

LEADERSHIP PRACTICES THAT SUPPORT COLLEGIALITY IN SCHOOLS

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DEDICATION

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ABSTRACT

Research has identified collegiality, encouraged by the school leader, as one of the factors present in highly effective schools. However, there is not a widely accepted understanding of what collegiality is or how it is fostered. This study examined teachers' perceptions about collegiality and leadership practices that supported its development in schools.

This investigation of the collegial experiences and understandings of teachers in three elementary school settings was conducted primarily through interviews and observation. A high level of collegiality existed among the staff at the three schools, and staff perceptions of the factors that impacted those collegial experiences yielded important data.

Three basic questions guided this research: (1) How do teachers demonstrate their own collegial behaviors in schools?; (2) What conditions do teachers identify that enhance teacher collegiality?; and (3) What are the leadership behaviors that foster and support collegiality?

A summary of the findings suggested that *teachers talking about practice* and *teachers teaching one another*

were the two most often discussed and practiced indicators of collegiality.

The findings of this study strengthen the connection between well-established transformational leadership practices and teacher collegiality. Both aspiring and practicing leaders need to understand the theory and research behind the practice of transformational leadership and its link to collegiality in schools.

This study has added to the body of research, supporting the link between leadership behavior of principals and the collegiality of teachers. Transformational leadership practices contribute to school effectiveness and continuing teacher growth and development. This has implications for the day-to-day practice of leaders, for the professional development of teachers, and for leadership development. A deep understanding of collegiality and the leadership practices that support and sustain it is necessary in an era of continuous school improvement.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

In an era of continual change and uncertainty, demands on teachers and schools have evolved in unexpected ways. The children entering our schools are characterized by a greater diversity and complexity of needs than ever before. Increasing pressures for our schools to change are driven by state and federal demands. Community expectations for our schools continue to increase significantly, often conflicting with the traditional roles of schooling. Collective bargaining has impacted many aspects of education, and financial difficulty often plagues the public school system. Finally, retirements and teacher attrition, coupled with continual growth in the student population, are leading to a national teacher shortage. These forces at work on the system of education have major implications for the way schools operate (Patterson, Purkey & Parker, 1986).

Recently, the demands for change and subsequent responses to those demands have emerged from within the organization itself (Goodlad, 1999; Murray & Hillkirk, 1996; Owens, 1995; Pellicer & Anderson, 1995). Through self-renewal, schools seek to increase their own capacity

for problem solving. One example is site-based management, the process of decentralizing decision making and thereby increasing the ability of individual school sites to develop appropriate responses to identified issues and needs.

A focus on school improvement continues to be central to the work of schools in the current political climate. Purkey and Smith (1983) proposed a model for school improvement, suggesting that school culture plays a major role in determining its effectiveness. They emphasized that change efforts are longest lasting when the school culture embraces collaborative planning; shared decision making; and an atmosphere of collegiality, promoting risk taking and self-evaluation.

Proposing that schools must understand and build upon their own school leadership capacity, Lambert (1998) defined leadership capacity as "broad-based, skillful involvement in the work of leadership" (p. 3). Lambert believed that it was necessary to assess leadership capacity at all school levels before one could successfully implement leadership-building methods. She supported school leadership that was collaborative in nature, and all school community members were responsible for the

leadership of the school. At its core, her model had five basic assumptions:

1. Leadership and leader are not synonymous.
Leadership, she asserted, means the shared learning processes that allow participants to construct meaning, leading to a shared purpose for schooling.
2. Leadership results in constructive change. Learning is collective, and its direction is the shared purpose of the organization.
3. Every member of the school community has the responsibility for leadership, actively participating in the decisions affecting their environment.
4. Leadership is shared, and school change is best accomplished in collaboration with others. School change is a learning journey shared by the learner leaders within the organization.
5. Power and authority must be redistributed in a shared leadership organization.

Lambert believed school leadership capacity directly influenced organizational self-renewal.

Exploring the complexities of schools as social organizations, Lieberman and Rosenholtz (1987) revealed the extreme complexity of a teacher's work, specifically, the

psychological and personal characteristics of being a teacher. They pointed out the isolation of teachers and their distrust of anyone or anything perceived to interfere with their role with the students. Lieberman and Rosenholtz listed barriers to school improvement:

1. Principals hold onto routines, failing to challenge the regularities employed to manage school complexities.
2. Principals are more likely to act as moderators than facilitators of school improvement.
3. Teacher isolation magnifies the uncertainties associated with the teaching-learning process.
4. Finally, teachers and principals are often limited by "trial-and-error" learning.

Discussing the idea that the creation of collegial cultures in schools can mediate the process of change, Fullan (2001) asserted that to change, schools must create new beliefs, meanings, and skills. When teachers work in an environment supportive of their collegial work, the implementation of change is of a higher quality and more easily sustained.

Model II Action Theory (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990) described beliefs about people and their motivations,

suggesting that open sharing of information can enhance interpersonal relationships, encourage professional development, and stimulate organizational effectiveness. The theory highlighted trust, collaboration, and effective problem solving as the core of collegial school cultures.

There appears to be considerable confusion and overlap throughout the literature when discussing the constructs of collaboration and collegiality. Ranging from surface-level cooperation to deeply embedded cultural expectations for collaborative leadership and problem solving, the notions of collaboration and collegiality are not universally defined and often overlap.

How then are collaboration and collegiality described in the literature? Friend and Cook (1996) defined interpersonal collaboration as "a style for direct interaction between at least two coequal parties voluntarily engaged in shared decision-making as they work toward a common goal" (p. 6). They emphasized that collaboration was a style of interaction, unable to exist in isolation. Pointing to several defining characteristics of collaboration, the authors more fully explained their definition. Collaboration is voluntary and cannot be coerced. They recognized that some mandates do occur, but

volunteering must occur within the mandate. They viewed parity among the participants as a vital ingredient. The contribution of each person to the collaborative interaction should be equally valued, and each person must have equal power in decision making. In a school setting, if one or two individuals are perceived to have greater decision-making power, the chance of developing a collaborative culture is greatly diminished. Likewise, the responsibility for participation and decision making must be shared, as is the accountability for outcomes. Finally, Friend and Cook recognized the need for at least one mutual goal in order to facilitate collaboration.

According to teachers in the Johnson (1990) study, collegiality ranged along a continuum, from collegial staff relations to closely aligned co-teaching. Teachers relied on colleagues to meet their personal needs (reassurance and socialization), instructional needs (subject-matter expertise and pedagogical direction), and organizational needs (setting and meeting standards and initiating and sustaining change). Gilbert (2000) suggested that teachers differ in their conception of teaching, thus also in their perception about the role of their peers. Those teachers who view teaching as an independent, isolated activity

could still seek peer interaction to meet personal needs and provide instructional support, whereas those teachers who understand the interdependent nature of schools seek out colleagues to meet organizational goals.

Sergiovanni (1994) advocated the establishment of a professional community characterized by equal doses of competence and virtue, the professional ideal. This establishment of a sense of "we" (p. 40) is at the core of a collegial culture. He recognized the difficulty of the shift from privacy, competition, and individualism to collaboration and a sense of community.

Researchers have agreed that lasting school improvement must have collegiality as a core element (Bolman & Deal, 1991; Goodlad, 1999; Sergiovanni, 1994). The principal, as leader and facilitator, must initiate change through empowering teachers and supporting their ideas and decisions, making collaboration a reality (Gilbert, 2000).

Even when school leaders value collegiality, effective implementation is not automatic. Guiding this research is the theoretical perspective outlined by Barth (1990) in *Improving Schools From Within: Teachers, Parents and Principals Can Make the Difference*. Barth contended that

collegiality was the foremost organizational characteristic that influenced fundamental cultural change and school improvement.

Barth (1990) described a good school as a "community of learners," a place where

Everyone is teaching and everyone is learning,
simultaneously under the same roof . . .
adversarial relationships and parallel play [are
becoming] cooperative and collegial coalitions
. . . teachers and principals talk with one
another about practice, observe each other
engaged in their work, share their craft
knowledge and actively help each other become
better . . . students and adults are encouraged
to take risks and . . . a safety net protects
those who take risks . . . change nourishes
recommitment . . . fundamental periodic choice
replenishes the profession and the professional
. . . there is a special place for philosophers,
for people who ask "why" questions . . . a great
deal is made of humor . . . there is a community
of leaders . . . there is low anxiety and high
standards (pp. 161-179)

He placed great emphasis on the quality of interpersonal relationships within a school; he believed relationships were vital to lasting school improvement. Barth believed leaders must create collegial work places if schools were to improve fundamentally.

In addition, Barth (1990) viewed schools as the center of learning, a "community of learners and leaders" (p. 85). Guided by a vision of what the school should be, the leader must become the head learner, engaging in practice, reflecting on practice, articulating practice, better understanding practice, and improving practice, while encouraging all members of the school community to do the same. The guiding vision is created together by the teachers and principal, and all must collectively seek to give life to the vision.

Statement of the Problem

Lewin (1936) asserted that to understand human behavior, one must examine the entire situation, both the person and the environment in which the behavior occurs. This interaction of person and environment delineates the perspective of organizational culture. Present in every human interaction with the organization is the understanding and acceptance of the values and expectations

defining the tradition of the organization. Those values and expectations are transmitted and reinforced, both formally and informally, through socialization processes within the organization, thus molding the behaviors of the workers of the organization (Cheng-Bau, 2004).

As discussed previously, the literature examining effective schools and school culture emphasizes the importance of teacher collegiality for effecting lasting school change and continued improvement. Yet the evidence indicates that the majority of teachers in schools are still operating in a less than wholly collegial environment (Langfred, 1988; Lieberman & Rosenholtz, 1987; Little, 1982; Lortie, 1975; Shedd & Bacharach, 1991).

Current research has focused on leadership perceptions and behaviors that support and enhance, or inhibit, the growth of a collegial school culture (Gilbert, 2000; Humphrey, 2000; Lucas, 2000). However little or no research has examined the core beliefs and perceptions of the teachers about collegiality in schools and the leadership behaviors that support it.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The primary purpose of this research is to describe the perceptions of teachers regarding collegiality in

schools and the leadership behaviors that support it. Using Barth's (1990) four indicators of collegiality in schools as a guide for defining collegiality, the author sought to determine what was actually occurring in schools and what the school leader was doing to foster a collegial school culture. The questions that guided the research are

1. How do teachers demonstrate their own collegial behaviors in schools?
2. What conditions do teachers identify that enhance teacher collegiality?
3. What are the leadership behaviors that foster and support collegiality?

Methodology

This investigation sought to uncover the varied collegial experiences and understandings of teachers in three different elementary school settings, primarily through interviews and observation. The school settings were identified as having a high level of collegiality among the school staff. Staff perceptions of the factors that impacted those collegial experiences yielded important data. The research questions examined detailed descriptive information from teachers about the collegial culture and

practices at their schools. In order to develop such an understanding, a qualitative research design was used.

A multiple case study approach was used in this investigation to understand the collegial experiences of teachers within three school settings and their understanding of the leadership supports and inhibitors to their own collaboration.

A case study is a form of qualitative research in which the researcher examines a single concept within finite boundaries of time and activity, collecting detailed information through several procedures during an extended time period (Cresswell, 1998). A definite advantage of the case study approach is that it allows the researcher to examine closely the interactions that impact a specific phenomenon within its own context (Isaac & Michael, 1981). The researcher is able to study the factors that have impacted the current status of the subject of study, examining why as well as the specific factors involved.

Data collection in case study research must be guided by several principles. The most important principle is the use of multiple sources of evidence (Denzin, 1988; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1988; Miles & Huberman, 1984). Commonly called triangulation, this

process examines data from dissimilar methods such as interviews, observations, and document analysis (Mason, 1996). The process of triangulation corroborates evidence from different sources to gain understanding of a theme or perspective. The basic assumption of the process is that any bias inherent in a specific data source, researcher, and/or method would be minimized when used in tandem with other data sources and methods.

This researcher utilized two primary data collection methods, an interview guide with sample question, used during individual interviews (see Appendix A) and observation of school processes and activities to corroborate interview data collected from the schools.

Significance of the Study

The study was intended to provide information that would assist principals and teachers in their efforts to work within a collegial culture by helping them sort out the complexity of collegiality in schools. Collegiality is not universally defined in the literature, nor is it well understood by practitioners. The results of this study will enhance the theoretical framework if the teacher perspective of the role of collegiality in schools allows a more operational understanding of collegiality. Practicing

school leaders may discover methods for promoting collegial structures within their own school community, thus enhancing school improvement efforts.

Sustaining change is difficult. School leaders are called upon to meet the diverse, complex, and changing needs of our schools. Political call for change is increasingly voiced as the community expectations for our school systems continue to rise. If leaders are able to better understand the factors that contribute to the development of a collegial environment, then it will become easier to create the conditions that foster collegiality.

Finally, as the teacher shortage becomes a reality, the need to retain new teachers entering the profession becomes critical. The traditional structure of schooling fosters teacher isolation, a condition that contributes to attrition. It is imperative that educators better understand the nature of collegiality, exploring ways to build and sustain a culture of collegiality. This study seeks to aid in this process.

Limitations

A multiple case study format, this study examined three school sites identified as highly collegial. The school sites were determined based on their responses on a

self-reported survey, thus bias was inherently a part of the selection process. The researcher sought to verify the collegial culture of the selected school sites through short follow-up interviews at the school sites.

Because the purpose of the study was to determine the conditions and behaviors that fostered collegiality, only schools rated high in collegiality were included. The researcher recognized, however, that the generalizability of the study may be limited by the exclusion of cases not highly collegial. By focusing on the highly collegial schools, clear patterns emerged that could assist educators to recreate the conditions necessary to foster collegiality.

Definition of Terms

Collegiality. For the purpose of this study, collegiality is comprised of Barth's (1990) four dimensions of teacher collegiality: Teachers talk about practice, observe one another engaged in practice, work together on curriculum, and teach one another.

Teacher Perception. For the purpose of this study, teacher perception refers to the core beliefs and basic assumptions held by the individual.

In addition, one subscale from the *School Culture Survey* (Gruenert & Valentine, 1998) provided the basis for site selection for this study. It is described as follows:

Teacher Collaboration. The degree to which teachers engage in constructive dialogue that furthers the educational vision of the school. Teachers across the school plan together, observe and discuss teaching practices, evaluate programs, and develop an awareness of the practices and programs of other teachers (p. 98).

This subscale correlates well with Barth's (1990) four dimensions of collegiality.

Transformational Leadership. For the purpose of this study, transformational leadership refers to the leadership practices that deal with the process of change. Vision, charisma, trust, and empowerment are vital components. Core leadership practices include identifying and articulating a vision, fostering commitment to goals, providing individualized support, providing intellectual stimulation, modeling appropriate behavior, and setting high expectations.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

The literature drawn from the school restructuring era of the late 20th century suggested that the social organization of schools as workplaces was a factor that helped delineate effective from ineffective schools (Little, 1982; Rosenholtz, 1989). The correlation between teacher collegiality and effective schools is therefore well documented. Collegiality has also been tied to enhanced professional development (Conley, Bas-Isaac, & Schull, 1995; DuFour, 2004; Fullan, 2005), decision making (Hoy & Tarter, 1993), and leadership (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991).

This investigation examined research in a variety of related fields. The following discussion presents major research findings in the areas of leadership, culture and context, professional learning communities, collegiality, and teacher perceptions and beliefs.

Leadership

The role of the educational leader in shaping school organizations that can effectively respond to political demands has changed dramatically over the last decade. The

ability of a school organization to respond to the increasing demands for change is contingent on the culture of the organization, shaped by the vision of the leader. The leader must succinctly and continually articulate the vision; inspire the members of the organization, the teachers and other staff, to pursue the vision for all children; and communicate the vision to the greater community.

Transformational leadership describes the ability of leaders to focus their followers on a vision, inspiring them to reach their ultimate goal, and resulting in changes in systemic thinking. Achievement and self-actualization become the rewards driving the individual (Aviolo & Bass, 1987).

The first step, logically, is to build trust within the organization -- trust in oneself as the leader, as well as trust in the organization as a whole. To do so, it is vital to truly know oneself, to look deep within and discover one's own inner being. Bolman and Deal (1995) suggested that today's leaders must have the courage to confront their own shadows, to embark upon a personal quest for spirit and heart, and have the commitment to share their learning with others.

A leader must be able to listen, to observe people, to understand human nature, and to accept people for what they are, with all of their human strengths and failings. The leader of an educational organization must understand that the journey is being made by all parties, together, and that each must assist the other along the way. Trust, personal integrity, the ability to dream, and the ability to work with others are key to successful interactions (Champy, 1995).

These personal characteristics are important, but in an organizational sense, they are only the beginning. Leadership begins with those qualities that make an individual a good follower. Commitment to purpose; a vision for the direction of the school; and beliefs about teaching and learning, values, standards, and convictions that shape everything one does are the core qualities of a follower (Sergiovanni, 1992). They are the same qualities inherent in a leader.

To create a vision, something worth following, is one of the greatest tasks of a leader. Schlecty (1990) asserted that the process of articulating and communicating the purpose of the organization being led defined the way

in which the organization was envisioned. The purpose shapes the goals of the organization.

It is important to understand that a living vision must grow out of the deeply held values and beliefs of the members of the organization. Bolman and Deal (1995) contended that effective leadership fosters an integral relationship with the community. To be successful, leaders must embody the most precious values and beliefs of their group, their ability to lead emerging from the strength and sustenance of that community.

As such, leaders must be consistent in the values they model. Decisions should be driven by the vision and core values that are articulated. If, for example, *teachers working together collegially* is a central goal of the school, the leader must examine all decisions in light of how the decision will further the goal or vision that highlights collegial support.

The leader must prepare ways to support the core values, organizing activities that promote the implementation of the vision. In a school context, this would translate into providing opportunities for teachers to work together, such as peer observation, staff development, and problem-solving sessions.

The leader must encourage and develop leadership among the followers within the organization, sharing the challenge and vision of change (Bennis, 1989; Champy, 1995). Good leadership encourages collegiality in the pursuit of shared vision, values, and mission (Bolman & Deal, 1994).

Additionally, the leader must provide resources and support to the individuals who exemplify the vision and core values of the organization; the resources and support must be consistent with the vision. As the influence of the leader expands through follower commitment to the core values, individuals who may have been hesitant to embrace the vision begin to be influenced by these emerging leaders. Support is provided in many ways. Collegial support and encouragement are perhaps the most powerful (Schlechy, 1990).

The leader must believe that all members of the organization will promote the core values and include these expectations in the evaluation tool. In addition, it is necessary to communicate disappointment if the core values are violated. The leader cannot afford to let individuals be unaware of the commitment to the core values and the vision by ignoring their disregard of them. Schlechy

(1990) made a case for the importance of performance evaluation in this process. He suggested that the performance evaluation should provide knowledge of what is expected as well as feedback on performance. Systems of evaluation give life to the vision of the organization. Finally, Champy (1995) contended that performance evaluation helped to teach the culture of the organization, to demonstrate the vision and values.

All members of the school organization must be committed to achieving the vision, embracing the core values. Again, in the school environment, trust in the leader and belief in the vision and core values are the vital ingredients.

Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, and Fetter (1990) conducted a comprehensive review of research on leadership, concluding that the wide body of literature on transformational leadership could be reduced to six primary dimensions of leadership practice. First, identifying and articulating a vision refers to the leader's ability to inspire the members of the organization with the vision. When visions have value, commitment is engendered. Visions also inspire members of the organization to continually grow professionally. Secondly, fostering a commitment to

goals suggests that the leader must promote collegiality among staff members, assisting them to work together for a common goal. Third, leaders must provide individualized support, respecting all staff and caring about their personal needs. Leaders must support staff through the process of change and the resulting implementation dip, encouraging them to persevere. Fourth, leaders must provide intellectual stimulation, challenging staff to reflect on their work, examine their core beliefs and assumptions, and change or refine their performance. Next, providing appropriate models refers to the responsibility of the leader to model behaviors consistent with the espoused beliefs of the organization. This behavior includes expanding teacher beliefs about their own capacities and sense of self-efficacy. Finally, setting high expectations for performance will focus the teachers on the challenging aspects of the organizational goals and support the perception that those expectations are reachable.

In one interesting study, Hoy, Tarter, and Witkoskie (1992) examined the relationship between elementary school teachers and principals in the creation of effective schools. Focusing on the interdependence of supportive

leadership and faculty trust and the relationship to school effectiveness, they researched the types of leadership that evoked trust between the principal and the teachers as well as among the teachers themselves. They relied on two survey instruments to measure supportive leadership, faculty collegiality, trust in colleagues, and trust in the principal.

Defining supportive leadership as "behavior that reflects concern for teachers" (p. 38), Hoy *et al.* (1992) described a supportive principal as one who listens, is open to suggestions, gives praise frequently, minimizes criticism, and can give constructive input as needed. The supportive leader genuinely cares about staff, respecting their competence.

Teacher collegiality describes the teacher behaviors that support professional interaction, very similar to the relationship between the principal and the teachers. Enjoyment in working with one another, mutual respect, enthusiasm, pride in their school, and acceptance typify faculty collegiality (Hoy *et al.*, 1992).

The authors of this study defined faculty trust in very specific terms as a "generalized expectancy held by teachers that the word, action and written or oral

statement of others can be relied upon . . . and can be viewed in relation to different reference groups -- students, colleagues or principal" (Hoy *et al.*, 1992, p. 39). Teachers must have confidence in their principal as well as their colleagues to honor their word and act in the best interest of individuals as well as the organization; integrity is the key.

Hoy *et al.* (1992) viewed effectiveness as the ultimate goal of the organization but recognized that the criteria for effectiveness were rather ambiguous. They examined attributes of organizational effectiveness for analyzing the ability of an organization to mobilize for action, to achieve goals, and to adapt. Quantity and quality of the product, efficacy, adaptability, and flexibility were the attributes discussed. Hoy *et al.* (1992) found that supportive principals cared about their teachers, listened to them, offered suggestions, and trusted them; in return, the teachers responded with cooperation, commitment, and trust.

Surveying 842 teachers from 44 elementary schools, Hoy *et al.* (1992) randomly selected respondents for participation in two data pools. Through this strategy, they attempted to ensure methodological independence

between the dependent and independent variables, teacher and principal behaviors, and trust and effectiveness. They investigated five hypotheses:

1. Supportive principal behavior relates to trust.
2. Supportive principal behavior relates to effectiveness.
3. Collegial teacher behavior relates to effectiveness.
4. Trust in colleagues relates to effectiveness.
5. Trust in the principal relates to effectiveness.

Hoy *et al.* (1992) examined the relationship between four variables, supportive leadership, faculty collegiality, trust in colleagues, and trust in the principal, seeking the ways they worked together to explain effectiveness. They asserted that "Supportive principal behavior not only contributes to effectiveness, but also elicits teacher collegiality, trust in the principal and trust in colleagues" (p. 40).

Employing correlation analysis, Hoy *et al.* (1992) found support for the relationship between supportive leadership and faculty trust in colleagues as well as supportive leadership and effectiveness. They determined that a greater level of supportive leadership by the principal yielded greater trust in collegial relationships.

In addition, there were strong relationships between effectiveness, faculty trust in colleagues, and collegial teaching behavior. The perception of school effectiveness appeared greater when trust among colleagues and collegial teacher interaction were exhibited. The bivariate analysis indicated that effectiveness did not correlate to trust in the principal but did relate to trust in colleagues and collegial teacher behavior. After analyzing the data using multiple regression techniques, the authors determined that supportive leadership behavior did not directly influence effectiveness, although it did assist in building a culture of trust among teachers. After redesigning their model, Hoy *et al.* (1992) posed a new explanation. Supportive leadership influenced collegiality and trust in the principal. In combination, collegiality and trust in the principal produced trust in colleagues and school effectiveness. They concluded, "Only trust in colleagues explains effectiveness when the full five-variable model is subjected to multiple regression" (p. 42).

This study (Hoy *et al.*, 1992) demonstrated the complex relationships in effective schools. Supportive principal leadership is related to effectiveness and produces collegiality and trust in principals. Collegial teacher

behavior and trust in colleagues, in turn, predict school effectiveness. It is interesting to note that teachers perceived school effectiveness in relation to trust in colleagues, not trust in the leadership.

The Hoy *et al.* (1992) study was pivotal in pointing out that achieving school effectiveness is not as simple as having strong, caring principal leadership. The relationship is more indirect. Instead, their findings provided support for eliciting teacher input for decision making and providing professional training for leaders that focuses on both effectiveness and affective qualities. They directed principals to be caring, engaged, and supportive leaders. They also supported the need to develop a culture of trust wherein teachers are open, sharing with colleagues.

Carlson (1996) discussed three frameworks of leadership: transformational, dialectical, and democratic. These leadership frameworks coexist in many educational institutions. First, transformational leadership deals with the process of change. Vision, charisma, trust, and empowerment are vital components of transformational leadership.

Dialectical leadership (Carlson, 1996), simply put, examines the process of reconciling opposites, of dealing with the dualism within an organization. In an educational organization, examples are many. Proponents of inclusion vie with proponents of pull-out programs, the traditional classroom structure strains against the multiage constructivist classroom, and teacher isolationism competes with collaboration. The organization can tolerate differing philosophies as long as the vision stays focused on what is best for the students. A strong vision and climate of trust are essential in order to embrace these opposing forces.

Democratic leadership (Carlson, 1996) is discussed in terms of rights and responsibilities within a moral/ethical framework. A strategic planning process falls within this realm. Empowerment of employees is critical because organizational leaders can solve very few problems independently. School improvement through collaboration becomes the key.

Culture and Context

When attempting to initiate change, the leader must understand and respond to both the internal and external influences on the organization. The internal culture

shapes the responses of each individual to change. At the same time, external forces, such as the political, social, and economic environments, exert pressure (Schein, 1997).

The individual is important to the organization, and a greater understanding of how teachers think and make decisions is critical. Ross, Cornett, and McCutcheon (1992) asserted that teachers' thinking and practice were grounded in their own personal theories. Teachers make hundreds of decisions each day. The basis for each decision is the teacher's individual schema or theory about the way things are and should be. With increased education and training, our belief systems are altered and our theories refined, yet the theories do drive decision making. Few teachers, however, are consciously aware of the theories that shape their decisions. Teacher reflection on practice and collaboration with researchers can assist teachers to define their own theories in action. Bringing their personal theories to the forefront of consciousness, making teachers truly aware of why they make the decisions they do, can move teaching to a higher level of excellence (Ross *et al.*, 1992).

In the same way, the culture of an organization is defined as a pattern of shared assumptions, learned by the

group as it solved the problems of external adaptation and internal integration that have functioned successfully enough to be transmitted to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, feel, and act in relation to those problems (Schein, 1997). Culture is the shared learning of the organization, managed by the leader. Schein described three levels of culture: artifacts, espoused values, and basic assumptions. Artifacts are the visible products of the group, easy to observe but more difficult to understand. Espoused values are the explanations for observed behavior, based on joint action and observed outcomes. Finally, basic assumptions are the core values that have grown from repeated successful solutions to problems.

Understanding of culture is critical for the leader of the organization. Because culture is less conscious, reflecting norms, values, rituals, and learned responses, it is sometimes difficult to read. The purpose for deciphering culture is to uncover the assumptions that help or hinder the organization (Schein, 1997). Cultural analysis is helpful, but deep understanding of culture is best accomplished by attempting to change the system. Leadership manages the change process. It is within the

power of leaders to enhance diversity and encourage the formation of subcultures, or through selection and promotion, to reduce diversity and thus manipulate the direction in which the organization evolves culturally (Schein, 1997).

The understanding of organizational culture has clear implications for the development of teacher collegiality. It is imperative that the school leader recognizes the underlying basic assumptions held by teachers about collegial work versus teacher isolation. It is only with understanding of the core values of the staff that the educational leader will be able to take steps toward building a culture of collaboration within a school (Schein, 1997).

Professional Learning Communities

Professional development becomes the key in assisting leaders to help the school staff to understand and embrace the vision. Hawley and Valli (2000) discussed learner-centered professional development, proposing nine principles relevant to the establishment of a collegial culture in support of school improvement.

1. The content of professional development should focus on what students are to learn and how to address the problems students have in learning the material.
2. Professional development should be based on analysis of the difference between the stated goals and standards for learning and the level of student performance.
3. Professional development should engage teachers in the active identification of what they need to learn and the development of those learning opportunities.
4. Professional development should be mostly school based and job embedded.
5. Professional development should be organized around collegial problem solving while meeting individual needs.
6. Professional development should be a continuous process, including follow-up and support as needed for further learning.
7. Professional development should include evaluation from a variety of sources for student learning resulting from the implementation of the strategies developed and learned through the professional development process.

8. Professional development should assist teachers to develop a theoretical understanding of the knowledge and skills to be learned.
9. Professional development should be an integral part of a comprehensive change process within the school.

This multifaceted approach to professional development becomes integrated with the structure, culture, and reward system of the workplace.

DuFour (2001, 2004) emphasized the need for school personnel to increase their capacity to work together in a professional learning community if schools were to increase their effectiveness and meet the needs of all learners. He contended that in order to create a professional learning community, the focus needed to be on student learning, staff collaboration, and accountability for results. The vehicle for improvement, growth, and renewal is collective inquiry within the structure of collaborative teams. To build the capacity for organizational growth, as opposed to individual growth, the task of professional learning must be collaborative (DuFour, 2004). He stated,

The powerful collaboration that characterizes professional learning communities is a systematic process in which teachers work

together to analyze and improve their classroom practice. Teachers work in teams, engaging in an ongoing cycle of questions that promote deep team learning. This process, in turn, leads to higher levels of student achievement. (p. 8)

Fullan (2005) contended that the creation of professional learning communities within individual schools had been largely dependent on the leadership of the principal, but sustaining the collegial structure had not been a focus and often ended with the tenure of that leader. He advocated for a tri-level solution, involving the school, district and state in building capacity for the development and continuation of professional learning communities. Fullan discussed four implications of his tri-level solution. First, educators must focus on changing the cultures within the system to provide increased opportunities to learn in context. This allows for shared learning, further changing the culture. Second, Fullan recognized the need for systems thinking in action; this assists in changing the context and promotes sustainability. Perhaps more urgent, Fullan emphasized the importance of school staff learning from each other on an

ongoing basis. Schools can learn from one another, as can districts and even states. "Paying attention to the growing knowledge base, problem solving and learning through reflection, cultivating networks of interaction, and enlarging the work view are all part and parcel of increasing capacity and changing" (p. 222). Finally, Fullan cautioned against waiting for the "system" to change. Each entity constitutes a system and must tie its own professional learning to the larger system. Waiting for someone else to change guarantees that change will not occur.

By examining professional learning communities, Hord (1997) gleaned five attributes from the literature: supportive and shared leadership, collective creativity, shared values and vision, supportive conditions, and shared personal practice. Supportive and shared leadership recognizes the role of the principal in the change process but proposes a new relationship between administrators and teachers that leads to collegial leadership in the school, where all learn together, growing professionally toward the same goal. All within the organization, especially the leader, must support and encourage continuous learning. Collective creativity emphasizes the power of collaborative

problem solving, reflecting on practice and discussing teaching and learning in order to improve student learning. Shared values and vision must move beyond what is posted to an undeviating focus on student learning, leading in turn to binding norms of behavior supported by the staff. Fourth, supportive conditions include physical conditions (time, proximity, interdependence, communication, school autonomy, and teacher empowerment), as well as people capacities (willingness to accept feedback, trust and respect, ability to learn and teach effectively, supportive leadership, and established socialization processes). Finally, shared personal practice, peers helping peers, must be the norm in a functional professional learning community. Powered by the desire for improvement and enabled by trust and respect, peer observation and feedback are central to continuous growth and improvement in a professional learning community.

Collegiality

Lortie (1975), in his study of and interviews with new teachers, documented the isolation of teaching. He discussed the cellular organization of schools, pointing out that this structure of schooling significantly limited the types and amounts of teacher exchanges. Lortie

contended that this early separatism forced the beginning teacher to deal with problems alone, making decisions in isolation. Thus, new teachers learn early to value independence, and this behavior is reinforced throughout the teaching career.

Lortie (1975) asserted that high teacher turnover and short teacher tenure contributed to teacher isolation. Although the need for mass schooling increased the number of individual classrooms, it was the increased size of the school organization that speeded up the rate of teacher turnover. Lortie believed that the connection between independence of effort and high teacher turnover directly affected collegiality -- teachers working together for a common purpose.

Subject specialization and expertise also contributed to teacher isolation in schools (Lortie, 1975). Indeed, schools as workplaces encouraged task independence as the easiest way to meet instructional goals (McLaughlin, Talbert, & Bascia, 1990). Task interdependence, in contrast, is complex, requiring each member of the organization to accept a specific role within a web of interpersonal relationships. Without strong group cohesion, isolation persists as the norm (Langfred, 1998).

Teachers continue working long periods of time without interaction with colleagues, reinforcing their own isolation. Obviously, when collegiality exists, teachers do not feel isolated.

Shedd and Bacharach (1991) suggested that the traditional structure of schools supported teacher isolation, preventing teachers from talking about practice, planning and working together, or developing and evaluating programs or projects. They viewed this structure of isolation as blocking collegiality and growth of professional and institutional knowledge.

Discussing the importance of relationship to building a collegial culture, Donaldson and Sanderson (1996) suggested that the understanding of people, their motives, their abilities, and their trustworthiness were key to building and maintaining a strong professional relationship of collegiality. In schools, individuals must be bound by a strong fundamental commitment to working with one another for a common cause. School personnel must be able to understand the strengths and talents of each individual as well as their human frailties. Respect and trust are vital to sustain collaborative work.

Identifying two basic skill categories for working together, the "bedrock skills" include listening skills and influencing skills (Donaldson & Sanderson, 1996, p.11). Listening skills are necessary for any successful interaction; attending, striving to understand, and clarifying are the first steps in effective listening. Influencing skills give the collaborator a voice, the ability to assert oneself as well as listen. The ability to speak for oneself, state an opinion, and share thoughts and feelings enable the collaborator to influence what is happening during group work. Table 2.1 delineates the bedrock skills of listening and influencing, the core of effective communication.

Table 2.1

The Bedrock Skills

Listening Skills

Being present

Interviewing

Reflecting

Summarizing

Influencing Skills

Identifying intervention points

Using straight talk

Giving feedback

Lortie (1975) described presentism, individualism and conservatism as forms of isolation impeding the development of cultures of collegiality. Presentism refers to an orientation to the present rather than the future. Teachers tend to focus their energies on issues that will make an immediate difference. This present-oriented focus, Lortie claimed, influences the types of rewards valued by teachers. Intrinsic rewards vary by individual, but teacher satisfaction for task-related outcomes (when good things happen in the classroom) reinforces the notion of presentism. Likewise, individualism is congruent with an intrinsic reward system. As teachers establish their own goals and rewards, and with ambiguous criteria for achievement, individualism arises. The traditional school culture of isolation does not encourage teachers to choose indicators of effectiveness that rely on collegiality. In addition, Lortie claimed, teachers are able to align their own goals and indicators of effectiveness with their individual interests and abilities. Conservatism also supports teacher isolation and is most common among teachers entering the profession. Teachers traditionally act in a conservative manner, generally preserving the

status quo. Without dissatisfaction with the culture of isolationism, conservatism prevails, and the traditional culture remains dominant. Collegiality is not presentism, individualism, or conservatism. What then, is it?

Definitions and Descriptions

To collaborate, according to the *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (1970) is "to work together, especially in a joint intellectual effort" (p. 260). *Webster's College Dictionary* (1997) defined collegiality as "sharing responsibility in a group endeavor" and "cooperative interaction among colleagues" (p. 258). For the purposes of this study, *collaboration* and *collegiality* will refer to the same construct.

Barth (1990) described collegiality in more precise terms, discussing four dimensions of collegiality.

Collegiality is the presence of four specific behaviors as follows: Adults in the school *talk about practice*. These conversations about teaching and learning are frequent, continuous, concrete and precise. Adults in schools *observe each other* engaged in the practice of teaching and administration. These observations become the practice to reflect on and talk about.

Adults engage together in *work on curriculum* by planning, designing, researching, and evaluating curriculum. Finally, adults in schools *teach each other* what they know about teaching, learning and leading. Craft knowledge is revealed, articulated and shared. (p. 30)

In her work surrounding school norms and staff development, Little (1982) selected these same four dimensions of collegiality, indicating that they are crucial in supporting and achieving ongoing professional development. She further specified behavioral indicators of collegiality that she termed *joint work* (see Table 2.2).

In conjunction with her indicators of joint work, Little (1990) created a model explaining an organization's journey from independence to interdependence. Her model (see Figure 2.1) included the four forms of collegiality, representing their strength and ability to impact the "fundamental condition of privacy" (p. 511).

Table 2.2

Little's Indicators of Collegiality and Joint Work

- Talk about their practice
 - Share craft knowledge
 - Invite and observe each other teach
 - Design and prepare own materials
 - Design curriculum units
 - Research ideas for curriculum units
 - Write curriculum
 - Prepare lesson plans
 - Credit new ideas, programs and practices
 - Persuade others to try an idea/approach
 - Make collective agreements to test an idea
 - Analyze practices and effects
 - Teach each other during formal in-service
 - Teach each other informally
 - Talk "publicly" about what one is learning or wants to learn
 - Convert book chapters to reflect new approaches
 - Design in-services
 - Evaluate performance of principals
-

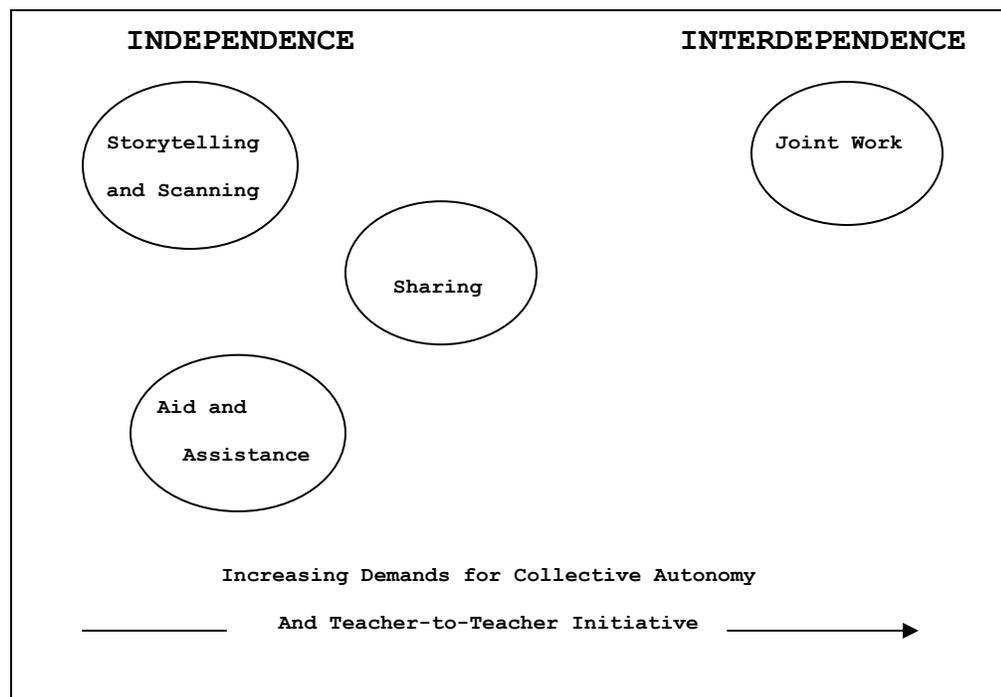


Figure 2.1. Little's Descriptive Model -- A Provisional Continuum of Joint Relations

In her explanation of the model, Little (1990) classified *story telling and scanning for ideas*, *aid and assistance*, and *sharing* as less powerful tools in building collegial cultures. *Storytelling and scanning for ideas* was described as an exchange of incomplete stories, complaining, and griping by school staff members. The focus was not on problem solving, nor was it a deep exchange between staff members. Little categorized *aid and assistance* as the help given to staff members by staff members, but only when asked. *Aid and assistance* did not

allow for evaluation or interference with one another's work; therefore, depth of exchange rarely resulted.

Sharing indicated discussions about themselves in which staff members engaged, as well as the sharing of resources, knowledge, ideas, and suggestions. *Sharing* may have led to a change in pedagogy; however, no real work was actually accomplished together.

In contrast to *scanning and storytelling*, *aid and assistance*, and *sharing*, Little (1990) recognized *joint work* as a strong collaborative effort. *Joint work* provides an opportunity for staff members to develop deeper ties to one another and to build more trusting, productive staff relationships. Little believed that *joint work* had the greatest potential to build a school-wide culture of collegiality.

In examining the studies of teachers' work and their professional relationships, Little (1985) identified a distinction between *autonomy* (teachers working alone) and *initiative* (teachers seeking to work collaboratively). She indicated that these two orientations may exist in opposite conditions, changing teachers' work and professional interactions. Teachers working with *autonomy* value independent decision making and non-interference. In

contrast, teachers functioning within the realm of *initiative* work in a community whose members accept joint responsibility for the organization, continually seeking the best interest of students (Little, 1990). "Each one's teaching is everyone's business, and each one's success is everyone's responsibility" (p. 523).

Definitions and Descriptions

Barth (1997) asked principals at a training academy to characterize collegiality. The following terms, frequently synonymous with collegiality, constituted their responses.

Collaborating. A mutual exchange of knowledge and skills for the purpose of achieving a common goal; all members work to complete a shared task. Although the efforts of individuals may not be equal, the commitment to the completion of a common goal is equal.

Teams. Groups of teachers within a school who work together for a common goal or purpose. Examples include multidisciplinary teams, school improvement teams, etc.

Teamwork. The shared tasks, collective effort, and common work of a learning community.

Partnering. The combination of resources, ability, expertise, and knowledge by individuals or organizations; the joining of forces to complete a task.

Networking. Typically a complex structure of relationships which benefit all parties; partnering or teaming designed to extend the boundaries and energies of several groups, individuals, or organizations.

Cooperating. Agreeable assistance between groups, teams, or individuals to complete a common task.

Learning organization. A group of individuals with a similar focus whose members teach one another and learn from one another.

Community of learners. A group without boundaries who share a common educational focus, learning with and from each other.

Harmony. An environment of pleasant agreement.

Sincerity. The quality of speaking and behaving according to one's personal beliefs.

Integrity. Speaking and behaving according to personal principles.

Honesty. Speaking or behaving earnestly, with candor.

Warmth. A condition perceived as human acceptance or attachment.

Friendliness. Behaving as a friend; being accessible and agreeable.

Responsiveness. The state or quality of attentive relationships between individuals or groups.

Responsibility. A condition in which a team or individual is accountable for any given task.

The wide array of responses points to the broad differences in understanding of collegiality by principals and other school leaders.

McLaughlin and Oberman (1996), Fullan (1990), and Hargreaves and Fullan (1992) supported Little's (1990) conceptualization of the behaviors of school members toward collegiality. They believed that joint work strengthened and increased interdependence and shared responsibility. Joint work is vital for collective commitment to improvement and increases the likelihood that school members are willing to participate in peer observation (review and critique of their colleague's work).

Little and McLaughlin (1993) differentiated between naturally occurring and *contrived* collegiality, a term coined by Hargreaves and Dawe (1990). Contrived collegiality refers to those occasions on which teachers are asked by administrators or policy makers to collaborate on specific projects or other structured tasks. Little (1992) further distinguished *induced* collaboration, similar

to contrived collegiality, but referring to intentional strategies such as peer coaching and mentoring. These strategies may produce genuine collaboration, but it is not guaranteed. In contrast, naturally occurring collaborative relationships do not emerge from institutionally sponsored or mandated programs. The interplay between the individual and the collective in naturally occurring collegiality, Little and McLaughlin (1993) noted, was "arguably different in the communities that arise from teachers' proximity and common circumstance, than those that develop from teachers' shared perspectives and mutual interests" (p. 2).

Warning school leaders to beware of mistaking contrived collegiality as indicative of a genuinely collaborative culture, Hargreaves and Dawe (1990) suggested that collaborative cultures take more significant amounts of time, care, and sensitivity to build than do quickly implemented changes of an administrative nature. They recognized that collaborative cultures require administrative leadership to facilitate their development and help them grow, understanding that their evolution is slow. Trust and sharing are the cornerstones of a culture of collaboration.

Case Studies of Collegiality

Several case studies have examined the culture of teacher collegiality in the workplace. These detailed descriptions of collaboration in practice are necessary to better understand the concept of collegiality in schools.

The Nias, Southworth and Yeomans study. Nias, Southworth, and Yeomans (1989) examined six schools, describing five primary schools at which teachers reported feeling confident about the adult interpersonal relationships at the school. Investigating what the staff believed good staff relationships to be and the way in which staff defined "working together," Nias et al. interpreted these relationships in terms of organizational culture.

Three of the schools, dubbed *developed schools*, had strong organizational cultures, and the other two, termed *developing schools*, were moving in that direction. In the developed schools, school leaders deliberately encouraged collaboration, and shared beliefs, values, and norms supported the culture of collegiality. The staffs of these developed schools described their organizational cultures as much more open to change from within the organization. They were not characterized by a tight bureaucratic

structure but encouraged individual differences and a divergence of practice. The developed schools rewarded autonomy and innovation from within their own ranks. The norms of high morale, confidence, and commitment controlled individualism (Nias et al., 1989).

Nias et al. (1989) emphasized that school leaders cannot and do not build collegial cultures independently; they rely on the leaders within the staff for support. The development of a culture of collegiality is the responsibility of the whole school, requiring the socialization of each member. Researchers noted that there was not a clear distinction between behaviors that developed collegiality and those that sustained it but that school leaders must take definite steps to inhibit activities that prevented the development of a collegial culture.

Arguing for training for the culture-shaping leaders of the school, Nias, et al. (1989) suggested that staff development could help school leaders to establish a personal educational philosophy, to develop negotiation skills, and to articulate, modify, and promote the shared beliefs and values. The core beliefs of individuals are

very resistant to change; therefore, leaders need training to accomplish this task well.

A second facet of this study (Nias, et al., 1989) indicated that schools with strong collegial cultures had school leaders who listened to their staff members and met and talked with them constantly, giving them opportunities to share their individual perspectives. They sought the feelings and insights of their colleagues and understood their school organization as a living organism. This allowed the school leaders to identify problems at an early stage and anticipate changes in attitudes, thus keeping the school culture in balance.

The importance of interpersonal skills between staff members who wanted to work together highlighted the third finding of the Nias et al. (1989) study. Knowing group processes and understanding conflict management were vital skills for developing and maintaining effective communication and collegial cultures.

The Ball and Rundquist study. Examining in detail two elementary school teachers, Ball and Rundquist (1993) described a collegial relationship from which both teachers benefited. The authors documented the collaboration between these two teachers, noting that they learned from

each other and helped each other to become better teachers. They communicated regularly, both orally and in writing, documenting problems as well as student comments and interesting approaches. They learned to share their own observations, thoughts, and worries, highlighting specific points for each other. The two teachers communicated daily (via electronic mail) and met face to face each week before school to discuss content, curriculum, children, parents, and other topics. The role of communication was vital.

Similar to Barth (1990), Ball and Rundquist (1993) described the characteristics of a learning community in the interactions of the two teachers. One of the teacher participants stated,

Respect and trust have consistently characterized our interactions. We see each other as equals not as equivalent. We notice different things about the children, and pick up on different aspects of students' interactions. We have used and profited from our differences without valuing one person's experiences and inclinations more than another's. Our work has epitomized the

idea of a "learning community," in which different people's contributions are all necessary to the quality and progress of the work . . . Our work is constructive -- building new ideas about teaching, students, content, and about the study of teaching. We contribute different kinds of things to the undertaking. Perhaps our experience can serve to broaden images of what it can mean for two people to work together to learn more about teaching . . . we joined hands and minds and learned from and with each other. (pp. 40-41)

The Johnson Study. Johnson (1990) took an in-depth look at good teachers, described as those whose work was valued, who had been judged by their principals to be very good, and who had been identified as making positive contributions to their schools. Like Barth (1990), she described collegiality as teachers working together, discussing goals and purposes, planning together, observing one another, and sharing both successes and failures. This is the ideal. In contrast, the real world of schools is most often characterized by isolation and parallel play.

Johnson (1990) attributed this isolationism to the tension between the immediate, daily task of teaching

students versus the long-term task of providing them with a broad education. The teaching of students is largely an independent task, whereas the education of students must be interdependent, spanning many years. Only when teachers understand their role in the long-term task of educating children will the interdependence of their efforts have meaning.

In addition, Johnson (1990) cited the structure and organization of schools themselves as inhibiting teacher interdependence and collaboration. Bureaucratic restraints, such as scheduling issues, often inhibit the development of collegiality.

Finally, Johnson (1990) pointed to the norms of privacy among teachers as supporting the individuals who preferred to remain apart, either from disregard for others, reluctance to share ideas, or fear of exposing their own shortcomings.

The teachers in the Johnson (1990) study viewed collegiality from several perspectives. They relied on colleagues to meet different needs, including personal needs, instructional needs, and organizational needs. Personal needs included the need for social interaction, reassurance, and psychological support. Generally, the

more isolated teachers felt in their classroom experience, the greater was their need for social interaction and support. Praise and recognition by peers were important components of fulfilling personal needs. Instructional needs were met through pedagogical advice and subject matter expertise. Teachers described sharing lessons and ideas. Discussions about classroom activities were largely dependent on whether staff ever entered each other's classrooms. Teachers discussed the importance of meeting with others who taught similar grade levels and/or subject matter. Finally, organizational needs referred to the coordination of students' learning, socializing staff, setting and upholding standards, and initiating and sustaining change. Recognizing and responding to these interdependent needs of a school, rather than an individual classroom, characterize a truly collegial environment.

Johnson (1990) further delineated prerequisites for collegiality. Good teachers are essential because collaboration will not occur unless teachers make it happen. Organizational norms to support open discussion, debate, and experimentation must be in place if teachers are to feel safe to engage in collegial activity. Some administrative practices discourage cooperation, especially

those that emphasize competition. Teachers generally require a reference group, sometimes grade-level peers and other times departments. These reference groups act as a professional unit. Sufficient time is crucial and the most frequent explanation for the lack of collegial interactions among staff. Johnson cautioned her readers, however, that the provision of time did not automatically guarantee that it would be used in collaborative work. Finally, she cited accommodating administrators as the last prerequisite for the development of a collegial workplace. Teachers believe that principals promote greater interaction among staff through their policies and practices. Scheduling and the use of meeting times are variables most often controlled by the administration. Johnson summarized, "The initiative is theirs, but the responsibility cannot be theirs alone" (p. 179).

Finally, the notion of collegiality is well documented in organizational literature across numerous disciplines. French and Stewart (2001) pointed out the focus on empowerment, teamwork, and participative management in today's law enforcement agencies. Organizational leaders are encouraged to foster collegiality through the promotion of cooperative goals and by building trust. Bell (2000),

when examining an innovative team model initiated at a major trauma center and teaching hospital, documented an increase in productivity and a decline in staff turnover and absenteeism. She attributed these trends to the community established through teamwork and collaboration. Even recent court rulings have indicated the validity of using collegiality in decisions for hiring, termination, and tenure in higher education institutions, consistently supporting expectations of cooperation among faculty members (Connell & Savage, 2001).

Teacher Perceptions and Beliefs

As described by Kurt Lewin (1936), human behavior must be examined in light of the context in which it occurs, the interaction of the person and the environment, complementary but inseparable. Within an organization, individuals are socialized into the traditions and history of the organization, both through formal and informal means (Cheng-Bau, 2004; Lewin, 1936).

Behavior within an organization seems driven by the values and beliefs of the organization and, ultimately, of the individuals within the organization. An individual's belief system has a great effect on observed behavior (Harvey, 1966). Many researchers have agreed that the core

beliefs held by teachers directly influence their perceptions, judgments, and attitudes about teaching (Bandura, 1986; Dewey, 1933; Pajares, 1992). Rokeach (1968) suggested that attitudes are "a relatively enduring organization of beliefs around an object or situation predisposing one to respond in some preferential manner" (p. 450).

The construct of teacher beliefs is complex. Pajares (1992) explored the difference between knowledge and beliefs, suggesting that "Belief is based on evaluation and judgment; knowledge is based on objective fact" (p. 313). He contended that it was the beliefs of the individual that defined tasks and shape interpretation, planning, and decision making about those tasks. Teacher beliefs define their behavior and organize knowledge and information. Pajares further indicated that beliefs form attitudes, which become action agendas; individuals enact what they believe.

Lumpe, Haney, and Czerniak (2000) proposed that core teacher beliefs developed and evolved from years spent in schools, both as students and as teachers. They suggested that working with teachers to effect change required a

close look at teachers' beliefs, assisting teachers to unlock and examine their own belief system.

Much of the literature discussing teacher beliefs revolves around their interaction with instructional practice. Haney, Czerniak, and Lumpe (1996) sought to investigate the factors that influenced teacher intention for implementation of four specific competency based strands in science. They concluded, "Teacher beliefs are significant contributors of behavioral intention" (p. 985). Researchers investigating teacher learning and the change process have identified teacher beliefs as a key factor in whether change will be implemented and sustained (Anderson, 2002; Fullan, 2001). Keys and Bryan (2000) suggested that teacher beliefs about students and learning could, and did, interfere with inquiry-based instruction. Finally, Anderson (2002) emphasized the need for collaboration to mediate the process of change, emphasizing the role of teacher interaction in reshaping teacher beliefs about the teaching of science.

Summary

Teacher collegiality has been identified as one of the key components in effecting lasting school change. The interdependence of individuals within the school, as well

as of the entire school system, is necessary to create and sustain that change. Yet teacher isolation persists. Accepting Barth's (1990) definition of collegiality as teachers *talking about practice, observing each other engaged in practice, working together on curriculum, and teaching each other*, it becomes evident that teacher collegiality has implications for professional growth and development, school culture and context, and leadership practices. Teacher beliefs and perceptions shape their response to that culture and context, in turn supporting or inhibiting the development of teacher collegiality.

Very little research has examined teacher perceptions of collegiality in schools or the leadership behaviors that support it. As the demands on our schools continue to spawn change efforts focused on a culture embracing collaborative planning, shared decision making, risk taking, shared leadership and self evaluation, all components integral to collegiality, it is vital that research examines teacher perceptions about what collegiality is, what conditions enhance it, and what leadership behaviors promote and support it.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This study examined the experiences and perceptions of teachers from three different school sites within Pima County in Southern Arizona regarding the role of collegiality in schools. The major questions that guided the research are

1. How do teachers demonstrate their own collegial behaviors in schools?
2. What conditions do teachers identify that enhance teacher collegiality?
3. What are the leadership behaviors that foster and support collegiality?

These questions guided the collection of detailed descriptive information from principals and teachers about their perceptions of and experiences with collegiality in schools. This chapter describes the design and research methodology that was used in this study. The phases of data collection are outlined, and the process for data analysis is explained.

Research Design

In an ongoing effort to investigate hypotheses about education, two major traditions in educational research

have developed. These methodologies are quantitative measurement and analysis and qualitative research (Borg & Gall, 1989).

The major goal of qualitative research is to develop an in-depth understanding of existing phenomena from the viewpoint of the subjects, using observable behavior as well as their own words to make sense of what is happening (Boyden & Bilken, 1992). Qualitative research is an investigative process in which the researcher slowly makes sense of a social phenomenon by becoming immersed in the everyday life of the setting chosen for the study and interacting within the environment to uncover individual perceptions and behaviors (Marshall & Rossman, 1989).

As with quantitative research, objectivity and truthfulness are critical to qualitative methods, but the criteria for judging them differ. In qualitative research, the process of verification, rather than traditional validity and reliability measures, seeks to establish believability. Several assumptions are characteristic of qualitative research (Cresswell, 1998):

1. Qualitative research occurs in the natural setting, where the behaviors and events occur.

2. The researcher is the primary instrument in data collection.
3. Data are primarily descriptive, reporting the words and actions of the participants.
4. The focus is on the perceptions and experiences of the participants.
5. The process that occurs is as important as the product. How things occur becomes pivotal.

Qualitative research has provided a rich source of new knowledge and understanding about teaching and leadership in our schools. David and Shields (1991) wrote about this recent shift, citing the deeper understanding of the processes that drive change; the use of qualitative methodology uncovers how and why change does or does not occur. In addition, Glesne and Peshkin (1992) suggested that the openness of qualitative study enables the researcher to explore the deeper complexity of social interactions.

This investigation sought to uncover the collegial experiences and understandings of teachers in three elementary school settings, primarily through interviews and observation. The three school settings were identified

as having a high level of collegiality among the school staff. Staff perceptions of the factors that impacted those collegial experiences yield important data. The research questions sought detailed descriptive information from teachers about the collegial culture and activity at their schools. In order to develop such an understanding, a qualitative research design was used.

A multiple case study approach was used in this investigation in order to understand the collegial experiences of teachers within three school settings and their understanding of the supports to their own collegiality. Data were examined across all settings with regard to each research question, as well as comparisons made among the three identified schools. A case study is a form of qualitative research in which the researcher "explores a single phenomenon bounded by time and activity and collects detailed information by using a variety of data collection procedures during a sustained period of time" (Cresswell, 1998, p. 12).

The purpose of a case study is to look closely at the background, status, and interaction with the environment of a given social unit such as an individual, institution, or community (Isaac & Michael, 1981). Case study is eminently

suitable for dealing with critical problems of practice and expanding the knowledge base for approaching different aspects of education (Merriam, 1988). These factors contributed to the selection of this approach to investigate the questions guiding this study.

A definite advantage to the case study approach is that it allows the researcher to examine closely the interactions that impact a specific phenomenon within its own context (Isaac & Michael, 1981). The researcher is able to study the factors that have impacted the current status of the subject of study, examining why as well as the specific factors involved.

In addition to the numerous strengths of qualitative research, weaknesses of the case study methodology must be considered. Considerable time must be devoted to case study research in order to be successful. The researcher must be cautious about oversimplifying or exaggerating a situation, leading a reader to false conclusions about the actual situation (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). Qualitative studies are also constrained by the perceptiveness and integrity of the researcher. Ethical questions must be considered and addressed. First and foremost is the issue of confidentiality. Confidentiality guidelines must be

closely followed and valued by the researcher. When observed and interviewed, participants must be confident that the researcher will maintain their confidentiality (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Researchers and readers of case studies must always be aware of the biases that could impact the final product (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). Generalizability of case study research must be examined as well.

Data obtained in qualitative case studies come primarily from interviews, observations, and documents (Merriam, 1988). Spradley (1979) suggested that interviews are a significant source of information. Although interviews come in several forms (open-ended, focused, or survey), case studies most commonly employ open-ended interviews, allowing the researcher to interact with the participants and share insights into the questions being studied. A formal interview is more structured, using a planned set of questions. It is often used to probe historical events that cannot be reconstructed (Merriam, 1988).

Case study research includes participant observation as a major method of data collection (Burgess, 1984). Participant observation allows the researcher to observe

firsthand the behavior being studied, recording behavior as it occurs. Body language, statements made by participants, and personal demeanor during observation can enrich the data gathered, providing additional perspectives for analysis. As suggested by Burgess (1984), there are both advantages and disadvantages to the participant-observer role. The researcher, by making the role clear to those involved, is free to participate in those activities of interest, obtaining data relevant to the investigation. The researcher is also able to establish relationships within the organization, thus achieving a deeper level of understanding about the organization. However, there are also certain disadvantages. Caution must be exercised concerning the problem of bias, understanding the possibility of researchers changing or influencing the context of the research, or themselves being influenced by the context (Burgess, 1984).

Data collection in case study research must be guided by several principles. The most important principle is the use of multiple sources of evidence (Denzin, 1988; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1988; Miles & Huberman, 1984). Commonly called triangulation, this process examines data from dissimilar methods such as

interviews, observations, and document analysis (Mason, 1996). The process of triangulation corroborates evidence from different sources to gain understanding of a theme or perspective. The basic assumption of the process is that any bias inherent in a specific data source, researcher, and/or method would be minimized when used in tandem with other data sources and methods. Denzin (1988) suggested that the flaws inherent in one method may be the strengths of another and that by using a combination of methods, researchers can draw on the best of each, neutralizing their specific deficiencies.

This researcher utilized two data collection methods. These included the preparation of an interview guide with sample questions used during individual interviews (see Appendix A) and observation of school processes and activities.

Methodology

Site Selection

While looking for sites at which to conduct this study, the researcher worked with data already collected by Dr. David Quinn (personal communication, January 2005), University of Arizona, and the Arizona Department of Education (2004). These data were gathered through a

statewide survey of elementary schools during the spring semester of 2004 using the *School Culture Survey Form 4-98* (1998) developed at the Middle Level Leadership Center at the University of Missouri by Steve Gruenert and Jerry Valentine (see Appendix B). Teacher Collaboration, one specific subscale from the survey, was examined. The indicators in this subscale are closely aligned with Barth's (1990) four indicators of collegiality. Schools from across Southern Arizona were rank ordered according to the scores from this subscale. From the pool of 68 elementary school in Southern Arizona that were surveyed by the Arizona Department of Education in 2004, 6 schools were identified that scored high on the subscale that directly related to Barth's four indicators of collegiality, scoring 3.80 or higher. Those schools that had not had the same principal for at least three years were eliminated from participation in the study. The decision to exclude school sites having principal tenure less than three years was based on the literature indicating that collegiality takes time to develop. If leadership behaviors that support and promote collegiality were to be examined, then the leader present at the school should have had the opportunity to impact the school culture. In addition, any schools that

fell within the home district of the researcher were also eliminated. Of the remaining four schools, three were identified for inclusion in this study. They represented a variety of school districts (urban, suburban, and accommodation), a variety of economic indicators (from higher socioeconomic status [SES] to lower SES), and a variety of achievement levels (from Excelling to Underperforming status). The common variable was the high rating for collegiality in their schools. The principals of the schools needed to be willing to participate in the research project and allow their teachers the choice of becoming involved in the study. Finally, no participating school could be located within the district in which the researcher was employed. This mitigated the bias effect inherent in examining schools and teachers who were knowledgeable about the researcher and her role in the school district.

Information about the demographic data of each school site that participated in the study is presented in Table 3.1. Schools in the study were similar in size, had comparable attendance rates, and received a similar rating on the *School Culture Survey* (Gruenert & Valentine, 1998), *Teacher Collaboration* subscale. Areas of dissimilarity

included free/reduced lunch rates, mobility rates, and achievement levels.

Finally, principals of the selected schools were interviewed to ascertain that their school sites did indeed represent a highly collegial workplace and to obtain the names of the teachers to approach for participation in the study.

Table 3.1

Sample Description

Indicators	School A (urban)	School B (accommodation)	School C (suburban)
Avg. Score on			
Tchr. Collaboration	3.850	3.833	3.931
Subscale			
School Size	400	442	431
% Free/Reduced	69%	52%	0%
Achievement			
Level/State	Underperforming	Performing Plus	Excelling
Rating			
Attendance Rate	95%	98%	97%
Mobility Rate	24%	37%	15%

Participant Selection

In discussions with the building principals at the selected sites, the purpose, methodology, and value of this research project were outlined. The researcher verified the validity of the self-reported survey results by asking the principal the following questions:

1. What does collegiality look like in your building?
2. Tell me about some instances of collegiality that have happened in the last month.

Once the collegial nature of each identified school was initially verified, the principal was issued an invitation to participate in the study. The principal needed to accept the invitation to participate before the researcher could proceed.

Information describing the nature of the research study, the method of data collection, and the role of the teachers was developed and shared with the principal at each identified school site. A snowball sampling method was used. The principal was asked to identify up to five teachers from the building who he/she believed to be most actively involved in collegial activities. Permission to approach the identified teachers for participation in the study was granted by each principal. As teachers were

identified as highly collegial, they were then approached for inclusion in the study. Interestingly, at all three school sites, principals indicated that the researcher could speak with anyone on campus; most staff members were considered highly collegial. If one of the identified teachers was unable to participate, principals provided additional names.

The researcher then met individually with identified principals and teachers to clarify the purpose and explain their role in the study. The participants needed to be fully informed of their role, and the choice to participate was theirs. Voluntary participation and the right to terminate participation at any time are key elements of informed consent. The information was shared directly in an individual presentation and through the Subject's Consent Form.

Participants provided information about their teaching experience, grade level, and tenure at the school site. Information is summarized in Table 3.2. Teacher participants represented a broad range of grade level assignments (K, 2, 4, 5, gifted [G], and counseling [C]), years of experience (3 to 30), and years at their respective sites (2 to 20). Although females significantly

outnumbered males, both were represented at each school site (11 females, 4 males).

Privacy is generally a major concern of research participants (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). The participants in this study had the right to expect that their confidentiality would be protected. The Subject's Consent Form represented a signed agreement between the researcher and study participants, explaining how the individuals would be involved in the research as well as providing assurance of confidentiality and anonymity. This Subject's Consent Form was signed by willing participants prior to beginning data collection. In order to maintain confidentiality, the names of the schools and staff were changed for the study.

Table 3.2

Demographic Information about Teachers Interviewed

	School A (K-5)					School B (K, 4-5)					School C (K-5)				
Teacher	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Grade Lvl.	2	4	C	5	5	4	5	K	5	5	5	G	2	2	4
Years of Exp.	20	23	30	3	15	6	15	8	17	8	13	11	11	19	7
Years at Site	20	2	15	3	14	2	8	3	5	3	13	5	11	4	7
Gender	F	F	F	M	M	F	F	F	F	M	M	F	F	F	F

Data Collection

The data collection process was designed to gather information about teacher collegiality as perceived by the teachers at three different elementary schools. The researcher collected data throughout the 2005-06 school year. The availability of teachers needed to be considered when determining the specific time frame of the study.

"The opportunity to learn about what you cannot see and explore alternative explanations of what you do see is the special strength of interviewing in qualitative research" (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 65). Individual interviews were conducted with participants. Open-ended questions (see Appendix A) were used to attempt to gain a more in-depth picture of both the principals' and the teachers' perceptions of the collegial culture at their schools and the factors that impacted that collegiality. Aware of the need to build a trusting relationship with study participants (Mason, 1996), the researcher sought to remain flexible during interviews to better respond to emerging issues. Confidentiality was guaranteed to all participants. Interviews were tape recorded with the consent of each participant; they were then transcribed by the researcher. Each interview varied in length, ranging

from 20 minutes to 45 minutes, with the average being 30 minutes in length.

A second phase of this study was observation of various meetings, both formal and informal, at the school sites to seek evidence of teacher collegiality. These included, but were not limited to, grade-level meetings, planning meetings, committee meetings, and school-based professional development activities.

"Observation makes it possible to record behavior as it is happening" (Merriam, 1988, p. 88). The researcher acted as both a participant and an observer and was able to ask additional questions to expand or corroborate information gained in the earlier interviews. Because observation occurs within a specific context as it is occurring, rather than relying on the memory or reconstruction of events and interactions (Mason, 1996), the researcher recorded teacher interactions in order to enrich the data gathered and provide additional perspectives for analysis.

Table 3.3 represents the number and types of observations conducted at each school site. Information gleaned from the observations was used to corroborate data from interviews. The observational data provided

supporting evidence for the themes that emerged from the interviews.

Table 3.3

Types of Observations Conducted at Each School Site

Types of Observations	School A	School B	School C
Grade Level Meeting	1	1	1
Committee Meeting			1
Planning Meeting		1	1
School-based Professional Development Activity	1	1	

Analysis of the Data

Analysis of the data gathered in this study allowed the researcher to make sense of the data. Qualitative literature provided several strategies for data analysis. Marshall and Rossman (1989) contended that reduction and interpretation were key factors to data analysis. The data generated during qualitative research are voluminous, and the researcher must categorize those data by patterns and themes, interpreting the information according to some schema.

Glesne and Peshkin (1992) recommended the use of memos and file logs to assist in recording analytical thoughts,

as well as the use of various types of files for data organization. Data displays, such as tables of information, graphs, charts, and matrices, can be constructed as part of the analysis to assist the researcher in developing and drawing conclusions (Miles & Huberman, 1984).

Verification of the conclusions drawn is important. The emerging data are used to find corroborating information. Each conclusion is examined with regard to "plausibility, sturdiness and confirmability -- that is their validity" (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 11).

This researcher incorporated all of these strategies for data analysis. Files were established to assist in storing and categorizing information. Interview tapes were transcribed verbatim. All information gathered in this study was organized, categorized, analyzed, and synthesized in an ongoing process occurring simultaneously with data collection (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Information was coded to allow for easier manipulation of the data.

Following Creswell's (1998) suggestion, data were reduced into patterns, categories, and themes congruent with the original research questions. The following steps were taken in the process of data analysis:

1. All tapes were transcribed verbatim.
2. Transcripts were read, and categories of information were developed.
3. Emerging patterns in each category were noted as duplication of information became apparent.
4. Patterns were recorded as they pertained to the identified themes.

Validity and Reliability

The process of triangulation in qualitative methodology indicates the use of multiple data sources to enhance the trustworthiness of the data, its internal validity (Miles & Huberman, 1984). The researcher employed this practice, gathering data from interviews, observations, and documents. Convergence among those sources of information lent strength to the conclusions drawn.

Reliability refers to the extent of consistency within the research findings (Merriam, 1988). Through researcher explanation of the underlying assumptions and theory of the study, triangulation of the data, and description of the methodologies used in the study, reliability is enhanced.

The results of this study are presented in a descriptive narration rather than as a scientific report.

The final product is a portrait of the participants' experiences and the meanings they attached to them, communicated through rich descriptive data.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this research was to describe the perceptions of teachers regarding collegiality in schools and the leadership behaviors that supported it. Using Barth's (1990) four indicators of collegiality in schools as a guide for defining collegiality, the author sought to determine what was actually occurring in schools and what the school leader was doing to foster a collegial school culture. Barth's four indicators of collegiality in school are teachers talk about practice, observe one another engaged in practice, work together on curriculum, and teach one another. The questions that guided the research are

1. How do teachers demonstrate their own collegial behaviors in schools?
2. What conditions do teachers identify that enhance teacher collegiality?
3. What are the leadership behaviors that foster and support collegiality?

This study was based primarily on the analysis of data collected through interviews conducted with teachers and

principals of three elementary schools in Southern Arizona that had demonstrated high levels of collegiality as measured by survey data collected by the Arizona Department of Education (2004). Additional data were collected through observations in those schools to verify the integrity of the themes and concepts that emerged from the interview data.

Sample Description

Three school sites in Southern Arizona, representing high levels of collegiality as measured by the *Teacher Collaboration* subscale of the *School Culture Survey* (Gruenert & Valentine, 1998), were included in this study. Each principal, who had been the school leader for a minimum of three years, corroborated the collegial nature of their school site and identified five teachers for inclusion in the study. A total of 3 principals and 15 teachers were represented.

Descriptive Findings

Employing qualitative methodology as described by Mason (1996), the data from the interviews were analyzed and categorized into text segments, each of which represented a single idea. Themes and concepts evolved from this information, addressing how teachers demonstrated

collegial behaviors and the perceptions of teachers regarding ways to enhance collegiality, as well as the leadership behaviors that fostered and supported collegiality.

For the purpose of clarity, each research question is restated followed by the descriptive findings.

Research Question 1

How do teachers demonstrate their own collegial behaviors in schools?

The concepts and ideas that emerged from the interviews in the three schools were matched with Barth's (1990) four dimensions of collegiality as described in Chapter 2. Table 4.1 displays the total number of text segments matching the four areas, as well as the number of teachers from each school site who discussed each collegial behavior.

Talk about practice. Teachers talking with one another about practice clearly emerged as the strongest indicator of collegiality discussed and modeled by the study participants at all three school sites, with School C indicating slightly higher levels of talk about practice.

Table 4.1

Text Segments Identifying Teacher Collegial Behaviors and the Number of Teachers

Responding

Collegial Behavior	Text Segments	No. of Teachers Responding
	School A	
Talk about practice	33	5
Observe colleagues teaching	18	5
Work with colleagues on curriculum	19	5
Teach each other	23	4
	School B	
Talk about practice	35	5
Observe colleagues teaching	10	5
Work with colleagues on curriculum	17	5
Teach each other	24	4
	School C	
Talk about practice	43	5
Observe colleagues teaching	17	5
Work with colleagues on curriculum	22	5
Teach each other	25	5

Teachers from all three sites discussed talking together and planning together as an integral part of each day. As one teacher commented, "I think all of us are willing to sit down with our colleagues and share and brainstorm and come up with ideas. We actually found a different time each week that we would sit down together." Another stated,

Oh gosh, we plan every other week on a goal, but we found that that wasn't really enough time so we set meetings. We meet together every day at lunch and we discuss. It gives us time to just bond as a grade level, and sometimes, you know, whoever else wants to come over; we have the art teacher sometimes come over, the PE teacher. So that's the way that we meet regarding work, connect on those team things.

Although teachers participated in one to eight formal collaborative meetings each month to talk about practice and plan together, most indicated daily interactions in which teaching practices were discussed.

I'd say we meet at least once a month for official grade level meetings, but we're

daily working together, especially on our grade level. We're always sharing ideas and discussing different things that we've tried that have worked and things that haven't worked.

The school leaders also cited this type of interaction. "I would say that's where teachers get together for their grade level meetings and they're talking together and planning together. They're talking about students, student needs, what they can do to help each other out."

This first indicator of collegiality, *teachers talking about practice*, was often discussed during interviews and was evident throughout the observations.

Observe colleagues teaching. Of Barth's (1990) four prongs of collegiality, observing colleagues teaching was perhaps the least practiced, although teachers from all three schools cited examples of it occurring, indicating a wish for more peer observation. One teacher stated,

Because I was a mentor this past year to a fifth grade teacher, we exchanged viewing each other's classes, but on the grade level basis, only under special request with special

accommodations would that happen. That is one of the things that has been on our wish list, that we might be able to observe colleagues teaching.

Part of the discussion inevitably revolved around ways to support peer observation. Teacher B3 remembered, Last year I had a student teacher and I did go out to observe other teachers and then actually when I just started teaching my first year I did go during when they had library time or music. It's like, 'Can I go to your classroom and just see how you're doing things?' I've done that myself.

Additionally, teachers reported that observing one another teach was more likely to occur if there were a structure in place to facilitate the process, either from the district level or the building. Teacher C1 offered, This particular circumstance was a program in the district that's a follow-up to professional development, called Collegial Coaching. And normally it's done with one other person. In this case I did it with two. I had a fourth grade and a third grade colleague

that let me join their teaching group, and so I got to pre-conference with each of them, see what they wanted us to look for, collect data for during their lesson, and then observe the lesson, and then post-conference to share what they, what we observed, and then vice versa. And they did the same for me which is extremely valuable.

He went on to say,

We do have some opportunity to do that [observe one another teaching]; it would just be something that perhaps there were kind of a more set schedule, or if it were something that were mandated, then the time thing would kind of, you'd find the time, you'd make the time!

Commenting on the possibilities created through peer observation, another teacher stated,

It might be really fun to go from level to level, like if you're a first grade teacher, go sit in a fifth grade class, or go to a second grade class and then see, 'Oh, here's the transition; here's how it is,' and the same thing, go back and say, 'Well, this is what they're going to have to do to get those

kids to this point,' so we see that, that whole. It's a working process that's completely connected in so many ways and we are so isolated sometimes that we don't see it, so I think that that might be a nice way to do that.

Generally, teachers indicated that observing colleagues teaching rarely occurred unless formally structured, either through a mentor program, collegial coaching, or for a specific purpose, such as to observe a model lesson and debrief as a group.

Working with colleagues on curriculum. Generally this topic was interpreted as being more formalized than talking about practice. Teachers again cited specific examples that reflected formal committee or grade level work in a particular curricular area.

Right now because of the standards, we have been working on developing and talking about how to evaluate and assess the standards. So we've had to do quite a bit. Last year we had to get together several times; we were working on standards and how to make assessments for them and evaluate them to see what was happening.

So that was more of in the professional way rather than in the lunchtime talk way.

Another teacher stated,

We meet monthly; we are working on Arizona standards now in science and developing a district assessment plan in order to get ready for the district and be prepared for the new AIMS test. We split the workload and work on different areas of the science standards and then get it all tied up together.

At another school, one teacher reflected,

It's part of a shift in our school, as an underperforming school, to beef up our math program. We've decided to go the way of more constructivist thinking of mathematics, hands-on programs, which a lot of teachers here aren't very familiar with. And so we've come up with creative ways to get the teachers to have a chance to meet with each other, to plan a unit and then to have one classroom model the unit so that teachers can see in practical application that these activities really do work. The last one was in E's room. She demo'd one on fractions

that we've been working on.

One principal summarized,

Every grade level is a data team, with a data team leader, and they meet twice a month for one hour each time and they have specific protocols that take the system for making standards work. They take the protocols and they come up with, they define what they want kids to learn in a particular unit or a lesson segment. They have a common pre-assessment and post assessment. They have common teacher to team designs, formative assessments and rating systems, rubrics and so forth, and then forms and protocols that guide them through. So as an example when my fourth grade team gets together they have all these things in place. It's driven by student achievement data, real data with real kids, and there's a goal setting process built into that.

Working together on curriculum was an integral collegial behavior evident at all school sites.

Teach each other. This indicator was the second most commonly cited dimension of collegiality as reported by the

teachers from all three school sites. Responses varied from once in a month to daily; all five teachers in School C indicated that they learn from colleagues "daily" or "constantly." One teacher commented, "Oh gosh, I think I learn something from somebody every single day, at least I try to even if you're in passing and you talk to someone. The more we know, the more we don't know." Another teacher suggested,

I think I'm always learning something from my colleagues because when we meet for data teams, we discuss what went well for us, and what other people did to help their students meet those goals, and there's always something there that I've not tried, or a different way of trying it. We also have the librarian, the gifted teacher and a special ed teacher on our team, so we get it from their perspective, what might help kids who are at both ends. And the librarian would help us see how she can support us in the library, and she has great ideas. I'm always learning something when I go to that.

Teacher B4 observed,

I think we learn, especially during the lunch

room where we talk about what we did. They listen and then they try and do that, so it's more from just how other teachers, because they talk to us about what they did, what was successful. And that's kind of how we learn from each other and how we try things.

In contrast, a few teachers indicated that they learned from colleagues only once a month or maybe two to three times in a month. One noted,

I would say maybe once a month I would learn from my colleagues. I have more experience with this grade level and more experience with teaching as a whole, and so more often it was my leading the group rather than And it is reciprocal, but they don't share as many ideas, I guess. I know how that sounds, but it's true.

A colleague, A2, differentiated between professional learning and general knowledge, commenting,

Oh, that's exciting, that I actually learned from them! I don't know, maybe two or three times. What does that look like? It's loud and it's exciting, and there's usually humor involved in it. And it's actually probably

more often than that, but for me to, I mean I'm trying to think of "learning something" that I can apply to my classroom, or just general knowledge. I mean, in my classroom, I'd say maybe two or three times; general knowledge, a lot more than that.

Research Question 2

What conditions do teachers identify that enhance teacher collegiality?

In examining the responses of teachers during the structured interviews, specific themes recurred. Teachers talked about the conditions that enhanced their own collegiality. Again, responses were categorized and are displayed in Table 4.2.

Supportive peer relationships. In two of the three schools, supportive peer relationships ranked third in the number of times it was mentioned as important to collegiality in schools; for the third school, it placed second. Teachers valued the insight and relationships developed within the work environment, enabling them to work closely together.

Table 4.2

Text Segments Identifying the Conditions Enhancing Teacher Collegiality and the Number of Teachers Responding

	School A		School B		School C	
	Text Segments	No. of Teachers Responding	Text Segments	No. of Teachers Responding	Text Segments	No. of Teachers Responding
Supportive Peer Relationships	16	5	20	5	23	5
Culture Supporting Risk Taking	15	5	13	5	16	5
Focus on Teaching and Learning	21	5	17	5	27	5
Common Goals and Mindset	14	5	11	5	16	5
Supportive Structures (time, etc.)	27	5	24	5	42	5
Shared Leadership	7	3	8	3	10	5
Communication	15	4	14	5	23	5

I would say just going in and just learning from the experience they have. I'll pose a

question of maybe a problem or perplexing situation for me and then they'll just kind of talk about it, or I just kind of mention what we're doing in class and then another teacher will kind of come up and say, "Yeah, we're doing that too and this is what we're doing," And so they'll just kind of say something that I think is, "Oh, that's a cool idea," and I'll go ahead and try that.

Another teacher suggested,

Just being able to work together and have that motivation to make our school a professional learning community so that we're not all off doing our own thing and recreating the wheel, I guess, you know, really drawing off each other's experiences and knowledge. So I would say that each staff member needs that motivation and vision to make the time to come together and really try to put forth that extra effort.

A third teacher observed,

We have a lot of colleagues working with us on the technologies and everything, and so we've

just been pulling from our own people to learn from them and have things taught by them. So again, that really has been successful that way.

Finally, Teacher C3 commented,

I learn something from them daily; I'm really lucky. L., who's next door to me, is an outstanding teacher, super with ideas. She's been teaching for I think about 17 years. She's new to fourth grade this year, so having her right next door has been a valuable resource. She's taught eighth grade, she's taught gifted; I get ideas from her daily. When we're at lunch, we'll talk about our lessons, and then it's good because we're both kind of creative, and so we'll just kind of throw ideas out. It's pretty helpful!

Supportive peer relationships suggest a comfort level with peers, an ability to trust and take risks.

Culture supporting risk taking. In the excerpts from most of the interviews, this concept was often more inferred than directly stated. For example, one teacher commented,

It's great to be involved in a learning place

where everyone is stretching and growing. And sometimes it is overwhelming, but he gets that too and tries to put it in doable pieces and tries to reassure us and be there for us when he senses we're overwhelmed.

One teacher reflected,

Well, I think it was the one that we talked about, being able to observe others' classrooms in a non-threatening way, should I say, 'cause maybe that's maybe one of the difficulties; and possibly that could promote work continuity together if we don't feel threatened by each other, that we're all here to do a job and we can help each other in that way.

Finally, a teacher commented,

I need my colleagues to have an open mind because nothing shuts me down faster than a closed mind. So I really need open mindedness and people who are willing to take risks, educated risks, you know, not just, "Let's see what we can do," but take risks nonetheless.

Risk taking is intertwined with supportive peer relationships and is often focused on the work of teachers, teaching and learning.

Focus on teaching and learning. For two of the three schools, a focus on teaching and learning was the second most mentioned condition for collegiality; it placed third for the remaining school site. Most of the conversations about collaboration at these highly collegial schools revolved around teaching and learning. One teacher wanted

more of the lesson studies. I know we're doing as many as we can right now. I want to see that to continue, to be able to go in and see a lesson taught by someone else. Say "This is how I've done something like this in the past; this is how they're doing it." And then you want to come back and sit down and say, "Well, I think what I do here maybe worked a little better, but I like what you did there," and really kind of breaking down the lesson and looking at how it's taught. It's one thing to read a lesson out of a book as opposed to actually implementing that lesson.

Another remembered,

We've also had time to talk. One meeting this year we brought rubrics and what is third grade for the writing with the six traits, or what are the rubrics that they're using, what are we using; what is fifth grade using? And then we could compare and we actually, we kind of all kind of formed into one 'cause we were all having such different things. And so I think that's been beneficial to the students, to have a kind of set rubric.

Another teacher reflected,

It sort of helps if, like my partner and I went to the same workshop. It's "Study and Skillful Teaching," and so we both had the same, like common language, understanding of what different strategies could be, and so that really is a helpful thing. And you don't always have to have that but it just sort of helps, then you have that common language. "Okay, I know how to activate prior knowledge. Okay, these are like five activators that we learned. And then okay, let's try that one." So it would be neat for me to see her do the activator in her class and then when

she sees it in my class, and it's sort of, you just learn how it looks different, but then it also, you can see how it's the same too.

When teachers are focused on teaching and learning, a common goal of school, it becomes easier to create common goals and a common mindset within the school culture.

Common goals and mindset. When discussing what was needed to make collegiality strong in a school, teachers often suggested that a common goal, a mindset for collaboration, was important.

I guess I'd say that when it comes to our school, I think there's such a huge focus on everyone working together, and it seems like each person is very involved, either like on a site council team or Academic Best, Personal Best, like that. Every person is working so hard to be part of these little teams that drive the whole school. Our school has such a huge focus on everyone really working together.

Another teacher reflected,

What you need is a willingness to be open to what others think, and remember this isn't about you; this is for the student. That we're

not here for ourselves; we're here for children.

Teacher B4 stated,

As a group, the six of us are pretty much a team. We think with the same brain, I think, sometimes, and the kids know that too. There's a real consistency; they know that we all kind of talk to each other.

A school counselor summarized,

I think we just need the willingness to learn, the willingness to know that other people have got options, that other people can offer us things. I think that mindset is huge, and collaboration, and learning from one another. Sometimes we get a little carried away with ourselves, I think, thinking that we really, don't really need too much of that. And I think when you go into a school setting, or any kind of a setting, with the mindset that, you know, that I can learn from these people, it's a critical piece.

Supportive structures. By far the area of critical need most often cited by teachers was supportive structures, including time and other resources such as substitutes and schedules.

Time! The time thing is a big deal, you know. We know the value of coaching and of being in other people's classrooms and observing and giving and getting feedback, structures to be able to do that more often without having negative impact on teacher time with kids. It's just kind of a tricky balancing act and time would probably be the main thing.

Commenting on the principal's support, one teacher noted,

She certainly is almost always real willing to get subs when she needs it. She somehow finds the money for that. I don't know, quite know how that works, but she is very good at using our resources, I think, very well in order to spread that around when we need it. And [she] is certainly willing to ask myself or another person who doesn't have a, you know, regular classroom, "Could you cover for an hour; could you do this so that that person could go and observe someone else if need be." She's done that herself, or she's gone in and read to a class, or done some other activity with them.

Another teacher mentioned, "Well, of course, training is very important. We need to make sure we keep up to date training because things change, it seems, very quickly."

Teacher B2 suggested,

To improve it [collegiality] is just to keep continuing to hire the right people. We've been very fortunate; we hired the right folks. They come into this environment, which is a non-threatening environment where you feel free to express your feelings and make suggestions, and get things done.

Teacher C1 summarized,

We kind of start with the student end results, what do we want for the kids, and then structure the schedule accordingly. And we want to have collaboration and team planning time to help the kids, then having the common specialist times is a means to that end.

Shared leadership. Again, shared leadership was not cited as often as some of the other indicators, yet it emerged through discussions as a strong, necessary piece in promoting collegiality. A teacher reflected on her principal,

There's no sense I get from her that she doesn't learn from all of us even though she's the leader, and, you know, she does learn and she's willing to and take people's ideas and takes them seriously and acts on them when they're good ideas.

Other teachers cited examples of shared leadership when discussing collegiality.

I just went to the last workshop for AHAA [Arizona Higher Achievement for All] in December, so I guess that would be meeting with the team, so one time with the AHAA team because we have to develop, we have to do two more in-services before the end of the year. So we have to come up with a plan for that, an action plan.

Finally, teachers in all of the schools indicated that structures for shared leadership, such as committees or grade level chairpersons, promoted collegiality.

See, right now I'm grade level chair, so actually I'm the one, if there are certain activities that we need to do with our grade level, I'm the one in charge right now. And sometimes we ask another teacher, "Oh, you're good at this, can you do that?" So that's kind of how we divide

it.

Another stated,

Some of the ways that that occurs here are there are different opportunities for committees and groups to work on, like we have what's called the Personal Best Team, which is designed to help promote responsible citizenship and service to others. And we have an Academic Best Team, which, as you know, hits at kind of the other realm of specific academics. Both are voluntary.

Interestingly, although teachers talked briefly about assuming formalized leadership roles, such as grade level chairpersons, they did not seem to perceive themselves as leaders. Generally, they saw their role and participation at the school site as similar to everyone else's within the school culture.

Communication. The sharing of ideas and positive communication between staff was often reflected when discussing collegiality in schools. One school staff member stated, "She and I communicate a lot about a lot of different situations." A teacher at another site mentioned,

We just met recently as a team, and it was mostly

to brainstorm ways that we're going to make sure that, as a school, we definitely all are walking the talk with the kids. And the kids have a voice, like: What do you think is important to ask the kids?; What do you value in our school?; What do you look for when you're at your best?; What is it that you would like to see in people?

She valued communication school-wide, with students and parents as well as staff members.

Key to communication is understanding; "Well I guess the first thing, I guess is just the common language, like a common understanding of, the same focus of what we're all wanting."

Finally, one teacher summarized, "Everything we do is ultimately for the child, and if we keep our focus on the child and we work together and communicate, it all seems to work out. You just keep that focus."

Research Question 3

What are the leadership behaviors that foster and support collegiality?

Examination of the responses made by both principals and teachers about leadership behaviors that fostered and

supported collegiality yielded a variety of responses that were then categorized and are displayed in Table 4.3.

	School A			School B			School C		
	Principal Text Segments	Teachers No. of Text Segments	Teachers Responding	Principal Text Segments	Teachers No. of Text Segments	Teachers Responding	Principal Text Segments	Teachers No. of Text Segments	Teachers Responding
Provides Vision	2	5	4	3	3	3	7	4	2
Models Appropriate Behavior	3	5	3	2	4	4	12	8	4
Fosters Commitment to Goals	2	17	5	5	6	4	9	24	5
Provides Individual Support	1	12	5	5	12	5	7	19	5
Provides Intellectual Stimulation	1	7	5	0	3	2	7	4	2
Sets High Expectations	1	9	5	3	5	4	9	13	5

Provides vision. Generally discussed less than several other leadership behaviors cited by principals and teachers alike, providing vision at the school site was an integral part of the discussion of 60% of the teachers. Principal C was most articulate in sharing the vision of his school.

So clearly, above it all, we operate in teams. At the center of that, we call it our diamond thinking, and it's on the wall; we put children in the center of the diamond and around the diamond children have academic, social, emotional, physical needs and character somewhere in there, and our premise is that children's needs will drive what we do, period. So if you're a teacher, for example, and you have a child in the center that has needs, the question we should all ask you is, "So what does your child need?," and you explain, and then our job is to help you get that child her or his needs. That's at the core of team so whatever effort is, we always start with that. So therefore, when we go to forum with an agreement and results, the first question is, "What are the student end results

we are after?" All these structural pieces go together to help collaboration along its path. A teacher from a different site explained how the vision for collegiality was operationalized.

She actually is also right now working on a shift in her faculty to help encourage teams that really aren't working well together.

There's a shift in personnel to try and spread the wealth, so to speak, to encourage others to be more involved in their development.

Additionally, Teacher B4 reflected,

And then she also encourages us to cooperate in any area. She always encourages us to work as a team. It's kind of one of our mottos, is "We are family" and so that, she really kind of pushes that and encourages that.

Models appropriate behavior. Modeling appropriate behavior to promote collegiality was mentioned a total of 34 times, only slightly more than providing vision or providing intellectual stimulation. Modeling was viewed in a variety of forms, including modeling the notion of collegiality.

Almost all tasks I give are to the team, rather

than police or nag people to death or be overly micromanaging or controlling, yet still being clear, because at the end if it goes well, they did it or we did it; if it goes poorly, it's my responsibility. It's subtle but it's there.

Another teacher discussed modeling of collegiality by her principal.

You know, just right now her willingness to say, "Let me take over your class. What are you doing?," and I just tell her I'm doing a math manipulative activity, her willingness to just jump in herself and set the example of not being intimidated by something.

Yet another teacher reflected,

When I look at her, she treats us as an equal. She's not the one, "I'm the boss here and you should do what I say"; she's always very open when I come with a question. She actually feels she's an equal just like us. We have a very good relationship, I mean with the principal, with the office staff. They all treat us the way they would want to be treated.

Fosters commitment to goals. Fostering commitment to goals has emerged as the most often discussed leadership condition supporting collegiality. One teacher described her principal in this way,

Well, he's often in our classrooms observing informally, not necessarily because it's an evaluation. He comes in and he scripts and then we meet with him and debrief, and usually what he's doing is he's pointing out what we are doing right and then he's connecting it to, for example, Dimensions of Learning. He sometimes gives us ideas of other ways to do it, or he'll say, "I've been in so and so's classroom. You might talk to this person, or this person has a different way of doing it." He also, if he's in your classroom and sees something that he thinks would benefit the whole school, he'll ask us to share at a staff meeting, just an idea of what we're doing and how we're doing it and how it impacts student learning.

One teacher described the way in which time had been structured by the principal to foster commitment to goals.

We have, of course, our monthly meeting. We

have one always for professional development, so indeed sometimes it's about teaching practices, sometimes it's another subject. We've had it on math, on just different subjects. Once a month we work on technology, so that's also teaching practices, how you're going to incorporate technology. And this year we're actually getting the report card and everything set up on the computer. And then, sometimes grade level meeting, and that's how it's set up.

Finally, Teacher A3 explained,

Well, I think, number one, she does a lot of excellent talks with teachers. I mean she really communicates about what she sees, very specific, specific examples of things she sees happening. So she's always focused on what we're doing with the kids, I think, and certainly promotes teams working together.

Provides individual support. Providing individual support was noted a total of 56 times, ranking second in frequency only to fostering commitment to goals. Teacher A1 offered,

Well, I think one of the most effective ways that she facilitates collegiality is by being present in the classrooms. She periodically, not daily, but three or four times a week maybe, will just drop into each classroom in the school just to observe how things are going. She'll stop and talk to students while she's there. You never feel like the principal doesn't know what you're doing because she's, her presence is in your classroom and that helps. Another thing, she's always said that if something happens throughout the day, whether it's really good or a problem, she likes for us to talk to her about it so that if a parent were to call, she's already heard it and she can give our point of view. To me that's really strong support.

Another teacher reflected,

She actually gives me just a sense of that I am on the right track, oh you know, not that I'm on the right track, even, just that. She gives me the support to go out there and do this and then resolve it and discuss it later, you know what I mean, just that ability to do it, try it. And I

come from that experience, that's not huge, but I could have come to a school where she wasn't that open and then I would feel more shut down in that regard. So I think she really is out there for her faculty, to go out there and do this, you know, kind of jump in with both feet.

One principal stated,

I am a support person for teachers. It's very easy to find some of those kids in my office working to get caught up to, you know, get them going. And so whatever I can do to support the teachers with their students, particularly those that they're having a difficult time with, I'm available to do that, and they're willing to do that. And I think the teachers really appreciate that.

One of the teachers in this same school commented,

In the end, Cristina provides a working environment that I feel, where I am very safe, that I can say things and not be ridiculed, or what I say is valued. And if I do say something that's not what I should, the way Cristina corrects you is just beautifully, you know. She says you need to do

this, this and this, whatever the problem is. It's just wonderful because she just has such a warm demeanor that she is not threatening me. She's just encouraging me to become a better teacher.

In summary, Teacher C2 noted,

He is always coming through, you know, on his morning rounds and making sure, you know, basically asking, "Do you have everything? What do you need? I mean is there something you need?" And he has an open door where we can, if there's just the smallest thing to the largest thing, that we can go in and say, "You know, I need your opinion on this," or "What do you think about this?" And if he doesn't feel that that's within his jurisdiction, or if he feels like you can find it from another colleague or something, he'll put us together as well. "You might want to talk to this teacher or you might want to talk to that," and we did.

Provides intellectual stimulation. Although one of the least discussed conditions of leadership to promote collegiality with regard to the actual number of text

segments, this indicator was inserted into the discussion by 11 of the 15 teachers. When specifically mentioned, it was most often to point out the ways in which the principal provided current literature and research as a basis for discussion and participated fully in that learning and discussion.

If he spots something when he comes in your room, he'll try and give you another idea.

Oh, you know, "Read this part in this book."

And we all have the *Classroom Instruction that Works*. He gives us all the resources to go look things up if we need to and he refers to them frequently.

The principal of this same school described some of their work.

We have data teams with Doug Reeves' work out of Colorado. Every grade level is a data team with a data team leader, and they meet twice a month for one hour each time. And they have specific protocols that take the system for making standards work, and that whole website center for performance assessment, they take the protocols and they define what they want

kids to learn in a particular unit or lesson segment that have a common pre-assessment and post-assessment. They have common teacher-to-team designs, formative assessments and rating systems, rubrics and so forth. And then forms and protocols guide them through.

On a different note, Teacher A1 described,

One of the focuses that we did this last year was Love and Logic, which is just a very sensible program, respectful to kids, respectful for teachers. And it helped me a lot that we didn't have just one set time to focus on it, and then we were just supposed to go on from there, but he would come back periodically every two to three months to remind us again and we would discuss. So to me a one time teaching is not nearly effective as to keep on touching on it, to keep on reminding, keep on encouraging, so that you really can incorporate it into your teaching style because so many times a workshop will just be, only be a one time thing. And it's hard to suck it all in and implement. That really helped.

Another teacher described,

Part of the professional development, the book that we read was *PLC, The Professional Learning Community*, and as a staff we kind of discussed that and put some of those practices that we learned in there into. We started doing those ourselves as a staff.

Sets high expectations. The last leadership behavior described by teachers and principals, sets high expectations, elicited the third highest number of responses during the structured interviews, discussed by 14 of the 15 teachers. One teacher stated,

I think we all feel very comfortable going to her if we need something. And on the other hand she comes to us if she needs something, or if there's a problem. I think she stresses meeting state standards throughout the school. You know, we discuss that quite a bit in all areas, PE, art, music, in the classroom, but it's all of our jobs. I don't know how to say this, she has a way of being sweet about things, but you know she's very serious. And you just take it well. It's very easy to say, "Oh, I get it, I see what I need

to do." So that's the main thing.

Another teacher described,

He also, when we're working on teams, he also makes sure that every grade level is represented, that everybody feels they have an equal voice in the decisions that are made for the school. [He] just encourages us to meet with other grade levels and see where are they going, and where have they been, and how do we get them to the next step. So he's always in our classrooms; he knows what we're doing on a friendly basis.

A principal offered,

When the AIMS scores come in, we take those AIMS scores electronically, we dump them into our data base, and then we print them out, A to Z as a grade level. So the team's responsible for all the kids at the grade, subtle but powerful. We do not pit one teacher versus another; we have just chosen not to do that. They pick their kids out, but they get the point quite clearly, that we're all in this together. When we do it as a school from highest to lowest, we do it from highest to lowest alphabetically or something,

we do it that way and everybody's responsible to help. I have certain mindsets coming into it. One of them is that I use situational leadership from Blanchard and Hersey a lot. In my understanding of the way that works, is that my job is to figure out for this person and this task, do they need me to direct, coach, support or delegate to them as a whole person in that area. The way I view it is my job to help them grow to the point where they are independent, but that mindset then, the way I obviously approach people is, in my mind, is it's my job to teach them, to help them, to coach them to point to be the best person they can and not need me any longer.

He added,

We have five things we look for in persons when we hire anybody, including the custodian or the principal or anybody else: (1) people in diamond thinking. In the interviews and everything they have, our best guess is that children's needs will drive what they do, whether anybody's looking or not; (2) they are a natural team player; (3) they work hard when no one's looking;

(4) they continuously learn, seeking to go after that one more child and one more here or one better way of doing this when no one's looking; and (5) that they're a kind and decent human being. And the way we define that is, if it's the third rainy day in a row and you're all in the lounge and you're sitting next to me, who's trying to be nice?

From the perspective of the teachers who participated in this study, the most often cited leadership practices that supported collegiality were perceived as (1) fosters commitment to goals, (2) provides individual support, and (3) sets high expectations. Three other leadership practices were identified by teachers and principals, but often described as a support for the other three behaviors. These were (1) provides vision, (2) models appropriate behavior, and (3) provides intellectual stimulation.

Observations

For purposes of verification and triangulation, observations were conducted at the school sites. The observational data corroborated those gathered during interviews.

In all cases observed, the principals were not active participants in the collaborative meetings and team work times, although it was clear that the principals had provided the structure, and often the protocols, for success. In addition, although not observed, teachers indicated that school leaders were often present and participating in team meetings.

During one data team meeting at School C, grade level teachers in conjunction with special-area teachers met together to analyze data from a post-assessment administered to the entire grade level and determined their next steps. All individuals present at the meeting participated in the process. Summary forms, derived from the research and provided by the principal, were completed by the data team leader, who then met with the principal to share results. This meeting was conducted during a Monday afternoon early release time designated specifically for data team meetings. Teachers were enthusiastic about their student achievement results in the area of focus (writing) and wished for additional time to focus on other areas as well.

At another school site, a grade level worked together to institute a process of grouping students for reading

instruction across several classrooms. With the encouragement of the principal and the support of the fifth grade teachers who had been following this procedure for some time, fourth grade teachers met to divide students into instructional-level groupings. Criteria were established, pre-tests had been administered, and the discussion was open and respectful. In some cases, students were placed in groupings above their actual instructional level because the individual needed the challenge, and support was provided. Teachers shared information about students' personalities and behaviors.

During yet another observation, staff gathered for professional development provided by one of the teachers. Teachers worked in small groups on integrating technology into their teaching, and the facilitator instructed them about different resources available through ASSET. The focus on technology had been established by the school staff in conjunction with the principal.

Case Study

Cross-school comparisons yielded both similarities and differences among the three school sites. Demographically, schools in the study had similar size, comparable attendance rates, and a similar rating on the *School*

Culture Survey (Gruenert & Valentine, 1998), *Teacher Collaboration* subscale. Areas of dissimilarity included free/reduced lunch rate, mobility rate, and achievement levels.

School C was the highest income school examined, had the highest performance rating by the state, the highest average score on the *Teacher Collaboration* subscale, and the lowest mobility rate. Schools B and C were more closely aligned, having similar scores on the *Teacher Collaboration* subscale, more than 50% low income families, and a higher mobility rate. School B had the highest mobility rate of the schools, yet it outperformed School A. This could be accounted for, at least in part, by the formula used by the State of Arizona to determine the labels. Only the growth of students who had been at the school and tested for two consecutive years was included in the calculations for the school performance labels. With a higher mobility rate, many students who may not score well on standardized tests will have their scores excluded from the labeling process.

Demographics, however, were not the only differences among the three schools. In discussions about teacher collegial behaviors, School C teachers were generally more

articulate about their own behaviors. Talk about practice was 18% higher (43 segments as opposed to 33 and 35, respectively) for School C teachers than those from Schools A and B. Although not as significant, School C teachers also offered more discussion about working with colleagues on curriculum and teaching each other. When discussing the observation of colleagues' teaching, Schools A and C had more to offer than School B teachers, discussing this behavior 41% more (18 and 17 times, respectively, vs. 10 times).

When examining the conditions enhancing teacher collegiality, School C teachers again provided more discussion during the interviews. The biggest areas of difference included supportive structures (42 text segments vs. 27 and 24) and communication (23 text segments vs. 15 and 14). The other indicators were not as disparate. In addition, all five teachers interviewed had information to share that was categorized into all seven areas identifying the conditions that enhanced teacher collegiality.

Interestingly, when comparing School A with School B, School A provided more text segments discussing a culture supporting risk taking, a focus on teaching and learning, common goals and mindset, supportive structures, and

communication. School B discussed supportive peer relationships and shared leadership more than School A.

Only two areas were discussed by fewer than 100% of the interviewees, shared leadership and communication. Teachers from Schools A and B did not identify these conditions as universally as did the teachers in School C.

When examining the leadership behaviors identified by teachers who fostered and supported collegiality, it was interesting to note that the pattern of School A and C teachers were more similar with all five teachers from each site providing comments regarding four of the six leadership practices, fosters commitment to goals, provides individual support, provides intellectual stimulation, and sets high expectations. Only the practices of providing vision and modeling appropriate behavior were not noted by all teacher participants. In contrast, School B teachers were unanimous only when discussing the area of *provides individual support*.

The principals of the three school sites also showed interesting similarities and differences. Principal C was the most articulate, providing numerous examples of all six leadership practices. Principal A also discussed all six leader behaviors but in much less detail. Interestingly,

Principal B provided more information than Principal A in all but two areas. She did not include any examples of providing intellectual stimulation as a leadership practice that supports collegiality, nor did she identify the practice of modeling appropriate behavior as often as Principal A.

The differences among the three school sites are indicative of the different school cultures and ultimately may help explain variations in student achievement levels.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS,
AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

A focus on school improvement continues to be central to the work of schools in the current political climate. Purkey and Smith (1983) proposed a model for school improvement, suggesting that school culture plays a major role in determining its effectiveness. They emphasized that change efforts are longest lasting when the school culture embraces collaborative planning, shared decision making, and an atmosphere of collegiality, promoting risk taking and self-evaluation.

Discussing the idea that the creation of collegial cultures in schools can mediate the process of change, Fullan (2001) asserted that to change, schools must create new beliefs, meanings, and skills. When teachers work in an environment supportive of their collegial work, the implementation of change is of a higher quality and more easily sustained.

Many researchers have agreed that lasting school improvement includes collegiality as a core element (Bolman & Deal, 1991; Goodlad, 1999; Sergiovanni, 1994). The

principal, as leader and facilitator, must initiate change through empowering teachers and supporting their ideas and decisions, making collaboration a reality (Gilbert, 2000).

Even when school leaders value collegiality, effective implementation is not automatic. Guiding this research is the theoretical perspective outlined by Barth (1990).

Barth contended that collegiality was the foremost organizational characteristic that influenced fundamental cultural change and school improvement. He proposed four aspects of collegiality, "Teachers and principals talk with one another about practice, observe each other engaged in their work, share their craft knowledge and actively help each other become better" (pp. 161-179).

Overview of the Study

As discussed previously, the literature examining effective schools and school culture emphasized the importance of teacher collegiality for effecting lasting school change and continued improvement. Yet the evidence indicated that the majority of teachers in schools were still operating in a less than wholly collegial environment (Langfred, 1998; Lieberman & Rosenholtz, 1987; Little, 1982; Lortie, 1975; Shedd & Bacharach, 1991).

Current research has focused on leadership perceptions and behaviors that support and enhance, or inhibit, the growth of a collegial school culture (Gilbert, 2000; Humphrey, 2000; Lucas, 2000). However little or no research has examined the core beliefs and perceptions of teachers about collegiality in schools and the leadership behaviors that support it.

The primary purpose of this research was to describe the perceptions of teachers regarding collegiality in schools and the leadership behaviors that supported it. Using Barth's (1990) four indicators of collegiality in schools as a guide for defining collegiality, the author sought to determine what was actually occurring in schools and what the school leader was doing to foster a collegial school culture.

A multiple case study approach was used in this investigation to understand the collegial experiences of teachers within three school settings and their understanding of the leadership supports and inhibitors to their own collaboration. Staff perceptions of the factors that impacted those collegial experiences yielded important data. The research questions sought detailed descriptive

information from teachers about the collegial culture and practices at their schools.

Research Questions

The following research questions were examined in this study.

1. How do teachers demonstrate their own collegial behaviors in schools?
2. What conditions do teachers identify that enhance teacher collegiality?
3. What are the leadership behaviors that foster and support collegiality?

Summary of Findings

Following is a list of findings from this study.

1. Of Barth's (1990) four indicators of collegiality, *teachers talking about practice* and *teachers teaching one another* were the two most often discussed and practiced. The other two indicators, *teachers working with colleagues on curriculum* and *teachers observing colleagues' teaching*, were evident at all sites but were less often discussed and practiced.
2. Seven conditions enhancing collegiality in schools were identified by teachers: supportive peer

relationships, culture supporting risk taking, focus on teaching and learning, common goals and mindset, supportive structures, shared leadership, and communication. The top three in rank order of importance, based on the frequency of teacher responses, included supportive structures, focus on teaching and learning, and supportive peer relationships.

3. Leadership behaviors that fostered and supported collegiality were categorized into six areas: provides vision, models appropriate behavior, fosters commitment to goals, provides individual support, provides intellectual stimulation, and sets high expectations. These leadership behaviors are consistent with the practices of transformational leadership as described by Podsakoff et al. (1990). Teachers at all three schools cited the same three leadership conditions most often: fosters commitment to goals, provides individual support, and sets high expectations.
4. In contrast, the principals were somewhat more scattered in discussing the leadership conditions that fostered collegiality, focusing additionally

on providing vision and modeling appropriate behavior.

Discussion of Findings

The findings discussed are directly related to each specific research question. For the purpose of clarity, each question is restated, followed by discussion of the major findings.

Research Question 1

How do teachers demonstrate their own collegial behaviors in schools?

Responses from teachers, corroborated through the principal interviews, indicated that teachers in all three schools demonstrated the four behaviors associated with collegiality as defined by Barth (1990): talk with colleagues about practice, observe others teach, work together on curriculum, and teach each other. *Teachers talking about practice* was the most common collegial behavior discussed by teachers, followed by discussion about *teaching each other or learning from one another*. *Planning together with colleagues and working on curriculum* ranked third in the number of responses, followed by *observing one another teach*.

The types of behaviors described by the teachers when discussing their collegial activities aligned neatly with Little's (1982) indicators of joint work, which she described as moving an organization from a state of independence to a condition of interdependence. Every behavior outlined in Table 2.2 was evident at some level at the three school sites that were considered highly collegial. Again, the most prevalent included talking about practice, sharing craft knowledge, persuading others to try an idea/approach, making collective agreements to test an idea, analyzing practices and effects, teaching each other during formal in-service, teaching each other informally, talking "publicly" about what one is learning or wants to learn, inviting and observing each other to teach, preparing lesson plans, and designing curriculum units.

Another view of collegiality described by Johnson (1990) outlined collegial teacher behaviors as working together, discussing goals, planning together, observing one another, and sharing successes and failures. These behaviors were again evident at all school sites, providing further support for calling these schools highly collegial in nature. One teacher reflected,

We'd get together every week and make sure that we had our calendar finished throughout the end of the year, but we'd also get together to talk about how our teaching, specifically we'll say math, was going, what we were doing. We had a tutorial in the afternoons, for 30 minutes, three times a week where we had leveled students and one teacher would teach the remedial group and one would teach the grade-level class, and then the other one would teach enrichment. And so we would get together to find out how that was going, and ideas about how to teach a specific concept, so regularly. But more often we would talk about ways that maybe one of us had taught a particular concept that was very effective and then share it and work together on it.

Furthermore, teachers often expressed a desire to engage in even more collegial work than was currently occurring.

Occasionally we have staff meetings where there are cross grade-level feedback, you know, what kinds of things are you seeing with kids coming in, what would you like to see with kids coming in. I think if that happened on a more regular basis

for all subject areas, that would be extremely helpful. You know, as a grade-level team, if we're seeing something, we'll go and talk to the fourth-grade team. I think that would be a really good thing to have something a little bit for formal and a little bit more frequent.

The most prevalent collegial teacher behavior was *talking about practice*. Teachers across all three sites cited numerous examples of ways in which they engaged in this activity. *Teaching one another*, whether formally or informally, was the next most often cited teacher behavior. Teachers believed that they could learn from one another and had much to offer colleagues from their own experience. *Curriculum work and co-planning* were third in rank order. Primarily, teachers discussed formal curriculum work in this category. Finally, *teachers observing one another teach* was the least evident collegial behavior. However, study participants often identified a need and desire for more of this practice.

Research Question 2

What conditions do teachers identify that enhance teacher collegiality?

Analysis of the interviews with teachers about the collegiality in their schools identified seven main themes or conditions that emerged as necessary to enhance collegiality: supportive peer relationships, culture supporting risk taking, focus on teaching and learning, common goals and mindset, supportive structures, shared leadership, and communication. Supportive structures were the most often discussed as a vital condition for collegiality. A focus on teaching and learning, followed by supportive peer relationships were next in the frequency of responses.

Supportive structures included time and other resources such as the provision of substitutes, alternative schedules, etc. The resources cited all revolved primarily around structuring more time for teachers to work together. One teacher commented,

It would probably take having a plan and saying, "Okay, this is what we're going to do during the month of April. This day I'm coming to your [room]," and just making sure that there's a plan and it can be done, 'cause we've done it. I think the first thing that comes to my mind is just the idea of having, like our second-grade team,

really meet and talking about and focusing on that and then it could happen. I think if we said, "Okay, we're really going to work on [this]. We're trying these new strategies; let's see what it looks like in all of our rooms. So let's make the time and set aside the time and really dedicate the next six months to that, or the next however long to focus it." I guess it's just sometimes our plates just get so full with so many other pieces, as I know you understand.

Hargreaves and Dawe (1990) discussed the importance of time to build a genuinely collaborative culture. The traditional structure of schools supports isolation of teachers (Johnson, 1990); though sometimes contrived, significant amounts of time must be provided for teachers to interact on a deeper level with one another in the workplace. Whether planning, observation, professional development, or curriculum development and evaluation, time is the most pressing condition to support collegiality.

Interestingly, a focus on teaching and learning emerged as the second most discussed condition for collegiality. It makes sense that the purpose of schools

is to focus on teaching and learning and that time is limited, so truly interdependent collegiality must stay focused on why teachers are there. DuFour (2001) and Hord (1997) stressed the need for collaboration and learning together about teaching practice in order to maximize student learning. Although a few social activities were mentioned, teachers overwhelmingly viewed collegiality in light of their practice of teaching. A teacher of gifted students stated,

I'm on two committees, the Academic Best Team and the Core IT Team, which basically is a team that looks at making sure that no children fall through the cracks as far as special ed, reading, second language speakers, anything that needs to be done to help that individual child. We try to look at each child individually.

Supportive peer relationships was the next most often discussed theme with regard to teacher collegiality. This indicator, however, was tied closely to the remaining indicators, a culture supporting risk taking, common goals and mindset, shared leadership, and communication.

Teachers engaged in collaborative work need a sense of trust in one another (Bolman & Deal, 1994; Champy, 1995;

Donaldson & Sanderson, 1996), enabling them to take the risk of becoming interdependent. A shared vision and common goals provide the conditions necessary for collegiality (Bolman & Deal, 1994; Carlson, 1996; Johnson, 1990; Schlechty, 1990; Sergiovanni, 1994). Nias et al. (1989) discussed shared leadership, vision, trust, the ability to listen and communicate, and peer support as vital for effective collegiality among teachers. Likewise, Ball and Rundquist (1993) emphasized the role of communication. Overall, when the organization and the teachers within that organization demonstrate true collegiality or joint work based on interdependence, systems thinking is in the forefront (Fullan, 2001). One teacher posed,

I think it has to be a comfortable situation where everybody is working for the same goals and everybody feels that and knows that there's nobody competing to be the best. Because as soon as you have certain people trying to be the best at things, then other people are feeling not comfortable enough to say what they want to do or comfortable about their

performance and everything because it's not a competition. And I think what we need is not to have competition; it's to have the same goals of just helping each other and just trying to reach the kids the best way that we can.

Another summarized,

I think you would have to have a good working relationship, other than time, as well. Open mind, everybody here gets along. It's like it's the School B Family and it truly is a family and I think everybody gets along and are willing to share their ideas. They're willing to tell anybody whatever they know. If I create an assessment or something and somebody wants it, please take it, or vice versa. We're willing to share. It's great, I love working here!

In summary, the conditions that enhanced teacher collegiality were the conditions necessary to support an interdependent organization: trust in and support from colleagues, a common vision and goals, a commitment to shared leadership among all staff focused on teaching and learning, a culture conducive to risk taking, good

communication, and adequate time to connect the vital pieces of a highly collegial culture. One teacher reflected,

It would be [to improve the collegial culture at school] to get teachers here to understand that talking about something doesn't create change. You must do something. Being willing to create change doesn't create change. You have to do the activities involved.

Research Question 3

What are the leadership behaviors that foster and support collegiality?

Examination of interview data from all three school sites yielded common themes. When teachers were asked to talk about what they needed from their principal or school leader in order to engage in specific collegial behaviors, six themes emerged. These six themes were consistent with the literature review by Podsakoff, et al. (1990) that identified six dimensions of leadership practice. These are provides vision, models appropriate behavior, fosters commitment to goals, provides individual support, provides intellectual stimulation, and sets high expectations. Teachers were consistent in identifying the same top three

leadership behaviors that enhanced and supported teacher collegiality. Again, the three most often discussed practices were fosters commitment to goals, provides individual support, and sets high expectations. The leaders from the three school sites identified the same three behaviors as important but discussed vision and modeling as vital components as well.

When classifying statements made by teachers with regard to the leadership behavior of providing vision, only statements that referenced a clearly articulated vision espoused by the leader were coded into this category. Those specific references were somewhat limited. Podsakoff, et al. (1990), however, suggested that value-laden vision led to unwavering commitment by teachers, also providing an imminent purpose for continued professional learning. This, then, tied closely to the leadership behavior of fostering commitment to goals; this leadership behavior yielded the highest number of utterances gathered during the interviews. Leaders must provide the target for the future, the vision or goal, inspiring followers to collaboratively work toward that end. By fostering commitment to goals, leaders must encourage staff to

cooperate and work together to reach the goal. As one school leader stated,

Collegiality is different than getting along nice, being nice and playing nice. Being nice and playing nice is a premise, but collegiality is working together collaboratively to go after meeting every single child's needs. [It's] children at the center, everybody working together and simply not letting go until every kid gets it!

The second most discussed leadership practice was *provides individual support*. Leaders were seen as respectful of the individual needs of staff members, providing verbal and emotional support, as well as information, instruction, and encouragement in the area of professional practice. Teachers felt comfortable taking risks because they trusted the leader to assist them to be successful. One individual suggested,

Well, I think one of the most effective ways that she facilitates collegiality is by being present in the classrooms. She periodically, not daily, but three or four times a week maybe, will just drop into each classroom in the school

just to observe how things are going. She'll stop and talk to students while she's there. You never feel like the principal doesn't know what you're doing because her presence is in your classroom and that helps.

Another teachers explained,

If there's something that I'm not sure how to teach, for instance, if I wanted to see someone that's really good at teaching inferencing, I would go to him and say, "Charles, I'm struggling with this." And he knows who's good at everything in this school. He would say, "Well, why don't you go watch this teacher?," and he would come into the classroom and take over my class if it was during a time where I didn't have a plan time. He's offered to do that quite often, and he will do that and say, "Okay, I'll come in and you can go watch this person teach," but he knows who's good at what. He'll always point us in the right direction and say this is the person that you could go talk to. What Charles does well is

that he does come in so often that he knows our teaching styles and who we can go to if we're struggling with how to teach a particular subject area.

Sets high expectations was the third most reported leadership practice that emerged from the interview data. Teachers discussed the expectations of the leaders for high performance of staff and students and a continual striving for excellence. Through the eyes of the principal, teachers were able to see the challenges inherent in the school goals, thus helping them to better understand the gap between the goal and the present level of performance. When offered in a format that allowed teachers to see the steps needed to achieve and to understand that the expectations were reasonable and doable, high expectations were more easily accepted by teachers.

Although not as often discussed by teachers, *modeling* by the leader did emerge as a theme often enough to warrant discussion. When principals "walked their talk," teachers were enthusiastic about the direction of the school. Principals modeled working together and collegial problem solving. They held themselves to a high standard of excellence, demonstrating for teachers the way in which

they expected them to act and react. Teachers often commented on the way the leader modeled the core beliefs of the school, leading the way for others to follow. One school employee observed,

Well a lot of things, I think. Just by her presence in the classroom. She tries to be in everyone's classroom every day, but it doesn't always work because of meetings. But just the non-evaluative visit; she reads to classes every week if she can, so there are lots of things that she puts herself out to do that are over and above the evaluative piece of her work, so she's not seen as strictly the evaluator. And so people, I think, go to her with problems and questions more readily than they would if she stayed in the office and didn't make those contacts.

Finally, the leadership practice of providing intellectual stimulation was again not as often articulated by teachers, although the theme underlay much of what teachers discussed. They looked to their leader to provide relevant research and background for decision making and for changes in practice. They expected the leader to

stimulate their thought and challenge their assumptions about teaching and learning, stretching them to excel.

All six leadership behaviors are intimately intertwined. The literature suggested that if the leader has a strong vision, the other five leadership practices will follow. Teachers, when looking at the leadership practices that support collegiality, reported a greater desire for three of those practices, fosters commitment to goals, provides individual support, and sets high expectations. The three practices that were identified support and enhance the remaining three conditions.

Case Study

Comparisons among the three schools yielded interesting patterns. School C teachers not only discussed practice substantially more than School A or B teachers, but that discussion was often linked to professional literature and research. Principal C easily discussed professional literature as he spoke about the structure and operation of his school. His philosophy and day-to-day practice were rooted in research, and he shared those concepts with staff. In turn, teacher talk about practice often referred directly to the literature.

He'll try and give you another idea. "Oh,

you know, read this part in this book," and we all have the *Classroom Instruction That Works*. He gives us all the resources to go look things up if we need to and he refers to them frequently. I think the part that's really good, at those staff meetings that we've talked about those ideas, it was stated, "Oh, you can look at this page in this book. That's where, you know, I got the idea from." So that's been pretty helpful.

Participants in Schools A and C discussed examples of peer observation practices almost double that of School B participants. Both School A and School C had some type of formalized vehicle to promote teachers observing colleagues teaching. For School A, the program answered the need to improve mathematics instruction and was developed at the school level. For School C, the structure was district generated, following specific training in collegial coaching. School B had no formal structure in place, either at the local or district level.

As teachers discussed the conditions they believed enhanced and supported collegiality in the schools, School C teachers reflected substantially more than School A or B teachers in three specific areas: *supportive structures*,

focus on teaching and learning, and communication. In the area of *common goals and mindset*, School C differed somewhat from School A, but there was a more substantial difference from School B.

School C teachers collectively discussed a greater number of supportive structures already in place for collegiality among teachers but desired even more time for collaboration. They seemed to view collegiality as an integral part of their work and discussed the structures for collegiality, such as committees, organization of early release days, and professional development opportunities, for example, as necessary to sustain their growth and momentum. Communication was a vital ingredient. There seemed to be a balance between leader-structured opportunities for collegiality (committees or structure for early release days such as data teams) and teacher-selected collegial activities (professional development opportunities such as collegial coaching). Yet even with the teacher-selection of activity, the structure for collaboration (peer observation) was developed by the leadership at the district level. In contrast, collegial activities in Schools A and B were more loosely structured. The principals were integral in establishing the structures

for collaboration, but the outcomes expected from the activities were less defined. Little district support was indicated.

A focus on teaching and learning was most evident at School C. Respondents offered an average of 5.4 text segments in this area as compared to 4.2 from School A and 3.4 from School B. School C teachers were highly focused on teaching and learning, permeating much of their discussion about work. The focus emanated from the school leader. School A teachers were focused on teaching and learning as well, but it was less integral to their discussions. Because School A was labeled as *underperforming*, the need was created externally rather than internally. Finally, School B teachers had the least focus on teaching and learning, although it did exist. The school leader at this site shared a vision more focused on building relationships with the community than on teaching and learning.

The condition identified as *common goals and mindset* was least prevalent at School B. In examining all of the data collected, it seemed that this was due, at least in part, to the actual structure of School B. School A and School C had a continuum, serving grades kindergarten

through five; on the other hand, School B served kindergarten and grades four and five, causing a lack of continuity for both staff and students. The kindergarten teacher from School B mentioned the disconnectedness experienced by the kindergarten staff, indicating that their needs were very different from the rest of the school.

When examining the leadership behaviors that supported collegiality, some interesting trends emerged. Teachers from both School A and School C indicated at a much higher rate than School B the behavior of fostering commitment to goals as vital to supporting collegiality. Seventeen text segments from 5 School A teachers (3.4 per teacher) and 24 text segments from 5 School C teachers (4.8 per teacher) were identified; in contrast, only 4 School B teachers indicated this behavior, citing it only 6 times (1.5 per teacher). This finding, combined with the previous discussion about a greater focus on teaching and learning in Schools A and C, would suggest that teachers need their school principal to lead the way, maintaining their focus and fostering their commitment to goals.

Interestingly, teachers in all three schools discussed shared leadership at about the same rate, averaging only

about two text segments per teacher. Teachers did not seem to view their activities within the school in light of leadership. Yet the evidence suggested that teacher leadership was very evident at all three sites. Teachers most often worked without the physical presence of the school principal, driving committee work and professional development activities. They examined data, provided feedback to one another, evaluated their progress with students, and planned and implemented programs to benefit the students, all without the direct supervision of the principal. They provided their own leadership, continuing to move forward in a collegial environment. Although not recognized by the teachers, teacher leadership was a vital ingredient to collegiality in schools.

In summary, School C teachers articulated their own collegiality at a higher rate than did the teachers from School A or School B. Conscious discourse focused on the literature of teaching and learning was evident among the School C teachers; higher levels of student achievement were also noted at School C. Structures for collegial work were often initiated by the principal or the district, and the goals of the school were continually kept in the forefront. Teacher leadership was a necessary ingredient

to collegiality at all school sites, yet it was not recognized as such by the teachers.

Implications for Practice

The literature drawn from the school restructuring era of the late 20th century suggested that in the social organization of schools as workplaces, teacher collegiality was a factor that helped to delineate effective from ineffective schools (Little, 1982; Rosenholtz, 1989). The correlation between teacher collegiality and effective schools was, therefore, well documented. Collegiality has also been tied to enhanced professional development (Conley, et al., 1995; DuFour, 2004; Fullan, 2005), decision making (Hoy & Tarter, 1993), and leadership (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991).

As more and more pressure is placed on schools to perform, teachers and principals working together to create a culture of excellence becomes vital. Collegial workplaces must be encouraged and nurtured. Few studies have looked globally at the leadership practices that support and enhance collegiality in schools. Many authors discussed goals and vision (Bolman & Deal, 1994; Carlson, 1996; DuFour, 2001; Hord, 1997; Johnson, 1990; Schlecty, 1990) and shared leadership (Bennis, 1989; Bolman & Deal,

1994; Carlson, 1996; Champy, 1995; DuFour, 2001; Hord, 1997). Schlecty (1990) and Hord (1997) discussed high expectations, and Hoy et al. (1992) emphasized supportive leadership. This study concluded that the collective transformational leadership behaviors of principals supported and sustained collegial practices of teachers.

Day-to-Day Practice

The results of this study supported the practice of transformational leadership behaviors as adapted and described by Podsakoff et al. (1990) to support and enhance collegial school cultures. Teacher collegiality, including teachers talking about practice, working together on curriculum, observing one another teach, and learning from one another (Barth, 1990), was important for a learning organization to continue to grow and meet the needs of the students in an era of high accountability. Teacher isolation is no longer effective. Principal leaders must practice the six identified leadership behaviors on a daily basis to increase and maintain high levels of teacher collegiality. As evidenced by the data from the teachers in the identified highly collegial schools, these behaviors must be an everyday part of the operation of the principal. Principals must provide a vision fostering commitment to

the goals of the organization. The goals should be focused on student success. Principals must model appropriate behavior, provide intellectual stimulation, and set high expectations in a highly supportive environment.

Principals must become cognizant of their own behaviors, reflecting daily on their own practice and striving to include the identified behaviors into each day. Principals must understand the conditions that foster collegiality and shape the supportive conditions in order to enhance teacher collaboration.

Professional Development

Collegiality has been tied to enhanced professional development (Conley et al., 1995; DuFour, 2004; Fullan, 2005); therefore, transformational leadership practices that support collegiality are equally important to support and enhance professional development programs. Principals who understand the power of teachers learning together and practice transformational leadership behaviors to support this collegial growth can only increase the effectiveness of their own school site. In addition, collegiality supports the emergence of teacher leaders who, in turn, need to understand and practice transformational leadership behaviors.

Teachers throughout the study were enthusiastic about learning from and with one another. Principals must harness this enthusiasm, structuring their sites as professional learning communities and modeling lifelong collegial learning with their staffs.

Leadership Development

The results of this research have implications for leadership development programs, whether conducted by institutions of higher education or school districts. Both entities share the responsibility for shaping emerging school leaders, providing them with the most relevant research-based theory and practice designed to promote school effectiveness and ultimately increase student achievement.

The findings of this study strengthen the connection between well-established transformational leadership practices and teacher success. Thus, its place in leadership development programs is supported. Both aspiring and practicing leaders need to understand the theory and research behind the practice of transformational leadership and its link to collegiality in schools. They need to recognize the specific leadership behaviors in action, both in themselves and in others, translating

theory into practice. Aspiring and practicing leaders need to model the four dimensions of collegiality (Barth, 1990) on their own journey as a leader, talking with one another about practice, working together on curriculum, observing one another practice, and teaching one another. They should grow together toward embracing transformational leadership practices.

Leadership development programs that embrace the notion that leaders must work collaboratively to hone their skills and develop their understanding of leadership are essential. Leadership programs should provide leaders with a body of literature supporting them to discuss, digest, and implement the leadership practices revealed. Leaders should be encouraged and enabled to shadow one another, providing feedback on the use of transformational leadership practices in their daily lives. They should be working together to plan their own "lesson delivery," ways to change or enhance their school culture and facilitate collegiality among their own staffs. Finally, leadership development programs should recognize and value the ability of leaders to learn from one another. Discussion and problem solving must be integral parts of any program.

This study has added to the body of research, supporting the link between leadership behavior of principals and the collegiality of teachers. The transformational leadership practices identified in this study (*provides vision, models appropriate behavior, fosters commitment to goals, provides individual support, provides intellectual stimulation, and sets high expectations*) appear to contribute to school effectiveness and continuing teacher growth and development. Overall, these transformational leadership practices, when present at a higher degree such as at School C, appear to be connected to a higher level of collegiality and higher student achievement.

Limitations

A multiple case study format, this study examined three school sites identified as highly collegial based on their responses on a self-reported survey; thus, bias was inherently a part of the selection process. The researcher sought to verify the collegial culture of the selected school sites through short follow-up interviews at the school sites. Subjects were nominated by their principal. The small sample size, focused only on elementary school sites, provided additional limitations. The researcher

attempted to mitigate the bias inherent in a qualitative study of this nature by examining school sites outside of the school district in which she worked, recognizing that this was a cross-sectional study, not intended to look at schools over time, and seeking nominations for study participants from the school leaders.

The purpose of the study was to determine the conditions and behaviors that fostered collegiality based on teacher perception; therefore only schools rated high in collegiality were included. The researcher recognized, however, that the generalizability of the study may be limited because only cases deemed highly collegial were included. By focusing on the highly collegial schools, clear patterns emerged that could assist educators to recreate the conditions necessary to foster collegiality.

Recommendations for Further Research

The findings of this study suggested recommendations for further research, which are summarized below:

1. Examine the relationship between principal perceptions and teacher perceptions of collegiality and the leadership practices that enhance it. Understanding similarities and differences in the perceptions between principals and teachers could

further delineate ways to better support collegiality.

2. Examine elementary schools with differing identified levels of teacher collegiality to provide additional insight into the leadership practices that enhance teacher collegiality. Are there differences in teacher perceptions in school rated less collegial, and what are the implications?
3. Determine whether the leadership practices in secondary schools that supported collegiality would be consistent with those identified at the elementary school level. Traditionally, elementary schools are much smaller and structured differently from secondary schools. Secondary schools typically present different challenges for school leaders.
4. Examine the relationship between levels of collegiality and student achievement levels with respect to the degree of engagement by the leader in transformational leadership practices.
5. Explore the teachers' sense of their own leadership. This study suggested that teachers were

not aware of their own levels of teacher leadership. How does teacher leadership relate to collegiality?

6. Explore at a deeper level the differences between naturally occurring, or teacher led, collegiality and leader structured, or planned, collegiality. What conditions transform leader-structured collegiality to teacher-led collegiality?
7. Delineate the characteristics of the specific training programs that would best support principals and/or teachers to become more highly collegial and continually push to higher levels of collegiality in the schools.

Conclusion

Many researchers have agreed that lasting school improvement must have collegiality as a core element (Bolman & Deal, 1991; Goodlad, 1999; Sergiovanni, 1994). The principal, as leader and facilitator, must initiate change through empowering teachers and supporting their ideas and decisions, making collaboration a reality (Gilbert, 2000).

Even when school leaders value collegiality, effective implementation is not automatic. Guiding this research was

the theoretical perspective outlined by Barth (1990). Barth contended that collegiality was the foremost organizational characteristic that influenced fundamental cultural change and school improvement. He proposed four aspects of collegiality, "teachers and principals talk with one another about practice, observe each other engaged in their work, share their craft knowledge and actively help each other become better" (pp. 161-179).

This study examined teacher perceptions of the leadership practices that promoted and supported collegiality in schools. Several themes emerged. Of Barth's (1990) four indicators of collegiality, *teachers talking about practice* and *teachers teaching one another* were the two most often discussed and practiced. The other two indicators, *teachers working with colleagues on curriculum* and *teachers observing colleagues teaching*, were evident at all sites but less often discussed and practiced.

Seven conditions enhancing collegiality in schools were identified by teachers. These included supportive peer relationships, culture supporting risk taking, focus on teaching and learning, common goals and mindset, supportive structures, shared leadership, and

communication. The top three in rank order of importance, based on the frequency of teacher responses, included supportive structures, focus on teaching and learning, and supportive peer relationships.

Leadership behaviors that foster and support collegiality were categorized into six areas: provides vision, models appropriate behavior, fosters commitment to goals, provides individual support, provides intellectual stimulation, and sets high expectations. These leadership behaviors are consistent with the practices of transformational leadership as described by Podsakoff et al. (1990). Teachers cited the same three leadership conditions most often across all three schools. These were fosters commitment to goals, provides individual support and sets high expectations.

In contrast, the principals were somewhat more scattered in their responses when discussing the leadership conditions that fostered collegiality, focusing additionally on the behaviors of *provides vision* and *models appropriate behavior*.

Additional themes emerged from the data. School C was rated as the most collegial and demonstrated the highest student achievement. Although there was no evidence to

suggest a causal relationship, interesting patterns did emerge. Both the school leader and the teachers in School C were well versed in the educational literature on teaching and learning, discussing it and applying it to their practice. The structures that supported collegiality, such as time and mechanisms for peer observation, were orchestrated by the leadership, both of the school and the district. Without strong structural supports for collegiality, the opportunity for collaboration was much more limited. Finally, the notion of shared leadership was vital to a collegial culture, yet the teachers did not as often identify it as a condition for collegiality.

This study concluded that the collective transformational leadership behaviors of principals supported and sustained collegial practices of teachers. This has implications for the day-to-day practice of leaders, for the professional development of teachers, and for leadership development. A deep understanding of collegiality and the leadership practices that support and sustain it is necessary in an era of continuous school improvement.

APPENDIX A

STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Structured Interview Questions

Structured interview questions were as follows:

For Principals

1. What does collegiality look like in your building?
2. Tell me some instances of collegiality that have happened during the last month.
3. Define collegiality.
4. How do you promote/develop/facilitate collegiality in schools as defined by Barth (1990)?
5. Be specific as to the activities/things you do to promote/support collegiality.
6. Could you identify up to five teachers from your building who you believe are most actively involved in collegial activities? Do I have your permission to approach them about participation in this study?

For Teachers

1. Tell me a bit about yourself. How long have you worked at your school, etc.?
2. How does your principal promote/develop/facilitate collegiality in schools as defined by Barth (1990)?
3. How many times in the last month (of school) have you planned with colleagues? What does that look like?

4. How many times in the last month (of school) have you observed colleagues teaching? Tell me about that.
5. How many times in the last month (of school) have you worked with colleagues to develop and evaluate programs and project? Tell me about that.
6. How many times in the last month (of school) have you felt you learned from your colleagues? What does that look like?
7. What do you need in order to be able to talk about teaching practices? What is your principal doing to make this possible?
8. What do you need in order to be able to plan together with other teachers? What is the school leader doing to foster this?
9. What do you need in order to be able to observe one another teach? What is your principal doing to make this possible?
10. What do you need in order to be able to learn from and with one another? How is your principal involved in this process?

11. If you could choose one thing to improve the collegial culture at this school, what would that be, and why?
12. Are you willing to let me observe _____?

APPENDIX B

SCHOOL CULTURE SURVEY FORM 4-98

Developed at Middle Level Leadership Center, University of

Missouri

by Steve Gruenert and Jerry Valentine (1998)

SCHOOL CULTURE SURVEY

To what degree do these statements describe the conditions at your school?

Rate each statement on the following scale:

1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Neutral 4=Agree 5=Strongly Agree

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Teachers utilize professional networks to obtain information and resources for classroom instruction.	①	②	③	④	⑤
2. Leaders value teachers' ideas.	①	②	③	④	⑤
3. Teachers have opportunities for dialogue and planning across grades and subjects.	①	②	③	④	⑤
4. Teachers trust each other.	①	②	③	④	⑤
5. Teachers support the mission of the school.	①	②	③	④	⑤
6. Teachers and parents have common expectations for student performance.	①	②	③	④	⑤
7. Leaders in this school trust the professional judgments of teachers.	①	②	③	④	⑤
8. Teachers spend considerable time planning together.	①	②	③	④	⑤
9. Teachers regularly seek ideas from seminars, colleagues, and conferences.	①	②	③	④	⑤
10. Teachers are willing to help out whenever there is a problem.	①	②	③	④	⑤
11. Leaders take time to praise teachers that perform well.	①	②	③	④	⑤
12. The school mission provides a clear sense of direction for teachers.	①	②	③	④	⑤
13. Parents trust teachers' professional judgments.	①	②	③	④	⑤
14. Teachers are involved in the decision-making process.	①	②	③	④	⑤
15. Teachers take time to observe each other teaching.	①	②	③	④	⑤
16. Professional development is valued by the faculty.	①	②	③	④	⑤
17. Teachers' ideas are valued by other teachers.	①	②	③	④	⑤
18. Leaders in our school facilitate teachers working together.	①	②	③	④	⑤
19. Teachers understand the mission of the school.	①	②	③	④	⑤
20. Teachers are kept informed on current issues in the school.	①	②	③	④	⑤
21. Teachers and parents communicate frequently about student performance.	①	②	③	④	⑤
22. My involvement in policy or decision making is taken seriously.	①	②	③	④	⑤
23. Teachers are generally aware of what other teachers are teaching.	①	②	③	④	⑤
24. Teachers maintain a current knowledge base about the learning process.	①	②	③	④	⑤
25. Teachers work cooperatively in groups.	①	②	③	④	⑤
26. Teachers are rewarded for experimenting with new ideas and techniques.	①	②	③	④	⑤
27. The school mission statement reflects the values of the community.	①	②	③	④	⑤
28. Leaders support risk-taking and innovation in teaching.	①	②	③	④	⑤
29. Teachers work together to develop and evaluate programs and projects.	①	②	③	④	⑤
30. The faculty values school improvement.	①	②	③	④	⑤
31. Teaching performance reflects the mission of the school.	①	②	③	④	⑤
32. Administrators protect instruction and planning time.	①	②	③	④	⑤
33. Teaching practice disagreements are voiced openly and discussed.	①	②	③	④	⑤
34. Teachers are encouraged to share ideas.	①	②	③	④	⑤
35. Students generally accept responsibility for their schooling, for example they engage mentally in class and complete homework assignments.	①	②	③	④	⑤

SCHOOL CULTURE SURVEY

The School Culture Survey provides insight about the shared values/beliefs, the patterns of behavior, and the relationships in the school. Each factor measures a unique aspect of the school's collaborative culture. The factor definitions are underlined; the additional sentences provide more detail about the concepts associated with each factor.

Factor	Factor Name	Items	Chronbach Alpha Reliability (1998)
CL	<u>Collaborative Leadership</u> - measures the degree to which school leaders establish and maintain collaborative relationships with school staff. The leaders value teachers' ideas, seek input, engage staff in decision-making, and trust the professional judgment of the staff. Leaders support and reward risk-taking and innovative ideas designed to improve education for the students. Leaders reinforce the sharing of ideas and effective practices among all staff.	2, 7, 11, 14, 18, 20, 22, 26, 28, 32, 34	.910
TC	<u>Teacher Collaboration</u> - measures the degree to which teachers engage in constructive dialogue that furthers the educational vision of the school. Teachers across the school plan together, observe and discuss teaching practices, evaluate programs, and develop an awareness of the practices and programs of other teachers.	3, 8, 15, 23, 29, 33	.834
PD	<u>Professional Development</u> - measures the degree to which teachers value continuous personal development and school-wide improvement. Teachers seek ideas from seminars, colleagues, organizations, and other professional sources to maintain current knowledge, particularly current knowledge about instructional practices.	1, 9, 16, 24, 30	.821
CS	<u>Collegial Support</u> - measures the degree to which teachers work together effectively. Teachers trust each other, value each other's ideas, and assist each other as they work to accomplish the tasks of the school organization.	4, 10, 17, 25	.867
UP	<u>Unity of Purpose</u> - measures the degree to which teachers work toward a common mission for the school. Teachers understand, support, and perform in accordance with that mission.	5, 12, 19, 27, 31	.796
LP	<u>Learning Partnership</u> - measures the degree to which teachers, parents, and students work together for the common good of the student. Parents and teachers share common expectations and communicate frequently about student performance. Parents trust teachers and students generally accept responsibility for their schooling.	6, 13, 21, 35	.658

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