreclosure was

described as being heavily influenced by one's childhood expectations placed by the parents. In this stage, the identity formation is not fully developed because the person has not sought ways of knowing other than what has been embedded by their parents. The identity achievement stage involved those who have explored other ways of knowing and initiated their own paths to take in life. The third stage, identity diffusion, was described as the stage whereby one's behavior is patterned as drifting or changing from day to day. It was considered to be dysfunctional and regressive because there is an act of avoidance by the person desiring to form an identity. Moratorium, the last stage, consisted of testing new ways of doing things. Although this stage was described as a period of indecisiveness, it was stated to be common for one to move between this stage and the identity achievement stage while making progress toward his/her identity development.

Kegan (1982) felt that a connection between the explanation and proaction regarding the ways of thinking about women becoming leaders was missing. As a result, he used neo-Piagetian psychology as a means to bridge research and intervention, which in turn connected identity theory with intervention. Furthermore, he suggested a method by which one could pursue exploration of identity formation and intervention. Stages, according to Kegan, were defined as phases where one faces the struggle between being part of and being separate from (object-relatedness). Thus, individuation occurred during the change between the past and present, and a force was felt as one moved forward in their route of becoming. Marcia (1993), on the other hand, distinguished identity formation from the construction of identity. He asserted that identity is

constructed when one is able to make important decisions about their lives, i.e., values, goals, beliefs, relationships, and occupations.

Skrla, et al's (2000) study stated that, "we need to find out how women leaders' identity formation intersects with the construction of leadership roles. Such research should lead to a better understanding of new and alternative forms of school leadership" (p. 71). In Curry's (2000) study, women leaders talked about themselves as they shared their current construction of their leader persona to family history and the framework that background provided in the construction of their leader persona. One participant's formation of her leader persona emerged from her refusing to accept family values, whereby women were obligated to be self-sacrificing caregivers. Another participant's leader persona emerged out of her family's supportiveness and their unquestionable expectations. At a very early age, she was expected to exercise her leadership qualities while solving problems and leading in difficult situations. Lastly, one of Curry's participants classified several features that assisted in her ability to lead. As a result, she acquired the ability to apply masculine rules, which required separating or isolating approaches to object relations. Although each of these women did not have the perfect experience that allowed them the ability to lead, each of them had constructed meanings that resulted in approaches that were quite adaptive to leading and living their lives. Consequently, each of the women leaders' personas emerged from the experiences they had beginning early in their life.

Despite of what research has written on leader persona and personal identity, the success of an individual or organization has been credited to the type of leadership it

practices. In an effort to increase effective leadership, numerous formulas, strategies and approaches have been implemented in businesses and educational institutions. However, Curry (2000) proposed that leaders are not found in formulas, but instead are connected within an individual's development of becoming. The leader persona, involving an individual's personal histories and inter-subjective experiences, should be considered when determining the way one leads. Hence, instead of attempting to lead by instruction or following leadership models, successful leadership may be more correctly described as compatibility of meanings and meaning systems between an organization and a leader. Nevertheless, institutions are apt to continue to ignore personal histories while applying both theoretical and practical strategies toward leadership development in the educational settings as a means for reaching high levels of professional and academic successes.

Effective Educational Leadership

Leadership has been the main focal point of research in educational administration for many years. Research has attempted to define leadership characteristics that lead to effective educational leadership. However, more pertinent issues regarding effective leadership and its link to student success have been raised. What must educational leaders know and be able to do in order to be effective leaders? What approaches are being implemented to ensure success for all students?

Hoachlander, et al (2001) suggests that a strong educational leader can define, manage, and improve curriculum and instruction in a skillful fashion. Furthermore, a strong educational leader maximizes student achievement by leading and shaping the

daily practices of formal schooling. Anderson, et al (1987) mentioned effective leaders

should have a vision and be able to translate that vision into action, create a supportive

environment, be aware of what is going on in the school, and be able to act on

knowledge. According to Bottoms & O'Neill (2001), school leaders who are prepared to

lead schools designed for high student achievement must have a comprehensive

understanding of school and classroom practices that contribute to student achievement.

Leaders must know how to work with teachers and others to fashion and implement

continuous student improvement, and know how to provide the necessary support for

staff to carry out sound school, curriculum and instructional practices. In addition,

Bottoms & O'Neill (2001) listed strategies that successful leaders must implement in

order to improve student achievement. These fundamental strategies included, but are

not limited to: 1) create a focused mission to improve student improvement and a vision

of the elements of school, curriculum and instructional practices that make higher

achievement possible; 2) set high expectations for all students to learn higher-level

content; 3) recognize and encourage implementations of good instructional practices that

motivate and increase student achievement; and 4) use data to initiate and continue

improvement in school and classroom practices and student achievement.

 According to Davis (1998), effective leaders generally possess what

psychologists consider an internal locus of control, meaning they tend to view their

successes and failures as reflections of their ability, degree of effort or motivational

level. In addition, they are self-reflective persons who are honest about their

shortcomings as well as strengths, and they are not afraid to seek assistance from others

when confronted with complex problems or tasks. Additionally, Lopez (1990) proposed

that leadership obtains strength from wisdom that includes a combination of using the

intellect, knowing the heart and understanding the spirit. Along with the skills and

knowledge cultivated in experience and formal study, many effective leaders use self-

assessment to examine the development of their wisdom. As a result, they take

responsibility for evaluating their own work while thoughtfully considering the evidence

of its effects.

In collaboration with the Council of Chief State School Officers and the support

of the Pew Charitable Trusts and the Danforth Foundation, The National Policy Board

for Education Administration (NPBEA) founded the Interstate School Leaders Licensure

Consortium (ISLLC). Its purpose served to publicize standards that highlight the

centrality of student learning in leadership preparation programs (Hoachlander, et al,

2001). The ISLLC specified several approaches by which educational leaders may

promote success for all students. These approaches included: 1) advocating, and

sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and

the professional growth of staff members; 2) collaborating with families and community

members; 3) responding to diverse community interests and needs; 4) mobilizing

community resources, while acting with integrity, fairness, and ethics, and 5)

understanding, responding to and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal

and cultural contexts.

According to Irvine and Armento (2001), leaders must respond to the challenge of

diverse classrooms to become effective leaders. Observing, accepting and respecting

others' cultures can provide leaders with an understanding of the origin of individual viewpoints, and in turn, become more sensitive to the cultural needs of that individual. As schools become more diverse, leaders must learn how to communicate with students as individuals in order for goals to be understood and achieved. Thus, the necessity for instruction that responds to the learners' culture becomes critical (Gay, 2000).

Lastly, effective schools research compared high-performing urban schools with schools that were demographically similar, but had inferior student outcomes. These investigations led to the identification and lists of schools and classroom factors that seemed to make the difference between effective and ineffective schools. Effective schools were characterized by: 1) strong administrative leadership; 2) goals focused on basic skills acquisition for all students; 3) high expectations for all students; 4) teachers who took responsibility for their students' learning and adapted instruction to make sure that learning was taking place; 5) safe and orderly environments; 6) the provision of incentives and rewards for student performance; and 7) regular monitoring of student progress (Edmonds, 1979). Other characteristics of effective schools included staff development programs focused on school improvement, use of school resources in support of priority goals, parent involvement, and coordination among staff of different programs serving the same students (Comer, 1980).

Women Leaders in Education

Women comprise more than half of the teaching workforce in our nation, but hold fewer than half of all school principalships (NCES, 2000). The U.S. Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics' Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS)

reported during 1993-94 and 1999-2000, that although the percentage of female

principals in public schools increased between 35 percent to 44 percent, the majority

were men during those years. Furthermore, in 1999-2000, a total of 83,790 principals

worked in public schools across the United States (NCES, 2000). Of that total, 47,130

were men and 36,660 were women. Almost 83 percent were white, about 11 percent

were African American, and only 5 percent were Hispanic.

According to Logan (1998), more women principals are hired at the elementary

level than are hired as high school principal, but elementary school principals seldom

move up to the position of superintendent. In K-12 education, females comprise 83% of

the elementary and 54% of the secondary teaching populations. Yet, they constituted

only 52% of the principals in elementary schools and 25% of the high school positions

(Henke, Choy, Geis, & Broughman, 1996). While women principals represent 41

percent of the workforce and this representation is predominantly in the elementary

school level, women of color also show greatest representation in the elementary school

principalships with 17.4 percent in elementary schools, 16.8 percent in middle schools

and 12.5 percent in secondary schools (Doud & Keller, 1998). Pollard (1997) supported

these numbers as he concluded in his study that Caucasian and African American

women found no problems in obtaining principalships at the elementary school level.

Lastly, Fiore & Curtin (1997) suggested both women and principals of color were more

prevalent in large districts in either central cities or urban fringes.

African American Women Leaders in Education

The percentage of principals of color in public schools increased between 1993-94 and 1999-2000 from 16 percent to 18 percent (NCES, 2000). During the 1999-2000 school year, more principals of color worked at the elementary level than would be expected based entirely on the distribution of schools at that level. On the other hand, fewer principals of color worked in public secondary schools than would be expected based on the percentage of these schools.

As stated by Weinberg (1977) school desegregation was a major factor in the decreased number of African-American principals. In addition, some researchers such as Miklos (1988) argued that subsequent school and district practices have meant that principals of color will more likely be placed in schools with a large number of students of similar ethnic or cultural groups and may be appointed through application of special criteria. Additionally, principals of color may differ from non-minority administrators in important characteristics. These differences may include years of prior classroom teaching experience, the nature of their previous positions in the field, the nature of their current appointment, and degrees earned (Table 1).

African Americans, Hispanics, Asians, and Native Americans represent 70% of the student population in 20 of the nation's largest urban public school systems (Irvine & Armento, 2001). It is necessary, then, for principals to be skilled in incorporating this diversity into rich and supportive climates for learning. Principals who themselves are members of racial-ethnic minority groups may bring special insights and talents to these tasks, and they may serve as role models for staff and students in distinctive ways.

Principals of color may also serve as important role models in low-minority schools (i.e., schools with fewer than 20 percent of students of color enrolled) by bringing distinctive perspectives that may not have been present otherwise.

Lastly, women and minorities are confronted with a variety of demands and expectations, which the White male does not experience (Valverde & Brown, 1988; Marshall, 1991). According to Marshall, women generally ignore or repress issues of their race and gender when they reflect upon their professional role. Cohn and Sweeney (1992) assert this helps them succeed in organizations that have varying expectations, rewards, and expectations for the atypical.

Women's Styles of Leading

What types of leadership styles, behavior, characteristics, and attributes do female administrators bring to the organizations in which they serve? An examination of women in leadership from a feminine perspective reveals that a female organization culture exists and that women exhibit ways of leading that are different from the ways men lead. Women's ways of leading are consistent with recent trends in leadership research and theory and provide a model for education that could lead to a "more caring community and a safer world" (Noddings, 1991, p. 70). Questions continue to abound about whether differences in leadership style and preferences are gender related. Leadership styles and preferences often associated with the females include preferences for democratic rather than autocratic organizations, and cultures that are inclusive and collaborative (Eagly, et al 1992). Additionally, there is support for the premise that female leaders are more attuned to instruction, teachers, and children (McGrath, 1992).

Also, there is evidence that because women develop differently, they are more likely to demonstrate an ethic of care that is grounded in relationships rather than laws (Porat, 1991).

Women leaders often have an abiding concern for children, especially marginal students and those without advocates (Brown, et al 1993). Rosener (1990) suggested that a woman's leadership orientation is marked by a concern for community and culture. She further stated that women generally concern themselves with the importance of establishing relationships and maintaining connections with others. In a leadership position, women are more likely to critically examine the past, ask the difficult questions, promote collective visioning, focus on the development of others, and respond with the good of the community at heart (Irwin, 1995). They tend to practice leadership as a form of inquiry and they are more apt to foster organizational exploration. Helgesen (1990) concluded from diary studies of four female leaders that their leadership style was participative, consensus building and empowering, leading to a web of inclusion rather hierarchical which is more prevalent in male leadership.

Aburdene and Naisbitt (1992) characterized women's leadership behavior in six central patterns. These patterns were identified as behaviors that empower, restructure, teach, provide role models, encourage openness, and stimulate questioning. Gillett-Karam (1994) used four behaviors to characterize women in leadership. These behaviors included (a) vision behavior – women leaders take appropriate risks to bring about change; (b) people behavior, meaning women leaders provide care and respect for individual differences; (c) influence behavior because women act collaboratively, and

(d) values behavior in which women leaders spend time building trust and openness. Regardless of the leadership behaviors and specific definitions, women possess the capabilities and skills to be excellent educational administrators.

Gross and Trask (1976) asserted that women principals have greater knowledge of and concern for instructional supervision and that superiors and teachers preferred women over men. They also asserted that teachers' professional performance rated higher under women principals. Thus, these female leaders demonstrated the kinds of behavior that promoted achievement and learning in addition to high morale and commitment by staff. Shakeshaft (1989) described the most significant leader behaviors of female leaders as making relationships with others central to all their actions, placing their major focus on teaching and learning, and building community and inclusiveness through democratic, participatory styles. She also noted that women's communication and decision-making styles stress cooperation, thereby helping to facilitate the translation of their educational visions into student progress.

Fennell's (1999) interviews with six women principals on their perception of leadership identified some personal characteristics of female leaders. One participant believed that leaders needed to have a clear sense of their own vision and beliefs. She further stated that it was the leader's responsibility to ensure that the vision of the organization was being fulfilled by faculty and staff. Another participant in her study felt that her greatest strength as a leader was the ability to establish rapport easily and build lasting relationships with the staff.

Good school administration, according to Growe & Montgomery (1999), is more attuned to feminine than masculine modes of leadership behavior. Attributes associated with females such as nurturing, empathy, intuition, sensitivity, cooperation, caring, and accommodation are increasingly linked with effective administration. A study completed by Helgesen (1990), revealed that many women lead differently than men because of their experiences as a woman. Often, these strengths been ignored, if not dismissed by the dominant male business culture. She revealed through her research that workplaces run by women emphasize practices that are inclusive, not hierarchical. As a result, a sense of appreciation for and importance of working jointly with one another is experienced as both teachers and administrators participate in the decision-making in school.

Moreover, Funk's (1993) extension of Helgesen's research described some advantages that women bring to school leadership roles. Her findings indicated these advantages to include a willingness to listen and think globally, attention to detail, flexibility, and a strong work ethic. These female roles, according to Funk (1993), as girls, mothers, daughters, and sisters have greatly affected the ways in which they lead. Her findings concluded that female school leaders bring their unique strengths into what once was considered the all-male world of school administration. They used people-oriented and collaborative styles to construct a school family in which everyone works together.

In the overall school reform movement, school, family, and community links involving team building and site-based management seemed to come naturally to

women, and enable them to empower others (Hill & Ragland, 1995). As empowerment

has become an important issue to educational reform, Funk (1993) affirmed that the keys

to real and meaningful changes in schools are held by those who can empower others.

These keys show that female leaders who empower others while restructuring,

reforming, and making site-based decisions, are the leaders of effective school

communities of the future.

Similarly, Shakeshaft (1989) agreed by stating that women use power to

empower others and believe that power expands as it is shared and is not finite. For

women, then, empowering others is non-threatening, unlike the threats power sharing

has for many males. Additionally, Hill and Ragland (1995) indicated the inclusive mode

of leadership utilized by female administration overlaps with thrusts of the reform

movement, which also involves teacher empowerment, shared decision making, and

school restructuring. Schroth (1995) agreed that the research is clear that women's

greatest strengths include sharing power, information, and communication and

collaboration. Schroth considered these strengths to be the primary skills needed for

effective site-based management.

In responding to the needs of children through reform efforts, female principals,

who spent more time on curriculum and instruction than did their counterparts, were

more effective reformers since they were viewed by their staffs as true instructional

leaders (Andrews & Basom, 1990). Thus, women leaders serve as innovative and

constructive change agents during a time when new leadership styles are greatly needed

for successful reform efforts (Shakeshaft, 1989).

African American Women's Styles of Leading

There are relatively few studies on African American women's styles of educational leadership when compared to White women and White males (Banks, 1995). However, research that has been made available indicates there are considerable differences in the experiences of women of color, White women, and White male leaders. One of these differences involves community relations. African American school administrators, male and female, tend to be very closely tied to the local community (Banks, 1995). African American principals, more often than their White colleagues, involve parents and members of the African American community in school activities (Monteriro, 1977). Historically, African American women have demonstrated tremendous amounts of strength and ability to survive and persevere (Hudson et al, 1998). Hence, many African American women school leaders today are like their ancestors; they are described as courageous while displaying strength and resilience as they face both racism and sexism in their efforts to succeed (Carter & Parker, 1996).

In a study conducted by Lomotey (1989), three qualities of African American principals emerged: 1) commitment to the education of all students; 2) confidence in the ability of all students to do well, and 3) compassion for and understanding of all students and the communities in which they live. Similar qualities were reflected by four African American women who participated in Hudson et al's (1998) study. Each of them spoke passionately about their desire and readiness to handle issues regarding equitable educational opportunities for all children. They were also receptive to racial, cultural, and socioeconomic diversity in schools and were willing to question the status quo. One

participant expressed the desire to become an advocate for parents who cannot speak on their own behalf. Another believed the appreciation her parents expressed toward diversity, gave her the appreciation for diversity as well. Furthermore, Doughty (1980) found that the African American females she studied had positive self-perceptions and believed in their ability to do their jobs. They tended to reject descriptions of themselves as tokens and felt they were hired and promoted because of their credentials and past performance.

Barriers Faced by Women in Leadership Positions

Women in leadership are confronted with barriers or obstacles on a daily basis. Often, women who aspire to administrative careers are convinced that stereotypical thinking about women's roles and the qualities necessary to perform on the job is the major barrier for them (Marshall, 1992). Also, society's attitude toward male and female roles is an obstacle that can categorize women as not task-oriented enough, too dependent on reactions and evaluations of others, and lacking independence. Despite the positive perceptions of principals toward female capabilities, Growe and Montgomery (1999) cite a study which women received little or no encouragement to seek leadership positions, while men were encouraged to enter administration. This lack of encouragement existed even when women who earned doctorates were more likely than men to desire an academic career.

Logan and Scollay (1999) completed a study that examined gender equity issues for educational administration programs. In this study, department chairs at universities with membership in the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA)

were asked about their perceptions of barriers to women who apply for high school

principalship and superintendency positions. The responses, applicable to positions of

both principal and superintendent, included traditional statements such as an

unwillingness of some boards to consider women for leadership, lack of support for

women administrators, positions of power held by "good old boys", and the reluctance to

change traditional hiring patterns.

According to Helgesen (1990), women still deal with the negative views of

female administrators held by peers, parents, and employees of both sexes. Gupton and

Slick (1995) quoted a female elementary principal as saying that "even after women

have obtained administrative positions, they are not afforded the status or the respect

given their male colleagues" (p.10). Within the school environment, the attitudes which

teachers have toward women administrators may have a direct effect on how well the

administrators' job performance will be evaluated by her supervisor (Hudson, et al

1998). These attitudes may also be a deterrent to more women seeking administrative

positions. A study completed by Hudson, et al (1998) examined teachers' attitudes

toward women principals. Its purpose was to determine how women and male teachers

perceived the effectiveness of female administrators and whether or not they preferred a

female administrator over a male administrator.

Table 2 presents the collective responses of male and female participants. Good

verbal communicator was checked by 92.5% of the participants for a male principal and

93.1% as a desirable quality for a female principal. Thus, it can be concluded that good

communication between principals and teachers is important regardless of the principal's

gender. The least desirable quality of male (17.3%) and female (19%) principal was the

unemotional attribute. The quality "emotional" was also one of the least desired

qualities for male (23.2%) and female (26.3%) principals. Teachers appeared not to

want extremes and to prefer a balance in both male and female principals. The low

percentage of responses for the quality authoritarian, (21.7%) for a male principal and

(19.4%) for female principal, indicate that an authoritative style was an unacceptable

quality for all principals. It is interesting to note that the quality "shares power and

credit" received a higher percentage of responses, 82% for a male principal and 83.6%

for a female principal, than did the quality of collaborative which received 74.5% for a

male principal and 76.4% for a female principal. Being decisive was slightly more

desirable in a female principal than in a male principal. The authors concluded this

response could be related to the idea that women traditionally are perceived to be less

decisive than men.

Table 3 represents the desirable qualities of male and female principals by gender

of the participants. Women selected good communicator, good listener, knowledgeable

of curriculum and instruction, personable, good manager, problem solver and seeks input

as the top seven qualities for both male and female principals. Being a good

communicator was the most desirable quality. Of the women participants, 92% thought

being a good communicator was a desirable quality in a male principal while 94%

thought this was a desirable quality in a female principal. Male participants' responses

differed slightly. Men selected good communicator, good listener, knowledgeable of

curriculum and instruction, good manager, problem solver, and seeks input as desirable

qualities in both male and female principals. However, men felt being decisive was more important than being personable. Of the male participants, 82% selected decisive as a desirable quality for male principals and 81% selected it as a desirable quality for female principals. Personable was selected as a desirable quality by 75.4% of the male participants.

Table 4 indicated that the majority of female participants (63.9%) responded yes, that males do have legitimate authority. Slightly more than half of male participants also responded that men do have legitimate authority. This suggested that men are not in agreement amongst themselves as to whether men step into the position of principal without having to earn their authority. The information on Table 5 overwhelmingly stated that female principals do not have legitimate authority. Female and male teachers equally say that women have to work to earn their authority. Female principals in the 1990's still had to prove themselves.

Female and male teachers stated that gender of the principal did not make a difference when they were asked by whom they would prefer to be supervised. They did not have gender preference for their supervision. However, the authors of the study raised several questions. If teachers have "no preferences" for whom they work, why do female principals still have to prove themselves? To whom do they need to prove themselves? Lastly, are teachers contradicting themselves?

In a study conducted by Hudson et al (1998), isolation, loneliness and rejection were feelings expressed by an African American female principal. She provided descriptions of her experience at a state meeting during lunch where everyone paired off

and no one invited her to join them. As a result, she found herself eating alone and

feeling as if she had invaded the system. While African American and White females

who enter educational administration shared a number of characteristics, Doughty (1980)

concluded that African American women may be doubly challenged by the dual barriers

of gender and race. This conclusion was supported by Ortiz (1982), who asserted that

both women and minorities encounter barriers to leadership positions. However, women

of color are faced with both gender and racial barriers. The lack of support from the

school board, the isolation associated with racial status, sex-typed expectations, gender

bias, the enormous amount of stress that is part of the job, and the "lonely at the top"

feelings are all barriers women of color face.

Support for Women in Leadership Positions

One answer to the barriers and obstacles women administration deal with on a

daily basis is mentoring (Growe & Montgomery, 1999). Mentoring is one recommended

approach to facilitate the special attention needed for the orientation, socialization, and

transition of new principals, especially for women and women of color (Southworth,

1995; Cohn & Sweeney, 1992; Ragins & McFarlin, 1990). Mentoring provides

constructive ways of handling frustration, sharing feelings about their work, and

providing encouragement. The use of mentors to assist present and future leaders has

been found to be a powerful tool that may be used to bring about more effective school

practice (Whittaker & Lane, 1990; Southworth, 1995).

The important role of the mentor is described by Wilmore (1995) in the

following manner:

"Committed mentors can keep the new principal focused on the things that really

count. They can help new principals through the difficult first year when the

campus/world is changing faster than they can keep up with. Mentors can help

new principals use their assessed strengths and weaknesses to their professional

advantage. The first year principalship is stressful for everyone. Every new

principal can use a good friend. (p.95)

A mentor has also been defined as a person one wishes to emulate. It is someone who is

respected not only for the position they hold, but because of the skills they use to

successfully execute their responsibilities in that position (Wesson, 1998). Lindbo and

Schultz (1998) say mentoring can be defined in many ways, such as a teacher, coach,

guide, role model, an advisor and a confidant. Mentoring also establishes a personal

relationship for the purpose of professional instruction and guidance (Daresh & Playko,

1995). The advantages of mentoring include, but are not limited to:

(1)   attracting and retaining women and professionals of color in the academic

        work environment;

(2)   accelerating assimilation into the culture of leadership, which helps

        mentees deal with organizational issues, and reduces turnover; and

(3)   helping new leaders to interpret hidden or ambiguous information (Growe

        & Montgomery, 1999).

An effective mentoring program is essential in an organization committed to nurturing,

growing, and keeping their own talent (Kaye & Jacobson, 1996). Thus, according to

Cohn & Sweeney (1992), because of the demanding leadership role of the principalship, mentoring should be an integral part of the successful assimilation by novice principals.

A mentor provides validation for those entering a new role, which is particularly important for women. According to Growe & Montgomery (1999), the best mentors for women are other women, because sharing gender related experiences and knowledge are significant. Women mentors can create incentives through illustrative success and increase women's identification (Neumark & Gardecki, 1998; Haring-Hildare, 1987). Furthermore, a female mentor may be more sensitive to the problems of novice principals in matters such as marriage and family situations and role conflict than a male mentor (Kalbfleish & Davies, 1991). However, it is not uncommon for women to have men mentors (Schneider, 1991).

Survey respondents in a 1998 study conducted by Hopkins (2000) reported it was more difficult to recruit women of color than women in general. Presently, many corporations are directing their attention specifically on women and women of color in order to increase diverse leadership in the corporation (Van Collie, 1998; Hardy, 1998). In addition, a number of companies are incorporating mentoring programs as a means to support women and women of color in breaking through the so called "brick wall" to upper levels of management (Hardy, 1998).

Wesson (1998) asserted that networking, a component of mentoring, allows women a means for getting advice, moral support and contacts for information and Women benefit from support networks both in searching for a job and in surviving the first crucial years on the job (Keller, 1999). Lastly, in a study conducted by Hill and

Ragland (1995) some women reported they receive financial, emotional, and spiritual support from both friends and family members. Together, these people celebrated the triumphs and offered words of encouragement when women leaders faced disappointments and struggles associated with their job. In particular, women with small children felt very fortunate to have friends and family members offer babysitting services, as well as "substitute moms" when they could not attend school functions. With their help, many women reported they were able to effectively perform their administrative responsibilities (Hill & Ragland, 1995).

Role of the Principal

Researchers have documented that principals play a significant role in influencing reform initiatives and are acknowledged as instrumental in the complex process of effective school improvement and organizational change (Hallinger, et al, 1985). Jackson, et al (2000) asserted that "no single individual is more important to initiating and sustaining improvement, particularly in middle school students' performance, than the principal" (p. 157). Similarly, Hausman, et al (2000), claimed principals to be crucial to the development and maintenance of effective schools. The best way for principals to fulfill their role of facilitating meaningful change in school is by creating conditions which promote the growth and development of the professionals within their schools (DuFour, et al, 1995). The fundamental role of the principal, then, is to help create the conditions which enable a faculty and staff to develop so that the school can achieve its goals more effectively. The principal must lead the school toward

educational achievement, be a person who makes instructional quality the top priority and must be able to bring a solid vision to realization (Richardson, et al, 1989).

According to Goleman (1998), effective principals, like other effective leaders, are similar in one critical way: they all have a high degree of emotional intelligence. He identified five components of emotional intelligence: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skill. Self-awareness was defined as knowing and being true to one's emotions, needs, values, beliefs, strengths, and limitations. Principals, by self awareness, understanding their values and needs, realize which concerns are flexible. Without sacrificing non-negotiable concerns, principals will be able to assist in the development of a shared vision for the school that all stakeholders can accept. Being aware of one's strengths and limitations allows principals to surround themselves with others who possess the strengths that they lack (Goleman, 1998). Such principals have enough self-confidence to let go of some important tasks, delegate and allow others to grow and develop. Self-regulation was described as having the ability to control one's emotions and withhold judgment prior to acting. As a result, the principal will be able to build a society of trust and risk-taking; thus, setting an encouraging environment throughout the entire school.

The third component of emotional intelligence given was motivation. Effective principals have a desire and love for learning and are known to be driven toward making a difference for students. Lastly, being empathetic and exercising appropriate social skills will enable principals to be able to have an understanding of the emotional make-

up of other people while understanding that individuals have different needs and levels of readiness for change.

Hopkins (2000) surveyed 43 principals to determine what they felt were vital traits of successful school leaders. The finding of the survey listed the top ten traits of school leaders in order of importance. Some of these traits were having a stated vision for the school and plan to achieve that vision; clearly stating goals and expectations for students, staff, and parents; being trustworthy and honest with students and staff; helping develop leadership skills in others, and developing strong teachers while cultivating good teaching practices.

Considering the high expectations placed on schools and school leaders, the diverse and large number of stakeholders with whom they must work, and the complexity of schooling, serving as a principal is a demanding and stressful role. Today, the role of the principal is somewhat different than others of the past generations. The problems they face will be more compounded and involve outside variables (Calabrese, et al 1996). These problems will demand a different way of thinking and solving problems. Furthermore, Holtkamp (2002) stated changing demographics of students and parents will heighten the need for flexibility. The pressure and demands for higher academic performance will require an increased need for action, and principals will need to examine the way they make decisions. Principals that can meet community expectations will be recognized as leaders (Calabrese, et al 1996). However, in order to meet these expectations, principals must be able to understand their role in the

organization, their character and attributes, areas that need improvement, areas that build success, and their personal characteristics.

Today's principal, then, will need to be prepared to focus time, attention and effort on changing what students are taught, how they are taught, and what they are learning (Bottoms & O'Neill, 2001). It is also necessary for the principal to create a learning environment with a rigorous curriculum in which all students can learn (Cross, 2001). Weissglass (2001), asserted that in order for leaders to be effective in working with the learning community, leaders will need to not only understand the educational issues, but also the social, personal, and institutional roots of inequities. Finally, he stated that while building unity, the leader must be able to raise controversial issues, relate effectively with people of diverse backgrounds, and assist others in dealing with their emotions.

As the leader who sets the direction of the school, the principal's skills with people are crucial to the success of the position. In order to develop positive relationships, four areas of interpersonal skills were listed by SSTA Research Centre Report: trust, motivating others, empowerment, and collegiality. Trust was listed as the most important because according to the report, relationships cannot be built without it. Secondly, a leadership position involves motivating others. It was recommended that one way to accomplish this is through a process of sharing the decision making. Empowerment was promoted because it enables teachers and others most affected by change to identify obstacles and design strategies for handling change. The last skill

listed was collegiality. Collegiality promotes idea sharing, project cooperation, and assistance in professional growth, all of which benefit the students.

Contextual Elements of the Principalship

Principals today work in a context of multiple reform agendas. These reforms, coming from local, state, and national sources, increase the complexity of the principal's role by forcing the principal to focus on the demands that each source is making. The larger community impacts principals' roles through demographic characteristics, values, and district supervision (Hallinger, et al, 1998). Differences in the socioeconomic status in a community can also affect the expectations of how principals are expected to behave. For example, Hallinger, et al (1998) found that principals in communities with a lower socioeconomic status tended to be both controlling and coordinating in their administrative styles, whereas principals in communities with a high socioeconomic status relied on more coordination.

Problems, such as drug abuse, violence, and family breakups demand that principals spend more time with social service organizations (Smylie, et al, 1994). Consequently, the time a principal can commit to instructional leadership is diminished by these external priorities. Since principals are hired and evaluated by school boards and superintendents, principals are also influenced by their district superiors' concept of a principal's role. In addition to the community and district contexts that principals encounter, a school community can also constrain their actions. School characteristics, such as size and level, can affect the particular role that principals enact (Hallinger, et al 1998). For example, larger schools have different coordination

concerns than smaller schools, and elementary and secondary schools have different needs and characteristic problems that require different styles of leadership. Lastly, teacher differences may affect a principal's work. According to Crow, et al (1995), new urban principals are frequently placed in troubled schools with few certified teachers. As a result, this could create a different set of problems than principals in schools with a certified, well-trained staff.

Other key roles principals play include community leadership involving shared leadership among educators, community partners and residents; close relations with parents and caregivers; visionary leadership that demonstrates energy, commitment and an entrepreneurial spirit. While these roles are important, leadership for learning and academic success is the priority that connects and encompasses all major roles. Hence, everything principals do – setting goals, creating a vision, managing staff, creating unity amongst the community, establishing effective learning environments, building support systems for students, and guiding instruction must be accomplished for the purpose of student learning and academic achievement. Lastly, in a recent study on principals, the Educational Research Service (1998) concluded that school principals are the keystones of quality schools, and must exist in effective to raise student achievement.

Accountability

The concept of accountability has been a trademark of education for quite some time. The emphasis, however, has shifted from accountability of how money and other resources are used, to accountability for outcomes or student achievement (Elmore, et al, 1996). Policymakers currently mandate accountability through processes involving

student achievement targets, assessment standards, and dissemination of test results to the media (Popham, 2001).

Consequences for failing to meet targets effect student graduation, teacher bonuses, district funding, and retention of principals (Bonstingl, 2001). Each of these consequences puts increasing pressure on principals to work together with teachers to make certain that learning goals are related to instructional strategies and standardized tests. These complex roles combined with the perception that schools continue to decline have resulted in a request for more effective principal leadership to focus on the additional accountability placed on school districts (Christie, 2000). However, this could create a dilemma for the secondary principal because he/she must find remedies for student achievement levels which were nurtured and sustained through the students' early years in elementary and middle or junior high schools. As a result, the emphasis on accountability has added pressures and recommendations for new principals' roles (Tirozzi, 2001).

According to Popham (2001), the emphasis on testing has resulted in curricular reductionism. Similarly, Kohn (2001) characterized schools as testing centers. In some schools, principals have modified existing programs to raise test scores. Other educators have called for a more diverse system for appraising accountability. Sergiovanni (2000) suggested using multiple measures that include state and local standards, while Madaus, et al (1999), recommended student portfolios and student products as a means to assess student learning.

State, district, and school systems hold educational leaders accountable. The state and district roles in accountability involve maintaining a long-term commitment to educational improvement. Some of these roles include development and implementation of accountability standards to ensure the high quality and good performance of all administrators and educators; recruitment and retention of high performing administrators who provide pedagogical leadership, and qualified teachers. These roles also include provisions for ongoing professional development to help teachers master new curricula, diverse classrooms, and appropriate teaching strategies.

Principals are accountable for socializing youth in ways that will foster basic democratic ideals that serve as overarching goals for all U.S. citizens. An admirable goal is to also help achieve a delicate balance of unity and diversity which respects the cultural rights and freedoms of all people. As principals implement educational programs that reflect multiculturalism, they must demonstrate a commitment to acknowledge and show appreciation for ethnic and cultural diversity; endorse societal interconnectedness based on the collective participation of all people; enhance equality of opportunity for all individuals and groups; and facilitate productive and positive societal change that increases human dignity and democratic ideals (Banks, 2003).

Leadership in Urban Settings

Schools in urban settings are usually part of a large, central bureaucracy that may be slow to respond to the needs of the schools (Peterson, 1994; Weiner, 1999). Urban schools are governed by bureaucracies that function rather inadequately and are separated from the communities they are intended to serve (Weiner, 1999). Today,

urban school systems are still under pressure to resolve both the political and religious

tensions that exist in the nation's social fabric. One of the main problems with

bureaucracy is that it is operates on an impersonal level. For example, standardized

educational practices are employed to serve all students in the same manner, regardless

of the individual student's educational needs. In the eyes of bureaucracy, 'all students

are treated fairly'. In addition, there may also be a lack of funding, materials, and

oversized classrooms. This overcrowding in urban schools has been the norm for years

where at times, students were required to sit two and three to a desk (Weiner, 1999).

Another concern in urban schools is the bureaucratic restraints. Besides the federal and

state requirements placed on urban schools, the decisions of these schools are controlled

by an extensive number of regulations. These bureaucratic regulations impact the every

aspect of school life, and according to Weiner (1999), "the larger the school system, the

larger and, in most cases, more dysfunctional or sick the bureaucracy is" (p. 15).

Children of color comprise 77% of our nation's largest school districts (Banks &

Banks, 2003). The number of children of color in the nation's public schools is

continually increasing and urban school systems are faced with the responsibility of

educating such extremely diverse group of students. Furthermore, because cities are the

first places immigrants settle, urban schools educate the greatest proportion of new

immigrants (Weiner, 1999). According to Irvine, et al (2001), one of every three

students will be from a minority racial or ethnic group, with a great majority being Black

and Hispanic young people by the year 2010. In fear of losing connections with the

community that has sustained them, these students of color may be apprehensive about adapting to the majority culture.

In urban school systems, some of the largest cities are surrounded by small, older suburban school systems that resemble city schools in their student population and problems of under-funding. Additionally, many teachers in urban school systems do not live in the community in which they work. Because of their being isolated from the students' lives outside the classroom, they must seek information about their students' family and community through other available resources.

Nevertheless, successful urban schools are a reality across our nation (Carter 2003; Levine & Lezotte, 1990; Weiner, 1999). One of the main factors that seemed to make a difference in urban settings was strong administrative leadership. (Cotton, 1991). According to Valverde (1988), administrators in effective schools gave first priority to acquiring basic skills and were vigorously involved in helping form the instructional program. Principals empowered their teachers to believe in their ability to successfully reach and teach all of their students. In addition, they encouraged their teachers to continually communicate high expectations to students by encouraging, supporting, and by holding them responsible for in-class cooperation, fulfilling assigned tasks, etc. Most importantly, through staff development programs, administrators were able to provide teachers ways to be more accommodating in their teaching methods and take into consideration each learner's personal and cultural learning styles.

Valverde (1988) states:

Developing a multicultural climate is important because of the attitudinal

impact it has on students. Principals need to realize that attending to the

cultural aspect of human beings is not trivial, but central to holding

minority students in school and to promoting learning. (p. 324)

Many students still know too little about the history, heritage, culture, and

contributions of groups of color in the United States (Banks & Banks, 2003). Thus,

educators are faced with the responsibility of providing students with information about

the history and contributions of ethnic groups who traditionally have been excluded from

instructional materials and curricula, as well as replacing the misrepresentation and

biased images of groups that were included in the curricula with more accurate and

significant information (Gay, 2000). Educators must also understand that multicultural

education offers opportunities for enhancing the quality of education while capitalizing

on the resources of all individuals (Penny, et al, 1997). In addition, Penny affirmed that

educators who receive in-depth training in multicultural education will establish that

children of color learn as well as other young Americans in the public school system.

School administrators must realize that teacher attitude is the key factor in the

development of a successful multicultural environment (Ladson-Billings, 1994). She

also believed that the degree of teacher commitment to multicultural education made a

difference in student performance and achievement. Larke (1992), stated effective

multicultural teachers should possess high expectations of all students and offer the

experiences needed that would allow each student to reach those high expectations. She

also added that multicultural teachers should utilize the students' environment, despite

the economic conditions, as a catalyst for instructional design. In order for teachers to be successful, however, administrators need to make available the necessary resources to his/her teachers. District-wide staff development, campus-based workshops, review of multicultural education textbook materials, as well as parental and community involvement are a number of resources administrators might provide his/her teachers. Teachers can then utilize effective approaches in assisting their students as well as themselves, to become educated about culturally different groups and make available opportunities for individuals from diverse background to learn, live, and work together.

When administrators' lead schools effectively, urban children can develop the skills, knowledge, and capacities needed to be successful in work and adulthood (Levine and Lezotte, 1990).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In this research study, four African American and European American female administrators in a recognized urban school district were selected from two middle schools and two ninth grade campuses within the same school district in hopes of broadening the scope of experience. Each participant was assigned pseudonyms. Each was asked questions based on the instrument (see Appendix C). The heart of this research lies in the data. This qualitative study uses the actual words of the participants to tell the story, thus providing a rich representation of the ideas presented. Sarbin (1986) defined narrative as:

> a way of organizing episodes, actions, and accounts of actions;
> it is an achievement that brings together mundane facts and fantastic
> creations; time and place are incorporated. The narrative allows for
> the inclusion of actors' reasons for their acts, as well as the causes
> of happening. (p. 9)

The District

The selected district serves over 53,000 students in the northwestern Houston area. It has experienced significant demographic shifts during the past two decades, which served an impetus for significant school reform efforts in the mid-nineties. This school district has earned a Recognized accountability rating (at least 80% of all students, as well as 80% African American, Hispanic, White, and low income students,

passed each section – reading, writing, and mathematics of the state's standardized assessment and have done so for seven consecutive years. Lastly, based on the school district's website, this selected school district serves a population of 56.3% Hispanics, 33.4% African American, 7.6% white, 2.6% Asian/Pacific Islander, 0.1% Native American, and 74.2% economically disadvantaged.

Some of the district's objectives include, but are not limited to, demonstrating student achievement; recruiting, employing and retaining a quality teaching, administrative and support staff to attain excellence in student performance; allocating resources to maximize excellence, and increasing and improving stakeholder partnerships and satisfaction. One of the district's strong beliefs lies in the personal and professional growth of all people within their school district. Currently there are fourteen secondary schools in the selected district, with five schools being under the direction of female principals.

The Community

The community of each of these schools is surrounded with HUD assistance apartments, convenience stores, and restaurants. Other than the vast number of apartments, the majority of homes in the area are one-story and have security bars on their windows. Children are often seen playing at nearby parks as families frequently travel by foot to their destinations. However, many families seem to enjoy the convenience of small churches, nearby storefront multi-culturally owned businesses, and the high number of pawnshops and grocery stores. Many, if not all surrounding merchants, have bilingual employees for their Spanish-speaking customers. Most of all,

throughout the community, a close-knit family relationship seems to be the norm among the residents.

Purposeful Sample

The sample selection of participants in this study represented a purposeful rather than random sample. Purposeful sampling attempts to include participants who have experienced the phenomenon under consideration and from those whom the researcher can learn the most (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Merriam, 1988). Patton (1990) writes:

> The logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research. (p. 169)

Furthermore, without interaction, purposeful sampling and emergent design are impossible to achieve (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

For this study, I interviewed two African American and two European American female administrators in large, successful, urban secondary schools; all within the same school district. The breakdown consisted of one African American female and one European American female representing middle school campuses, and one African American female and one European American female representing ninth grade campuses. Each participant was assigned pseudonyms. For the sake of this study, the term successful urban school district shall be defined as demonstrating sustained improvement in closing achievement gaps and having been cited as an exemplar of district-wide success in other studies. These studies indicated that despite the high

percentage of students meeting low-income criteria, these schools were among the highest achieving schools in the state. In particular, these administrators were employed within this school district which earned a Recognized rating (at least 80% of all students, as well as 80% of African American, Hispanic, White, and low-income students, passed each section- reading, writing, and mathematics of the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills, better known as TAAS) from Texas Education Agency for seven consecutive years.

The purpose of selecting the participants from different levels in secondary schools and within the same school district was to discover if any trends would develop from the information obtained. The criteria for the selection of participants were as follows:

- Female administrators;

- Served in an educational leadership role for at least three or more years;

- Have been or is presently serving in the capacity of principalship;

- Currently serving or have served as an educational administrator in secondary schools within the selected school district; and,

- Have discovered an evidenced impact on their students' academic performance as a result of their leadership role.

Instrumentation

A qualitative study relies heavily on the researcher, a human, as the primary instrument. Lincoln and Guba (1985) explained it this way:

Naturalistic inquiry is always carried out – logically enough – in a natural setting. Such a contextual inquiry demands a human instrument, one fully adaptive to the indeterminate situation that will be encountered. The human instrument builds upon his or her tacit knowledge as much as, if not more than, upon propositional knowledge and uses methods that are appropriate to humanly implemented inquiry: interviews, observations, document analysis, unobtrusive clues, and the like. (p. 187)

I am the primary instrument in this study. However, the interviews served as the primary source of direct information received from the participants' perceptions on the construction of the leader persona and the way they led secondary students toward successful academic achievement. The interview protocol was merged following a review of literature while other questions were developed by my own experience and curiosity that would provide information relating to the purpose of the study.

I used an interview guide approach to naturalistic interviews beginning with a list of concerns to be addressed by each participant, while permitting other topics to surface. In order to minimize the imposition of predetermined responses when gathering data, I asked the interview questions in an open-ended fashion. The interview guide in this study consisted of three main issues: 1) personal; 2) leadership quality/effectiveness and, 3) impact on student academic performance. Although the questions were developed prior to the interviews, I was still allowed to remain free to word questions in a way that established a conversational style interview. For example, a conversational style interview allowed me to develop new questions while continuing the flow throughout

the interview. I requested follow-up interviews upon review of the interview transcripts as needed for further explanation, elaboration or information verification. Hence, I used semi-structured interviews to seek explicit information that resulted from an outgrowth of previous interviews or specific information that provided comparable data across subjects.

In each case study, the interviews were conducted initially with the participants to seek an understanding of their self-perceptions regarding their leadership effectiveness. The interviews were held in the office of each participant, which provided a quiet location for conversation. I interviewed each participant at least twice with most of the interviews ranging from one and a half to two hours in length. In order to prevent the possibility of postponements, cancellations or schedule conflicts, I scheduled the interviews ahead of time. Immediately following each interview, notes taken during the interview were organized. Organizing and reviewing the notes were done as soon as possible as it allowed me to recall other things that were not noted when they occurred. Audio taped interviews involved rough-draft transcripts that I edited and typed in final form.

Each interview conducted was handwritten as well as recorded on audiotape with the consent of the participants. I discovered there were several advantages of handwritten notes. Handwritten notes involved my paying careful attention to what was being said, and allowed me to make certain notations without making it known to the interviewee. In addition, taking notes did not require me to memorize statements made during the interview, however it did allow me to highlight important items for later

review. On the other hand, using a tape recorder had many advantages, such as assuring

completeness, providing the opportunity to review as often as necessary, and assuring

that full understanding had been achieved. Tape recording my interviews provided me

an opportunity to later review nonverbal cues such as voice pitches and pauses, as well

material for reliability checks. Furthermore, transcriptions were transcribed by myself

and verified through comparison with the audio taped version. My participants received

a copy of all transcriptions for further verification and revision.

The data collected for this study consisted of four narrative sets of individual

lived experiences. The open ended nature of questions allowed individual participants to

focus on what information about their experiences they felt were most pertinent to their

leadership effectiveness. This was reflected in the narrative sets of the participants.

Data Collection

Among the various data collection techniques, interviews can be considered the

best way to get the information that is wanted (Merriam, 1998). In this study, I

conducted in-depth, open-ended interviews, and semi-structured face-to-face interviews

through which the events, beliefs, and perceptions, shaped the phenomenon under study

was explored. However, for the purpose of triangulation, I utilized other sources of data

such as audio-taped interviews, recorded field notes, non-verbal cues, and participant

observations. Non-verbal cues were used to gain information through nonlinguistic

signs.

My field notes consisted of a written account of observations, conversations,

experiences, and descriptions of the participants and the events that would directly or

indirectly affect their way of leading. Observations as defined by Marshall and Rossman (1989), "are the systematic description of events, behaviors, and artifacts in the social setting chosen for study" (p. 79), and can range from very focused to unstructured forms. Observations were scheduled with each participant prior to my arrival and data was analyzed upon the completion of each interview. Prior to the interviews, a human subject form was submitted and participants were assured that all personal information (name, etc.) would remain confidential.

Research Design

      This research study was operated from a case study method on African American and European American female educational administrators. I adopted the qualitative research framework to gain an understanding of how these administrators in secondary educational leadership positions exercised and (re)interpreted (Dillard, 1995) their leadership. The intent of my case study was to broaden the limited research base relating to the lived stories and experiences of the principalship from those whose voices can inform others about pertinent issues of leadership through diversity. In order to develop a clearer understanding of the administrators' perceptions on diverse leadership as it relates to student academic performance, this study investigated constructed meanings of the relationship between their lived experiences and the way they led, by employing the feminist and interpretive lenses.

      For this study, I utilized qualitative research methods to gain an in-depth look at the personal and professional characteristics, perceptions on ways of leading, and approaches to academic student success for four African American and European

American female leaders in a large, successful, urban school district. Research states

that because qualitative methods come more easily to the human-as-instrument,

qualitative methods are stressed within the naturalistic paradigm (Lincoln & Guba,

1985). By this, it is meant that the human-as-instrument leans more toward methods that

are extensions of normal human behaviors, such as observing, listening, speaking, and

reading. Primarily for me, the researcher, one of the greatest values was in the

experience of listening to their stories which validated my belief in women's ability to

lead successfully. Their stories also confirmed my belief that women leaders often do

what it takes so that all students can be successful, genuinely strive to make connections

with others, and believe in and love children of all ethnic backgrounds. In addition, I

learned a great deal about what the principalship entailed. Indeed, it was an opportunity

to become immersed into the lived experiences of school leaders who took enormous

steps toward providing a place where all children can achieve academically.

Qualitative research is based on an interpretivist epistemology, where the social

reality is seen as a set of meanings that are constructed by the individuals who

participate in that reality. Hence, the major purpose of my study was to discover the

nature of those meanings. I covered several forms of inquiry that helped explain the

meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption of the natural setting as possible.

The focus of my study was on interpretation and meaning. Characteristics of qualitative

research as explained by Merriam (1998) included an overarching interest in

understanding the meaning people have constructed, and an inductive approach to

knowledge generation. In my research, I was the primary instrument for data collection and analysis, and my end product was narrative and descriptive.

In their own words, my participants described how they contributed to the success of their assigned campus and the district as a whole. Developing an understanding of how these principals were contributing to the achievement of their students was dependent on techniques employed by qualitative methods, specifically interviewing. Interviewing allowed the interviewees to tell their own stories. Miles and Huberman (1994) asserted:

> Qualitative data, with their emphasis on people's 'lived experience', are fundamentally well suited for locating the meanings people place on the events, processes, and structures of their lives and for connecting these meanings to the social world around them. (p. 10)

Furthermore, the interaction between the interviewees and myself was a very natural and comfortable situation for me. I attributed this feeling of comfort to my experience as an educator in an urban school district as well as to my respect for campus administrators who work so diligently toward the success of their students. The comfort felt during interaction of the interviews aided in my absorption of the shared information.

Data Analysis

According to Marshall and Rossman (1989), it is not possible to understand human behavior without understanding the framework within which participants interpret their thoughts, emotions, and behavior. My research was grounded in the

assumption that features of the social environment are constructed as interpretations by individuals and that these interpretations tend to be temporary and situational. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) asserted that qualitative research is multi-purpose in its focus, and involves an interpretative, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. Furthermore, qualitative methods enabled me to understand, from the perspective of the participants, the complexity of their situations as well as the process and meaning of the events of their personal and professional lives. The importance of setting, context, and the participants' own frame of reference were emphasized as they allowed the emergence of constructs, which contributed to theory generation (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). Lastly, my research attempted to value subjective, personal meaning and definition, commonalities and voices to the oppressed.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested that data analysis in a naturalistic inquiry is open-ended and inductive. Hence, data analysis begins during the data collection process, and continues after the collection is complete. The data in my study was derived primarily from the interviews, observations, and field notes. My interviews were written and audio taped. Later, I transcribed the interview notes verbatim, and rechecked them for accuracy. Analysis of the data occurred immediately after each interview and observation. Analytic conclusions were formulated by unitizing, coding, and then categorizing ideas or statements of experiences from the data to ensure that the important constructs, themes, and patterns emerged.

Operating within the interpretive theory, and I being the researcher as the primary instrument for both data collection and data analysis, I was able to share in the

world of the researched and interpret what I experienced there. It was necessary that I made the best means of making sense of the data to begin and begin understanding the phenomenon studied. I used the elements of categorizing to analyze the data. The method of constant comparison was my guiding method.

Unitizing data were considered as units of information that served as the basis of defining categories. Categorizing, however, outlined categories of the index cards that apparently related to the same content. Categorization, according to Lincoln and Guba, (1985), can be accomplished most efficiently when categories are identified in such a way that "they are internally as homogeneous as possible and externally as heterogeneous as possible" (p 349). Thus, as the researcher, I examined, broke down, compared, conceptualized and categorized the data. The categorizing process for this study began with a search within individual narrative sets for data concerning broad topics, while I re-examined the categories for overlapping. The set of categories explored possible relationships among other categories. The first categorical topics were the participants' personal, educational and employment background. The discussion of leadership qualities and effectiveness were the next topic categorized, with the impact on student academic achievement being the last of these topics. From these core categories, themes emerged from which grounded theory was inductively derived.

Grounded Theory

Grounded theory is an essential outcome of the naturalistic model that hypothesizes multiple realities and makes transferability dependent on local contextual factors (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Furthermore, grounded theory is not deductive (Ford,

1975), but is patterned and open-ended and can be extended for an indefinite period of time. The purpose of my qualitative research method was to build theory that seeks verification in the data and illuminates the area under study, specifically female educational administrators' perception on diverse leadership as it relates to student academic performance in secondary, urban schools. Consequently, through this methodology, the steps in data collection, the categorizing method, and the analysis previously described were included in the organization of the ideas emerging from data analyses into a multifaceted and integrated theory.

Complementary Data Gathering Techniques

In order to gather additional data, several other strategies and techniques were employed. The purpose of these techniques was to enhance the collection and interpretation of the data. The use of tape recording, field notes, and non-verbal cues are discussed in the next section.

Tape Recordings

A cassette tape recorder was used to tape interviews with the participants. The transcriptions were reviewed and corrected by the researcher.

Field Notes

The main reason I recorded my field notes was to compose a written document of the observations, dialogue, experiences, and descriptions of the participants and the events that affected them directly or indirectly. My field notes also served the purpose of recording certain feelings, and thoughts about the investigation, as well as a place to record follow-up interview sessions that needed to be scheduled with the participants.

All of my field notes were kept in one notebook. This notebook consisted of the

interview records and observations that were made during the taped interviews with the

participants. Following each observation or interview, I transcribed the field notes.

Non-verbal Cues

The non-verbal techniques that were used in my study included: body

movements (kinestics), spatial relationships (proxemics), use of time as in pacing,

probing, and pausing (chronemics), volume, voice quality, accent and inflectional

patterns (paralinquistics), and touching (haptics) (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I made use of

these non-verbal communication techniques to obtain information through non-verbal

signs. I asked additional questions during the interviews so that I could gain a clearer

understanding of certain nonverbal cues. These non-verbal cues were recorded in the

field notes.

Trustworthiness and Credibility

The process of building trustworthiness in naturalistic inquiry is critical (Lincoln

& Guba, 1985). The criteria for building trustworthiness are credibility, transferability,

dependability, and confirmability. In order to enhance trustworthiness and credibility in

this study, I used an audit trail that reflected triangulation of the data through the use of

interviews, observations, recorded field notes, and follow-up individual interviews. This

procedure helped me preserve the data in an understandable and retrievable form. In

addition, in an effort to meet ethical standards, I assured my participants privacy,

confidentiality, and inclusiveness. I also encouraged my participants to engage in on-

going member checks to review and clarify constructions developed by myself, and if necessary, to revise these constructions.

Member Checking

Member checking, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985), is the most crucial technique for establishing credibility. It is a process which involves participants verifying data and interpretations collected through the interviews. There were multiple benefits of member checking which could be either formal or informal. One of its many benefits was its provision of assessing intentionality. Other benefits I discovered consisted of providing my participants an opportunity to share additional information, correcting errors and interpretations, and providing them an opportunity to evaluate the overall adequacy. The participants in this study received a copy of the interview transcripts for review, clarification, and suggestions.

Transferability

Transferability has been recommended as the qualitative counterpart for external validity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). They also stated that "if there is to be transferability, the burden of proof lies less with the original investigator than with the person seeking to make the application elsewhere. The original inquirer cannot know the sites to which transferability might be sought, but the appliers can and do" (p. 298). In other words, though the researcher seeks only to describe one specific situation and the meaning of that particular situation for the participants of the study, the reader of the research report can apply the findings of the research to similar situations in which he or she is involved. It is my hope that my readers be able to transfer different aspects of my study to

situations in which they are involved. However, as Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated, the transferability will depend upon the situation to which the reader applies the findings of my study.

Lastly, Lincoln & Guba (1985) stated that "the naturalistic cannot specify the external validity of an inquiry; he or she can provide only the thick description necessary to enable someone interested in making a transfer to reach a conclusion about whether transfer can be contemplated as a possibility" (p.316).

Dependability and Confirmability

Dependability, which is the naturalist's substitute for reliability, can be demonstrated by "taking into account both factors of instability and factors of phenomenal or design induced change" (p. 299), according to Lincoln and Guba (1985). To establish dependability, it was necessary that I examined the records for accuracy and to substantiate documents. Confirmability, or objectivity, was utilized during the data collection and analysis phases to verify and construct findings that may be important to increase what is already known about diverse female educational leaders. To demonstrate confirmability, I maintained a record of the inquiry process, copies of each taped interviews and discussions, notes from interviews and discussions, and hard copies of all transcriptions. In addition, I have made these records available upon request.

Summary

Qualitative research methods were chosen and utilized for my study due to the nature of the study, the setting, and my personal interest. I took steps and followed procedures so as to provide an in depth look at the African American and European

American female educational administrators' perceptions on leadership as it relates to

student academic performance. I also investigated constructed meanings of the

relationship between their lived experiences and the way they led by employing the

feminist, and interpretive lenses. More importantly, I emphasized the naturalist inquiry

which was an approach that investigated the lived stories and experiences of the

principalship. It is from these female administrators' voices that others can be informed

about pertinent issues of leadership through diversity.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Introduction

In this chapter, I will present the leadership experiences of the female

administrators in my study through my own eyes. In my study, I used the actual words

of my participants to tell their story in hopes of providing a rich representation of the

ideas presented. I attempted to tell each administrator's story through data from my

interviews, observations, and documents. In order to make meaning of the data, I chose

to organize the data in the following manner: a description of each school, an

introduction of each participant, and a case-by-case review of interview responses.

School #1

The first school I visited was a middle school. Its staff included approximately

103 employees and 1,200 students. As I drove up to the school's parking lot, I

immediately observed that it had been in existence for many years. Construction

workers were busy remodeling the outside of the school. Their plan was to widen the

cafeteria and level the teachers' parking lot. However, the outer appearance of the

building could not be compared to the inside. As I entered the building, I was swept off

my feet with an invitation that was filled with warmth and a sense of belonging. The

front lobby receptionist welcomed me with a warm smile as she offered a student's

assistance to guide me to my destination. While directed by the student, teachers and

students in the hallways were friendly. The student who was appointed my guide,

demonstrated pride in his contribution to the school as he showed me his artwork that

was displayed on the hallway's bulletin board. There was an overwhelming feeling of illuminating passion and cheerfulness between the faculty and students. In the teachers' lounge, I could hear teachers laughing while eating lunch and sharing stories with one another. As I passed the cafeteria to see some teachers talking and eating lunch with their students, I was touched. It reminded me of my childhood experience when teachers ate with us. The only difference was my teachers were required to do so, whereas these teachers took it upon themselves to spend additional time with their students in a more relaxed environment. Receiving such warm greetings and a heartfelt hospitality, observing the closeness of teachers and students, being hugged by everyone whom I was introduced, I immediately felt like part of their family. Additionally, the walls were covered with print-rich materials such as social skills, student and faculty recognitions, and most of all, a huge sign that read, "You are important to us".

Again, from the moment I entered the school, I felt welcomed. The individual at the front sign-in desk, the students, teachers, and staff all seemed pleased to be at this school. It wasn't long before I became aware of their model. Their principal wore a big smile, gave hugs to almost everyone she saw, positively expressed her feelings toward her teachers and students, and almost behind every task, she repeatedly enlightened them with positive statements like, "You can do anything you set your heart out to do." Thus, the environment was filled with an aroma of care and joy; so much, that it encouraged me to spread that same aroma on my own campus. This appeared to be one of the most passionate and productive schools visited.

Case Study #1: Brandi Miller

Context

Brandi was interviewed three times. After three interviews, the following responses were compiled. Brandi is a European American female and approximately 47 years of age. She was raised on a farm by two parents whom she emphatically stated were wonderful and promoted education, hard work, honesty and ethics. Brandi has a total of 23 years experience in education with fourteen of those years in administration within the same school district. The student population of the school at which she served as administrator was over 1,000 with 57.9% Hispanics, 32.3% African Americans, 7.0% Whites, 2.6% Asian/Pacific Islanders, and 0.3% Native Americans.

Brandi Miller's Story

It is important to comment on the comfortable and uplifting atmosphere that existed throughout Brandi's interview. The office was well lit with bright colors and a sweet smell of perfume. She seemed so relaxed and comfortable with me and not once demonstrated a sense of hurriedness throughout the interview. From time to time, she used various gestures such as a nod, pat on the hand, or touch on the shoulder, to indicate we had reached a personal level of communication. Secondly, it is also important to mention that as she shared her innermost feelings, from early childhood to her professional adulthood, Brandi appeared quite confident and pleased with her life's accomplishments. She constantly reminded me of the many opportunities this district offers its employees and that she was a proud product of such a fine district.

Some life experiences that facilitated Brandi's choice of becoming a leader started before she became a teacher. She was a business major, but did not really enjoy her experience. Her hometown invited her to return home to teach Bible School and she fell in love with teaching. Brandi paused for a moment as if she was re-living the moment in her father's truck as she nervously expressed her love for teaching. She remembered her father stopping out on a country road as she told him that she wanted to change her major to teaching. "I didn't love the business major and I wasn't good at it". Brandi then explained to her dad the love she had for teaching, and he thought it was a great idea. Again, Brandi paused as if to remember both the relief and joy she felt because of her father's response. "I felt so relieved after confiding in my father. I just loved teaching and even as a teacher, I knew I wanted to be a principal."

With an excitement for learning, she kept a journal of her first days of teaching. In this journal, she documented all the things she observed and vowed to always remember to do certain things when she became a principal. She also made notes on things she would never do as a principal, and it usually dealt with a lack of people skills. In essence, says Miller, "Education has been a mission for me".

As Brandi began to describe some of the important personal qualities, values and behaviors that were necessary for leadership and instructional improvement, her facial expression became more serious. With sincerity, she stated that she believed the best administrators were good listeners, cared about and took care of their staff, and asked for input from their staff. She said, "The whole core of philosophy is about the people and the children in the building. I think you have to be organized, but I believe your best

strengths for the most powerful people are if they have strong people skills." As if to make a point that should not be left out, Brandi sat up towards me and stated firmly that the best leaders don't take the limelight. Instead, she felt the spotlight should be put on other people by letting them grow and become the best they can be. Her voice became like one mimicking that of a preacher as she said, "In surrounding yourself with those kind of people … keep raising the bar and loving them through it while showing them the way and praising the people, consequently, the leader will successfully help them reach their dreams." Demonstrating, praising, caring, and loving are feminist characteristics in leading. These characteristics are good for teachers, in addition to students, parents, and community members. According to Grogan (1996), these characteristics should be considered highly valued appropriate responses to the challenges of leading America's schools. Through these characteristics, Brandi exemplified her sense of efficacy as a principal by emphasizing the importance of principals believing they can make a difference in others' lives (Carter, 2003). In addition, Brandi empowered her teachers by putting the spotlight on them and receiving input from them.

Brandi asserted her belief in God as being the biggest influence in how she conducted herself on both a personal and professional level.

I think it is essential in leadership and in life that you [have to] believe in God. I think you have to hold Him in high esteem and I think you have to pray when you have trouble in your personal and professional life. I also think you have to

be open about that. That is my core value – that I believe in God and He will not

lead me wrong.

Other core values that Brandi possessed included hard work, belief in people, and the

search for the common good. She believed the search for the common good was the

most difficult of all, because she felt that so many people in the world are so unhappy

and heavily burdened with the world's problems. She believed educators must be

willing to dig deep to get through to their hearts. I interpreted Brandi's folding her arm

and leaning back in her chair to mean that she was bothered by the heavy burdens that

cause the world so much unhappiness. Even more, her gestures could be an indication of

the heavy burden placed on educators and the desire to dig deep through the hearts of

such a burdened world.

Brandi expressed the interpersonal dynamics that impacted her effectiveness as a

school leader to include the great mentors she had. At this point of the interviewing

process, Brandi seemed to pour her heart out as she talked about her parents' impact on

her life. Her greatest mentor in life was (and still is) her mother. "My mom had a great

mix of strength and fortitude, compassion, and love." As principal, Brandi stated that it

was necessary to be tough, but it was as equally necessary to be loving toward others.

Her father, along with her mother, played a major role in how she leads today. He was a

self-educated man and taught himself how to speak Spanish fluently. Her house as a

child was a farmhouse and it was filled with books and encyclopedias. Brandi believed

the best thing about her upbringing was hard work. In her house, everyone worked until

they were finished. She saw her mom and dad work very hard during the harvest, but

they were excited because they knew things were completed.

> Just like the life of a principal, you get to school super early – that's what you
>
> do on the farm… you get up and start your day if you need extra time to get
>
> things done. It comes down to the belief that you must have strong ethics and
>
> can make things work out.

Brandi's parents always supported her and she believed the best leaders have good

thoughts in their hearts about people and they don't look for the negative. "When some

leaders see a person, they have negative thoughts and wonder why that person has come

to see them, why they're talking to them, and what do they want from them. I've never

gone there. I think the best leaders just don't dwell on negative thoughts." Moreover,

whenever she talked about her parents, she spoke a great deal with her hands as to

demonstrate to me exactly what she was sharing. Her actions reminded me of a little kid

who had something to share at 'show and tell' at school. She couldn't say enough about

her parents and she made sure that I understood her feelings of 'without them, there

would be no Brandi'.

The interview seemed to be rather productive as Brandi took extra time to answer

the next question relating to obstacles and restrictions. However, she shared that some

of the obstacles or restrictions she experienced while carrying out her duties as principal,

involved the regular school day not being long enough. She paused for a moment as if

to gather her thoughts. "I wished I had more time in the day to visit with students

because we didn't know to intervene sooner and we lost some of them because we didn't

know they were dying." Otherwise, Brandi saw no restrictions in her ability to perform her job. Instead, she believed that with the world of people around her, she could do anything and nobody could tell her differently. In a situation like this, she believed that "everyone should feed off of each other's energies and keep each other going for the good of the students". Even though most things may be considered restrictions, Brandi confidently said, "I just saw them as hurdles we had to jump over."

Expanding on the topic of obstacles, Brandi commented on restrictions set by the board and superintendents. "As principal, I work for them and they're my boss. I'm going to do my job so well that they're not going to find fault with me." She further stated that should she have concerns, she would state her concern it in a way that they would understand because that was her job. In addition, Brandi vowed that in order to prevent obstacles from existing, she was going to use her people skills.

You communicate with people, set up appointments, look at their

eyes, and tell them why we should think about this and you don't

blame them for something that happened (get over it). This is the

world; there are people here. So, pick your battles. Don't go to

war over every little thing; all you'll do is be fatigued.

Brandi's experience as a principal enabled her to guide successful school change over the long term by being a high energy, positive person who loved kids. Very seldom did her school not see her smile because whatever was going on, Brandi was determined that her people were never going to see her negativity. "If the principal is doom and gloom, then the whole building will be doom and gloom". Even in reprimanding

someone, she firmly believed that it must be done with dignity, away from the public eye, and should create a learning experience. "Do it where they [can] leave your office with some dignity, because even if they weren't a good teacher, they might be a fine person." This represented her belief system about conferences. Sadly, Brandi stated, "Many times people cried because they disappointed me, but it wasn't about whether or not they disappointed me. We needed to do better for the children." Furthermore, Brandi felt that confidentiality was very important. Therefore, after the conference, she would let the person know their conversation would not become public knowledge. She would check with that teacher several times, because she believed positive follow-ups were very important, too.

> I've had people I had to let go from the profession because teaching wasn't their bag, and in that very session, I was invited to their wedding. They knew I loved them and it wasn't a "I hate you and you're trash" type of conference. It was just this is not the profession for you…and they knew it too. So, it's very important how you treat people. You - the best leaders – must treat people with respect.

Establishing a successful learning environment for her students involved implementing a classroom management plan, making the school safe, and team building. This team building included a plan from the data for the academics in which everyone was a player. "I did not write the plan. I didn't say the plan. I motivated the plan, but *everybody* wrote the plan together." This, she thought, was what was behind her school's success.

Other approaches used in gaining success for her students academically, included block scheduling, reading labs, and countless hours of staff development. In addition, department chairs were empowered to take ownership of their department. "One person cannot do it all; you have to set people free. Put the key players out there and let them roll." Once the data was reviewed, assessment took place. Team meetings were held to discuss the individuals' weaknesses and strengths and a diagnosis was written for every single student. Goals and assessments were outlined and shared with the students so that they knew exactly where they were academically. Individual contracts were written for each student and then the student, teacher and parent were required to sign it. Lastly, after-school tutoring was set up by objectives and teachers used strategies that maximized the learner's ability in all listed objectives. Teachers also compared teacher-data with one another.

Although standardized testing is required, Brandi deemed that for the children's sake, they should receive an A in band, LOTC, choir, athletics and whatever else was offered on campus. Brandi had a vision of what she wanted her school to be. Brandi stated, "I not only wanted to be the best in the district, I strived to be the best in the state." As she sat upright in her leather chair, she concluded with pride that "the principal's vision has to be the top of the mountain, and everybody on that campus has to feel the same way".

Brandi alleged that principals should be held accountable for student standardized test scores at the building level. "As much as I disliked the fact that we were testing our babies to death, our educational level is higher." Brandi realized that

they must be able to compete with other students in the world, and that meant testing. "That's the way of the world and if we're going to be tested, the principals should have the best for their students. If they know that's the game – then, win the game!" She observed that as kids scored well on testing, they walked taller, and felt smarter. "I believe in the arts and in building the whole child, and I totally agree with accountability."

Lastly, Brandi shared her viewpoint on diverse leadership. She viewed diverse leadership to be an advantage in the workplace for all employees and an excellent role model for the students. She felt that race and gender added more depth to the variety of leaders and provided different views of the world. Brandi also thought that diverse leadership helped make more thoughtful decisions for the students and "added a positive view for others looking for employment to see a diverse staff". Currently, Brandi has three administrators: one African American female, one European American female, and one European American male.

School #2

The second middle school I visited had approximately 103 employees and 1,000 students. The hallways were noisy and the atmosphere did not feel accepting of visitors. I did not see welcome signs hanging from the ceiling as I entered the building and a person was not there to greet me in the front foyer. Instead, this school environment was more business-like and regimented than the other middle school. However, the secretary in the front office was cordial. Teachers appeared to be busy, yet friendly as I toured the building. I did not see many print rich materials in the hallways, but the classrooms I

visited were covered with positive slogans. When leaving the classrooms, I could hear the students asking their teachers who I was and their teacher responding that I was a visitor in the building. The teachers kept the students on task. In other words, teachers did not excuse students from fulfilling their daily objectives, because a visitor was in the building.

The principal was structured and business-like. She appeared confident in her staff and her leadership abilities. Furthermore, she made sure her staff knew that she was there for them. For example, except for meetings, her office remained opened for discussions with parents, teachers, and students. Teachers could make special requests to attend workshops and for certain materials needed for their classrooms. There were forms on her secretary's desk on which visitors were to register. At the same time, the existing atmosphere seemed to remind everyone of their responsibilities and set expectations.

Case Study #2: Delandria Davis

Context

The following information was compiled after three interviews with Delandria. Delandria, an African American female, is approximately 48 years of age and came from a large family. She is the seventh of eight children and has always been around lots of people. Sometimes when she is alone, she feels somewhat uncomfortable. Consequently, Delandria always knew that she would choose a career that involved being around people. She currently has 25 years of experience in education, all of which are in the same school district. The student population of the school at which she served

an administrator, is approximately 900 with 58.9% Hispanics, 31.1% African

Americans, 6.9% Whites, 2.9% Asian/Pacific Islanders, and 0.1% Native Americans.

Delandria Davis's Story

As I entered the building, Delandria's office immediately set the tone for the

interview. Her countenance spoke strongly of business and structure. Yet, she presented

herself in a homely and warm environment as I observed the photos in her office. It was

evident that she took pride in her career as she sat upright in her luxurious office filled

with pictures of family members. She began by expressing pride in her position and

love for people. She spoke so freely throughout the interview.

Some of Delandria's life experiences that facilitated her choice of becoming a

principal began with her teaching career. As she began to share her story, Delandria

spoke with poise and dignity. She openly expressed how she enjoyed teaching, but

originally had not thought about becoming an administrator. However, she had great

mentors who helped her see the leadership qualities that she had not seen in herself.

With only three years of experience, she became the chairperson of the English

department where she was required to supervise people who had been employed at the

school longer than she had been there.   Because she had not seen her leadership skills,

she asked herself, "Why did they make me chairperson?" After the experience gained as

department chair and effectively working with both experienced and inexperienced

people, she finally saw her leadership abilities. "I guess with my principal seeing the

leadership abilities in me, he started giving me administrative duties." However, at that

particular time, Delandria's view of administration was "in-charge, punitive, and telling

people what to do". Still, she had a yearning desire to help people, especially children.

As a result of this yearning, she furthered her educational career and earned a master's

degree in Counseling, and an administrative certificate. "One thing just led to another."

Mentors played an important role in who Delandria is today. Her first mentor

was an African American female that has retired but still serves as her mentor today.

Often times, Delandria seeks advice from her mentor, regardless of her retirement from

the school system. Delandria feels that her mentor will honestly share her feelings and

advise her on what she should do in certain situations. Since mentors were instrumental

in Delandria's educational career, it was Delandria's desire to serve as someone's

mentor as well. "I believe there are some people, hopefully when I retire, that will call

my name and say I mentored them. You have to pass it on."

Delandria's attributes her strong qualities in becoming an effective leader, to

what people have told her. She believes her knowledge base of shared experiences have

contributed to her success. People with experience in leadership have been willing to

share insights, strategies and most importantly, their vision about leadership with her.

Delandria appears to be a person that is able to seek and receive support because of her

talent, professionalism and concern for people. Delandria's comfort zone during the

interview reached a new level when she began to share her love for people and her

career. She told her story as if she had already written a book about her love for her

career. Her words flowed continuously throughout the two-hour interview. With pride

she shared:

The things I've heard over the years and from the people is that they have a

sense that I really, really care, and I do." "I've never been in a position looking

at another position because I wanted to get out of the current position. "[I] desire

to help people and do what I can for people.

She knew there were people that touched her heart, like particular kids that may be in

foster care. "I always try to reach out to people and do what I can to help." She

expressed her internal desire to help and said everybody is special, but recognizes "the

needs of some are not necessarily the needs of others". Specifically, she does not

believe in hard-set rules that apply to everyone regardless of the situation.

Communication was first and foremost on her list of qualities for leadership

roles. While listening to her story, I discovered a strong quality of Delandria's – her

exceptional ability to communicate. With certainty, she stated, "I found that many of the

conflicts or misunderstandings that people have are because people do not

communicate". Delandria believed in allowing people ample time to effectively

communicate. "I believe leaders and administrators then, must be organized because

through organization we are able to devote time to people and their concerns…we must

devote the time to be able to effectively communicate." Thus, organization and

communication skills are both qualities that are necessary for administrators to be

effective, according to Delandria.

As Delandria proclaimed her deeply rooted faith and love for the church, the

term 'servant leader', was heard repeatedly. She elaborated by sharing some of her

religious commitments in her home and at her church. Being a "servant leader" was

what she thought "leaders were here to do". "As a principal, she believes that support and tools that teachers need are most important to accomplish their jobs. She views her teachers as soldiers that engage in warfare for the lives of the children.

> As a person on the front line, the way I [take] care of my teachers impact[s] me as a leader.

She stated that lack of supplies and tools affect teachers' morale, instruction and the community's perception of her school. Additionally, supporting teachers when they are right was important. However, she stressed the significance of speaking with them one on one when there was a problem. If there is a problem between a teacher and parents, she believes in allowing them to meet one-on-one to resolve the issue, with the assurance that the principal will be available, if needed. This allows the teacher and the parent to "clean it up" without having Delandria there to overrule what they've said (or reprimand the teacher) in front of the parents. "You never want to diminish the teacher's authority in what they are doing."

Relaxing, as she was giving some thought to principal's limitations, Delandria finally spoke slowly and said, "I did not feel as if there were limitations to being a female principal". She shared that she thought she had free reign to do whatever she wanted to do within the proximity of her campus. Reflecting on her position as principal at an intermediate school, she realized she "broke the rules" and committed several dangerous acts when she went to apartment complexes, knocked on doors and picked up children if they missed the bus. However, as principal at an urban ninth grade campus, she knew she had to handle situations differently.

There were avenues outside her campus that she felt she could not control. For instance, parental involvement was one of those avenues.

If there was more parental involvement, I believe students would perform better. The type of involvement I'm referring to does not include coming up to school and 'selling popcorn' or other items. The involvement is more geared toward parents believing in their child's education.

Her goal is to demonstrate to parents and the community that children in her school can be educated. She wants parents to believe in the future of their children. This belief on the part of the parents will produce parental involvement and commitment at a deeper level.

Speaking about respect for female leaders, Delandria shared two experiences she would never forget. Earlier in her administrative career at one particular campus, she felt that "respect" was not what it should be. A teacher said to her, "I was teaching when your mom was changing your diapers." She recognized age as a factor that impacted her leadership. Even though Delandria had always been the kind of person who tried to have minimal conflict, after that comment, she felt she needed to speak with that teacher. On another occasion, a White teacher secretly tape-recorded a conversation with Delandria. The tape recorder was revealed when the tape started clicking.

Female leaders should not feel like it's a sign of weakness when they ask for help. You try not to be paranoid and say that it's just because I'm female or because I'm Black, or because I'm young that people do this. But, sometimes in

the back of your head, you might wonder if they would do this if it were someone else.

Delandria had to confront a situation that dealt with race. She did not hesitate, but was careful to follow procedures and to seek counsel when she shared this situation with her mentor. Delandria was not afraid to deal with issues of race.

When asked about race as a barrier, it was obvious Delandria did not believe she was limited because of her race. "I can honestly say that I've never experienced being limited because of my race." Boldly, she avowed that once she set a career goal, she applied herself and usually was successful. "I have the belief that if you have goals, you have to be willing to do what you need to do *wherever* the job may be." She elaborated on how people she had met wanted to move up the career ladder but refused to go to another school to serve in that capacity. She added, "If you truly care about people, care about kids, and want to make a difference, it sends you *wherever*." Doing otherwise will only limit a person's opportunity, according to Delandria.

Delandria established a successful learning environment for her students through staff development. She could not say enough about it. Clearly, she was an advocate for staff development. Her eyes seemed to glow as she spoke with passion about the benefits of staff development. Delandria believed in full participation in numerous staff development sessions, piloting strategies with small groups before training a large group, and sticking with something long enough for it to work. "Many times people tend to want to flint back and forth and not give it [the process] the opportunity to really work."

Delandria has a history of workshop attendance and she remembered one in particular. The workshop discussed hiring and how hiring plays a tremendous role in student performance. There was discussion on the importance of hiring quality people, people who care about kids, people who are flexible, people who are open to new strategies and new ideas and are willing to learn more. It was stated that hiring a strong administrative team that shares the principal's philosophy, but has different strengths from that of the principal, could possibly have a positive impact on leadership. This workshop was very profound for Delandria as she began to process the information. Delandria began to develop a plan that would bring together people of various strengths. She wanted to build a team that was strong, particularly in areas where she was weak. For instance, Delandria's strength was in curriculum and instruction, teaching and learning. For everyone, she believed this plan might be a good one. According to Delandria, a teacher may be strong in discipline, while another might be strong in language arts – together both teachers could serve the school while sharing the principal's philosophy. She added, "To impact curriculum and instruction, you've got to have a strong staff in place. And in order to have a strong staff in place, you really need to know what questions to ask in an interview, as well as what qualities to look for that will build your team."

Another factor related to team building was developing a master schedule so that subject area teachers had the same conference time. Every math teacher was off the first period and every science teacher was off second period. "Again, communication, collaboration, and discussion of the best practices are all important to me because

teachers who teach [similar] subjects need to have the opportunity to work together, build a strong team, and to provide the best instruction."

Also important to Delandria was having a systematic plan for assessing students. Delandria felt it was a good idea for her faculty to learn how to effectively assess students. She also believed the development of teachers' own assessments could be used to discover students' strengths and weaknesses. She suggested that teams work together because everyone's strength does not involve putting an effective assessment together. She believed "the more people you have involved in the process, the better it's going to be."

On the issue of assessments and testing, Delandria said schools should measure their success through various testing and it is necessary to test students to discover where they are academically. She believes in testing and assessment, and principals being held accountable for the results of those assessments.

> The principal is accountable for every single thing that happens on that campus. I am responsible, therefore I am accountable. When test scores come in and they are great, principals are the first to say, "We did this at my school; we have this program or that program". However, when test scores come back and they are not so great, principals may be quick to say, "Well, that teacher in room 101 and 310 has not been doing what they needed to do. In other words, principals are quick to accept responsibility and accountability when it's good, but when it's bad, we don't want it.

The bottom line according to Delandria, is that responsibility is with the principal because the principal is the educational leader.

In addition, she believes that principals and teachers should be held accountable for the management of the students, as well as accountable for the perception that people have in terms of the type of school the principals operate. "I believe effective leaders welcome and accept accountability."

Another factor that contributed to student success, according to Delandria, was programs. I'm a big people person and I believe that people will drive success in whatever they do." Even though many schools are looking at structured programs, Delandria felt that success was about the people and the willingness of people to effectively learn how to implement particular programs. In addition, she believed that beliefs drive behavior. "If I weren't an administrator, I'd be a preacher because I'm really strong on beliefs. If you believe your students will be successful, you are going to go and seek out any and every avenue to make it possible." Thus, whether it is through technology, textbooks, getting parents involved, or peer-to-peer tutoring, educators should seek various approaches to gain student success. However, if a person does not believe in student success, according to Delandria, then it was not going to happen. Thus, believing and caring played major roles in making things happen for Delandria. "I've even gone the gamut of music and whatever it takes to touch the heart of people, because it is through the heart [that you reach] the mind. If you just try, it'll transform." Delandria caused me to think about studying efficacy and the importance of believing success can happen in a school environment.

Finally, Delandria believed there was a strong relationship between academic performance and diverse leadership. She also believed that academic performance on the student level was a result of effective teaching practices exercised by child centered, exemplary teachers. According to Delandria, diversity in leadership fosters a sense of inclusion. Furthermore, she believed it [diversity in leadership] helped teachers, parents, students, and stakeholders to support the goals of the school district if they felt a part of the process. "Having ethnic representation among leadership strengthens representation, fosters understanding and self-esteem". Delandria has three assistant principals on her campus: one European American male and female and one African American female.

School #3

Well-organized, clean-kept, and quiet hallways describe School #3. This particular school consisted of approximately 88 employees and 900 students. The office staff was busy dealing with students needing schedule changes, and attendance and tardy forms. Earlier observations made at several other schools involved students being uncomfortably noisy during class exchange. However, to my surprise, students at this particular school hurriedly exchanged classes with minimal noise as staff members monitored the hallways. Everyone seemed to know what their duties were and took pride in fulfilling them.

Although this was a school that demonstrated the importance of organization, both in the office and hallways, there was a sense of warmth throughout the building. Students were in the middle of class change, yet I witnessed teachers asking students about their day and vice versa. When I appeared to be lost, several faculty members

voluntarily directed me to my destination. I observed teachers instructing their classes, while at the same time re-directing off-task behavior of other students. The teachers showed an interest in making sure all students received the well-planned lesson.

The principal was very business-like, but was quick to show interest in those around her. She walked the halls with ease as if to know that she would find her school on task and filled with learning opportunities.

Case Study #3: Stephanie Thomas

Context

Stephanie's compiled information is a result of two interviews and a follow-up phone call. Stephanie, a European American female, is in her early fifties with 30 years experience in education, all of which are in the same school district. She comes from a two-parent home, but she did not consider either of her parents as leaders. She and her siblings were taught to work really hard in everything they did.

> My daddy taught me my whole life how important it is to take care of yourself.
> He had three girls and one boy, and girls were to know how to change a tire and
> know how to take care of themselves so they wouldn't get stranded down the
> road. He taught us all that.

Stephanie is the youngest of four children, and all but one has a college degree. The student population of the school at which Stephanie was an administrator was approximately 800, with 73.6% Hispanics, 17.4% African Americans, 8.1% Whites, 0.9% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 0.0% Native Americans.

Stephanie Thomas's Story

Stephanie's interview was one that repeatedly asked me, the interviewer, "What can I do to help you understand my program?" She was extremely helpful as she elaborated on each interview question. She provided me with samples of paperwork outlining successful programs implemented at her school. Her office was very orderly, although most of her office walls were covered with educational degrees earned from various universities. I observed a photo of her daughter on her desk. This is not to say that her degrees were more important, because through conversation, she demonstrated heart-felt pride in her daughter.

Stephanie's upbringing played a major role in how she led. She believed that life is a choice and we have to bounce back during difficult times and keep on going. "My Italian blood causes me to have an innate sense to be loud and aggressive. Some Italians are submissive and some are aggressive. I guess I'm aggressive. My dad taught us all that."

According to Stephanie, some of the important personal qualities, values, and behaviors necessary for leadership and instructional improvement included being a good listener to the community, students, teachers and upper administration. In addition to those qualities, learning as much as you can from workshops, and knowing how to make good decisions were necessary for leadership and instructional improvement. According to Stephanie, a good principal must be an instructional leader and be familiar with the curriculum. Stephanie stated, "When I observe my teachers, I don't necessarily attempt to understand what they are teaching as much as how they are teaching." She felt that

her teachers knew what they were teaching, however, her goal was to help them deliver the curriculum to each student. She observed how they presented the lesson and held a one-on-one follow up session to discuss how they presented the lesson.

Some of her very own qualities as a leader helped her in her leadership position included knowledge of the curriculum, follow-up on how the teachers were teaching and how students were learning. Staff development was also crucial because it allowed teachers to know what was to be taught and different ways to teach it.

> Knowing, knowing, knowing is important". Knowing what the teachers
> need, knowing what the students need, then making whatever they needed
> available so that they could be successful in their teaching, were all a part
> of being an effective leader.

The interpersonal dynamics Stephanie felt that impacted her effectiveness as a school leader were her experiences as a school counselor and belief in her position. "I learned from people (from their mistakes and achievements), and I always wanted to become a principal some day and I never gave up." When she was a counselor, her principal told her that she ought to be an assistant principal. He saw something in Stephanie and he gave her an idea that maybe she should become an assistant principal. When she became an assistant principal, she was then told she should become a principal. She felt quite fortunate in her career choices. Getting the counseling and assistant principal jobs was easy. However, many times she found herself quite devastated and had to learn to be patient when she did not get the principalship position at various schools when they became available. Eventually, she learned to keep on

doing what she was doing, because she felt the time was not right for her to get the job of principalship. When the time was right, she believed "higher-ups" would know and she would be offered the job, which is exactly what happened when she was offered her current principalship position. "I guess I knew what I wanted to do and I had to keep on working until the district felt it was the right time for me." As principal, she realized the importance of her counseling background. As a matter of fact, she believed that good principals are those who were once counselors, because they have learned to work with students, parents, administrators and data which is a driving force in today's educational arena.

Stephanie spoke calmly but boldly, as she contended that there was a difference in her leadership style as a female compared to some male administrators within the district. She felt that women were more sensitive to the needs of others, they planned and listened more, and were more sensitive to the emotional needs. She also believed that female administrators wrote little notes to their staff (letting them know they are appreciated), have more social meetings, and do more inspiring things for the teachers.

She experienced various obstacles or restrictions that caused her great concern as she carried out her duties. As principal, on a daily basis Stephanie felt that drug problems and the fact that kids "rule the roost" were among her greatest concerns. Parents tended to be very content with the way kids carried out their lives – kids were driving cars without a license and involved in gangs. "I wish I could take them home and make sure they did their homework, have dinner, and go to bed on time." This past year, Stephanie's campus started the year with six pregnant students and some had even

gotten married through the school year. "The community is great and I love the community, but there is a notion that it's ok, because mom will stay home and take care of the baby so that the student will continue going to school." The kids didn't stop coming to school because they knew their moms would stay home and take care of their babies. Although the scenarios are so real, the percentage of such scenarios was low at her campus.

Stephanie considered the district's policy on budget as a restriction to her power as principal. "If I had my choice, I would add an assistant principal and counselor and pay to have more teachers attend workshops during the summers." Many of her teachers attending workshops traveled out of state and Stephanie felt disappointed, because she was only able to offer a $500 material fee for items they could use in their classrooms.

According to Stephanie, establishing a successful learning environment for students had to be done with much care. Stephanie's elementary background played an important role in establishing a successful learning environment for her students. One thing she noticed was her kids needed more time on task, so her campus adopted the Modified Accelerated Block scheduling. Stephanie spoke confidently about this program. She walked hurriedly to her files to retrieve helpful information explaining her program. She took the time to explain how the program worked as well as observed the pros and cons. The students' accelerated block was modified by giving students English and Math for 90 minutes each day and 45 minutes for Science and History. The students would then be allowed two electives of their choice. The advantage of this type of scheduling was more time on task and consistency of core subjects, whereby they would

be enrolled in these courses year round. Although students did not earn as many credits per year, Stephanie believed Modified Accelerated Block scheduling increased students' success rate and they did not have to retake classes or be required to attend summer school. Additionally, Stephanie cited a colorful environment, hands-on training, and staff development were powerful approaches in gaining students' success. Lastly, she added some key dimensions that effected student success:

I think staying abreast of new legislative laws and texts; knowing what's going on at [state agencies) and the legislature, are important. Also important is passing the information on to my teachers and going to professional meetings.

She said the success of schools is generally measured by test scores. However, Stephanie believed the atmosphere of the campus, making sure teachers wanted to be at work, making sure kids wanted to come to school, and being there to pick teachers up when they were feeling down were as equally as important in measuring the success of schools. "Each year I give my teachers a survey and I make a point for them to let me know what their needs are and how I can make things better here at our school."

Stephanie agreed with the idea of holding principals accountable for student standardized test scores at the building level. Accountability allows principals to consistently challenge themselves. "If principals are not held accountable, they could possibly become complacent like principals did years ago."

Lastly, Stephanie viewed diverse leadership as being critical. Her administrative team includes one African American female, one European American male and female. She felt that many parents and community members related better to a member of their

own culture, therefore, it was important to have a representative from as many cultures as possible on your administrative team. Finally, she shared that administrators often knew more about their own cultures so they could assist students in the way they learned best.

School #4

From the office staff to the teachers and principal, my visit included a heart-felt welcome by all. Upon entering the building until the moment I left, I was surrounded with cheerful smiles and greetings. Also, like School #3, everything seemed to be so neat, and well organized. The secretary's desk was covered with school-spirited items and a sign-in form for visitors designed in the school's designated colors.

While some students seemed to enjoy the laughs and conversations with one another during class change, some students appeared more eager to get to their lockers and classes in order to avoid the possibility of being tardy to class. Nevertheless, the atmosphere of the school seemed calm, yet cheerful, while teachers monitored the hallways. Once the bell rang, teachers hurriedly closed their doors to begin teaching the day's objectives. There were very few students remaining in the hallways after the bell rang. Those students were informed to report to the attendance office to receive a tardy form in order to be allowed to enter class.

Throughout my visit, the school staff willingly assisted me by answering all of my questions. In fact, everyone went out of their way to provide me with additional information they felt would help me in my research. The principal was very

knowledgeable about her students' strengths and weaknesses and provided her teachers with the necessary resources to address their students' needs.

With approximately 85 employees and 850 students, this school seemed to represent a close-knit family, each reaching out to help one another.

Case Study #4: Wendy Williams

Context

Wendy's two interviews were filled with scenes of reality as it clearly told the story of how a high percentage of poor, urban children live today. Her stories were vivid and allowed me to take a trip through the winding cities of urban life in childhood and adulthood heading for survival.

Wendy, an African American female, is in her early fifties with 28 years in education. Fifteen of those years are in administration and seven are in the same school district as the other research participants.   Coming from a single parent family with all female siblings and being raised in and having survived in a rough area, Wendy felt that her survival skills made her an expert in almost everything. Her mother worked two jobs, which made Wendy, who was the eldest, have to share some of the responsibility of making sure the other siblings were taken care of in the home. In other words, Wendy had to be a big sister, mother, and disciplinarian. These heavy responsibilities required her to survive a life that was rough for her.

The student population she served as administrator was approximately 1,000, with 43.1% Hispanics, 43.1% African Americans, 7.2% Asian/Pacific Islanders, 6.5% Whites, and 0.1% Native Americans.

Wendy Williams's Story

Wendy's office was somewhat cluttered. It was evident that she was moving outdated materials while trying to make room for new ones. There were several interruptions while she shared her story. However, these interruptions did not take away from the rich information Wendy so openly shared. She sat back quite comfortably in a large leather chair as if to say, "I'm ready to tell my story".

Some of the important life experiences that facilitated Wendy's choice to become an administrator reflected back to her childhood. There were several relatives in her extended family who were teachers. So, during her whole childhood, she knew she wanted to be a teacher, but at that time, did not have an aspiration to become an administrator. She also had an uncle who was in administration, but he did not have a desire to be a principal. However, once Wendy demonstrated that she knew what she was doing in the classroom, she believed it opened up avenues for her and she began to develop a rapport with the administrative staff on her campus. "When the administrative team looked at strategies I was using in the classroom, I said to myself, 'I can do this', and that's what inspired me to become an administrator. Wendy explained how the administrators were phenomenal as they worked with her and taught her a great deal regarding administration. During her years as an assistant principal, then, she felt fortunate to have had several phenomenal mentors who served as role models and supported her in obtaining a principalship position.

Wendy believed her knowledge in and understanding of the curriculum to be some of her strongest qualities as a leader and has helped her in her leadership position.

In addition, other strong leadership qualities included being able to communicate to her staff about the curriculum and being able to strengthen the curriculum while taking its problems into consideration. As far as Wendy being direct, she shared, "I am direct when I have to be. I'm not an authoritative type principal, but when I have to be direct, I'm direct." Nevertheless, she felt that she treated her teachers and everyone with dignity and expected the same from her employees and the students.

In so many ways, Wendy did not feel principals or educators got the respect they deserve from society. However, she felt she was beginning to earn that respect because principals and educators are responsible for the academic and social success of children. "I think at all times, educators should behave and carry themselves in a certain manner." Wendy also believed that the way educators carried themselves had to be a reflection of how they would like to impact children. "Although every educator has their own personal lives, there is a certain way they should conduct themselves."

According to Wendy, obstacles can cause great concern as principals try to carry out their duties. Wendy thought that change had a great deal to do with those obstacles because teachers have a diverse group of students and they must be willing to change the way they teach if children are going to succeed.

> When I say change, I think teachers are the most challenging group in education
> because they yearn to learn how to work better with the kids in the classrooms
> and they want the kids to be successful. But some haven't figured out how to do
> that because they lack the knowledge of the environment that the children may be
> coming from.

Wendy felt that it was important to understand her students and some of the problems

they were experiencing. In addition, she believed that sometimes, the most attention

many students got was when they were in school because some parents might be

working more than one job, or might be in school. Many of her students came from

single parent homes or homes where parents were incarcerated. Wendy, coming from a

single parent home, shared a 'connectedness' with some of her students. "There are

many barriers challenging teachers in trying to get students where they need to be."

However, Wendy believed that once educators understand that the purpose of all they do

is for the students (being aware of and appreciating their different backgrounds), then,

they will try to be creative for student success.   It was even more important then, as she

stated before, that principals behave and carry themselves in a certain manner at all

times. With a firm belief, Wendy stated that students respond to educators that are

passionate about their success.

One of the manners in which Wendy established a successful environment for

her students was reviewing data on how her students performed, and analyzing their

strengths and weaknesses.

First of all, you must discover (1) what is the problem and what happened? (2)

how did it happen, and (3) how am I going to fix it.

Once the students' strengths and weaknesses were identified, it was necessary to start

working with the staff so they could develop a plan that would be effective with the

students. The standardized test grades students on lower level thinking skills.

Unfortunately, Wendy claimed, most teachers do not know how to teach at a higher level

because they are so used to teaching the lower levels of standardized tests. Now, teachers must prepare students and teach them how to think on a higher level.

The approaches and techniques Wendy used in gaining success for her students varied. One successful approach was finding staff development for teachers so they could obtain first hand strategies that could be utilized in the classrooms.

> There's no quick fix for student success. I believe you have to pull a little bit from here and little bit from there because we're not looking for a quick fix. We're looking for a long-term fix where students will be able to succeed in school and in their society.

Wendy felt the best strategy school-wide, regarding staff development, was to teach different strategies for each Benchmark and have teachers engage in and utilize these strategies in their classrooms.

Effective schools, according to Wendy, have leaders that guide schools through change over the long term. She asserted that success involves knowing and looking into things that students are interested in and inspire them to desire coming to school, such as advanced technology. She realized that almost all children play with hand-held computers. Therefore, hand-held computers should become a component in the curriculum.

Holding principals accountable for student standardized test scores was a good idea according to Wendy. Wendy felt that principals should be good at what they do and successfully lead students toward high school graduation. Principals, then, have to be accountable. She thought that accountability also urged people to think twice before

becoming a principal. "If you are not sincere about it and if your heart is not in it, don't just [seek] the position because of the pay…it's work and we work our tails off".

Wendy summed it up by saying monitoring and knowing what was going on in and out of the classrooms; knowing where the teachers were in terms of what they were teaching; knowing what her teachers needed; knowing where the kids were in terms of learning and what they needed (tutorials, extended day, etc.) were equally important in school improvement and high student achievement. "A student and teacher assessment and some type of adjustment after reviewing the assessments are also greatly needed," Wendy said. Although principals play an important role in school improvement and student achievement, Wendy believed there were limits to their powers. One way she got around those limits was by praying and keeping her kids and staff in prayer.

Analysis of Findings

"To know the ways in which leaders develop, we must know and understand

something about the developmental pathways those leaders have trave led" (Curry, 2000,

p. 21). As the lives of these women administrators in this study unfolded, several

themes emerged that provided the link Curry described. There were many forms or

ways of leading practiced by the administrators in my study. I identified "ways of

leading" as a major theme. In addition, I found that the following themes supported the

major theme: each of the participants' upbringing and educational career facilitated their

choice to become administrators; a supportive mentoring relatio nship impacted their

effectiveness as an administrator; professional development played an instrumental role

in student academic success, and each administrator believed principals should be held

accountable for the results of student-standardized tests. In addition to these themes, I

discovered that all of the administrators expressed a strong belief system in their

children's ability to learn, and three of them expressed a belief in God. The

administrators also shared their viewpoint relating to diverse leadership. As a result, I

have added diversity in leadership and belief systems as emerging themes.

Multiple Ways of Leading

Data for this study support the widely held notion that leaders in more effective

schools and leaders in general, do not use me rely one style of leadership (Lightfoot,

1983; Manasse, 1985). The women in this study practiced many forms of leading that

were consistent with recent trends in leadership research (Growe & Montgomery, 1999;

Brown & Irby, 1993; Funk, 1993, and Shakeshaft, 1989). Collectively, the women

administrators felt the style of leadership that worked best was one of inclusiveness as they made relationships with others central to all actions; placed a major focus on building community and inclusiveness through participatory styles of leadership; shared the power and the credit; empowered others to improve their skills, and maintained open communication. Consequently, their decision-making styles stressed cooperation, team building and ongoing professional development as a group.

Specifically, Brandi led with high energy and a persona of "pleasantness". Delandria led with a business team approach, and a sense of great responsibility. Stephanie led with counseling skills and people skills. Wendy, like Delandria and Stephanie led by using examples from others. Collectively, each of the four administrators led with a genuine love for their students and a belief that they were responsible for taking care of the educational needs of their students and teachers, while considering the needs of the parents and the community. Their ways of leading also included being supportive, organized, compassionate, empathetic, sensitive to the needs of others, having good listening skills, patience, and an ability to effectively communicate with others. Additionally, the women in my study led by practicing shared decision-making with their staff. According to Hill and Ragland (1995), these female administrators have employed an inclusive model of leadership in schools where both administrators and teachers participate in the decision-making process. They also added this type of inclusiveness comes natural to women. This 'naturalism' in female leadership could be contributed to Funk's (1993) belief that women's roles as girls,

sisters, mothers, and daughters have significantly influenced the ways in which they lead.

Brandi, like Delandria, often practiced effective leadership by motivating their staff and taking the spotlight off of themselves so that teachers could grow and develop. Their sense of efficacy as a principal revealed through their acts of guidance and motivation, demonstrated they could make a difference in their teachers' lives as they worked together toward student academic success. Although Bennett (1995) and Nieto (2000) agreed that efficacy and expectations were characteristics of teachers and have been consistently related to student achievement, this efficacy was also witnessed in the four women administrators' leadership practice.

Their act of leadership through guidance and motivation also provided a sense of empowerment for their teachers to act and take charge of the situations at hand. Hence, through empowerment, teachers were given the power to act and grow while enhancing their strength, creativity, and competence. Shakeshaft (1989) stated women exercised their power to empower others and women leaders often believed that whenever power was expanded, it should be shared and not limited. Thus, empowering others apparently was not threatening to the women in this study.

It was Stephanie's belief that a good principal must be an instructional leader.

When I observe my teachers, I don't necessarily attempt to understand

what they are teaching as much as how they are teaching.

Principal efficacy and empowerment played a major part in her belief in her teachers'

ability to teach "what" they were teaching. Assisting them with "how" to teach also

showed support for her teachers.

These women emphasized several approaches of authenticating their leadership.

Brandi and Delandria did not feel there was a need for embarrassment or admonishment

when teachers made mistakes. "Do it [reprimand] where they [teachers] can leave your

office with dignity and do it on a learning curve", Brandi stated. Delandria said allowing

her teachers the opportunity to correct their mistakes, while she stood in the background

was an important type of support. "You never want to diminish the teacher's authority

in what they are doing". Belenky, et al (1986) asserted women use a humanistic

approach that is caring and empowering. They also stated that women tend to "show an

immense respect for the world and the people in it as they resolve conflict by trying to

understand within the context of each person's perspectives, needs, and goals" (p. 144).

Principals, then, must allow teachers to feel as if they can be successful on a given task

as they take on challenging goals, try harder to achieve them, and persist despite

setbacks (Bandura, 2000). Wendy considered herself to be direct in her communication

with teachers and students. However, she did not think she was authoritative, as she

treated everyone with dignity. Stephanie's leadership practices of giving voice to vision,

and using that voice to empower others to work toward a common goal were defined by

Colflesh (2000), as being a feministic attribute of leadership.

Making available the necessary tools so teachers could be successful in their

teaching was considered to be critically important to each of the women in my study.

Stephanie utilized a teacher survey as a method of getting to know her teachers' needs and how she might fulfill those needs. In particular, Delandria considered herself as a 'soldier on the front line' as she took care of her staff and students and provided them whatever they needed to be successful. Delandria's leadership was similar to that of soldiers who possess the characteristic of having a belief in the cause for which they are fighting, and believing in themselves. According to Bassford (1994), the spirit of a soldier is extremely important, because it refuses to be upset by fear and it confronts with all its power. In addition, self-disciplined soldiers realize success and survival depends on working together and being able to undergo extreme hardship to achieve team goals. Similarly, Delandria and the other female administrators exhibited soldier-like characteristics. They were ready, willing, and able to stand, protect and provide for their campus. Regardless of the battle, these women proved their ability to stand on the front line for what was important, even if it meant sometimes having to stand alone. By implementing school safety measures and allowing opportunities for their staff to learn from their mistakes, they served as the 'protector' of their campus. Through their desire to make available the necessary resources for their staff toward successful teaching and learning, they served as 'providers'. Confidence in their ability to lead effectively was also a soldier-like characteristic they exhibited. Each was confident their students could learn and they supported their teachers, while working as a team toward a common goal – student academic success. Hence, their sense of loyalty and selfless service were the root of their values. Finally, providing for the needs of others could be attributed to

women's ways of leading as they felt the need to be supportive and nurturing toward their students, teachers, and parents.

Personal Characteristics

Curry's (2000) research stated:

Along developmental pathways, there are moments of insight when the individual knows something about who she is, how she came to be, and what she aspires to be. It is knowing what one wants or expects to achieve in the future. (p. 60)

Each of the participants in my study stated their upbringing and educational career facilitated their choice to become a principal. Brandi's experience as a Bible School teacher, Delandria's teaching experience, Stephanie's childhood and counseling experiences, and Wendy's family of educators, all led them to become educational leaders. Brandi (European American), Delandria (African American), and Stephanie (European American) came from a two-parent home, while Wendy (African American) came from a single parent home in which she served as caretaker for her younger siblings, while her mother worked two jobs. Even though each had different childhood upbringings and traveled along different developmental pathways, it was proven that each were determined to succeed and to positively impact the lives of others throughout their years in education.

During their childhood, the participants were taught the importance of work. Brandi shared that one of the core values taught as a child was hard work on the farm, and finishing the job she started, even if it meant getting up early to get it done. While at

home one summer from college Brandi taught Bible School and discovered she did not want to pursue a major in business. Instead, she wanted to become a teacher. Her apprehensiveness to inform her father that she wanted to become a teacher, instead of pursuing a major in business, might have been attributed to a societal view of teaching during that time. During that particular period of time, the availability or lack of availability regarding career choices for women was an issue. Being a teacher, social worker, or nurse were 'acceptable and expectable' vocations for African Americans. However, for Brandi, she was aware that her father *and* society expected more from European Americans, especially when so many more opportunities were made available to them. After receiving her father's approval, she expressed with confidence that she wanted to become a principal, possibly because she knew such advanced opportunities existed for her, a European American, in a Euro-centric dominated society. Thus, it appears to be evident that European American women might often be "penalized by their gender, but privileged by their race" (Collins, 1990, p. 223).

This illustration of White privilege was also observed in Stephanie's story when she talked about being hired as principal.

> I had to keep on doing what I was doing because the time was not right for me
>
> to get the job of principalship. When the time is right, they [administrators]
>
> would know and I would be offered the job which is exactly what happened.

This would indicate a need for educators to understand whiteness, white privilege, and the implications for European Americans leading diverse campuses. Laible and Young (1998) explained:

If whites cannot see white privilege and oppression, then they will be unable to

recognize the effects of white privilege, analyze it, and take actions against it. (p.

5)

If Stephanie sees her job as coming so easily, how can she understand others who must

struggle or are consistently rejected because of race? Can she mentor principals of

color? Accordingly, European Americans may not understand that it is a privilege to

view their lives as morally neutral, normative, average, and ideal, while women of color

continue to tirelessly work for change in unequal, yet inevitable, conditions within the

educational system (McIntosh, 1992). Wendy's view was different from Stephanie's

viewpoint on opportunities for positions. "We (African American females) have been in

situations where we have had to survive. We have a strong sense of accomplishment.

We cannot simply be equal; we must be better" (Hudson et al, 1998, p. 47). White

privilege was apparent in Stephanie's story.

Being the seventh of eight children, Delandria always knew she wanted to be

around many people while she possessed a genuine desire to help others.   Her

philosophy of care and meeting the needs of her students, which entailed the belief that

the needs of some students were not necessarily the needs of others, does not represent

the bureaucracy which governs our schools today. While school systems appear to treat

all students fairly and anonymously, they fail to consider the individual needs of its

students (Weiner, 1999). As a result, students may not receive the educational and

financial support necessary for successful learning. Delandria wanted to ensure that the

needs of her students were met.

Stephanie, who was also brought up in a two parent home, claimed her father taught her and her siblings to work really hard so that they would be able to take care of themselves. Wendy, on the other hand, learned to survive in a fairly rough part of town and worked at a very young age to help her mother provide for the family. The socialization of this African American female included fostering of ideals of nurturance, collaboration, caring, and service to others (including her family) which impacted the way she successfully led her school. Though these values were an integral part of her past, they are not paralleled with the value of our educational system where individualism and competition are the norms (Winfield, 1997).

Collectively, one of the characteristics the four women in my study demonstrated was the strength of being resilient. Most definitions focus on the strengths of the individual. However, Walsh (1998) defined resilience as the ability to conquer life's challenges. Nevertheless, how resilience manifested itself depended on the administrators' own worldview and means of coping with life. Wendy, coming from a one parent home and poverty stricken neighborhood, rejected the deficit model and began to incorporate models of resilience that built upon her strengths and own expectations. Being the oldest child with the responsibility of caring for younger siblings while her mother worked, enabled Wendy to practice leadership skills at an early age. Wendy had to learn optimism in which she believed her actions and efforts would yield success. Also, having a strong sense of self-esteem and responsibility toward her family were valuable. As principal, Wendy exercised her resilience when she dealt with obstacles. She believed one of the main obstacles that affected teachers'

response to her requests, had to do with change. According to Wendy, "change can stall individuals and keep staff from trying to go where the principal is trying to lead them." Yet, her resilience to succeed and belief in her teachers resulted in an effective learning environment for all involved. Hence, Wendy's experiences as an African American female administrator supports research which acknowledges African American women as historically demonstrating great levels of strength in order to survive and persevere (Greene, 1995).

Delandria, also an African American, demonstrated resiliency in several instances in her interviews. She demonstrated her ability to stand strong through several experiences where employees failed to respect her as their leader.

You try not to be paranoid and say that it's just because I'm a female or because I'm Black, or because I'm young that people do this. But, sometimes in the back of your head, you might wonder if they would do this if it were someone else.

Although African American women administrators continue to strive toward fair treatment and to maintain hope, Delandria's efforts were persistent as she continued to succeed in spite of such experiences.

I was surprised by Delandria's comment, "I can honestly say that I've never experienced being limited because of my race." This statement would almost be impossible to prove, especially when 'oppression' has been practiced, subtlety and privately, for centuries and it is my belief, that it is practiced daily even in this present century. Furthermore, although she had strong leadership qualities and excellent communication skills, certainly there are other people of color with talent and skills. She

is not the only person of color qualified to have this position. There are few African American female secondary principals in her district, and Deitz (1992) stated people continue to hire in their own images. Often, persons of color forget that being the only one, means you have been discriminated against. Delandria has forgotten that she cannot collaborate with peers that look like her. She has fallen into the belief that being the "only one" is normal.

Although Stephanie did not consider either of her parents to be leaders, her father taught her and her siblings how to care for themselves and work hard in everything they did. She was resilient in bouncing back each time she was not awarded the principalship position for which she applied. After applying over the next several years, Stephanie earned the principalship position at the school she is now employed. Her high self-expectations in her attitude, behavior and actions enabled her to achieve success while being resilient. She was persistent, a characteristic of resiliency, in her belief that a position would be offered to her. Her belief was not in vain, her goal was accomplished.

Stephanie considered the district's policy on budget to be one of her obstacles as principal. She felt that she needed additional staff and funds for teacher workshops. This is a continuing concern in urban schools as educators are faced with the responsibility of educating an extremely diverse group of students (Weiner, 1999). In addition, while bureaucratic regulation has an effect on every element in school life, urban schools have been overwhelmed by having inadequate funding for both teachers and students.

Stephanie worked hard to obtain additional funds for her school. She worked to overcome this great obstacle. Stephanie shared her greatest concerns were kids 'ruling the roost" at home and within the community. Comer (1980) reported successful results in turning gang leaders into academic leaders and future leaders in the communities. Stephanie did not mention the strategy of finding programs that channel student leaders into positive arenas. Thus, Stephanie did not appear to see her students' strengths as potential leaders. Through culturally responsive pedagogy, it would be advantageous to respond to her students' needs by incorporating their culture in the lessons on a daily basis and building on their strengths. Also, exercising the practice of care would prove advantageous. Principals must care enough about the students and their community to reach out and meet parents in an effort to meet community needs. Collectively, these practices would result in an acknowledgement of and appreciation for her students' background, cultural heritages and traditions.

As far as obstacles were concerned, Brandi saw them as "hurdles we had to jump over". One particular obstacle she experienced while carrying out her duties as principal involved the regular school day not being long enough. She felt more time was needed in order to effectively work with her students.

> I wished I had more time in the day to visit with students, because we didn't
> know to intervene sooner and we lost some of them, because we didn't know
> they were dying.

Not being able to reach out and help each child can be one of the most stressful aspects in leading urban schools. In urban schools, the large number of students can prevent

educators from recognizing problems, which makes it somewhat difficult to reach each student. Brandi did not express disappointment in her students' ability to learn. Her disappointment, however, surfaced because of her inability to change factors beyond her control such as poverty, broken homes, and gangs in the community.

Unanimously, each of the participants believed one of the most essential leadership qualities involved being caring and having a great deal of concern for their entire building. For African Americans, nurturing and protecting comes from a history of shared responsibility for other African American children, and for all children, to the extent of going beyond blood kinship ties (Collins, 1990; Fordham, 1988; Hale-Benson, 1982). Specifically, Brandi believed a leader's philosophy should be about people and the children in their building. Wendy felt it was critical to understand her students' backgrounds and some of the problems they experienced. As a result, Wendy recognized the importance of being culturally responsive to her students' needs while attempting to build bridges of meaningfulness between home and school. She also felt a 'connectedness' with some of her students as they, like her, came from single parent homes.

Stephanie and Delandria also showed a great concern for children and the need for them to have parental support along with the support received within the school system, but they differed in their definitions of parental involvement. Stephanie was concerned with teenage pregnancy, and like Delandria, was concerned about her students coming to school each day to receive instruction. However, Stephanie did not go into the homes, like Delandria, to promote parental involvement. I thought of Martin

Haberman's research on "STAR Principals" when Delandria said visits to her students'

apartment complexes were dangerous. Haberman says educators will sometimes break

the rules to help children. This is what Delandria did to help her students. Many

mornings Delandria went far beyond the call of duty when she 'broke school policy' by

picking up her students from their homes when they missed the school bus. Her

profound sense of caring and willingness to serve as an advocate for her students

overshadowed her concerns as to how the superintendent and board members might have

felt regarding her decision to pick up students from their homes. However, it is my

belief that because Delandria's school performed academically successful for several

years, it is more than likely the academic success was indeed the reason she was

protected and not reprimanded for her breaking school policy. In contrast, Stephanie

believed parents should come to school and follow the traditional model. Delandria

believed in a more holistic model of support within the home. Delandria in this instance,

was more successful than Stephanie, but both leaders had an abiding concern for

children, especially marginal students and those without advocates (Brown, et al, 1993).

Care and nurturing were dominant themes that emerged in my study. Through

her own description of her teachers in Harlem, Lightfoot (1988) expressed the

seriousness of leading children:

> Being a dedicated teacher in Harlem was a life, not a job. It meant teaching
>
> generations of children in the classroom, but it also meant standing as a symbol
>
> of knowledge, grace, and truth in the community, and reaching out to youngsters

who had the capacity to follow in your footsteps. The demands were both

professional and deeply personal. These women were mothering Harlem. (p. 89)

Similar to Lightfoot's teachers, the female administrators in my study were also

"mothering" secondary urban students as they cared for and reached out to help them

become successful.

Mentoring

Mentoring programs is one of several ways women and people of color can

obtain guidance, support and instruction as educational leaders (Ragins & McFarlin,

1990). The literature clearly suggests that success and advancement in administration is

improved through mentoring and those who are mentored perform better as

administrators than those who are not mentored (Southworth, 1995; Cohn & Sweeney,

1992). The use of mentors to assist present and future leaders has been found to be a

powerful tool that may be used to bring about more effective school practice (Whittaker

& Lane, 1990; Southworth, 1995). Each participant in my study indicated a supportive

mentoring relationship impacted their effectiveness as a school leader. Even though

Growe and Montgomery (1999) asserted the best mentors for women are women,

because sharing gender related experiences and knowledge are significant, three of my

participants shared they were completely comfortable with both their male and female

mentors. Their statement was supported by Schneider (1991) who affirmed it was not

uncommon for women to have men mentors.

While her mother was an inspiration throughout her life, Brandi had several

mentors including principals, and even a superintendent. Her mentors were European

American male leaders in the same school district. Brandi's mentors, according to Lindbo and Schultz's (1998) definition would be defined as having a possession of knowledge and advanced or expert status, and being willing to give away what he or she knows in a noncompetitive way. She was very pleased with the knowledge and expertise her mentors openly shared with her. Also, an advantage to their mentoring relationships was the availability and flexibility of being able to meet with them when needed. Brandi did not comment on whether she felt there were any differences in having a male versus a female mentor, but she believed men could serve as effective mentors for women administrators. It was evident Brandi did not experience the race barrier like Delandria and Wendy, the African American participants in my study.

Delandria currently has the same African American female mentor she had when she first became an administrator. Hopkins' (1998) study reported it was more difficult to recruit women of color than women in general. Consequently, Delandria's desire to keep her mentor, even after her mentor's retirement, could be an indication that there was a lack of availability of women leaders, and African American leaders within the educational system. Literature reveals there is a great need for mentoring programs for women and women of color, yet, there appears to be an even greater need for mentoring programs that include female mentors of color.

Delandria, like the other women in my study, felt her mentors provided her with the necessary guidance as they shared one another's interests. Grover (1994) would have defined Delandria and her mentor's relationship as a successful mentoring partnership because the mentor guided and assisted Delandria to a level of personal and professional

excellence that had not been previously gained. In addition, Delandria's mentor could

be described as what Dodgson (1986) considered to be a "trusted and experienced

counselor who influenced the career development of an associate in a warm, caring, and

helping relationship" (p. 29-30). Throughout their personal and professional

relationships, Delandria depicted her mentor as being warm, caring, and honest while

serving as both mentor and advisor.

Stephanie believed one particular district administrator, a Hispanic American

female, had confidence in her leadership ability and impacted her effectiveness as a

school leader. Considering their cultural differences, I was somewhat certain

Stephanie's mentorship with a European female administrator would have been different

than that of her mentorship with a Hispanic American female. Hispanic American

women in Hudson, et al's (1998) study revealed that during their leadership, they

constantly felt they had to prove themselves in districts with less Hispanic

representation. Additionally, Stephanie's mentor might have experienced what Dubois

(1986) referred to as "double consciousness:

> …double consciousness, a sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes
>
> of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused
>
> contempt and pity. (p.7)

Hence, I wondered whether or not Stephanie's mentor led with a belief that Stephanie

was supposed to be successful, because she was European American. I also wondered if

Stephanie's mentor believed she was supposed to be Stephanie's servant as she looked at

and measured her self-worth through Stephanie's eyes. For years, it has been embedded

in the dominant culture that people of color are to be submissive to European Americans, and they should feel somewhat inferior to European Americans. As a result, people of color tend to help European Americans in any way possible, because they feel it is expected of them. Thus, I believe Stephanie, like Brandi, will not be subjected to the race barrier like her mentor or other leaders of color.

Another issue of concern was Stephanie's mentor providing 'everything' Stephanie felt she needed. Shakeshaft (1989) refers to this action as the "maternal instinct." Her mentor's sense of caring for and providing Stephanie with the ins-and-outs of becoming an effective educational leader, and trying her best to lessen problems and concerns from the staff, were some of the maternal instincts demonstrated. Also, one might consider her mentor's constant "looking over" Stephanie's shoulder to ensure she was comfortable with the assigned leadership tasks, to be a maternal characteristic.

Even though she stated she would be comfortable with a male mentor, Stephanie asserted there was a difference in her leadership style compared to male administrators within the district. For example, she felt women were more sensitive to the needs of others, planned and listened more than men and wrote notes of praise to their staff. Research conducted by Shakeshaft (1989) concurs with Stephanie's assertion regarding the differences in leadership styles.

Lastly, Wendy believed several administrators within the district were phenomenal in her being the leader she is today. Her mentors included a European American male and an African American female. Each of her mentors was employed in the same school district and supported her in obtaining a principalship position. Cook

(1979) implied that it may be difficult for the male administrator to form a mentoring relationship with a female protégé since "his cultural upbringings and life experiences have conditioned him to see women as wives, mothers, and sweethearts, but not executive peers" (p. 19). However, Wendy and Brandi did not share this concern or the concern the women in Gaskill's (1991) study had regarding their cross-gender mentoring relationship. The women in her study stated the main problem in having a male mentor was "jealousy from peers or spouse" as well as "political problems." Moreover, Wendy was the only participant in my study who had a mentor of a different race and gender. Nevertheless, she stated she did not experience disadvantages of the cross-gender and cross-racial mentoring relationships. Instead, she emphatically stated that each of her mentors had a positive impact on the way she leads today.

These women's stories reflect the importance of their mentors, in obtaining success and providing the ways to overcome existing barriers within the educational system. Due to the impact of their mentoring relationships, my participants shared one interesting commonality, which was their desire to mentor others. Wesson (1998) added, an administrator can grow by being a mentor to someone else.

Student Academic Achievement

Today's principal must be prepared to focus time, attention and effort on changing what students are taught, how they are taught, and what they are learning (Bottoms & O'Neill, 2001). They must also create a learning environment with a rigorous curriculum in which all students can learn.

Establishing a successful learning environment for Brandi's students involved team building, implementing a classroom management plan, and making the school safe. Other approaches used in gaining student academic success entailed block scheduling, computer-directed reading labs, after-school tutorials, and countless hours of professional development. Brandi also cited reviewing the data and making appropriate assessments as important.

Delandria established a successful learning environment for her students through ongoing development for her staff. Being a strong proponent of professional development, she believed in allowing her teachers to attend as many seminars as possible to improve instruction. Student success, according to Delandria, was achieved not so much because of programs, but because of people. It was about the willingness of people to effectively learn how to implement particular programs. Student success was also about educators' belief in the students' ability to be successful at learning as educators seek every avenue to make it possible. Student success at her campus was associated with teacher and principal efficacy as they believed in themselves and the abilities of their students as well. Bennett (1995) and Nieto (2000) suggested that efficacy and expectations are characteristics of teachers (and leaders) that have been consistently related to student achievement, particularly with students in diverse classrooms.

One key practice that proved successful toward obtaining student achievement at Delandria's campus was the development of a master schedule in which all core teachers shared the same conference hour. This allowed teachers who taught similar subjects the

opportunity to work together, build a strong team, and to provide the best instruction for student success. Delandria possessed a belief in strong professional development focusing on educators, parents, and the community working together for the common good. In addition, she believed several strategies, topics, and methods included in professional development were based on research. She added, "research is no good unless it is put into practice".

Stephanie's elementary education background assisted her in establishing a successful learning environment for her students. Along with this experience, she used a great deal of care in her efforts. Caring, coupled with her desire to meet the needs of her students, brought about close principal-teacher and principal-student relationships. Realizing her students needed more time on task, she, like Brandi, approved and implemented modified accelerated block scheduling. This type of scheduling extended the amount of time in English and Math. It also provided more time on task and consistency in core subjects. As a result, modified accelerated block scheduling confirmed an increase in her students' success rate.

Wendy established a successful environment for students by reviewing the data and determining their strengths and their weaknesses. Discovering the problem, how it happened and the solution to the problem were addressed. Following the Benchmark targets and attending professional development were other approaches Wendy utilized toward gaining student success. Wendy believed advanced technology, common sense and judgment would assist children in being academically successful.

While each of my participants emphasized the importance of professional development, they did not mention whether their professional development activities accentuated the significance of culturally responsive teaching *and* leading. Such professional development would encourage teachers and leaders to acknowledge cultural heritages of different ethnic groups, learning styles and an incorporation of multicultural education. My knowledge base enabled me to observe culturally responsive teaching and leading in place, but Wendy was the only one to allude to it. Wendy felt strongly about understanding and having knowledge regarding her students' background. She realized it would affect how the child received instruction and communication in school. Often, leaders that are successful in their urban school district, engage in culturally responsive practices, but do not openly express the process because it is embedded and infused over time as a natural system that works. It is through graduate courses and professional development that they can learn to deconstruct the process and communicate what they do in verbal and written form.

Accountability

Establishing a means through which educators at all levels become accountable for student achievement was paramount in the initial effort to create an educational system that could and would serve all children effectively. Darling-Hammond (1997) wrote:

> Although the right to learn is more important than ever before in our history,
> schools that educate all of their students to high levels of intellectual, practical,

and social competence continue to be, in every sense of the word, exceptional.

(p. 2)

Accountability mandates, such as the No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2002) legislation in

the United States, are in theory largely designed to force schools to take a person-

centered-approach, so that every child has a chance to see his individual cognitive

capacities recognized, and maximized. The accountability plans must also include other

indicators of achievement, but high achievement on the other indicator cannot

compensate for poor performance as measured by test scores.

Principals can create and maintain a positive school culture in the face of the

pressures that accountability brings. Ultimately, the responsibility for the performance

of teachers and students rests with the principal. Consequently and unanimously, each

participant believed principals should be held accountable for the results of student-

standardized tests.

Diversity in Leadership

African Americans, Hispanics, Asians, and Native Americans represent 70% of

the student population in 20 of the nation's largest urban public school systems (Irvine &

Armento, 2001). It is necessary, then, for principals to be skilled in incorporating this

diversity into rich and supportive climates for learning. Principals who themselves are

members of racial-ethnic minority groups may bring special insights and talents to these

tasks, and they may serve as role models for staff and students in distinctive ways.

Consequently, it is imperative for students to see people of color in roles other than

custodial, clerical, food service, and transportation positions. They must also be exposed

to people of color in leadership positions. Diversity then, promotes personal growth and a healthy society. It also challenges stereotypical preconceptions and encourages students to build upon their abilities to become an asset to this pluralistic society. In doing so, the community and workplace can be strengthened while students learn to foster mutual respect and work together as a team. The same principle applies to gender in leadership roles. Through their observations of leadership roles held by various ethnic groups, students can also come to the realization that both males and females serve in leadership roles.

Additionally, principals of color may serve as important role models in low-minority schools (i.e., schools with fewer than 20 percent of students of color enrolled) by bringing distinctive perspectives that may not have been present, otherwise. Thus, diversity enriches the educational experience for students, teachers, parents, and the community.

Brandi viewed diverse leadership to be an advantage in the workplace for all employees and an excellent role model for the students. Brandi has three assistant principals: an African American female, and one European American male and female. She felt diversity added more depth to the variety of leaders through race and gender to provide different views of the world. Brandi also thought that diverse leadership helped make more thoughtful decisions for the students and "added a positive view for others looking for employment to see a diverse staff". It appeared Brandi saw the importance of diversity in leadership and its effect on recruiting aspiring principals to her district.

Delandria believed there was a connection between academic performance and diverse leadership. Her administrative team consists of a European American male and female, and one African American female assistant principal. According to Delandria, diversity in leadership fosters a sense of inclusion. Furthermore, she believed it helped teachers, parents, students, and stakeholders support the goals of the school district if they felt a part of the process. Brandi stated, "Having ethnic representation among leadership strengthens representation, fosters understanding and self-esteem". Additionally, according to Collins (1990), "offering subordinate groups new knowledge about their own experiences can be empowering; however, new ways of knowing that allows subordinate groups to define their own reality has far greater implications" (p. 221).

Stephanie viewed diverse leadership as being critical. Currently, Stephanie has an administrative team, which consists of one African American female, one European American male and female. She felt many parents and community members related better to a member of their own culture therefore, it was important to have a representative from as many cultures as possible on her administrative team. Additionally, she shared that administrators often knew more about their own cultures, so they could assist students in the way they learned best.

Finally, Wendy's administrative team consists of an African American female, and one European American male and female. Wendy said teachers have a diverse group of students and they must understand their students' backgrounds and some of the challenges they experience. In addition, she believed that sometimes, the most attention

many students got was when they were in school, because some parents work more than one job, or might be in school. Many of her students came from single parent homes or homes where a parent was incarcerated. Wendy believed that once educators understand the purpose of meeting the needs of students (being aware of and appreciating their different backgrounds), they will try to be creative for student success.

Belief Systems

Each participant in this study understood the process of student success with regard to academic achievement for all students. However, neither of them felt they would have been able to reach this level without truly believing all children can learn and deserve a quality education. Moreover, three of the participants gave credit for their success to belief in a higher being. Hoyle (2002) alleged that spiritual leaders supported others in seeking the greatest vision, reach for the best accomplishments and serve before being served. He further asserted that schools with troubling numbers of school dropouts, unethical student accountability reporting, disturbing failure rates, school violence, and low teacher morale were a result of a "spiritless leadership". Furthermore, he added that gifted leaders who are able to recognize their leadership strategies are often unsuccessful without the spiritual component. Hence, developing a spiritual approach to educational leadership can be the anchor that helps leaders stay well-grounded and closely focused on the high goal of improving education for all students (Thompson, 2004).

Yoder (1998) suggested characteristics of a spiritual leader to include: personal awareness, significance of relationship, a belief in a divine power, and having a sense of

purpose or mission. In turn, these characteristics bring new meaning to leadership, balance their lives, and help leaders see their work as an inspired vocation. Chopra (2002) pointed out that great leaders respond from the higher levels of spirit and leaders who survive in chaotic environments, do so because they understand the underlying spiritual order. Yet, he added that those who want to become leaders will succeed by pushing through daily chaos and using basic, yet essential, spiritual rules. Hoyle (2002) also believed that leaders lack an understanding of human motives if they do not have a sense of spiritual awareness. Additionally, Hagberg (1998), described women as being more motivating and inspirational than men. Webb's (2000) study examined the role of spirituality as a success factor for women. She found that women in the study who possessed a sense of spirituality were better able to handle issues of race and gender and it gave them a sense of "peace, clarity, and strength" (p. 1).

Particularly, Brandi asserted her belief in God as being the reason for her success and ability to lead personally and professionally. Brandi added that it was essential in leadership and in life to believe in God. Her core value was that she believed God would never lead her wrong. Thus, Soder (2002) would agree with Brandi when he affirmed that people could move in better ways when spirituality became part of their leadership. Delandria proclaimed to be deeply rooted in her faith in God and in her church which she believed helped her to do the right things, for the right reasons. In addition, Soder (2002) who asserted that spiritual leadership is about building connections and about the way we associate with others in our lives and in our work, would agree with Wendy's belief system. Wendy believed that it was necessary to pray

and to keep your staff in prayer. Although Stephanie did not mention having a belief in a higher being, it is not indicative that she does not share in this belief system. Stephanie's reasoning could have been that she considered her belief system to be both personal and private.

I was not surprised that faith in God was a factor of their effective leadership as female educational leaders. It was faith, I believe, that helped them to be resilient through trying situations. I also believe it was their faith in God and a belief that things would get better from childhood to adulthood. Personally, my faith God sustains me through the most difficult times in life and in my work. When I take each day that is given to me, I look for the positive and aim toward victorious outcomes. I refuse to let unfortunate situations lead me to a dead-end trap of negativity, despair, and hopelessness. I am, like the four women administrators in my study, a resilient optimist seeking to empower others to use their strengths and skills to succeed in this ever-changing society.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

I would like, at this point, to review where I started with my study, and how it evolved. Given the perspective of the naturalistic paradigm, I set out to conduct a qualitative research study, examining and (re)interpreting (Dillard, 1995) the life experiences and leadership practices of four African American and European American women administrators in secondary urban schools. More specifically, through discourse, the purpose of this study was to determine the constructed meanings of their personal and professional acts of leading, as related to high academic achievement for secondary urban students. Recognizing that the participants in my study had multiple realities, I chose qualitative methodology in an attempt to understand the meaning they assigned to their experiences. I understood that the knower and the known were inseparable and the researcher and participants would influence each other.

In an attempt to understand the life experiences and leadership practices of these four administrators, I began with these research questions as guides:

1. What personal characteristics attributed to these African American and European American women administrators' success in secondary urban education?

2. How do the selected African American women administrators and European American women administrators exercise and interpret their acts of leadership?

3.   What are these African American and European American women administrators' perceptions about leadership as related to student academic performance in a recognized, urban district?

I investigated these questions through in-depth, open-ended interviews and semi-structured face-to-face interviews with the four administrators. I also investigated the questions through the collection of data received from observations of the administrators, employees and students, audiotapes, non-verbal cues, and recorded field-notes. As I collected and transcribed the data and transcribed them, I compared them with each another's data and put them into categories, using note cards and number-coding.

I investigated the literature I felt would be relevant to the study of African American and European American women administrators' leadership practices. I investigated the leader's persona, personal identity (Curry, 2000), and effective educational leadership (Bottoms & O'Neill, 2001). Regarding women in educational leadership positions, both Logan (1998) and Bell & Chase (1993) found that women leaders were often concentrated at the elementary level and decreased in number in middle, secondary, and post-secondary institutions. In addition, Doud and Keller (1998) supported Pollard's (1997) study that concluded European American and African American women did not find problems in obtaining principalship positions at the elementary level. My study revealed that obtaining a position in administration was more challenging for women than men.

I also examined women's styles of leading. Many researchers along with Funk (1993), Shakeshaft (1989), Brown and Irby (1993), and Growe and Montgomery (1999), provided characteristics of the ways women lead. They expressed that women leaders had an abiding concern for children, especially marginal students and those without advocates. They further stated that women generally make relationships with others central to all their actions, while placing their major focus on teaching, learning, and building community and inclusiveness through democratic, participatory styles.

In addition, I investigated the role of the principal, the contextual elements of the principalship, and principal accountability for student academic success (Holtkamp, 2002; Hallinger, 1996; Bonstingl, 2001; Popham, 2001). They contended that state, district and school systems now hold educational leaders accountable for students' academic success. They further stated that failure to meet set targets effected student graduation, teacher bonuses, district funding, and the retention of principals. This is especially true for urban schools. Irvine and Armento (2001) asserted that the number of children of color in urban schools will show a great increase by the year 2010. Additionally, women and principals of color are more prevalent in urban settings that have a high number of students of color (Fiore & Curtin, 1997).

Summary

As the results of the study are presented, the guiding questions serve as a focal point of the research. The personal characteristics which attributed to the African American and European American women administrators' success in a successful secondary urban school district will be discussed in the next section (see chapter 4 for

greater details). The women administrators exercised many forms of leading but shared a commonality of employing a model of inclusiveness where both administrators and teachers participated in the decision-making process.

Recognizing and appreciating diversity among students and teachers was not an option. Similarly, to enhance students' academic performance, the administrators promoted teacher awareness of and willingness to address students' learning styles and individual needs. Hence, culturally responsive leadership was characteristic of leaders in my study in their attempts to successfully lead students toward academic achievement.

Personal Characteristics and Emerging Themes

The first research question asked, "What personal characteristics attributed to these African American and European American women administrators' success in secondary urban education?" The personal characteristics that emerged included high aspirations and expectations for students; a caring and nurturing approach; being empathetic and supportive; possessing strong people skills; open communication; a sense of empowerment; principal efficacy; and being organized and flexible. Unanimously, each of the women administrators demonstrated the character of resilience throughout their leadership role as principal.

Resiliency

Resiliency emerged as an ongoing theme among all participants. The resiliency factor of these effective female leaders strengthened their ability to rebound from obstacles in order to lead students toward successful academic achievement. O'Gorman (1994) affirmed that resilience describes individuals who possess the ability to recover

from adversity while retaining a positive self-image and view of the world. Examples of
some of the strengths of a resilient child adapted from Carter (2001) include: the child
having extraordinary responsibilities; extracurricular interests or skills; seeking support;
displaying intrinsic faith; displaying a sense of humor, and being persistent. Some of the
critical components that played a major role in their ability to bounce back during
childhood to adulthood included: their childhood upbringing and a supportive mentoring
relationship.

  Specifically, Wendy's upbringing caused her to become resilient as she was
required to fulfill extraordinary responsibilities as her mother worked two jobs. She was
the caregiver for her younger siblings; thus, she had a strong sense of responsibility for
her family.   In addition, Wendy was persistent. Regardless of a childhood of poverty,
she was determined to bounce back and despite the "rough streets" on which she grew
up. Brandi always had a talent for singing and as a resilient child she gained a sense of
pride and acceptance and was well respected for her talent. As a child, Delandria was
optimistic and had a belief that no matter what was going on in her life, everything
would be just fine. Early in her childhood years, she established a deep-rooted faith in
God and she added, "My faith has never failed me…". Somehow, Delandria always
thought things would work out for the best. Although Stephanie believed her parents did
the best they knew how in rearing her and her siblings, she often had to seek guidance
from someone on the outside, because she did not feel her parents were able to
understand the dynamics of her career. As a result, she was persistent in finding

someone who accepted her as she was and someone who was willing to serve in the capacity as her confidant and counselor.

All but one of my participants was reared in a two-parent home. Nevertheless, as a young child, each was taught the importance of hard work. Brandi was taught to accept responsibilities on the farm on which she was raised. Delandria was told to work hard to fulfill whatever goal she set in life and Stephanie's father inspired her to take care of herself, even if it meant having to change the tire of her vehicle. In order to help her family survive, Wendy learned about hard work at a young age. Coming from a single parent home, she took on the responsibilities of a caregiver for her younger siblings while her mother worked two jobs. Hence, each administrator's childhood was different, yet was proven through their resiliency that they were determined to succeed and have a positive impact on the lives of others.

Mentoring also helped these women achieve resiliency when facing issues or problems as a leader in secondary urban education. Each administrator in my study expressed a supportive mentoring relationship that impacted their effectiveness as a school leader. Brandi's mentors (both European male administrators) provided her with the flexibility of meeting with them whenever she needed their advice. Delandria treasured the mentoring relationship with her African American mentor so much that she continued the relationship after her mentor retired from the educational system. Stephanie's Hispanic American female mentor went beyond the call of duty by serving as a mother, counselor, and advisor throughout their mentoring relationship. Wendy, having both an African American female and European American male mentor, believed

she was well prepared because of their support and guidance. Growe and Montgomery (1999) asserted the best mentors for women were women because sharing gender related experiences and knowledge are significant. However, three of my participants shared they were completely comfortable with both male and female mentors.

Principal Efficacy

Efficacy and high expectations are characteristics that have been constantly related to student achievement, especially with students in diverse classrooms (Nieto, 2000). Principal efficacy is associated with the principal's belief system about students and the learning process, and the belief that they can make a difference in the students' lives (Weiner, 1999). Principals must have high self-expectations and an ability to successfully lead students toward academic achievement. It is nearly impossible for principals to effectively lead and achieve student success if they do not believe all children can learn. Each of the women administrators exhibited high self-expectations and a strong belief in their students' ability to learn.

Principal efficacy emerged as a theme that was consistently related to student achievement. Collectively, each participant gave credit to effective professional development initiatives as reason for their students' academic success. All expressed a strong belief in their students' ability to learn and shared how they supported this belief with specific actions. Specifically, Brandi implemented a safe school environment, block scheduling, computer labs, and praised her students and staff for their hard work. Stephanie also implemented a modified block schedule, which allowed for more time-on tasks. Wendy reviewed the data to study her students' strengths and weaknesses. After

doing so, she implemented the necessary programs (including technology) to acquire the

desired results. All, including Delandria, assured their campuses they believed in them

and that they could be successful by providing the necessary resources, which would

result in academic success.

Belief System

Another theme that emerged was belief in a divine power. According to Yoder

(1998), a belief in a divine power can help bring new meaning to leadership, a balance to

one's life, and assist leaders in visualizing their work as an inspired career. Three of the

participants gave credit for their success to a belief in a higher being. Brandi shared that

it was essential in leadership and in life to believe in God. She also believed that God

should be held in high esteem as leaders pray to Him during troubled times. Delandria

proclaimed to be deeply rooted in her faith in God and in her church, which helped her

decision-making process. Wendy attempted to make connections with her school in her

personal and professional life, as she believed that it was necessary to pray and keep her

staff in prayer. Although Stephanie did not mention having a belief in a higher being, it

was not indicated that she shared in this belief system. Instead, she chose not to share

this part of her life or belief system which implies that it could be a personal issue with

Stephanie.

Multiple Ways of Leading

The second research question asked, " How do the selected African American

women administrators and European American women administrators exercise and

interpret their acts of leadership?" The women in this study practiced many forms of

leading that were consistent with recent trends in leadership research and theory. Their ways of leading provided a model for education that could lead to a "more caring community and safer world" (Noddings, 1991, p. 70). In addition, their relationships with others were central to all actions and their major focus was on teaching and learning. Consequently, their decision-making styles stressed cooperation, which helped facilitate a translation of their educational visions into student progress.

Specifically, Brandi led with high energy, motivation, a positive attitude and love for her students. Often, she was observed praising her students and teachers for their accomplishments. Delandria led with a deep, down heart-felt desire to help others and to be a soldier on the front line for her campus. Stephanie led with a strong knowledge in curriculum, how students learned, and how teachers taught. It was Wendy's belief that leaders should lead by example and be conscientious about the way they carried themselves at all times.

Through empowerment, teachers were allowed to share in the decision-making and were given the freedom to grow. Brandi and Delandria believed in celebrating their teachers' accomplishment and empowering them to grow. In addition, Brandi included her teachers in the decision-making processes, she stated, "It's not just my plan; it's our plan. I just help motivate the plan." Brandi and Delandria also allowed their teachers to learn from their mistakes by "not pointing the finger at them." Instead, they found it more beneficial to conference with them individually. Stephanie, like Brandi and Delandria, also found it important to learn from one's mistakes and the mistakes of

others. Lastly, Wendy's open door of communication policy was an effective method of

empowering others. Faculty members could talk to her on a regular basis.

Perceptions of Leading toward Student Academic Performance

The third research question was, "What are these African American and

European American women administrators perceptions about leadership as related to

student academic performance in a recognized, urban district?" As our society continues

to progress, principals as educational leaders must acknowledge their ethical and moral

responsibilities in leading highly diversified schools toward academic success. These

women administrators perceived their leadership to be one that gave voice to vision. In

addition, they exercised their voice to empower everyone to discover their own skills

and abilities. They claimed that academic performance on the student level was a result

of effective teaching practices exercised by child centered, exemplary teachers. In

particular, Wendy's knowledge of students' backgrounds affected how they received

instruction and communication in school. Carter and Larke (1995), and Nieto (2000)

asserted that the effective educators engage in culturally responsive teaching [leading],

and have a strong background in multicultural education. Dillard's (1995) study asserted

it is impossible to create 'traditional' conceptualizations of teaching or leading without

taking issues of culture and community context into consideration. Thus, it is critical

that leaders consider their students' background and culture when establishing a

successful learning environment.

Conclusion

Principal efficacy, professional development, empowered and a goal toward academic success for all students were the components demonstrated by these school leaders. Although it is not a generalized formula, it proved to be a sound base and a successful combination for these administrators. The type of success demonstrated and attained by these leaders required an individual to be focused, dedicated, and confident in meeting the needs of the students.

The female administrators in this study were exceptional women who successfully led in positions generally held by men. One purpose for embarking on this research was to describe the leadership behaviors of female administrators in secondary urban schools. What emerged was an understanding that these four women practiced many forms of leadership. They defined themselves by their positions as educational leaders who devoted their lives to providing a quality education for their students. They were able to effectively articulate their vision to their staff and empower them to lead. Collectively, these female administrators felt the style of leadership that worked best in today's educational system was one of inclusiveness – a relational style, rather than one of competition. Their leadership styles were both collaborative and demonstrative of care and nurturing for their students.

Many times, I reflected on the interviewing process as I began to type their responses. In doing so, I found myself remembering the actual moment these female administrators shared their stories. The words and expressions used to characterize their thoughts and ideas were more than just simple written text representing their verbal

thoughts. These words were filled with emotions and feelings and thus, were a printed form of the lives and realities of these female leaders.

The main focus of their stories is that principals are there to ensure a quality education for all students. To accomplish this feat, they insist that teachers believe in and care about every student, and develop policies and procedures of the school that are inclusive and supportive. These participants' stories revealed they had a desire to bond with the students on a caring level and to establish an atmosphere of joint respect and concern for one another. Their stories revealed high self-expectations for themselves and resiliency in their ability to bounce back during difficult times. They promoted their faculties through shared decision-making processes, and teachers were empowered to utilize their knowledge toward professional growth. Furthermore, they were careful to make every decision with genuine care and concern for all those involved. These administrators' stories also revealed strong leadership characteristics that included being empathetic and supportive; possessing strong people skills and open communication; empowerment and principal efficacy; being organized and flexible; and considering themselves to be 'soldiers' on the line for their campus. Fair and impartial treatment toward faculty, parents and students were also strong values held by these female leaders. It was their belief that fairness toward everyone impacted other's perception of how they led their school.

I entered this journey as an empty vessel. However, at the end of the journey, my vessel overflowed. The similarities and differences of each participant's experiences produced volumes of written and verbal contexts. Each of these female administrators

served as an inspiration to me because they were dedicated, caring, and inspiring female

leaders in educational administration. Their voices spoke of wisdom, endurance,

motivation, pride, and an overwhelming sense of love for and belief in themselves and

their schools. Throughout their interviews, I realized that I, too, had traveled similar

paths. I realized we shared characteristics of resiliency, caring and nurturing, and a

sense of efficacy. Most importantly, I discovered like three of my participants, that I led

with a sound belief in God. Similar to Brandi and Delandria, I have faith in knowing

that whatever obstacles come my way, God will never lead me wrong; thus, it is

important to hold Him in high esteem. Such spiritual leadership has given me the ability

to lead with my heart as I reach out and touch the lives of others. It is through

'touching' that others can feel my genuineness towards them. It is through 'touching'

that I extend myself in various leadership positions to take care of the needs of others.

These female administrators have given me an even stronger desire to extend myself

whenever necessary. I realize this will require my being a "soldier on the front line" and

"working my tail off" as Wendy stated. However, because of the yearning I possess to

positively impact others, it will be a challenge I look forward to undertaking.

Recommendations

The following are recommendations based on the findings of this study:

1. Principals should engage in professional development that focuses on the

   caring perspectives. Each of the principals in this study demonstrated caring

   and nurturing as part of their daily routine as they led their students toward

   academic success. Exercising the practice of care can prove to be

advantageous. The administrators in this study demonstrated a genuine care as they established an atmosphere of joint respect and concern for one another. As a result, future administrators may also achieve academic success and a sense of community.

2. Principals need strong people skills. Thus, professional development with a concentration on public relations and building learning communities would be beneficial. The participants placed a major focus on building community and inclusiveness through participatory styles of leadership. This community involved students, teachers, parents, paraprofessionals, custodial and food service staff, bus drivers, the community, and stakeholders. This style of leadership was found to be key in leading successfully.

3. Research is needed on ways to build resiliency in principals. Walsh (1998) defined resilience as the ability to conquer life's challenges. How resilience manifested itself depended on the administrators' own worldview and means of coping with life. Principals must possess the ability to rebound from obstacles to lead students toward successful academic achievement. Research should document ways in which resiliency was developed.

4. Principal preparation programs must be continued. Programs for school leaders should involve job shadowing, which provides valuable insight into the principalship's role. Programs should demonstrate effective ways to be culturally responsive in leadership practices. According to Gay (2000), such practices can "build bridges of meaningfulness between home and school

experiences as well as between academic abstractions and lived socio-cultural realities" (p. 29).

5. Principals must learn how to empower teachers. Shakeshaft (1989) stated women exercised their power to empower others. Women leaders often believed whenever power was expanded, it should be shared and not limited. Through the administrators' empowerment, teachers were allowed to share in the decision-making process and were given the freedom to grow professionally, while using the knowledge of social relations that dignified their own history, language, and power.

6. Principals should have opportunities to select strong mentors. Whittaker & Lane, 1990; Southworth, 1995) found that mentors are powerful tools that may be used to bring about more effective school practice. Each participant stated that a supportive mentoring relationship impacted their effectiveness as a school leader. Being able to connect with some experienced mentors would be beneficial.

7. Diversity in 20 of the nation's largest urban public school systems is increasing. Hence, the importance of diversity in leadership should be emphasized. Principals who are people of color may bring special insights and talents by incorporating rich and supporting climates for learning. Principals of color may also serve as role models for staff and students in distinctive ways.

8. Efficacy is a characteristic that has constantly been related to student achievement, especially with students in diverse classrooms (Nieto, 2000). Principal efficacy is associated with principals believing they can make a difference in their teachers' and students' lives. This belief greatly impacted the female principals as they led their students toward academic success. Thus, approaches by which principal efficacy might be enhanced need to be addressed.

Implications for Future Research

Based on the findings of this study the following are suggestions for further research:

1. This study was conducted with two African American and two European American female administrators in secondary urban schools. Since the 2000 Census, the Hispanic population is the largest minority group in the nation. It would be beneficial to replicate this study by identifying the leadership styles of Hispanic female administrators;

2. There is a vast amount of literature on the similarities and differences of men and women's leadership styles. However, it would be interesting to discover how male administrators from various racial and ethnic groups view leadership behaviors. This information can be helpful to gain insight on men's perceptions of educational leaders' styles of leading.

3. This study examined the leadership styles of female administrators in a recognized urban school district. Since states, districts, and schools mandate

principals to successfully lead students toward academic success, it is recommended that this study be replicated by identifying female administrators' leadership styles and successful student academic performance in a rural school district.

4. There appears to be an emergence in literature on spirituality in leadership. Studying the prevalence of faith and its connections, if any, to how female administrators lead, is recommended.

5. It would be interesting to discover the similarities and differences of female educational leaders of both elementary and secondary schools. It is recommended to compare and contrast female principals at various educational levels and share their views on accountability and leadership styles.

It is my belief that each of the female administrators in my study will be an example to society at large as a leader who believes in equity and quality. As the state of Texas becomes more focused on educating its children, it appears that these educational leaders share in their efforts toward high academic achievement for all children. This study showed that principals make a significant difference in shaping teaching and learning as they attempt to demonstrate their personal and professional acts of leading.

Lastly, although there is valuable knowledge rooted in the stories shared by these female educational administrators, it is my sincere hope that educational leaders will realize the stories they have created on their own. Therefore, this research will

contribute to the conversations concerning school leaders that have been a part of

recognized performing schools in successful, urban, secondary education.

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APPENDIX A

TABLES OF ESTIMATES

Table 1. *Percent in public elementary and secondary schools, by highest degrees earned: 1999-2000*

Highest degree earned	Sex	
	Male	Female
Bachelor's	1.9	1.8
Master's	57.1	50.6
Ed. Specialist/professional diploma	31.7	36.4
Doctorate	9.4	11.2

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey: 1999-2000 (Principal questionnaire).

Table 2. *The percentage of participants who believe the quality to be desirable*

Quality	in Male Principal	in Female Principal
Authoritarian	21.7	19.4
Decisive	79.3	82.3
Collaborative	74.5	76.4
Problem Solver	86	88.7
Detailed Oriented	38.6	43.4
Share Power & Credit	82	83.7
Good Manager	86.6	87.7
Empowering	65.3	69.3
Good Verbal Communicator	92.5	93.1
Good Nonverbal Communicator	65.1	67.4
Seeks Variety of Input	84.3	85.2
Knowledgeable of Curriculum & Inst.	84.8	86.2
Unemotional	17.3	19

Table 2. (continued*)*

Quality	in Male Principal	in Female Principal
Emotional	23.2	26.3
Personable	84.2	86
Disciplinarian	64.3	66.4
Good Listener	86.6	89.1
Forward Thinking	77.7	77.7
Dynamic	58.7	60.3

Source: Hudson & Rea (1998). Teachers' Perceptions of Women in the Principalship: A Current Perspective. *Advancing Women in Leadership* 1(3). Retrieved August 12, 2002 from http://www.advancingwomen.com/awl/summer98/HUD.html

Table 3. *Participants' responses by gender*

	WOMEN RESPONSES		MALE RESPONSES	
	Percent of women responses in male princ.	Desirable Qualities in female princ.	Percent of men responses in male princ.	Desirable Qualities in female princ.
QUALITY				
Authoritarian	17.2	15.2	34.9	31.7
Decisive	79.4	83.1	80.2	81.0
Collaborative	77.4	79.4	66.7	68.3
Problem Solver	86.0	89.4	85.7	86.5
Detail Oriented	36.7	41.8	44.4	48.4
Shares Power & Credit	82.5	84.2	80.2	81.7
Good Manager	86.8	88.5	85.7	84.9
Empowering	76.3	72.2	58.7	60.3
Good Verbal Comm.	92.3	94.0	92.9	93.7
Good Nonverbal Communication	66.8	69.3	61.9	62.7
Seeks Variety of Input	84.2	85.7	84.1	83.3
Knowledgeable of Curriculum & Instruction	87.4	88.5	77.0	79.4
Unemotional	14.9	16.9	24.6	25.4
Emotional	22.1	24.9	27.0	31.0
Personable	87.1	89.4	75.4	76.2
Disciplinarian	63.3	65.6	66.7	68.3

Table 3. (continued)

	WOMEN RESPONSES		MALE RESPONSES	
	Percent of women responses in male princ.	Desirable Qualities in female princ.	Percent of men responses in male princ.	Desirable Qualities in female princ.
QUALITY				
Good Listener	87.7	91.1	83.3	83.3
Forward Thinking	79.7	80.8	73.0	69.8
Dynamic	57.3	60.7	62.7	59.5

Source: Hudson & Rea (1998). Teachers' Perceptions of Women in the Principalship: A Current Perspective. *Advancing Women in Leadership* 1(3). Retrieved August 12, 2002 from http://www.advancingwomen.com/awl/summer98/HUD.html

Table 4. ***Do male principals have legitimate authority?***

	No Response	No	Yes
Female	12.3	23.8	63.9
Male	16.7	43.7	39.7

Source: Hudson & Rea (1998). Teachers' Perceptions of Women in the Principalship: A Current Perspective. *Advancing Women in Leadership* 1(3). Retrieved August 12, 2002 from http://www.advancingwomen.com/awl/summer98/HUD.html

Table 5. ***Do female principals have legitimate authority?***

	No Response	No	Yes
Female	14.3	76.2	9.5
Male	18.3	75.4	6.3

Source: Hudson & Rea (1998, Summer). Teachers' Perceptions of Women in the Principalship: A Current Perspective. *Advancing Women in Leadership* 1(3). Retrieved August 12, 2002 from http://www.advancingwomen.com/awl/summer98/HUD.html

APPENDIX B

CASE STUDY CONSENT FORM

CASE STUDY CONSENT FORM

Investigator: Clara T. Turner   Dr. Norvella Carter, Advisor
                       Home: (281) 350-0010   (281) 550-5152
                       Work: (281) 878-0670   (979) 845-8382

The purpose of this project is to examine and (re)interpret the life experiences and leadership practices of two White women administrators in secondary urban schools and two African American women administrators in secondary urban schools. Its purpose is also to determine the constructed meanings of their personal and professional acts of leading as it relates high academic achievement for secondary urban students in a large successful urban school district. The study shall be conducted in Houston, Texas with the length of each interview (approximately two) ranging from two to three hours.

I, _____ , understand that:

    (1)   The audio taped and written information obtained during this project will be used to write a case study which will be read by the respondents, the class instructor, and one class member who will conduct a check of the data. The case study will not be disseminated to others without the written permission of the participants involved in this project.

    (2)   All participants' names will remain confidential and no risks, benefits or compensation will be involved.

    (3)   I am entitled to review the case study before the final draft is written and negotiate changes with the investigator.

    (4)   I may withdraw (with no penalty) from this study at any time by speaking to the investigator and all data collected from me will be returned immediately.

    (5)   Audio tapes and interview information will be retained indefinitely by the investigator and will be stored in a secured file cabinet.

"I understand that this research study has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board-Human Subjects in Research, Texas A&M University. For research-related problems or questions regarding subjects' rights, I can contact the Institutional Review Board through Dr. Michael W. Buckley, Director of Support Services, Office of Vice President for Research at (979) 458-4067."

I have read and understand the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this consent form.

Signature of Subject: _____Date:_____

Principle Investigator: _____Date:_____

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview Protocol

Women Principals as Leaders

<u>Personal Information</u>

1. Tell me something about yourself.

2. How many years of elementary/secondary teaching experience did you have prior to becoming a principal?

3. How many years have you been employed as a principal in this district (in others)?

<u>Qualities/Effectiveness</u>

1. What do you feel are some of the important personal qualities, values, and behaviors necessary for leadership and instructional improvement?

2. What do you think are some of your really strong qualities as a leader (administrator) that has helped you in your leadership position?

3. Please share some of the important life experiences that you have had which facilitated your choice to become an administrator?

4. What interpersonal dynamics do you feel impacted your effectiveness as a school leader? (How were you motivated toward becoming a leader in education?)

5. What role, if any, did your upbringing play on the way you lead?

6. What values, interests, goals, and beliefs influence the way you conduct yourself, personally and professionally?

7. Please describe some of the obstacles or restrictions that cause you the most concern as you try to carry out your duties as principal.

8. How has your personal life been affected by your decision to pursue a position in leadership?

9. Should school leadership be redefined and its multiple responsibilities distributed among other administrators and teachers?

Interview Protocol

Women Principals as Leaders (con't)

Impact of Effective Leadership on Student Performance

1. As principal, how did you go about establishing a successful learning environment for your students?

2. Please describe some of the approaches/techniques you used in gaining success for your students.

3. From your experiences as a school leader, name 2-3 key dimensions of leadership for sustained reform – the habits of mind and heart – that enable leaders to guide successful school change over the long term. Describe these in the context of your concrete experiences as a school leader.

4. Generally speaking, do you think it is a good idea or a bad idea to hold principals accountable for student standardized test scores at the building level? Why or why not?

5. How should principals measure the success of their school? Is high-stakes testing a viable answer?

6. If principals play an important part in school improvement and student achievement, what are their secrets and what are the limits to their powers?

VITA
CLARA THOMPSON TURNER

PERSONAL INFORMATION

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PROFESSIONAL RESEARCH INTERESTS

General: Curriculum and Instruction   Women in Educational Leadership
             Urban Teacher Preparation   Race, Class, and Gender in Schools
             Diversity & Multicultural Education

PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION

Degree	Content Area	Institution	Year
Ph.D.	Curriculum and Instruction	Texas A&M University College Station, Texas	2004
M.A.	Counseling	Prairie View A&M Univ. Prairie View, Texas	1997
B.S.	Psychology	Texas A&M University College Station, Texas	1985

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Position	Location	Date
Secondary Education School Counselor	Aldine Independent School District Houston, Texas	1998- present
Teacher: English as a Second Language (ESL)	Aldine Independent School District Houston, Texas	1995- 1998

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS
Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD)
Chi Sigma Iota Counseling Academic and Professional Honor Society International
Kappa Delta Pi International Honor Society in Education
The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi
The American Education Research Association (AERA)