EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP FOR SCHOOL CHANGE--
STORIES BY SIX LATINA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

by
Anna Yolanda Loebe

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entitled EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP FOR SCHOOL CHANGE - STORIES BY

SIX LATINA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement for the
Degree of Doctor of Education

Kris Bosworth
Alberto Arenas
Toni Griego-Jones
John Taylor

Final approval and acceptance of this dissertation is contingent upon the
candidate’s submission of the final copies of the dissertation to the Graduate College.

I hereby certify that I have read this dissertation prepared under my direction and
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Dissertation Director: Kris Bosworth
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SIGNED: Anna Uplandia Locke
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Six female, Hispanic elementary school principals from a southwestern urban school district were asked to describe leadership for school change through personal narrative in response to two central questions: (1) How does the Latina elementary school principal define and enact leadership for school change? and (2) How does the variable of ethnic culture interplay in the Latina educational role? A phenomenological research approach was used to seek answers to these questions. The participants were interviewed on three separate occasions within a one-month period using three in-depth, phenomenological interviews designed to draw out the participants’ subjective, intuitive, personal, and metaphorical interpretations of the meaning of educational leadership as well as to identify any leadership characteristics they might attribute to Latina culture.

The participants’ metaphors defining educational leadership depicted a vibrant living mosaic of a leader responsible for developing the human potential of children and adults on a stage with ever-changing directors, props, and costumes. The more literal definitions of leadership conveyed a common belief that leadership is a collaborative effort of moving others forward toward some defined goal, generally of improving student learning. They identified three unique features of educational leadership. Educating children and youth creates a different kind of leadership when one must accept all students. Secondly, educational leaders are change agents responding to reform agendas primarily emanating from government sources. Lastly, educational leaders must be able to deal with limited budgets in creative and resourceful ways.
The participants described how Latina culture influenced their leadership development and roles. They reported various kinds of barriers, tensions, conflicts, and ambivalence in realizing education and career goals. However, they found ways to circumvent or transcend obstacles along their career paths. All participants reported cultural differences in their leadership styles. Dominant features of Latina leadership included speaking Spanish and understanding Latino culture, respect, service, sense of family, empathy, and use of personal narratives. Three other themes emerged from their stories—the need to “prove” themselves in academic and professional endeavors, the passion and urgency to right inequities, and the need to serve as cultural “brokers” to lead others to greater cultural understanding.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

School principals are charged with leading the nation’s schools and initiating school changes in response to the reform movements of the day and within the period’s zeitgeist. Though responsible for the education of youth and the professional development of their faculty, their preparation to lead as principals has traditionally come from fields outside of education. The typical industrial-era organizational and leadership theories, models, and designs have been drawn from the fields of business, industry, and government. Western European males guided by a positivist research paradigm have historically told these leadership and organizational stories. Today, as business, industry, and government groups vie for control of the schoolhouse, it appears that the time has come for school principals to tell their own organizational and leadership stories.

If school principals are indeed to take charge of the schoolhouse, then it may be necessary to describe to non-educators what educational leaders do to lead human beings to exemplary levels of performance. If the stories are to reflect society’s diversity, then these first-person narratives must include those of women and ethnic minorities in educational leadership roles. Collectively, the stories can create an idiographic body of knowledge from which to identify distinguishing characteristics as well as any particular ethnic cultural perspectives of educational leadership. Within the educational leaders’ stories, we may find what is essential to lead our youth into the future that has yet to be discovered by business, industry, or government scholars of leadership. This research
study reports six educational leadership stories using an interpretive social science approach.

This dissertation documents a qualitative study of first-person narratives describing educational leadership for school change. The participants were six Latina elementary school principals from an urban school district in Southern Arizona. The study was based upon a three-part series of interviews. The first chapter of the dissertation presents the background of the study, specifies the purpose of the study, describes its significance, and presents an overview of the methodology used. The chapter concludes with limitations of the study and definitions of special terms.

Background of the Study

The year-long shadowing of two Latina elementary school principals voluntarily involved in a school reinvention project during the academic year 1993-1994 gave rise to a number of questions about the lives of principals as educational leaders and as facilitators of school change. What makes one an educational leader? Is it realistic to expect principals to enact significant and enduring school changes given the structures and systems of competing interests that govern schools? Are there unique ethnic cultural features of leadership particular to the Hispanic female (Latina) leader? Why is there not more educational leadership literature written from the practitioner’s perspective? From the woman’s perspective? From the Latina’s perspective? Educational administration and leadership courses in the researcher’s master’s and doctoral degree programs provided few, if any, answers to these questions.
In the researcher’s graduate academic experience, the literature and course of studies leading to a master’s degree program in educational administration in 1981-1982 emphasized that leaders are born. Special personality traits made one a leader. Ten years later, the literature and course of studies for a doctor of education program in educational leadership emphasized that leaders can be made. Special skills and practices make one a leader. Though simply contrasted here, the two prevailing theories of leadership were insufficient for determining what makes one an educational leader. Gender and cultural features of leadership were scarcely addressed.

The topic of women in leadership roles was briefly mentioned in three pages of a leadership textbook used between 1981 and 1997. In the Spring of 1998, a female professor organized an experimental course entitled “Women’s Voices in Leadership.” Four women were invited to enroll in the seminar course. None of the educational leadership course literature or discussions addressed ethnic cultural features of leadership. The review of the literature for this work included discussions of female and Latina leadership perspectives as well as reasons for the relatively late inclusion of their perspectives in the literature. The year-long observations of and conversations with two Latina principals in the midst of their work demonstrated that more than traits and skills appeared to be necessary to lead others toward school change in response to the reform agendas and social milieu of the day.

All educational leaders enact and tell their stories within common schooling contexts. The leader stories told here are set against the following backdrops: (1) educational reform agendas typically driven by governmental bodies and the
corresponding role of principal and (2) the nation’s increasing Latino population. A discussion of each background feature follows.

Educational Reform Agendas and the Corresponding Role of Principal

Reform movements typically influence school changes and serve as part of the context in which principals enact leadership. Hence, a summary of the reform movements and the role of principal between 1980 and 2000 are presented here as a backdrop for the educational leadership stories documented in this dissertation.

The years between 1981 and 1998 comprised what Murphy and Adams (1998) called the “Intensification Era” (1980-1987) and the “Restructuring Era” (1986-1995) of educational reform. The early 80s were marked by government-initiated reforms calling for tighter education regulations and increased graduation requirements, prescribed curriculum, and staff development programs outlining clear, sequential steps for managing school-based improvement teams led by the principal. The principal was expected to be an instructional leader. The role required principals to supervise curriculum and instruction and to monitor student progress closely. This role, however, would soon be extended to others besides the principal.

Populist notions of governance and school choice marked the late 80s through the early 90s. For example, the numbers of charter schools increased. In 1991, there were no charter schools in the nation. By 1996, there were almost 300 in operation (Nathan, 1999). Site-based management teams governed local schools, and parents became more involved in school matters. Instead of top-down mandates, educational leaders were expected to exercise problem-solving capacities in which they identified goals and
practices to achieve them. Furthermore, "discussions of school restructuring . . . emphasized the importance of collegiality, experimentation, teacher reflection and school-based staff development" (Hallinger, 1992, p. 42).

The early 90s ushered in the present "Reformation Era" (Murphy & Adams, 1998). During this period, the viability of public education was called into question. Government pushed standards and accountability measures in three areas: content (knowledge and skills), performance (degree of content mastery), and opportunity-to-learn standards (structures, resources, and processes of schooling that facilitate student learning). Because decentralization of school governance continues to evolve, principals have been charged with developing a shared vision, creating productive work cultures, and sharing leadership while exercising a greater tolerance for ambiguity and diversity (Hallinger, 1992; Leithwood, 1994). As the 90s drew to a close, it became evident that the role of the principal had become highly complex and diverse in response to the many voices competing for his or her attention.

Today, perhaps more than ever, educational leaders find themselves in the middle of the town square where representatives of government, professions, markets, and special interest groups have assembled to give orders and to cast stones even as studies argue that principals do make a difference in leading effective schools (Educational Research Service, National Association of Elementary School Principals, and National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2000). Because the mandates, pressures, and ambiguities in the lives of principals have increased, perhaps it is time for educational leaders to tell their own stories and to lead the discussions on how best to educate today's
children and youth for tomorrow's ever-evolving, diverse society. The next section describes one demographic change in the nation with immediate impact upon schools, teachers, and principals—the increasing numbers of individuals of Hispanic origin.

**The Increasing Hispanic American Population**

In the year 2004, mainstream newspaper reports detailed America's increasing numbers of Hispanic citizens, as well as undocumented immigrants. The latter group fueled debates and diatribes regarding borders, languages, health care, education, and justice issues, among others. Who are the Hispanic or Latino Americans?

The use of the terms *Hispanic* and *Latino* are used interchangeably throughout this text to describe a growing ethnic minority group in the United States. Both terms have been used interchangeably in the literature, as well as in the U. S. Census Bureau report *Current Population Reports* of March 2001 (Therrien & Ramirez). Haro (1990) succinctly defined Latinos as “men and women of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Central or South American descent, and those from other Spanish-speaking regions of the world” (p. 42). This definition, however, is but a sweeping brush stroke of America's Hispanics.

Although Hispanic Americans may share Spanish as a common language other than English, “each national origin group’s relationship to the United States differs as do their experiences related to factors such as immigration, socioeconomic relationships, and political relations” (Santiago, 1996, p. 26). For example, Mexican Americans, or Chicanos, who are often perceived as “new immigrants,” were an integral part of the hemisphere long before the Pilgrims settled here. Mexican people were systematically
robbed of their lands and possessions and subjected to acts of discrimination and subjugation as the United States fulfilled its “manifest destiny.” Puerto Rico was obtained as a spoil of the Spanish American War in 1898. Puerto Ricans became citizens of the United States in 1917 as a result of the Jones Act. A “commonwealth” relationship was declared in 1957, thereby establishing a unique political and economic connection. Cubans were invited to seek refuge in this country based on failed U. S. policies to continue to control its leadership (Santiago, 1996). In sum, Latinos are a diverse group distinguished by such factors as race, socioeconomic status, prior educational experiences, language proficiency, and the number of generations lived in the United States, among other factors.

Nationally, 44.7% of Hispanics are most likely to reside in the West, 33.2% in the South, 14.1% in the Northeast, and 7.9% in the Midwest (Therrien & Ramirez, 2001). The Latino population of the United States has grown steadily in the past two decades. Between 1980 and 1990, there was a 53% increase in U. S. Latinos. In 1992, the Census Bureau predicted rapid growth from 24 million Hispanics in 1992 to 31 million by the year 2000 (U. S. Department of Commerce, as cited in Santiago, 1996). The actual census figure for the year 2000 was 32.8 million Latinos, 12% of the U. S. population (Therrien & Ramirez, 2001). How do Latinos fare economically and educationally?

Latinos are more likely than non-Hispanic Whites to live in poverty in the United States. In 1999, 22.8% of Hispanics were living in poverty, compared with 7.7% of non-Hispanic Whites. In the marketplace, Latinos are over-represented in the service,
operator, and manual labor occupations and are under-represented in the managerial and professional occupations. This economic profile rests upon the fact that two of every five Hispanics age 25 and older did not graduate from high school. In March 2000, only 57% of the Hispanic population had graduated from high school compared to 88.4 % of non-Hispanic Whites. Further, only 10.6 % of Latinos acquired a bachelor’s degree (Therrien & Ramirez, 2001).

These national statistics reflect two conditions affecting the economic future of this country. The growing number of Hispanics represents an ample labor pool for the years ahead, but the number of Hispanics living in poverty reflects inadequate education and social mobility among Hispanics (Muro, 2001). Such economic and educational factors inhibit establishing a norm of Hispanic leadership across the country and explain why the existing Hispanic leadership literature primarily describes the obstacles to economic and academic success faced by this group. Conversely, this study reveals leadership characteristics of successful female Hispanic educational leaders.

Purpose

The purpose of this study rests on two premises. First, educators play a vital role in the socialization of society’s children and youth. The central responsibility of educators is to educe, that is, to draw forth and develop human potential. The root of the words educe and educate means “to lead.” Educational leaders are charged with leading schools forward in collaboration with leaders from other fields. Given this phenomenon of schooling, this study argues that educational leaders have a responsibility to elucidate
what it means to educate and to lead as an educator rather than as a businessperson or legislator, for example.

The second premise for this study is based on the fact that most leadership research reflects positivist and Western European male perspectives. Within the field of educational leadership, the same has been true and continues to be true. A 1998 study of K-8 principals identified the typical K-8 principal as a 50-year-old white male leading a school (Doud & Keller, 1998). This study argues that in order to uncover the female and ethnic minority perspective of educational leadership, it is necessary to target these populations for inquiry and to use methods designed to capture the essence and quality of experience through a qualitative approach. This study sought to capture the nuances of educational leadership through the eyes and voices of six Latina elementary school principals.

In sum, the purpose of this study was to record, describe, and analyze the leadership stories of six Latina elementary school principals in order to answer two central questions: (1) How does the Latina elementary school principal define and enact leadership for school change? and (2) How does the variable of ethnic culture interplay in the Latina educational leadership role? Their stories illuminate further what it means to be an educational leader in an era marked by greater demographic, cultural, and ideological diversity.

Significance

Most theoretical frameworks of leadership spring from the natural and social sciences. The leadership research has been helpful in describing traits, dispositions, and
skills common to leaders across disciplines. Educational leadership research has historically borrowed approaches, methods, and tools from the social sciences to examine the practices of educational leaders. These tools have been useful for probing, measuring, and describing what educational leaders do; they have been less useful for examining and describing the meanings, values, beliefs, presuppositions, assumptions, judgments, and biases influencing the practices of educational leaders. This study attempted to seek out hidden features, aspects, qualities and meanings of educational leadership perceived by six Latina participants using phenomenological, critical race theory, and narrative perspectives and tools of inquiry.

The majority of the leadership research is reported from a Western European male perspective and tradition (Smith, 1998). More current studies include the perspectives of Anglo female leaders (Helgeson, 1990; Shum & Cheng, 1997), and to a small extent, comparative studies have included African American males and females (Byrd, 1999; Omelas, 1991). In the field of education, women hold the majority of teaching positions in elementary and middle schools, yet they continue to occupy fewer than half of the principal positions (National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2002). Among female educational administrators, few are Latinas (Byrd, 1999; National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2002; Omelas, 1991). Their voice is but a whisper in scholarly works. Therefore, only Latina principals were selected for this study. Their leadership stories augment the present meager accounts of Latina leadership in the research literature.
How might the Latina perspective contribute to the field of educational leadership and general leadership? In examining the stories of Latina elementary school principals, we may learn that a Latina cultural perspective can add to the pool of innovative means to lead, organize, and educate today's youth. Furthermore, studies such as this may uncover knowledge to apply to the academic preparation, recruitment, incentives, and retention of Latina educational leaders in graduate leadership programs, as well as along career paths. Overall, this study may assist in the promotion of multiple leadership perspectives with which to form mutually supportive relationships in schools and in communities.

Methodology

To seek answers to the questions regarding the essence of educational leadership from the perspective of Latina leaders, phenomenological, critical race theory, and narrative research approaches were used. The aim of these approaches was to uncover the participant's subjective, intuitive, metaphorical and hermeneutic interpretations of the definition and meaning of educational leadership. These approaches offer the means for exploring aspects of educational leadership that do not fit neatly into the categories of traits, skills, and dispositions. In this study, interviews were used to draw out leadership stories.

A set of three focused, in-depth interviews per participant was used to elicit stories describing life as an educational leader charged with bringing about school change. The first interview served to place each participant's leadership experience within the context of her life history. The second interview focused on leadership for change within the context of the school community. In the final interview, the
participants reflected on the meaning of their experiences as educational leaders. All interviews included questions designed to elucidate Latina perspectives of leadership. All interviews were pilot-tested by two retired Latina elementary school principals prior to the actual study.

A professional transcriber transcribed all interviews. Copies of the transcriptions were returned to the participants for their review. They were invited to make any desired changes to clarify, correct or expand their recorded statements. None of the participants requested changes or made additional statements. The participants’ narratives were examined for unique artifacts, values, and basic assumptions of educational leadership, school change, and Latina features of leadership. Common themes were noted. The analyses of the narratives were checked for bias by a professor serving on the researcher’s doctoral committee.

The phenomenological interview method is based on “the original and archetypal paradigm of human inquiry . . . two persons talking and asking questions of each other” (Heron as cited in Seidman, 1998, p. 2). In this study, however, the researcher asked questions only. It would have been natural to engage in two-way conversations for two reasons. First, the researcher, a Mexican American educator, knew each of the participants through previous collegial work interactions and shared similar personal bicultural and bilingual experiences. Secondly, the interviews were conducted in June 2003 when schools were no longer in session. The summer vacation timing coupled with the shared aspects between researcher and participants seemed to encourage more storytelling. Though no empirical evidence is proffered for the previous statement, the
Mexican American author Sandra Cisneros (as cited in Kanner, 2002) once made the following observation: “Mexicans are storytellers. We tell you stories the way people would give you a flower. The Mexicans give you a verbal flower” (p. 1). Nonetheless, the methods of phenomenological interviews and the use of narratives are not without limitations regardless of how freely the stories may be shared.

Limitations

The researcher conducted all interviews. Though this practice assured greater continuity, reliability, and validity factors, interviewer bias could affect the participants’ responses. In addition, prior knowledge of the participants could lead to the researcher’s unacknowledged positive or negative responses toward the participant and bias the data collection and analysis. To limit the potential for bias, participants were asked to provide feedback to transcriptions of interviews. A third party reader was asked to read samples of transcriptions and analyses to check for any bias.

Because the purpose of the interviews was to elicit stories based on the participants’ personal histories of leadership, most interview questions were intentionally broad and open-ended. Hence, the responses to the questions varied by participant. Furthermore, participants could only report their perceptions and perspectives of events. “The accuracy of recollections over an extended period of time diminishes, and responses can be distorted by the time and place of the interview, the emotional state of the respondent, and the respondent’s reaction to the interviewer” (Patton as cited in Lindeman, 1992, p. 20).
The small number of participants limited the pool of pertinent and data-rich sampling choices that would be available in a larger study. Secondly, the small sample limited conclusions that could be drawn from the participants’ narratives. Generalizations of the findings may not apply if local circumstances are different.

Definitions

*Change* To make different, to alter, or to modify. In the context of school environments, change generally disrupts people’s expectations with regard to their job content, raises questions, and causes feelings of anxiety, tentativeness, skepticism and ambiguity (Heckman, 1996; Salisbury & Conner as cited in Geijsel, Steegers, & van den Berg, 1999).

*Hispanic* A person whose ethnic heritage originates in a Spanish-speaking country such as Cuba, Mexico, Puerto Rico, most countries in Central and South America, and other countries.

*Latina* The Spanish term used to describe a Hispanic female.

*Latino/s* The Spanish term used to describe a Hispanic male; the plural form describes a group of Hispanic males or a mixed group of Hispanic males and females.

*Outgroup* A group “whose marginality defines the boundaries of the mainstream [and] whose voice and perspective . . . has [sic] been suppressed, devalued and abnormalized” (Delgado, 2000, p. 60). In this study, *outgroup* refers to an ethnic or racial minority group whose perspective is shaped by having lived their “whole lives thinking about and experiencing issues of race” (Bell as cited in Rochlin, 1995, p. 341).
Phenomenology  The science of phenomena that examines how humans intend (perceive) objects (things, ideas, imagination, or memories) through manifold (multiple) perspectives and within one’s environment and through one’s life experiences. The phenomenological perspective applied to educational leadership research is a means for illuminating the substance of cognition—the unique artifacts, values, and basic assumptions of educational leadership as perceived by educational leaders (Chamberlin, 1974; Mitchell, 1990).

Organization of the Dissertation

The background of the study and definition of terms conclude Chapter 1. Chapter 2, a review of the literature pertinent to this study, addresses the topics of women’s leadership, Latina leadership, the nature of change, and educational leadership necessary for change. Chapter 3 describes the theoretical constructs of critical race theory, phenomenology, and use of personal narrative as the bases for this study and methods of inquiry and analysis. Chapter 4 reports the results of the study, and Chapter 5, presents the summary and discussion of the key findings. Note, however, that the final chapter departs from the traditional dissertation format. In the style of scholar Gloria Ladson-Billings (1994), the researcher placed her related stories next to those gathered from the participants. This allowed the researcher to integrate a traditional method of inquiry with a method of inquiry that embraces story “as an appropriate methodology for transmitting the richness and complexity of cultural and social phenomenon” (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. x).
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Overview

The studies highlighted in this literature review examined the theoretical constructs of three major topics that may serve as a rationale and means for the exploration of the Latina perspective of educational leadership, a generally absent perspective in the current leadership literature. The first section examines the history and perspectives of women’s leadership and women’s ways of leading, and explores how the leadership characteristics of female school principal leaders compare to the leadership attributes of business and industry women leaders. The second section summarizes the status of Latina leadership, in general, and Latina leadership in the field of education, specifically. Because leadership is manifested in the context of change, the third and final section of this chapter addresses the nature of change and the type of educational leadership that most effectively promotes school change.

History and Perspectives of Women Leaders

A review of the literature revealed that the study of leadership and organizational theory has generally been the work of Western European males—findings about males interpreted by males. The assumption was that the research on males could be generalized to the female population. “Gilligan (1979) found women either were not involved in such research or if they were, and the findings were different, they were ignored” (Smith, 1998, pp. 38-39). The issue of women in the workplace began to appear in the literature of the 1970s. The few publications treating this topic “assumed that women were not really leaders . . . [and] none investigated how women acting as women, really led. They
just counseled women on how best to ape what men were doing” (Helgeson, 1990, p. xxxiii). Three decades later, the study of women’s ways of knowing and leading appears to be at an exploration stage. Investigators look for the signs and forms of the female perspective and how it influences and shapes work and public spaces they now occupy. A historical overview of how the rising number of women in the workplace between 1970 and 2000 influenced the study of leadership follows. This serves as a means to contextualize the resultant literature on women’s styles of leadership.

**The Impact of Women in the Workplace: 1970-2000**

The literature of the 1970s that acknowledged the growing presence of women in the workplace naively advised women to emulate male styles of organizational behavior. Some literature neglected the issue of gender altogether. Burns (1978) failed to discuss the possibility that leadership could be viewed differently by men and women in his definitive book *Leadership*. Thirteen years later, in the monograph *Leadership Styles* (American Association of School Administrators, 1993), author Anne Lewis also ignored the gender issue in her discussion of leadership theories. Helgeson (1990) offered a possible explanation for avoiding the issue: “Any examination of ‘difference’ was considered akin to stereotyping—inevitably undermining women’s ability to achieve high positions—rather than a way of broadening the base of leadership styles recognized by the marketplace” (p. xvi).

In the 1980s, women began to assume positions of authority and influence in the marketplace and other public spheres. Nonetheless, the literature on women in the workplace focused on their “handicaps”—the skills they lacked, what they needed to
learn, and why they had to change. To counter the perceived “handicaps,” women began to mobilize and speak out. Friedan (as cited in Smith, 1998) described how women first gathered to gain power and voice and then to establish the value of women’s work to life and society by redefining the family and restructuring institutions to equalize power. Because more and more women now worked outside the home, they saw the need for such things as parental leave, flexible scheduling, and child care facilities at the work site. As a result of their activism, laws concerning marital property reform, domestic abuse, sexual assault, gender discrimination, child support, welfare reform, and family medical leave were passed in various states. Women’s increased presence, influence, and their rising voices in the workplace and in public forums signaled that women perceived the work world differently than men, though they were still largely misunderstood.

What does the literature of the 90s say? Helgeson (1990) predicted that by the end of 1990, women in public positions of authority would constitute 45% of the labor force. Women were entering the workplace in response to the need of most families to earn two incomes, the high divorce rate, and a desire for financial independence. The dramatic reconfiguration of the workplace and family structures began to crumble the expectation that women needed to emulate men in their work roles. In turn, corporate leaders began to re-think the place of women among their ranks. Helgeson (1990) noted that the most successful companies would be those that aggressively hire, train, and promote women who express their personal values. Such organizations would be those inclined toward using holistic and intuitive approaches for setting new directions and opportunities for their organizations. Characteristics more typically ascribed to women such as concern for
people, interpersonal skills, intuitive management, and creative problem solving would be necessary for creating new formulas for success in the workplace. In sum, the literature of the 90s, moved away from telling women how to emulate “what men were doing” (Helgeson, 1990, p. xxxiii) to telling companies how to reinvent themselves for the new organization and societal cultures.

The appearance and influence of women in the workplace between 1970 and 2000 raised the issue of gender as another lens from which to study leadership. As leadership theory continues to evolve with the added voices and perspectives of women, it is important to recognize that gender is still not entirely integrated in leadership theory development. Neither are the issues of race, ethnicity, or class. “Tetreault (as cited in Sigford, 1995, p. 96) described a five-phase integration process to envision a process that interweaves” any new perspective from which to study leadership. For example, the literature of the 1970s revealed Phase 1 of the integration of gender in leadership studies—the male perspective alone defined the literature. Women were excluded. The 1980s ushered in Phase 2 by including women who performed well within the male tradition. Women were pseudo-included in the literature. The literature of the early 1990s revealed Phase 3—the acknowledgement that there were differences between men and women’s life views. However, the content, structure, and method of description were still more reflective of the male experience and perspective. Women were not excluded, but they were generally not the narrators of most stories. The late 1990s and new millennium brought the literature into Phase 4 of the integration process—the use of multidisciplinary approaches for analyzing women’s experiences within their own social, historical,
political, cultural, and economic contexts. As more studies include women’s first-person accounts of their views of leadership, the base of leadership theory broadens, and Phase 5 of the integration process can begin to emerge: the norm of drawing knowledge from males and females representing all races, ethnicities, and classes in an egalitarian manner. Until there is greater integration of gender, race, ethnicity, and class issues in the literature of leadership theories, the existing body of knowledge can serve to illuminate our questions and investigations. The following section highlights what we have learned thus far about women’s ways of leading.

Women’s Ways of Leading

Helgeson (1990) described women’s ways of leading from the observed and first-person accounts of five women leaders in her book *The Female Advantage-Women’s Ways of Leadership*. Helgeson found a prototype for her diary studies in Mintzberg’s (1973) study of five male executives, originally a dissertation, and later published as *The Nature of Managerial Work*. Mintzberg kept a minute-by-minute record of activities to discern the participants’ patterns of managerial behavior. Helgeson chose non-corporate women leaders for her study. In addition to noting the details of their work activities, she also tried to capture the nuances of their behaviors through shadowing and interviews. When compared to Mintzberg’s study, Helgeson revealed nine contrasts in managerial and leadership behaviors between men and women leaders.

The male executives worked at an unrelenting pace with no break in activity. The women worked at a steady pace with breaks scheduled into their day. Whereas men saw the day marked by interruptions and fragmentation, women saw their unscheduled tasks
as opportunities to connect with others. The men spent little time in activities not related to their work, such as family activities and hobbies. Conversely, the women made time for family, reading, and outside interests “to broaden their understanding of the world” (Helgeson, 1990, p.18). Both men and women maintained a complex network of people outside the company and preferred face-to-face meetings to gain information. However, women differed in that they set aside time to tend to mail as “a way of keeping relationships in good repair by being polite, thoughtful, and personal” (p. 24). The male executives spent little time in reflection; women often paused to consider how their decisions affected the larger society. The men primarily identified themselves with their jobs; women saw themselves as complex and multifaceted. The job was only one facet of their identity. Whereas the men had difficulty sharing information, women scheduled time to share information. Finally, the male executives saw work as the means to an end, and therefore, focused on the completion of tasks and the achievement of goals. Women, on the other hand, did not take an instrumental view of work or people. Instead, they saw the process of work and people as ends in themselves. Other studies have confirmed similar differences between males and females in positions of leadership.

A review of literature by Smith (1998) cited the findings of Miller (1976), Chodorow (1978), Lever (1978), Tibbetts (1980), Gilligan, (1982), Mitchell (1987), and Shakeshaft (1989) in describing characteristics of women’s leadership styles. Women tended to be more nurturing, caring, sensitive, and empathetic in their relationships than men. Women in leadership roles were found to be responsive and able to nurture and foster human potential in all people. These behaviors were reflective of women’s
dispositions toward connectiveness, interdependence, and contextualized thinking.

Helgeson (1990) commented on such characteristics of women leaders:

We feel . . . that women are more caring and intuitive, better at seeing the human side, quicker to cut through competitive distinctions of hierarchy and ranking, impatient with cumbersome protocols. Our belief in these notions is intuitive rather than articulated; we back it up with anecdotes instead of argument.

In sum, it appeared that women were less compelled to emulate men in the workplace. They introduced into the work environment their own experiences and expectations as well as those of the domestic domain: “organization, pacing, the balancing of conflicting claims, teaching, guiding, leading, monitoring, handling disturbances, imparting information” (Helgeson, 1990, p. 31). Helgeson concluded that corporations that had learned to incorporate such skills succeeded in the diversified global society and economy. Although women leaders in business and industry may profit from this knowledge, does the same knowledge also apply to women leaders in the field of education?

Women Leaders in Education

The literature surveying women and leadership has generally addressed the issue of gender through studies of women in the corporate and small-business world. Female educational leaders, specifically principals, were typically not the subjects of early gender-issue leadership studies. Blackmore (1989), an educator, explained:

In conventional educational administration, gender, race, or class have been treated unproblematically, largely because the literature ignores all discussion of
power and its implications for social relationships. It fails to contextualize organizations within broader social structures . . . [such as] the manner in which educational leadership is conceptualized and practiced. (p. 20)

Other educators who reviewed the literature confirmed this state of affairs as late as 1997: “Unfortunately, very few studies have been conducted to understand women principals’ leadership in terms of sex-role orientation and [the] multidimensions of leadership” (Shum & Cheng, 1997, p. 168). As in any other profession, the enactment of educational leadership emerges from the individual’s complex make-up, including the extent of compliance with the norms associated with gender. How, then, does the available literature describe the sex-role orientations of principals within the context of education?

In their review of the literature on educational leadership, Shum and Cheng (1997) found that, in general, male principals (or female principals with a masculine orientation) demonstrated dominant, unfriendly, instrumental, and control behavior. Conversely, female principals, or male principals with a feminine sex-role orientation, demonstrated submissive, friendly, emotionally expressive behavior. Generally, women principals expressed empathetic, sensitive, and collaborative attitudes, with good interpersonal skills. Those women principals who were androgynous in orientation may be both sensitive and emotionally expressive as well as independent and assertive. Some scholars encouraged the androgynous sex-role orientation for women principals to gain leadership success (Bolton; Korabik; and Sargent as cited in Shum & Cheng, 1997).
Sigford’s (1995) and Smith’s (1998) reviews of the literature on the leadership styles of female educational leaders, generally superintendents and principals, yielded similar findings of the interpersonal relationship skills, management skills, and instructional skills of women leaders in the field of education. Their findings were consistent with Smith’s conclusions that “Women . . . possess a leadership style based on mutual interdependence, interpersonal relationships, and community involvement. This style fosters collaborative and cooperative management skills” (pp. 51-52). The interpersonal relationship skills, management skills, and instructional skills of female educational leaders are summarized below.

**Interpersonal relationship skills.** In 1987, Shakeshaft (as cited in Sigford, 1995) concluded that women in educational leadership focused on building relationships and community as well as on teaching and learning issues. In 1998, Smith reiterated and expanded Shakeshaft’s conclusions as found in a number of studies she reviewed: Hemphill and Griffiths (1962); Frederikson Fishel and Potter (1975); Levandowski (1977); Tibbetts (1980); Adkinson (1981); Gilligan (1982), Loden (1985); Castro (1985); Gottwald and Towns (1986); and Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986). Their studies revealed that women administrators created more closely-knit organizations because of their interpersonal relationship skills. Women administrators encouraged teachers, parents, and community members to express themselves before decisions were made. They involved others in setting goals and making plans. They formed coalitions to mobilize support. As a result, parents and community members tended to become more involved in school affairs and were more approving of learning activities and outcomes.
However, Marshall (as cited in Sigford, 1995) pointed out that because female educational leaders are “atypicals” in the field—women leaders in a male world, they are generally more visible and more vulnerable to critique.

It appears, then, that women in education manifest the same, or similar, leadership dispositions as women in business and industry. This disposition toward mutual interdependence, collaborative decision making, and community involvement is typically manifested in a participatory management style as described below.

**Participatory management skills.** Smith (1998) reported that whereas male leaders tended to be independent, authoritarian, and controlling, using a hierarchical chain of command, women educational leaders were more democratic in approach. Women administrators tended to lead from the center rather than from the top given that their relationship with others was central for shared decision making. Though not describing female educational leaders, the business women in Helgeson’s (1990) diary studies also described themselves as leading from the middle:

> Not at the top, but in the center; not reaching down, but reaching out. The expressions were spontaneous . . . . Inseparable from their sense of themselves as being in the middle was the women’s notion of being connected to those around them by invisible strands or threads. (p. 45)

They saw themselves within a web rather than in a hierarchy.

Like the business and industry women leaders, female educational leaders were motivated by intrinsic rewards rather than controlling behaviors. They established authority by being interactive (Sigford, 1995). On the other hand, male educational
leaders tended to be more ambitious and competitive, and women administrators tended
to place more emphasis on people's needs and feelings. Thus, they were more prone to
use compromise and teamwork to solve problems and make decisions (Smith, 1998).
Furthermore, women were "more likely to break with tradition to experiment with new
ideas [because they were] more concerned with a vision based on humanity rather than on
latent theories" (Porat as cited in Sigford, 1995, p. 66).

Empathy. Interaction. Compromise. Teamwork. These are the attributes of female
educational leaders who perceive their leadership as "leadership through others--
empowering others through one's own knowledge and ideas--rather than leadership over
others. [It is] an educative, non-hierarchical view of leadership consistent with the view of
participation and dialogue as educative processes" (Blackmore, 1989, p. 27). As they
empowered others, women administrators found they also strengthened themselves
(Smith, 1998). Such attributes seemed to create a participatory style of leadership.

Women's participatory style of management appeared to fit current societal
demands for more ecological leadership approaches in organizations. Smith (1998) noted
that Naisbitt and Aburdene, authors of Megatrend 2000 (1990), proposed that
organizational structures be in the form of a lattice or grid. However, Frances Hesselbein
(as cited in Helgeson, 1990), chief executive officer of the Girl Scouts of America,
proposed a different idea for organizational structures of the new millennium:

The new system is circular . . . ; positions are represented as circles, which are
arranged in an expanding series of orbits. I use circles because symbolically they
are important. The circle is an organic image. We speak of the family circle. The
circle is *inclusive*, but it allows for flow and movement; the circle doesn’t box you in! I’ve always conceived of management as a circular process. (p. 44).

The lattice or the circle? Time will tell which organizational structure best conforms to a global society.

Although all leaders exercise management leadership skills, educational leaders also exercise educational and instructional skills. Though there is no single definition of educational leadership, Shum and Cheng (1997) offered a description: “Educational leadership refers to leadership influence through the generation and dissemination of educational knowledge and instructional information, development of teaching programmes and supervision of teaching performance” (p. 166). The next section highlights the educational and instructional leadership skills of women educators.

**Instructional leadership skills.** Women administrators in education have tended to be more involved in the instructional process of teachers and students at the school level than their male counterparts. Andrews and Basom (as cited in Sigford, 1995) found that women principals observed teachers considerably more often than male principals, valued the productivity of their teachers, and were more likely to be of assistance to new teachers. Women administrators were more concerned with academic achievement and demonstrated greater concern for individual differences, developmental problems, and the social-emotional development of their students, than were male principals. Other studies have arrived at similar conclusions.

Smith (1998) found in her review of the literature that women principals demonstrated more concern for working with children and were more involved in
instructional supervision than male school administrators. Women administrators demonstrated "greater respect for teachers and were involved in and approved more learning activities and outcomes . . . [They] were more involved in the supervision of the teaching process and monitored and intervened in instruction more than . . . [male administrators]" (p. 55). As a result, the climate of their schools was more conducive to higher academic achievement and higher quality performance of teachers. Why is this so?

Women principals tend to maintain a higher level of interest in and knowledge of current educational trends for two possible reasons. First, women administrators are generally more aware of the methods, techniques, and problems faced by teachers because on average they have spent more years teaching than male administrators (Smith, 1998). Secondly, they participate more often in professional growth activities. Sigford (1995) explained that such practices are reflective of the female educational leader's perspective: Female principals and superintendents view their roles as master teacher, educational leader, or pedagogue. Male administrators more often see their role from the managerial-industrial perspective. Because there are indeed differences in perspectives and behaviors between female and male educational leaders, how might the current knowledge be applied to the domain of schooling?

Three implications for educational leadership practices emerged from Sigford's (1995) review of studies. First, educational leaders are encouraged to use traits from either gender to adapt leadership skills to varying situations. "The androgynous sex-role orientation is particularly encouraged by scholars for women principals to gain leadership success" (Shum and Cheng, 1997, p. 166). Secondly, because organizations are value-
laden rather than neutral entities, leaders must make decisions based on ethics. The values women leaders bring to organizations can become standard fare for all schools. These are the values of persuasion, honesty, fairness, and sensitivity and concern for protecting each child's ability and equal opportunity to succeed. Finally, because research has increasingly linked good school administration with feminine modes of behavior, women principals are advised to avoid the male stereotype. Again, we return to an earlier finding—that women no longer have "to ape men" (Helgeson, 1990, p. xxxiii) in the work place and other public spheres.

In sum, the studies describing female business and industry leaders and those describing women leaders in education generally ascribed the same leadership attributes to each group of women leaders. More recent studies have placed the phenomenon of leadership under the lens of feminist theory that rests on the lens of critical theory. Viewed through these dual lenses, leadership theory has begun to be deconstructed. Placing the dimension of gender in leadership under the feminist lens means it is now possible to discuss women's role as leaders in one of two ways. The liberal feminist perspective examines the existing organizational structures and seeks ways to integrate women into that society. The radical feminist perspective seeks to establish new decentralized bureaucratic structures where all people can engage in personal, face-to-face relations rather than through formal protocol; be egalitarian rather than hierarchical, and share rather than hoard resources (Ferguson as cited in Hoy & Miskel, 1996). The latter feminist view is a wide-angle lens that sees beyond gender in the study of leadership.
The radical feminist perspective also seeks knowledge of issues such as race, ethnicity, and class in leadership. The next two sections of this literature review now turn to the leadership perspectives of Latinas, in general, and of Latina school principals, in particular.

Latina Leadership

The broad review of the literature for this study failed to provide documentation of a Latina educational leadership perspective. However, the literature did provide institutional and organizational strategies for increasing the representation of Latinos in the leadership pipelines. Most of the strategies called for educational and institutional reforms that nurture and promote Latino leadership. One writer stated it simply and emphatically: "The mantra must be: Educate, educate, educate! And much must be done fast" (Muro, 2001, p. B7) for Latino students as well as those responsible for educating them. Lopez (2000), however, argued that the search for solutions and strategies must begin with the process of rearticulation—re-framing problems. It is to look beneath and beyond what is immediately visible to the eye by asking critical questions such as the following suggested by Hoy and Miskel (1996): Whose voices are being silenced and why? Whose interests are served by current structures of authority? What structures are responsible for exclusion, repression, and inequality in organizations and societies? The answers to these questions have begun to be addressed in the current body of literature describing leadership. Though the literature is missing the Latino leadership perspective, reasons for its exclusion have been recorded.
The phenomenon of Latino leadership appears to be in an awakening phase—yawning and stretching itself into public recognition. However, the topics of Latina leadership and Latina educational leadership are barely stirring out of slumber, as evidenced by the two books, two dissertations, and two professional journal articles found pertinent to this study. There is scant research related to Latinas in any domain of leadership. Some explanations follow.

"The relationship of Hispanic women leadership to women leaders in the United States has been neglected and left out of the social sciences and feminist scholarship research" (Lopez, 2000, p. 218). The limited research on Latinas is due to the lack of understanding on the part of social scientists on the contributions, leadership styles, diversity, and organized movements of Hispanic women. The available research focuses on the obstacles Hispanic women face in their economic and professional development. These obstacles include sex and ethnic discrimination, low levels of educational attainment, low earning levels, and traditional sex-role socialization. In describing how Latinas are breaking new ground through leadership, Lopez described factors that influence career choices of Latinas and leadership stress factors affecting Latina leaders. These factors are summarized below.

Latinas experience a number of conflicts if they elect to work outside the home. Latinas learn early not to take risks and place a high value on security. Latinas have strong nurturing values and beliefs that if one works hard, one gets ahead. First-borns tend to experience ambivalence about pursuing a professional career. Hence, there is a reluctance to separate from family and to relocate if the career requires a move. Once
involved in a career, Latinas experience psychological conflict about holding loyalties to two conflicting goals: success in the mainstream and attachment to Hispanic culture. Cultural values suggest that power is unferminine. Therefore, Latinas tend to eliminate or avoid conflict rather than face it. Related to issues of power is the conflict of doing the right thing versus doing what is politically responsible. Finally, Latinas may find it difficult to distinguish between gender-based or race-related discrimination in the workplace or marketplace because they bear a double stigma-female and ethnic minority (Lopez, 2000).

Lopez’s (2000) review of studies of Latinas in the workplace revealed that to a large extent the women studied were first-borns who had assumed a large amount of responsibility in the family. Consequently, they seldom delegated responsibilities. This was often an unconscious act. In supervisory positions, Latinas tended to maintain an “in charge” posture for fear that they might be perceived as weak, regardless of how stressful a position is. Latinas were found to be overly formal and reticent about promoting themselves, especially in job interviews and toward powerful decision makers. When dealing with conflict, they tended to “freeze-up” instead of taking charge. These tendencies are attributed to the fact that Latinas typically move up the career ladder in isolation. They learn to “play the game” in one arena, but when exposed to a new arena, they keep their distance while learning to “read” the new situation they have entered without the feeling of equality. In essence, the majority of Latinas have had to teach themselves how to climb the ladder of success.
In sum, mainstream scholarship has not provided useful paradigms for understanding Latina women. Similarly, much of the recent feminist scholarship merely presents new stereotypes of women’s roles, rather than seriously addressing how “historical and social structural differences construct . . . different . . . choices for women” (Zambrana as cited in McKenna & Ortiz, 1988). In addition, the limited research on Latinas is exacerbated by the deficit, or problem, orientation of the existing studies and leaves Latinas vulnerable to stereotypic notions that are easily accepted by others as well as by Latinas themselves. The present dearth of empirical studies addressing Latinas explains the even smaller body of literature examining the role of Latina educational leaders. The next section summarizes what we have learned thus far about Latinas who become elementary and secondary school principals.

Latina School Principals

As with research documenting Hispanic female leadership, there is a dearth of studies related to Latina educational leaders. Ornelas (1991) found only sporadic data available comparing Anglo and Hispanic women administrators in terms of leadership styles and characteristics. Of these few comparative studies, Ornelas cautioned the reader not to assume that what applies to White females applies to Latinas. “The experiences of each group are sufficiently unique to warrant separate consideration. Furthermore, the terms race or ethnic minority, as used in the research literature, have been virtually synonymous with Black administrators. Only infrequently does it address Hispanic administrators” (Yeakey, Johnson, & Adkison as cited in Ornelas, 1991, p. 9). Overall, in the available studies of female school administrators, regardless of race or ethnicity,
“there is noticeable absence of studies which describe the experience of women from the viewpoint of the women themselves . . . [and] the majority of the research . . . has been conducted by women in doctoral programs seeking degrees in educational administration” (Smith, 1998, p. 20).

Byrd’s (1999) review of the literature revealed that “despite the projections of changing demographics, the hiring and promotional practices of school districts have not changed . . . Minorities and women . . . are still not represented appropriately in upper administrative positions” (p. 28). Further, by the year 2000 the population of public schools was comprised of one-third minority students yet faculty, educational leaders, and school board members of the nation’s K-12 public schools remain largely White, male, and middle-aged. A 1998 survey of K-8 principals confirmed that the typical K-8 principal is a 50-year-old white male (Doud & Keller). Clearly, the gender and racial stratification in public school administration does not yet parallel this country’s current demographics.

Though women comprise the majority of graduate school administration programs and the teaching ranks of the nation’s public schools, few women fill the highest and most powerful administrative positions in public education (Byrd, 1999). In 1998, 42% of principals of K-8 schools were women (National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2002). Of these women, Anglo women have been more successful than African-American and Hispanic women in filling supervisory and elementary school level administrative positions (Byrd, 1999). Among the nation’s women in administration, Latinas comprised 5.4% superintendents, 6.6 % assistant
superintendents, and 3.8% of high school principals. These positions are typically staff positions rather than line positions. Line positions have strong links to authority and top-level decision making in the organization; staff positions may only report to and make recommendations to figures of authority. What does the literature of the past two decades reveal about the few Latinas who have ascended to school system administrative positions?

Byrd’s (1999) review of the literature revealed that Latina school administrators were generally found directing special education programs or schools with large minority populations, usually with large concentrations of economically disadvantaged students. Latina administrators were typically assigned to schools with orders to improve conditions such as physical deterioration, low standardized test scores, and student apathy. However, they were given inadequate resources with which to make changes. In addition to dealing with poor building facilities and student problems, it was reported by Ornelas (as cited in Byrd, 1999) that Latina principals “had to deal with pre-dominantly non-Hispanic, and unhappy, personnel who viewed them as ‘warriors’ with orders to bring about stability to minority schools” (p. 27).

Byrd (1999) also found that male and female minority principals tended to remain in lower hierarchical positions as a result of the status conferred to minority schools and programs. Their appointments to such schools also contributed to the skepticism about their leadership capabilities. Yet other reports have indicated that Latinas believe that only Hispanic administrators can solve the problems in Hispanic schools (Padilla; Reyes & Valencia as cited in Byrd, 1999). In spite of the small numbers of Latinas who have
risen to school administrative positions regardless of the atypical positions they fill, what does the literature reveal about their defining characteristics?

The few studies related to Latina educational leadership revealed differences in career socialization and career paths of Latina administrators. Latina administrators were generally younger, of limited managerial experiences, and lacked sponsorship and inside information on how the system operates (Amodeo & Ortiz; Ortiz; Ortiz & Venegas, 1978 as cited in Omelas, 1991).

Byrd (1999) reported on a case study of the career paths, barriers, and strategies of six Latina administrators by Regules (1997). The typical Latina staff-level administrator began her career as a bilingual education teacher and then became a bilingual education resource teacher. The teacher roles were followed by a district administrator position before becoming an assistant principal. Eventually, she returned to the district level as a director before advancing to assistant superintendent. The typical Latina line-level administrator followed the same path except that she became a site administrator (principal) before returning to the district to be a director and eventually an assistant superintendent.

In a study of the variables most relevant to upward career mobility of Anglo and Hispanic female administrators, Omelas (1991) found that Hispanic women aspired to higher career goals than did the Anglo women. The Hispanic group, more than the Anglo group, attributed their career success to intentional change and also gave themselves the greater portion of credit for choosing, planning, and carrying out the change to become administrators. Latina administrators generally made three changes in order to achieve
their career goals. They changed their perceptions about the cultural role of women, their views about the organization as they moved from children and instruction to adults and administrative concerns, and their realizations regarding how they obtained and held their administrative positions.

Only three studies addressing leadership attributes of Latina school principals were found within two references used for this section of the literature review. The first reference, however, described attributes of successful male and female minority principals (Ortiz as cited in Omelas, 1991). Minority principals were found to be more sensitive and understanding of the problems of minorities. They possessed a repertoire of behaviors culturally appropriate within their own ethnic group as well as with other school personnel of the dominant group. Minority principals were found to be highly independent, strong-willed, and decisive. They developed a strong sense of mission and accomplishment and exhibited intensity about their work.

Omelas (1991) found in her review of the literature that Hispanic school administrators were assets to their school districts for a number of reasons. Note that the following comments were made of both Hispanic men and women administrators:

They conveyed a high sense of self-confidence, were highly student-oriented, [were] used to operating and adapting to different worlds (that of the Whites, Blacks, Browns), expressed desires to be the very best because they realized that they were being watched as examples, showed tremendous pride in their accomplishments, and strived for even greater accomplishments. (p.17)
Byrd's (1999) research included a study by Carr (1995) that indicated that female Mexican American educational administrators found it difficult to find their balance being Mexican American and female. The leadership styles of these Latina principals practiced aspects of management not utilized by Anglo males. Those included collaboration, teamwork, shared decision making, and a tolerance for diversity. These findings mirror those found among women's leadership research.

A third reference to Latina administrators reported a single non-empirical interview with a Latina superintendent of a New Mexico school district. Vail (1996) wrote:

She moved beyond barriers not with aggression but with diplomacy, and it's worked. As a girl, she had no professional role models, so she became one. As a college student, . . . she bucked her family's expectations that she get married and rear children. As a fledgling school executive, she took jobs that no one else wanted. As one of the country's few female superintendents, she has attacked her job with vigor. (p. 17).

Of her career experiences, this Latina superintendent remarked, "Aggression and confrontation don't get you anywhere. Humor, appeasement, and persuasion work best" (p. 18).

The review of the literature for studies of Latina school principals yielded only two serviceable research documents-doctoral dissertations authored by women and one non-juried journal article (Vail, 1996). Ornelas (1991) and Byrd (1999) both reported finding sporadic data. Their review of the literature included research from the 1980s.
However, preliminary searches for literature for this study were limited to the years 1995-2000, and when none was found within this period, the years were extended to 1990. A summary of Omelas’ and Byrd’s findings follows.

There were few Latina school administrators, and they were generally found directing special education programs or schools with large numbers of minority students in lower socio-economic areas. Latina administrators were generally younger, had limited managerial experiences, and lacked mentoring in their career ascension. In order to achieve career goals, Latinas changed their perceptions about the cultural role of women, their views about the organization, and their realizations regarding how they obtained and held their administrative positions (Omelas, 1991).

Characteristics of Latina school administrators have typically been culled from studies of mixed groups—either with Latinos or with members of other ethnic minority groups. Minority leaders tended to be more sensitive and understanding of the problems of minorities and possessed a repertoire of culturally appropriate behaviors among various populations. Such leaders also demonstrated independence, decisiveness, and intensity about their work. Latina leaders typically practiced collaboration, teamwork, and shared decision making. These findings mirror those found among women’s leadership studies (Byrd, 1999).

The voice of the Latina educational leader describing her own experiences was missing from all works reviewed for this study except for the interview included in the Vail (1996) article. In the last decade, however, education scholars have discovered the value of personal narratives in the study of education phenomena through the firsthand
accounts of teachers, students, and administrators (e.g., Aguirre, 2000; Danzig, 1997; Delpit, 1988; Greene, 1994; Rochlin, 1995). (See Chapter 3 for a discussion of story as method of inquiry and analysis.)

In this study, Latina educational leaders were asked to relate their stories of leadership for school change. The conceptual frameworks for the nature of change and the educational leadership necessary for initiating and promoting school change are discussed next.

The Nature of Change

Schools have continuously been charged with making the changes deemed to resolve the nation’s problems. However, Hallinger (1992) predicted that the “school will become the initiator of change, rather than simply the implementation agent” (p. 46) in the new century. If this is so, it is necessary for educational leaders to understand the nature of change and how to lead others through those transitions that disrupt people’s job expectations and produce new concerns and feelings of ambiguity (Geijsel et al., 1999). Leaders who understand the predictable movements of change may be in a better position to steer the course of change. The following section summarizes the life cycle of change and six models of change.


Initiation refers to the processes and planning which lead up to and include the decision to proceed with the change. ... Implementation refers to the first use of
the change on a system-wide basis in the classroom . . . Routinization refers to whether the change becomes an ongoing part of the system (p. 163).

This life cycle of change is apparent in the six models of change summarized here.

The Social Interaction Model (Havelock as cited in Bridges, 1990) divides change into five stages: awareness, interest, evaluation, trial, and adoption. The change agent has the greatest responsibility for initiating the awareness and interest stages. A second Havelock model is the Research, Development, and Diffusion (RD & D) Model. “In this model change is viewed as an orderly, sequential process which evolves through research, development, packaging, and dissemination stages. The change recipient is viewed as a passive consumer who accepts the innovation” (Bridges, 1990, p. 39) with little help for learning how to use the innovation. A third Havelock model is the Problem Solver Model. In this model, the change agent is involved throughout the process. The change agent identifies user need and then continues to function as a facilitator of change (Bridges, 1990). In the final Havelock model, the Linkage Model, the change agent facilitates change creating a communication network between the sources of innovations and the users.

In education, this model is often used in linking organizations and individual users with resource systems which produce new products . . . . The knowledge of the change facilitator about the new products and the ability of that facilitator to persuade and help others to use the product [determine the success of the implementation of the innovation]. (Bridges, 1990, pp. 40-41)
Schmuck, Runkel, Arends, and Arends (as cited in Bridges, 1990) described a fifth model developed from change patterns in the business world. This model assumed that group dynamics created the problems that lead to change and new solutions. Those groups that were supported by management, given adequate time for implementation, and provided consultants for guidance would adopt the change.

A review of the literature on change management, organizational behavior, psychology, sociology, education, and other disciplines by Bents and Blank (1997) revealed six phases of change and questions one might ask at each stage:

1. AWARENESS
   Where do I stand?
2. PERSONAL CONCERNS
   What's in it for me?
3. MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS
   What are the guidelines?
4. CONSEQUENCE COMMITMENT
   What am I going to do about it?
5. COLLABORATION
   How do I share this with others?
6. REFOCUSING
   How can we best celebrate and go on? (p. 68)

Bents and Blank (1997) argued that “Any consideration of transformation demands that we pose pivotal questions” (p. 69). Implied in their statement was the concept that change was about how individuals responded to the disturbance of the status quo or what may be perceived as chaos. Sullivan (1998) called that phase of chaos the “purposeful disorder through which a system of organization must evolve if it is to metamorphose into new order” (p. 408). For educational changes, the responsibility for answering the questions falls on educational leaders, particularly school principals and
teachers. Knowing the dynamics of change helps educational leaders anticipate transitions and concerns in their organizations. How educational leaders steer their ships through uncharted waters, however, will make a difference in whether or not their ships arrive at new ports. The kind of leadership necessary for the journey through change is discussed next.

**Educational Leadership for Change**

"School change is not, like building a bridge, a matter of engineering. If it were, changing schools would not be the national concern it is" (Sarason as cited in Heckman, 1996, p. ix). Leadership is manifested in the context of change. The degree of successful change implementation is largely due to the actions of the school leader. Leadership styles have also been linked in the research to the level of successful change implementation (Bridges, 1990; Geijsel et al, 1999; Leithwood, 1994; Murphy & Adams, 1998). Fullan's (2001) more recent exploration of leading others through change is summarized below.

In 2001, Michael Fullan, author of *Leading in a Culture of Change*, proposed a new framework for thinking about and leading large-scale change. The framework reflected a convergence of theories, knowledge bases, ideas, and strategies that helped leaders mobilize others to confront complex problems that had yet to be successfully addressed. This framework called for initiator-type leaders who would not be the crisis leader of the past. It would be "someone with answers, decisions, strength, and a map of the future, someone who knows where we ought to be going-in short, someone who can make hard problems simple" (Heifetz as cited in Fullan, 2001, p. 3). Instead, today's
leader will be one who can lead others through complex change by exercising five components of effective leadership.

First, effective leaders understand the process of change. Such leaders understand that the goals of change are not to have the best ideas and innovations. They regard the predictable resistance to change as a potential positive force and appreciate the early difficulties of trying something new. They understand that the change process is not a finite checklist but, rather, an on-going reculturing process. Throughout the change process, effective leaders are guided by moral purpose. Secondly, they act “with the intention of making a positive difference in the lives of employees, customers, and society as a whole” (Fullan, 2001, p. 3).

A third component of effective leadership is the ability to form relationships with diverse people and groups. They foster purposeful interactions and problem solving and are wary of consensus arrived at too easily. Among the ways in which effective leaders build relationships is through the fourth component of effective leadership—generating and sharing knowledge inside and outside the organization. It has been found that the role of knowledge is intricately connected to the three previous aspects of effective leadership. Fullan (2001) elaborated:

What has been discovered is that, first, people will not voluntarily share knowledge unless they feel some moral commitment to do so; second, people will not share unless the dynamics of change favor exchange; and, third, that data without relationships merely cause more information glut. Put another way,
turning information into knowledge is a social process, and for that you need good relationships. (p. 6)

Finally, effective leaders seek coherence even as they live with the tensions inherent in ambiguity and creativity wrought by change. There are three coherence-making features in the process required to identify best solutions and generate internal commitment from members of the organization. The first feature is called lateral accountability. In a collaborative organization, peer pressure along with peer support make it difficult for the innovation to be ignored or even sabotaged. Secondly, where there is a culture for knowledge-creation and knowledge-sharing activities, there is a natural sorting process that contributes to coherence-making. Finally, when leaders have been successful in building strong relationships, there is shared commitment to selected ideas and paths of action. “People stimulate, inspire, and motivate each other to contribute and implement best ideas, and best ideas mean greater overall coherence,” said Fullan (2001, p. 118).

In addition to the five leadership components exercised by effective leaders, they also possess energy, enthusiasm, and hopefulness. Leaders bound to the five aspects of leadership cannot help but demonstrate commitment. This internal commitment “derives from energies internal to human beings that are activated because getting a job done is intrinsically rewarding” (Argyris as cited in Fullan, 2001, p. 8). The outcomes of effective leadership and commitment are an increase in good things and a decrease in bad things. Fullan noted that in schools, for example, good things are enhanced student performance, increased capacity of teachers, greater involvement of parents and
community members, and engagement of students. These positive changes increase levels of satisfaction, enthusiasm, and pride for all in the system. In turn, bad things decrease. There are fewer aborted change efforts and less piecemeal, uncoordinated reform wasting efforts and resources. Ultimately, employees are less demoralized.

Elements of Fullan’s (2001) framework for thinking about and leading others through change are present in an account of a school change project in the book *The Courage to Change-Stories from Successful School Reform* (Heckman, 1996). Heckman, the principal investigator, and the elementary school teachers and principal involved in a school change project related first-person accounts of being change initiators. What they learned about leading each other through change follows.

The school change effort took place in an inner-city elementary school in Southern Arizona. The school was chosen because throughout its existence it had been an underperforming school serving primarily students of color and poverty. Consequently, the school had also been a continuous recipient of federal, state, and district school improvement funds and programs that came and went like fashion trends. This time, the change efforts would be different. Though there would be outside intervention and funding, no outside agent would dictate the changes to be made. Interested school personnel, the principal, and parents would identify the problem areas and make the necessary changes to address those areas of concern. The outside agent would provide a framework for thinking and talking about change and the cost of substitute teachers on a weekly basis to free teachers to engage in “intense, self-revealing dialogue sessions in which [to] examine, in depth, their beliefs and ideas about schooling” (Heckman, 1996, p.
Two structures were created for the exploration of solutions to complex problems—one workday set aside for the purpose of indigenous invention through critical reflection and inquiry with colleagues. How was the process of indigenous invention different from the earlier school improvement efforts?

As the word \textit{indigenous} suggests, local individuals identified what needed to be changed and then created the new ideas and practices to put into action. This notion contrasted sharply with school improvement programs imposed upon local schools by outsiders. Teachers, students, parents, and the principal were all involved in creating the changes deemed necessary in school practices, structures, and curricula. To do this, the participants first examined current practices and the explanations underlying these regularities. Heckman (1996) explained:

\begin{quote}
The foundation for indigenous invention develops by first rejecting or turning upside down the old ideas about organizations and individuals. Particular persons . . . are not placed in exclusive roles as creators or designers. Instead, the project seeks development of conditions in which anyone and everyone in the school who wants to invent may do so. (p. 127)
\end{quote}

To set the change project in motion, four pre-conditions for initiating school change were jointly developed by the school principal and the principal investigator, a university educational leadership researcher.

The first pre-condition was to select a school administrator open to self-examination and risk taking. The principal who volunteered to engage in indigenous invention met that criterion. Secondly, teachers and other school personnel were free to
participate for as long as they desired. The third pre-condition called for commitment to
an adequate time frame for accomplishing significant reinvention. In this case, the
researcher, private funding agencies, and school participants agreed to an eight-year
effort. Finally, participants needed to understand that all aspects of underlying
assumptions or theories of existing practices and structures would be examined before
making agreed-upon changes. Heckman (1996) explained why:

Each aspect of a school has to be seen as connected to other parts. If one part
changes, the symmetry of schooling will be off. To restore the symmetry, other
parts will have to be altered or the change will have to be eliminated, which has
happened more often in the history of school reform in the United States. (p. 9)

To facilitate examination and change of practices and structures, time would be
provided during the teachers’ workweek for them to convene in dialogue sessions. These
sessions would include research staff working alongside all change initiators as third-
party participants—contributing and facilitating—but not directing. What did the
participants learn about the process of making change happen through intense dialogue
sessions?

The processes of examination and inquiry required courage to question and to
transcend the anxiety that arises when questioning ideas and practices that have seemed
so normal. As the change initiators created changes, angst, ambiguity and skepticism
increased. Such feelings are the norm for inventors who

both believe and doubt that they can unravel the puzzle and make something new
and unique. As they figure it out, however, they worry that what they have created
is not quite 'it;' but they go on. They . . . [learn] about the importance of skepticism and commitment. (Heckman, 1996, p. 21)

The change initiators in this school also learned the difference between the kind of talk common to faculty meetings and dialogue with identified purposes and intentions:

Dialogue has importance and relevance to both parties, whereas talk may have no, some, or a lot of relevance to one but not to another party; dialogue seeks to promote understanding, whereas conversation tries to convince; and dialogue challenges taken-for-granted notions, whereas talk accepts them.

(Gitlin as cited in Heckman, 1996, p. 23)

Dialogue, as experienced by the researcher in the Heckman (1996) school reinvention project, had the quality described by Bohm (as cited in Senge, 1990): “a free flow of meaning between people, in the sense of a stream that flows between two banks” (p.240). It was purposefully designed to explore complex issues from multiple viewpoints to “reveal the incoherence in our thought” (p. 241). Three conditions were present for dialogue as defined by Heckman and Bohm. First, all participants had to “suspend” their assumptions. Phenomenologists call this act “bracketing” thoughts to examine them (Sokolowski, 2000). Secondly, there must be a climate of trust among colleagues. Lastly, there must be a “facilitator” who “holds the context of dialogue” (Senge, 1990, p. 243).

In sum, Heckman (1996) made the case for intense, self-revealing dialogue as a necessary tool for change to dispel fears of the unknown and to create new realities.

The role of the principal in promoting change was emphasized in this case of school change. Heckman (1996) wrote that the principal possessed the essential qualities
for promoting indigenous invention. She expressed commitment to challenge present schooling practices and to encourage new practices. She had a deep respect for and belief that students could achieve and benefit from their education beyond schooling and held the same respect and belief in the families supporting their children’s education.

Heckman observed that the principal “talked and acted like a risk-taker. She would take risks to enact her values and commitments to the children, parents, and teachers . . . and yet not be different just for the sake of being different and innovative” (p. 169). How did the principal perceive her role as a change facilitator?

The principal recognized from the onset of the school change project that it was necessary to create an environment in which change could occur. The first condition for creating this environment was to invite participants, not force participation. Participants were encouraged to examine ideas, take risks, explore new ideas and practices, and make mistakes. In giving the inventors permission to fail, the principal gained their trust. The principal found that building mutual trust was a necessary ingredient “for true change to occur” (Heckman, 1996, p. 171). Most importantly, the principal learned that the role of principal also had to change if changes were to be made across the school. What was this change and how did it compare to Fullan’s (2001) framework for thinking about and enacting change?

Heckman’s (1996) observations and the principal’s reflections revealed that she had the commitment, enthusiasm, energy, and hope necessary to engage in initiator-type leadership. She promoted change by enacting the five leadership aspects described by Fullan (2001). She was guided by moral purpose and understood the complexity and
dynamics of change. She sought to build relationships among all school stakeholders and had the unusual advantage of engaging in scheduled weekly dialogue sessions for the expressed purpose of creating and sharing knowledge with school staff. Together they attempted to make sense and coherence of changes being created. However, she also exhibited a characteristic of leadership not included in Fullan’s (2001) five components for change. She spoke of the need for self-reflection, a quality not typically emphasized in the leadership literature. In her words,

Once I realized that everything—yes, everything—needed to be examined, including myself, I started questioning why I did things a certain way. Would the style of my leadership promote or inhibit change? I couldn’t do it alone, but having everyone involved in creating change was the way we could accomplish more common goals . . . It was great to know that all of us were identifying areas of common concern; we were willing to reach common ground by working together; but I felt that was not enough. I did some reflecting on my own life and career . . . . I came to see the role a principal must play if true change was to take place. Even though I had read many books and articles on leadership, it was not until I was able to pull back and reflect on my own beliefs, practices, and experiences that the picture became clearer. (Heckman, 1996, pp. 170-171)

Her words revealed what may be a critical, missing ingredient in aborted or failed attempts to make enduring school changes—self-reflection. This study asked principals to do just that.
This section argues that leaders are those who can lead others through change. Using the work of Fullan (2001), five components of effective leadership for change were summarized. Effective leaders understand the on-going re-culturing process of change. Secondly, they act with moral intent to make a positive difference in the lives of those they touch. A third component of effective leaders is their capacity to form relationships with diverse people and groups. Among the ways in which they build relationships is through the fourth component of effective leadership—generating and sharing knowledge inside and outside the organization. Finally, effective leaders seek coherence even as they live with the tensions inherent in the ambiguity and creativity wrought by change. Overall, these leaders possess energy, enthusiasm, hopefulness, and commitment.

Effective leadership in schools has been found to increase student and teacher performance and to increase parental and community involvement (Fullan, 2001). As member satisfaction, enthusiasm, and pride increase in the organization, there is less piecemeal and uncoordinated reform. There are fewer aborted change efforts, and there are less wasted efforts and resources. Perhaps most importantly, there are fewer demoralized members in the organization.

Using the documentation of a school reinvention project described by Heckman (1996) and the teachers and principal involved in the project, it was possible to compare an actual change effort using Fullan’s (2001) description of effective leadership for change. The principal and teacher leaders generally demonstrated the five components for effective change leadership described above. However, two additional conditions for change were indicated: the inclusion of reflection and dialogue on a regular basis among
those involved in the change process. Heckman argued that self-revealing dialogue was necessary for making explicit the assumptions and beliefs about schooling practices in order to dispel fears of change and to create new realities. The school principal involved in the change project concurred and affirmed from her experience that reflection was a critical ingredient for making enduring school changes. In this study, interview questions related to each of the components of effective leadership for change identified by Fullan and Heckman were formulated to learn if and to what extent the study participants exercised these leadership components.

Summary

The impetus for this review of literature lies in two central questions: (1) How does the Latina elementary school principal define and enact leadership for school change? and (2) How does the variable of ethnic culture interplay in the Latina educational leadership role? To begin answering these questions, it was necessary to ask five additional questions: What were the perspectives of women leaders in general? What were the distinguishing characteristics of women leaders? How did the characteristics of women leaders in the fields of business and industry compare with those of educational leaders? The answers to these three questions served as a basis for comparison for the answers to the next two questions: What do we know of Latina leadership, in general? In particular, what do we know of the leadership characteristics of Latina school principals? Presuming that leadership means leading others to change meant posing two additional questions: What is the nature of change? What are the characteristics of leaders who
successfully lead others through change? These questions served as the springboard for the literature review.

The review of the literature on women's leadership revealed that the study of leadership and organizational theory has generally been the work of Western European males—findings about males interpreted by males. The literature of the 1970s documented the social conditions that led women into the labor force and generally counseled women to emulate male behavior in the workplace. By the 1980s, the numbers of women in positions of authority increased, and they began to redefine the family and workplace structures. The organizational theory and leadership literature of the 1990s urged organizations to become more holistic places incorporating attributes typically ascribed to women such as concern for people, interpersonal skills, intuitive orientation, and creative problem solving. Leadership perspectives of women in the fields of business and industry were found to be similar to those of women in the field of education (Helgeson, 1990; Sigford, 1995; Smith, 1998).

"Mainstream scholarship has not provided useful paradigms for understanding Latina women" nor has it seriously addressed "how historical and social structural differences construct . . . different choices for women" (Zambrana in McKenna & Ortiz, 1988, p. 88). Instead, the literature described the conditions that have inhibited the ascent of Latino Americans into positions of leadership and proposed educational and institutional reforms for increasing the representation of Latinos in the leadership pipelines. The studies were grounded in a deficit, or problem, orientation and tended to promote stereotypic notions of Latinas/os. Studies related to Latina school principals,
conducted primarily by women in educational administration doctoral programs, confirmed that minorities and women are still underrepresented in school administration positions. These studies showed that Latina educational administrators lacked career and system mentorship and were typically found directing special education programs or schools with large minority populations in low-income areas. One study of Mexican American female educational administrators revealed that they practiced collaboration, teamwork, shared decision making, and had a tolerance for diversity in their leadership roles (Byrd, 1999). Hispanic men and women administrators were found to have a strong sense of self-confidence and were highly student-oriented. They possessed a repertoire of culturally appropriate behaviors among various groups and generally performed at high levels because they were aware of being watched as examples (Ornelas, 1991).

The last topic addressed in the literature review was the nature of change. The literature ascertained that the role of school principals in promoting change is pivotal. Those school leaders who understand the nature of change have been found to be more successful in bringing about change (Bridges, 1990; Geijsel et al, 1999; Leithwood, 1994; Murphy & Adams, 1998). Recent studies of leadership for change revealed essential skills and dispositions necessary for leading others through the change process (Fullan, 2001). One principal who voluntarily participated in a school change project revealed a characteristic of leadership not typically emphasized or noted by leadership scholars—the need for continuous self-reflection about the values and beliefs that influenced the behaviors she enacted as an educational leader (Heckman, 1996). Heckman described an
additional component for indigenous school change—the use of dialogue related to the underlying assumptions, beliefs and questions related to the school changes at hand.

To learn how Latina elementary school principals defined and enacted leadership for school change and to learn if ethnic cultural perspectives influenced their leadership, this study utilized a qualitative inquiry approach based upon three theoretical constructs—phenomenology, critical race theory, and a view of leadership stories advanced by cognitive psychologists. The theoretical framework and the methods of inquiry and analysis are described in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY:
QUALITATIVE EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP RESEARCH FROM CRITICAL RACE THEORY, PHENOMENOLOGICAL, AND NARRATIVE PERSPECTIVES

Introduction

There is no one truth, says the postmodernist voice. There is no single monological description of physical or human phenomena. To recognize this is to become awake to the processes of our own sense making in a radically different way: to engage with intensified awareness in acts of becoming different, acts of redescribing and redefining ourselves and our contacts with the world. (Greene, 1994, p. 440)

The majority of leadership research has been grounded in logical positivism that tests correlations between variables (Greene, 1994; Lincoln, 1985, 1989). Educational leadership research draws its theories, models, and designs from the natural and social science disciplines typically associated with the industry, business, and political fields. These disciplines are rooted in the Western philosophies of platonic idealism and logical positivism. The platonic idealism view arises from the Greek belief in the gods determining who would become leaders and in the Judeo-Christian belief that God chooses leaders before they are born. This religious view attributed leadership to hereditary traits such as "high intelligence, physical prowess and attractiveness, . . . extraversion, self-confidence, sensitivity, . . . a sense of purpose [and 124 other such traits identified by the psychologist Stogdill in 1984]" (Mitchell, 1990, p. 8). This perspective
describes a "leaders-are-born" model of leadership. In contrast, the positivistic view of leadership of the past 50 years evolved from administrative theory, scientific management theory, and studies in human relations, organizational development, and contingency and situational leadership. Such theories assume that one can "become" a leader by studying human behaviors to determine those that most effectively influence others to accomplish specified tasks. This secular perspective describes a "leaders-are-made" model of leadership.

The two aforementioned leadership perspectives, couched in behaviorist and psychoanalytic studies of personality, motivation, and overt behavior, have shaped the traditional preparation and professional development of educational leaders even though the theories and models have generally come from outside the profession. In contrast, this study examined educational leadership through three inter-related lenses—the critical race theory, phenomenological, and narrative perspectives. These were chosen for three reasons: (1) to widen the lens through which the practice of educational leadership may be viewed, (2) to isolate any unique characteristics of educational leadership, and (3) to illuminate any particular features of educational leadership from a Latina cultural perspective. The critical race theory perspective is described first.

Critical Race Theory Perspective

Critical race theory emerged in the late 1970s during the Civil Rights era in the United States when it became apparent to civil rights activists within the law profession that
Dominant conceptions of race, racism, and equality were increasingly incapable of providing any meaningful quantum of racial justice and began to meet, to talk, to write, and to engage in political action in an effort to confront and oppose dominant societal and institutional forces that maintained the structures of racism.

(Matsuda, Lawrence, Delgado, & Crenshaw, 1993, p. 3)

Their first task was to address the differential treatment of people of color by the courts and in prison. Their goal was to identify and to eliminate racism in American jurisprudence by examining the way law encoded cultural norms. By the mid-1980s, this small group of progressive legal scholars had produced a small but significant body of scholarship called critical race theory (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Matsuda et al., 1993; Torres, 1998).

Critical race theorists are generally of ethnic minority origin and share a worldview shaped by lives as members of outgroups—groups “whose marginality defines the boundaries of the mainstream and whose voice and perspective...have been suppressed, devalued and abnormalized” (Delgado, 2000, p. 60). It is a perspective shaped by having lived their “whole lives thinking about and experiencing issues of race” (Bell as cited in Rochlin, 1995, p. 341). This work begun by legal scholars now reaches beyond American law studies. American education institutions, policies, and practices, for example, appear to be rife for examination through the lens of critical race theory (Aguirre, 2000; Armendariz, 2000; Cruz-Janzen, 2000; Gregory, 2000; Lopez, 2000; Rochlin, 1995; Taylor, 1998; Torres, 1998). The key characteristics of critical race theory seem especially relevant in the study of education phenomena including educational
leadership. The characteristics of critical race theory and examples of their relevance in the study of education phenomena are described next.

Critical race theory is characterized by five key elements. First, critical race theory has an interdisciplinary and eclectic nature. It has evolved from critical theory, liberalism, Marxism, the law and society movement, critical legal studies, feminism, poststructuralism/postmodernism, neopragmatism, and nationalism to examine issues of race, class, and gender within the systemic, structural, cultural, psychological and social context of a society. Critical race theory aims to make explicit the inherent political implications and policy orientations of social structures such as law, research paradigms, and education in order to promote social justice (Lopez, 2000).

Secondly, critical race theory brings the issue of race to the forefront in the analysis of social policy in the United States. Critical race theorists view race as a social construction that is historically variable, denotes a relationship of power, and plays "a fundamental role in structuring and representing the social world" (Omi & Winant as cited in Lopez, 2000, p. 53). Subsequently, critical race theorists ask how traditional interests like federalism, privacy, traditional values, and property interests serve as vessels or vehicles of racial insubordination. As an example, note how public schools, a significant socialization vehicle, perpetuate notions of racial differences and supremacy.

Schools enforce the norms, values, and behaviors of the dominant middle-class group. These values are manifested in the formal and hidden curriculum, instructional and administrative practices, and in the structural and political aspects of most schools. Frequently, the schools express negative biases toward the language and cultural
backgrounds of students different from the majority group. Consequently, public schools
determine who will participate in the structural mainstream of life and who will be among
the nation’s disenfranchised (Cummins; Fine; Mercer; Romo & Falbo as cited in
Armendariz, 2000).

Thirdly, critical race theorists challenge notions of colorblindness, meritocracy,
objectivity, and neutrality inherent in the ideology of equal opportunity laws held by the
dominant society. “The colorblind understanding of race assumes that racism exists when
you notice color” (Lopez, 2000, p. 56). Therefore, if one does not call attention to color,
then race and racism cease to exist. For example, note Greene’s (1994) observations of
colorblindness in the arena of educational research:

[Schools have typically been examined through a distancing and colorblind lens]
as a phenomenon complete with rules, textbooks, memo books, bulletin boards,
test forms, lesson plans, time-on-task arrangements, and management devices.
The gaps, the broken glass, . . . the pallid faces, the empty shelves: They are too
often obscured or denied. More often than not, the reality of the school is
deracialized . . . Educational research . . . was for a long time, seldom
particularized. It was not reflective enough—or its practitioners were not reflective
enough-to take difference seriously into account, to see in terms of plurality. (p.
447)

Meritocracy and objectivity often work in tandem. Meritocracy is “a political
construct by which employers, schools, states, etc. legitimate the allocation of benefits to
favored . . . constituencies, and deny the validity of competing claims (p. 130)” (Omi
& Wanant as cited in Lopez, 2000, p. 56). In education, meritocracy attributes the educational success of students solely to their “hard work.” Accordingly, educators measure students’ merit by using “objective” standardized tests. When students fail, it is merely a result of not working hard enough. Critical race theorists seek additional explanations. Lopez (2000), for example, posed critical questions such as Are all students provided with the equitable and necessary resources and curricula to succeed? How does one define equity? How are factors such as gender, class, race, and ethnicity addressed in determining equity? These types of questions presume that socialization processes are rooted in particular ideologies whose outcomes create certain social contexts. Conversely, notions of colorblindness, meritocracy, objectivity, and neutrality presume that issues of racial inequality have no social meaning; are ahistorical; or are simply stories of random, intentional, and individualized acts.

A fourth characteristic of critical race theory is its insistence on a contextual and historical analysis of the law. Critical race theorists presume that group differences in income, imprisonment, health, housing, education, political representation, and military service demonstrate group advantage and disadvantage along racial lines (Lopez, 2000). To understand and describe these differences in contextualized, historical forms, critical race theorists have turned to non-traditional research methods for analyzing law and society. This fifth characteristic is described next.

Critical race theory scholars recognize and value the experiential knowledge of people of color and of their communities of origin. Stories, dreams, dialogue, personal histories, poetry, parables, and science fiction are used to elicit and illustrate key themes.
about race and racism in America. The use of multiple methods to collect and analyze stories creates “a ‘plurality of consciousness, voices, and languages, ‘ a ‘polyphony,’ to counter the ‘monophony’ of the American voice and consciousness” (Ball as cited in Rochlin, 1995, p. 340). Critical race theorists believe that stories from more than one group and genre are essential for making visible that which promotes social justice.

**Critical Race Theory Applied to Educational Leadership Research**

Two dominant stories of leadership told to educational leaders have traditionally been created and told by mostly Western European males from other disciplines. Critical race theorists actively oppose binary oppositions such as “leaders are born”/“leaders are made,” white/black and male/female because the terms and concepts are constructed in opposition to each other and result in the subordination of one to the other in a hierarchical logocentrism (Greene as cited in Taylor, 1998). To counteract either/or views of social reality, critical race theory researchers gather data in the form of narrative, or story, from people who have typically been excluded from dominant society stories. The intent is to understand the concerns, priorities, and experiences of these individuals and to find ways to create a more just society that reflects the voices of all its members (Williams, 2000). Hence, this study asks Latina educational leaders to tell their stories of educational leadership.

The advent and advance of the critical race theory research perspective only in the past 30 years is an indication that quantitative research paradigms are no longer the only or the best means for examining complex human lives within complex cultures. In the field of educational research, note the observations made by Greene (1994):
[There is] a growing disenchantment with technician and bland objectivist assumptions, . . . an intensified concern for the particularities of school life and for the social and economic contexts that affect what is learned and taught, . . . more and more acknowledgment of the importance of perspective and point of view in educational inquiry, . . . [and the roles played by gender, class, and ethnic identity in student achievement] . . . [Consequently, more educators are turning] their attention to critiques of ideology and . . . the clarification of discourse . . ., to the methods of ethnographers, . . . and to participant or ‘qualitative’ research in live contexts and with live informants in always-changing schools . . . . Their objective, in most cases, [is] the emancipation of people from linguistic and cognitive constraints, from domination of many kinds . . . [In sum, they have expressed] impatience with the monological [and] the univocal way of making rational sense. (pp. 424-425)

The recognition of multiple cultural views and interest in situated knowledge and embodied knowledge have been influenced by existential phenomenology, experientialism, hermeneutics, critical theory, poststructuralism, feminism, and aspects of postmodernism (Greene, 1994). These research approaches all share the notion of interpretation or “the connecting of human praxisto cognit ive activity” (Greene, 1994, p. 430). Phenomenology, the second underlying perspective proposed for this research study, follows.
The Phenomenological Perspective

The phenomenological perspective applied to educational leadership research provides a means to illuminate the substance of cognition—the unique artifacts, values, and basic assumptions of educational leadership as perceived by educational leaders. In addition to what leaders do, phenomenology asks what leaders are by examining their beliefs, values, moral judgments, feelings, motives, intentions, dreams, hopes, illusions, and imagination. It gathers stories by posing such questions as

What does it mean to exist and to live in a state or condition of leading in the educational process? How do educational leaders structure the meaning of being a leader in their consciousness? Why do people choose to follow this leader and not that one? Do values determine what leaders and followers do? Why do great leaders seem to be visionaries and dreamers? Does intuition play a part in decision making and communicating? (Mitchell, 1990, pp. 52-53).

Phenomenology, like critical race theory, is a perspective that can examine not only the traits and behavior theories of leadership, but also the subjective, intuitive, personal, and symbolical dimensions of educational leadership. A Sufi teaching might describe the perspective thus: “You think that because you understand one you must understand two because one and one makes [sic] two. But you must also understand and” (as cited in Covey, 1994, p. 121).

How does one discover underlying values and assumptions out of which educational leaders relate, enact and embody leadership stories? The next sections describe the method of phenomenology, how the phenomenological method can elucidate
what is particular to educational leadership, and how it may be applied to the qualitative
research methods of interviews and narratives (stories).

The Phenomenological Method-Definition and Historical Overview

Phenomenology is the study of human experience and of the ways objects (things, ideas, imagination, or memories) appear to us in and through our experiences. In its classical form, phenomenology insists that parts can only be understood against the background of wholes (horizon) and that what is absent can occur only in relationship to what is present. Further, the object (identity) we behold can be viewed (intended) from multiple perspectives (manifolds of sides, aspects, and profiles) and still remain the same object. When two or more persons (subjects) are viewing (intending) the same object, the dimension of intersubjectivity is introduced and manifolds are multiplied.

The German mathematician and philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) wrote the first statement of phenomenology and questioned “theories of knowledge, realizing that how one perceives objects—whether persons, trees, principles, angels, or social processes—is understood by examining the consciousness which a subject has of them” (as cited in Chamberlin, 1974, pp.125-126). His objective was to establish phenomenology as an eidetic science. Eidetic science, in Husserl’s words, means “to place before its own eyes . . . certain pure conscious events, to bring these to complete clearness and . . . subject them to analysis and the apprehension of their essence” (as cited in Chamberlain, 1974, p. 128). To contemplate the object in question, one must first leave the natural attitude in order to enter into the phenomenological attitude. The natural attitude is “the focus we have when we are involved in our original, world-directed
stance, when we intend things, situations, facts, and any other kinds of objects” (Sokolowski, 2000, p. 42) in a matter-of-fact way. Conversely, the phenomenological attitude “is the focus we have when we reflect upon the natural attitude and all the intentionalities that occur within it” (Sokolowski, 2000, p. 42). To enter into the phenomenological attitude, we bracket the world and all things in it by suspending our beliefs, judgments, propositions, assumptions, and biases. It is to become a scientist who looks with curiosity at an object through the lens of a microscope in order to decipher and describe its multiple dimensions.

Phenomenology views the self-the subject involved in the study of a phenomenon-as a being composed of two egos. We are more than biological, psychological, and subjective beings, or empirical egos. We are also rational, moral, and emotional beings, or transcendental egos. As such, we are agents of truth and meaning. Sokolowski (2000) explained that each of us is a center of disclosure to which the world and everything in it manifest themselves. In other words, we are the perceptual and cognitive “owners” of the world as we form judgments and verifications. Such activities cannot be adequately treated from a merely empirical point of view. The life of reason is not enclosed in the solitude or privacy of a “sphere of consciousness.” It is a public thing that is expressed in manifest conduct and achievements.

In sum, phenomenology acts as a lens from which to view the world, life experiences, knowledge, biases, and assumptions within some context and with certain “disengagement and reflective apprehension” (Chamberlin, 1974, p. 127) in order to see what was previously hidden or unclear. To see through this special lens it is necessary to
remove our daily-wear lenses by consciously setting aside our common sense, ordinary assumptions, and general knowledge about the object of study. We are then ready to look at and describe the object from multiple angles and having done that, analyze the underlying assumptions we have previously used to describe the object. These are the assumptions we had temporarily put aside or bracketed. This method of examination offers the possibility of examining “all of the intangibles of educational leadership which are not easily detected or empirically verifiable” (Mitchell, 1990, p. 230) through a seldom-used lens. Mitchell argued that these intangibles are as real as the forces of light, heat, gravity, and sound.

*Educational Leadership Research through the Lens of Phenomenology*

The aim of all scientific research is to uncover previously hidden features, aspects, qualities or meanings of the object in question. The aim of educational leadership research is the same. Traditional educational leadership research has generally described what educational leaders do—the observable manifestations of leadership. Fewer studies have examined and described the underlying meanings, values, beliefs, presuppositions, assumptions, judgments, and biases influencing the practices of educational leaders—the unseen aspects of leadership. Chamberlin (1974) posited that

Educators are less in need of a universal, empirically verifiable definition of education than they are of help in reflecting on their experiences of education and their intuition of the meaning which education already has for them and for companion participants. (p. 133)
Phenomenology offers a way to study the period of time during which educational leaders pause to formulate or reflect upon their response to a given situation by asking the practitioners themselves to elucidate what it means to be an educational leader in the context and process of education. Covey (1994) and Gardner (1995) each wrote about this invisible pause before acting.

Educational leaders likely pause from time to time to examine what they experience, remember, intuit, imagine, dream, treasure, reject, or question in relationship to the particular context or space in which they find themselves. Covey (1994) described this space as the place we go to in a "moment of choice" to consider a multitude of external and internal factors before making a decision. Such factors include the sense of urgency, the social mirror (things that are pleasing and popular), and expectations of self along with the expectations of others. These factors rest upon our deepest values (what we believe is important in the long run), operational values (what we want in the short run), scripting, self-awareness, conscience, and basic needs and wants. Gardner (1995) called that space where scenarios, visions, and stories are formed the "arena in which leadership ... occurs-namely, the human mind" (p. 15). Both Covey (1994) and Gardner (1995) concluded that the substance of leadership was comprised of more than personality traits and skills. Phenomenology proposed an alternate method for describing with greater clarity the substance of leadership.

The phenomenological method seeks to keep the objective and subjective world together. It considers evidence from any source of knowledge: empirical data, subjective feelings and attitudes, dreams, illusions, irrational views, and logic (Mitchell, 1990). In
looking at educational leadership beyond innate, natural traits and discrete, independent behavioral skills, phenomenology seeks to uncover and interpret the "tacit meanings of ideals, symbols, rituals, legends, myths, history, and heroic images of [the leader's] cultural context" (Willer as cited in Mitchell, 1990, p. ix). These are the seldom-examined elements and plots of the educational leader's story. Uncovering tacit meanings of educational leadership through purposeful reflection and interpretation may provide insights as to what is necessary for successful school change efforts in a multicultural American society. In this study, Latina elementary school principals were invited to tell their leadership stories through a series of interviews in an effort to discover not only their self-ascribed meanings for educational leadership but also what it meant to be a Latina in this role. The activity of pausing to reflect on the meaning of their leadership practice through open-ended questions was an example of hermeneutics, "a method of phenomenology which analyzes the basic assumptions, presuppositions, prejudices, and precritical understandings of any body of knowledge or of any concept" (Mitchell, 1990, p. 5).

Chamberlin (1974) described why this type of reflection might be of particular importance for educators in the following passage:

Phenomenology provides direction for an activity of reflection rather than a product, or a stance. By self-consciously exploring the way the meanings he holds have been constituted in his consciousness, and by reflection upon the direct and indirect deposit of his own experiences, an educator has a facility for clarifying what the educational process is for him, as well as for reexamining the meaning of
his own philosophical commitments . . . [Because] education as a social activity is a dynamic process reflecting historical conditioning, and since each educator is a historical being whose situation and thinking are in continual flux, phenomenology offers a method for repeated reexaminations of the meaning of new developments . . . . With a clearer understanding of both the subjective roots of his own philosophical position and nature of the educational process, an educator may be able to interpret more adequately the meaning education has for others and thus be able to help them discern that meaning for themselves. (p. 135)

The following sections now turn to the particulars of this study: the research participants, site, procedures, instruments, the data, and method of data analyses.

The Research Participants and Research Site

Six Latina elementary school principals agreed to participate in this study. Three school district administrators who were familiar with the pool of elementary school principals nominated them for the study. These three administrators had served as area assistant superintendents and met regularly with the principals assigned to their region. The nominators included one Hispanic female, one White female, and one Hispanic male.

The school district administrators received a letter outlining four criteria for nomination of principals: (1) Latinas, (2) with a minimum of three years of service as a principal, (3) at the elementary school level who (4) had been or were successful in enacting some form of school change. Latina here referred to a female whose ethnic origin was Mexican, Puerto Rican, or Cuban, or of another Spanish-speaking heritage. The fourth criterion was left open to the nominator’s judgment. However, the nominators
were asked to provide a written definition and example of what they meant by “successful school change.” Two of the nominators provided written definitions of principals who had enacted “successful school change:” (1) “Have instituted a climate collegial effective instruction. Have demonstrated student achievement growth. (2) Mainstream/improving student achievement performance; shares/mentors principal peers in leadership skills” (see Appendices A, B, C, and D).

Table 1 provides a context within which to place each of the participant leadership development and career stories. They are listed from eldest to youngest.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Ethnic Origin</th>
<th>Year of Birth</th>
<th>Years As A Teacher</th>
<th>Years As A Principal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Isabel</td>
<td>Mexican</td>
<td>1943</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynn</td>
<td>German/Panamanian</td>
<td>1948</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tango</td>
<td>Mexican</td>
<td>1952</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cecilia</td>
<td>Mexican</td>
<td>1952</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sylvia</td>
<td>Mexican</td>
<td>1960</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malintzin</td>
<td>Mexican</td>
<td>1963</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Setting: A Southwestern Urban School District

The six Latina elementary school principals were drawn from a Southwestern urban school district comprised of 61,000 K-12 students across 104 schools. Of these students, 47.5% were of Hispanic origin, 39.4% were White/Anglo, 6.6% were African
American, 4.0% were Native American, and 2.6% were Asian American. In 2001-2002, the total dropout rate in this school district was 3.0%. The dropout rates per ethnic group, listed from least to highest percentages, were Asian American, 1.2%; White/Anglo, 2.0%; African American, 2.8%; Hispanic, 3.8%; and Native American, 6.3%.

In 2001-2002, teachers numbered 3,700, support staff numbered 3,600, and administrators numbered 200. Of the 200 administrators, 84 were elementary school principals or assistant principals. The director of the school district’s communications office stated that the district did not keep statistics of the ethnic proportions of administrators “since there are frequent changes in administration.” However, the director did offer “a directory of administrators including their pictures, if that helps.”

The six participants were principals of schools situated in the southwest region of the school district, an area generally populated by a large percentage of Hispanics and Native Americans (see Appendix E). Table 2 reports the ethnic composition of each of the six student bodies served by each participant, using her pseudonym:

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>Asian American</th>
<th>Hispanic American</th>
<th>Native American</th>
<th>White/Anglo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cecilia</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>80.0%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isabel</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>74.5%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynn</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>96.0%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malintzin</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>76.0%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
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Note that all participants exercised their leadership in schools with high Latino student populations.
Procedures and Instruments

In this study, the researcher facilitated the reflection process through a series of three interviews (see Appendix F). The three interviews were pilot-tested by two retired Latina elementary school principals prior to interviewing the participants. The results of the pilot interviews were not used in the study. The pilot interviews served to gauge time and pacing and the wording and order of questions. A description of how each of the three interviews was used to elicit personal narratives from each participant follows.

*Interview 1*

This study utilized in-depth, phenomenologically based interviews, a method of interviewing described by Irving Seidman (1998). The method combines life-history interviewing and focused, in-depth interviewing through primarily open-ended questions. The interviewer’s major task is to build upon and explore the participants’ responses to those questions so that the participant can reconstruct his or her experience within the topic under study. This interviewing model involved conducting a series of three separate 90-minute interviews with each participant. The first interview established the context of the participants’ experience. The second interview allowed the participants to reconstruct the details of their experiences within the context in which they occurred. And the third encouraged the participants to reflect on the meaning their experience held for them.

To establish rapport between the educational leader (principal) and the researcher, as well as to begin the task of identifying the essence of leadership, in general, this study began by asking educational leaders to describe their educational, biographical, and career histories. They were then asked to relate the story of their leadership development
beginning with preschool days. Open-ended questions such as the following were asked: Describe your earliest memory of being a leader. Were you conscious of being the leader? Name a significant person in your leadership development. Who did not affirm you as a leader? A second set of questions was asked to draw out a cultural perspective of leadership. Open-ended questions such as the following were asked: Describe how Latino culture has influenced or influences your leadership. Describe your earliest memory of any cultural-difference awareness in your leadership development. Describe any leadership attributes and/or practices that you might define as “Latina.” To close the first interview, the participant was asked to provide an analogy or metaphor to describe the terms educational leader and Latina educational leader.

The purpose of having participants reflect upon early leadership experiences was twofold: (1) “to have them reconstruct a range of constitutive events in their past family, school, and work experience that place their [role of educational leader] in the context of their lives” (Seidman, 1998, p. 11) and (2) to identify habits of leadership. These habits of leadership were “the motivators of conscious behaviors . . . [that] operate on a level of experience which precedes any sort of deliberate, critical positing of distinct objects of reflection or consciousness” (Kestenbaum, 1977, pp. 3-4).

**Interview 2**

The second interview focused on the recent and present life story of the participant’s educational leadership. Because educational leaders are in the business of shaping human lives, rather than in the mechanized assembly of objects, they were first asked questions designed to reveal fundamental beliefs about human nature and learning,
such as Describe your beliefs about human nature and the ability to learn. What does it mean to educate? Describe the process of leading others in the process of educating children. How does being Latina influence your leadership in staff development situations? Define education through metaphor. Such questions may help uncover educational leaders’ ideas and attitudes about “the anthropogenesis of man, or how man becomes man under the aspect of education” (Vandenberg, 1974, p. 211).

The remaining part of the second interview addressed the details of the participants’ lives as educational leaders in the act of promoting school change. Questions such as the following were asked: Who decides what needs changing? What is the process of identifying the necessary change? How do you convince others of the need for school change? How do you counter resistance to change? How do you support others in making changes? Do you use different techniques or formats to address different audiences about proposed change? Are you perceived differently in the role of change agent than a non-ethnic minority person might be? Participants were asked to describe two change efforts that would serve to illustrate how they successfully led a school change effort. To close the second interview, the participant was asked to provide an analogy or metaphor for change.

Interview 3

In the third interview, participants were asked to reflect on the meaning of their experiences as educational leaders. Seidman (1998) explained what is meant by the question of meaning:
The question of "meaning" is not one of satisfaction or reward, . . . rather, it addresses the intellectual and emotional connections between the participants' work and life. The question might be phrased, "Given what you have said about your life before you became a [principal] and given what you have said about your work now, how do you understand [educational leadership and school change] in your life? What sense does it make to you?" This question may take a future orientation; for example, "Given what you have reconstructed in these interviews, where do you see yourself going in the future?" (p. 12)

They were asked to reflect on their roles in the context of reform agendas and external directives for school change, what they might advise administrative interns, and how their leadership would evolve in the future. As in the previous interviews, they were asked to conclude this interview with a metaphorical description of the term educational leadership.

Throughout the interviews, the participants were asked to describe educational leadership and school change in as much detail as possible. Spontaneous accounts of experiences were accepted even if not directly related to the question at hand. To draw out cultural features of their leadership, the participants were asked questions about the influence of Latina culture, if any, on their educational leadership story. To draw out presuppositions or habits of educational leadership, each interview closed with a question asking for a metaphorical description of the key concept of that interview. The key concepts described through metaphor were educational leader, Latina educational
leader, education, change, and educational leadership. Why ask for metaphorical descriptions?

Metaphors allow human beings to construct alternative modes of being, to look beyond actual experience, and to imagine what might be if things were otherwise through imagination. According to Greene (1994), seeing through imagined possibilities allows us to break through crusts of conformity and the taken for granted. It enables us to enter into the consciousness of other individuals, and in doing so, “it may suggest diverse modes of inquiry and alternative ways of living together in the light of what ought to be” (p. 456). Sussman (1992) concurred that imaging through metaphor may indeed make it easier to admit that the act of understanding one another is merely interpretation, “i. e., not THE truth. When many interpretations are possible, truth is more likely to be felt—though it may be experienced as the slightest breeze, as a momentary insight” (p. 220). In such moments, Greene stated that metaphors may evoke any or all of the following behaviors: provoke some change in the listener, open the way to unexpected connections, make unexpected resemblances visible, and draw attention to alternative modes of being and thinking by enabling us to break out of oversimplified or statistical or technical mindsets when it is necessary to do so.

In sum, the three in-depth interviews and metaphorical descriptions were meant to capture the essence of educational leadership for enacting school change through the eyes and voices of Latina educational leaders. The structured reflections of the participants placed life expressions of educational leadership into spoken and symbolic language, a meaning-making process. Asking participants to pause and study their expressions of
educational leadership helped them step out of their natural attitudes. They were asked to look beyond the traits, skills, and behaviors of leadership and "become something like detached observers of the passing scene or like spectators at a game" (Sokolowski, 2000, p. 48). The resulting reflections and interpretations—leader stories—formed the substance for analysis. The following section describes the use of personal narrative from three vantage points: (1) the critical race theory perspective, (2) a cognitive view of leadership advanced by Gardner (1995), and (3) the use of leader stories by educational leadership investigators.

Leader Stories—The Data Source

Narrative Inquiry Approach

According to Brockway (1993 in Sharp, 1998), "Neither science nor philosophy are able to solve our perennial epistemological problems and give us the certainty that we seek, and so we tell stories" (p. 107). Throughout human history, storytelling has served to express emotions, entertain, and to pass along an individual or group's history. Storytelling provided storytellers with a means to understand the events they experienced. In turn, listeners or readers compared stories to their own experiences and ultimately formed their own interpretation of the original story (Sawyer, 1942; Schank, 1990). As people told and received stories, they evaluated persuasive reasons for moral action based upon their narrative assessments (Fisher, 1987). Stories opened the mind to creative possibilities when tales exceeded people's values, beliefs, and experiences (Kirkwood, 1992).
The narrative inquiry approach is based upon an epistemological conviction that there is no single, objectively apprehended truth. Individual stories reveal how one constructs reality within a particular narrative field. That is, one's story shapes what and how events are perceived. Narratives reflect the individual's experience as well as the meaning given to that experience. Hence, postmodern researchers called for recognition of the situatedness and contextualization of the subject.

Narrative analyses in the study of women's leadership, for example, revealed that women have particular ways of knowing and leading (Belenky et al, 1986; Helgeson, 1990). Although early studies of women's leadership took gender into account, racial factors were typically overlooked. Greene (1994) cautioned researchers that there was more than one feminist view, for example, “the narratives and viewpoints of . . . women of color” (p. 452). Critical race theorists (Delgado, 2000; Matsuda et al, 1993) counseled researchers further: Not only is it necessary to document personal life histories of women and minorities, it is also necessary to determine how social structures have kept their stories from being told and heard. The use of narratives from a critical race theory is described next.

**Narrative Inquiry and Critical Race Theory**

From a sociological perspective, stories are “social events that instruct us about social processes, social structures, and social situations” (Maines & Bidger as cited in Aguirre, 2000, p. 320). Some narratives are more easily embraced than others are. “Narratives that are familiar, that feel intuitively right because we have heard them so many times before, and that confirm our sense of our own identities, are often
unquestioningly embraced” (Ferber, 2000, p. 343). This tendency to accept certain narratives without question prompted critical race theorists to critique empiricist sociology stories that told of one dominant reality in a particular society. Critical race theorists argued that there was more than one story to tell and that all stories could be categorized as one of two types.

Two types of stories contend for and tug at our minds: (1) the cultural or stock story and (2) the collective story. The stock story is that story told from the point of view of the ruling interests. These stories justify the world as it is. It accepts the present distribution of rights, privileges, and opportunity established under the uncontested normative order. These stories instruct about what is expected and warn about the consequences of nonconformity. That is, they create hegemony and help maintain the status quo (Aguirre, 2000; Ferber, 2000). In contrast, the collective story is a subversive story told by those members of society who have historically been silenced or marginalized in the cultural or mainstream narrative.

There has been an ongoing battle between stock stories and collective stories. Consensus among competing stories is unlikely, and the discovery of truth through reason is impossible (Lopez, 1991). Thus, counterstories from those whose voices have seldom been part of the stock story created the potential to widen the lens from which to view social reality. For Delpit (1988), widening the lens was not enough. It was about becoming “vulnerable enough to allow our world to turn upside down in order to allow the realities of others to edge themselves into our consciousness. In other words, [it is to] become ethnographers in the true sense” (p. 297).
Critical race theorists have been particularly interested in gathering and examining collective stories for the purpose of giving voice and bearing witness to more than one view of the story (Ferber, 2000). Critical race theorists argued that Anglo-American jurisprudence, education, and research paradigms have been characterized by "the acceptance of transcendent, acontextual, universal legal [or other] truths or procedures . . . . This view tends to discount anything that is nontranscendent (historical), or contextual (socially constructed), or nonuniversal (specific) with the unscholarly labels of 'emotionality,' 'literary,' 'personal,' or 'false'" (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995, p. 57). Nonetheless, the use of counterstories was promoted for at least three reasons: (1) Reality is socially constructed, (2) stories provide outgroup members a way for psychological self-preservation, and (3) the exchange of stories from teller to listener can help overcome ethnocentrism and the habit of viewing the world in one way (Delgado, 2000). How is the use of the narrative approach in the form of counterstories relevant to this educational leadership research study?

Leadership stories have historically been told from a Western European male perspective and tradition based upon tales collected from the fields outside of education. Women's stories have begun to be told and heard, yet the voice of people of color is still lacking. Lesser heard is the Latina voice emanating from the field of education. "Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) indicated that the voice of people of color is required for a complete analysis of the education system. Delpit (as cited in Taylor, 1998) argued that "one of the tragedies of education is the way in which dialogue of people of color has been silenced" (p. 54). Delgado (2000) posited that
Stories, parables, chronicles, and narratives [can serve as a] powerful means for destroying mindset-[that] bundle of presuppositions, received wisdom, and shared understandings against a background of which legal, . . . political, [or other] discourse takes place. (p. 61)

Counterstories move the listener or reader back and forth between the storyteller’s world and his or her own world all the while asking:

Can my world still stand? What parts of it remain valid? What parts of the story seem true? How can I reconcile the two worlds, and will the resulting world be a better one than the one with which I began? (Delgado, 2000, p. 69)

These same questions may be asked of the prevailing educational leadership stories.

In this study, the stories of six Latina educational leaders were gathered to learn how they defined and enacted leadership for school change and to what extent their leadership might have been influenced by their Latina culture. It was presumed that their stories would reveal how they led their various audiences to effect desired changes. This presumption was based on the work of Gardner (1995) who posited that leaders achieved their effectiveness primarily through the stories they related and by the way they lived or embodied their stories. A summary of Gardner’s view and use of leader stories as a source of data are described next.

_Gardner’s Cognitive View of Leader Stories_

Gardner (1995) offered a view of leadership that fits neither into the leaders-are-born or leaders-are-made models. Like critical race theorists, Gardner sought “to repair an imbalance in the behavioral science literature” (p. x) by proposing an alternate way to
examine the features of effective leadership by studying the arena in which leadership naturally occurs—the human mind. Gardner described this cognitive approach as one that examined how ideas, thoughts, images or mental impressions developed and how they were stored, accessed, combined, remembered, rearranged, or distorted by the mind’s operations. Gardner’s interest in stories, scenarios, dreams, and visions was useful in his study of leader stories.


Persons who, by word, and/or personal example, markedly influence the behaviors, thoughts, and/or feelings of a significant number of their fellow human beings . . . [i.e.,] followers or audience members. The leaders’ voices affected their worlds, and ultimately, our world.(pp. 8-9)

Gardner’s study of 11 leaders answered two questions: (1) What are the ways in which leaders of different types achieve varying degrees of success in characterizing and resolving important life issues in their own minds? and (2) In turn, how do they attempt to alter the minds of their various audiences to effect desired changes? Gardner discovered that leaders achieved their effectiveness primarily through the stories they related and by the way they lived or embodied their stories. He described three types of leaders, the types of stories they related, and the outcomes of those stories.

*Ordinary* leaders, the most common types, simply related the traditional story of the group as effectively as possible. They tended to maintain the status quo. *Innovative* leaders were able to take a story that had been latent in a group, or the leader’s
professional domain and revitalize that story. These leaders had a particular aptitude for identifying stories or themes that had been dormant in the culture and reviving them. Innovative leaders often succeeded in reorienting their times. *Visionary* leaders, like Gandhi, created new stories and were successful at conveying this story effectively to others. Gardner (1995) found that "The ultimate impact of the leader depends most significantly on the particular story that he or she relates or embodies, and the reception to that story on the part of audiences (or collaborators or followers)" (p. 14).

According to Gardner (1995), leaders told stories about themselves and their groups, about where they came from and where they were going, about what they feared, struggled against, and dreamt about. The leader's story, however, competed with the stories told by audience members (followers). If the leader's new story were to succeed, it must transplant, suppress, complement, or in some measure outweigh the earlier stories or the current "counterstory." Only the most robust story captured the audience.

Gardner’s definition of a leader story or narrative follows:

In speaking of stories, I want to call attention to the fact that leaders present a *dynamic* perspective to their followers; not just a headline or snapshot, but a drama that unfolds over time, in which they—leader and followers—are the principal characters or heroes. Together, they have embarked on a journey in pursuit of certain goals, and along the way and into the future, they can expect to encounter certain obstacles or resistances that must be overcome. Leaders and audiences traffic in many stories, but the most basic story has to do with issues of *identity*. And so it is the leader who succeeds in conveying a
new version of a given group's story who is likely to be effective . . . [that is,]
the story needs to make sense to audience members at this particular historical
moment, in terms of where they have been and where they would like to go.

(p. 14)

Thus, the successful leader weaves a story with enough background, details, and texture
such that audience members are comfortable with these and are free to fill in the spaces
left for them.

In studying the phenomenon of leadership, Gardner (1995) posed these questions:
What are the ideas (or stories) of the leader? How have they developed? How are
they communicated, understood, and misunderstood? How do they interact with
other stories, especially competing counterstories that have already drenched the
consciousness of audience members? How do key ideas (or stories) affect the
thoughts, feelings, or behaviors of other individuals? (p. 16)

In addition, there are questions related to the kinds of families from which leaders come,
the cognitive strengths or intelligences exhibited by leaders, the role played by supportive
individuals in the lives of leaders, and how long it takes to develop and disseminate new
ideas.

In contrast to the two prevailing stories that leaders are born and leaders are made,
Gardner (1995) argued that personality traits and performance skills alone could not
explain the particular direction set by a leader and the degree of success achieved with
various audiences. Cognition, the mental structures activated in leaders and followers,
may explain the inner workings of leadership further. Gardner explained that individuals
compared stories with one another and highlighted some features within a particular culture. He explained:

[It is] a process that entails the capacities to create stories, to understand, and to evaluate those stories, and to appreciate those struggles among stories. Ultimately, certain kinds of stories will typically become predominant—in particular, stories that provide an adequate and timely sense of identity for individuals who live within a community or institution. This focus on stories presupposes that some individuals are in a position to convey these stories to others, that other individuals can identify with those stories, and that various individuals feel included or excluded once these stories have spread. (p. 22)

The successful leader, then, is one who is skilled in comparing and contrasting the stories in a group. That leader is then able to weave a new story by highlighting and downplaying features of existing stories. Finally, the leader articulates the new story in a way that resonates with the audience. This leader-follower interaction serves as the impetus for bringing about change.

The narrative form offered the researcher a way “to reflect upon the normative filters embedded in the story and the storyteller’s actions . . . . The story provides context for understanding . . . . values and motives for actions. The story reveals how leaders frame problems and choose courses of actions” (Danzig, 1999, p. 129). Reasons for using practitioner stories as the main data source are summarized next.
The educational leadership literature has generally been devoid of practitioner stories. This is not surprising given the rational, behaviorist nature of traditional research designs. The personal stories of practice have been dismissed as unscientific, shallow, and unreflective, wrote Danzig (1999), who argued:

Leadership is not understood by breaking it down into a set of component parts. Leadership is learning to analyze prior experiences in order better to understand how they shape future courses of action; it is learning to reflect on how actions are connected to cultural norms, to initial experiences growing up, to institutional histories and to professional experiences on the job. Leadership is learning to tell one's story in a way that is understandable to others and learning that there are other stories which are equally powerful determinants of actions. (p. 130)

Thus, examining the stories of educational leaders allows practice to be more carefully scrutinized in order to better “connect the explicit, formal, symbolic presentations of knowledge and the practical know-how found in individuals’ effective actions” (Danzig, 1997, p. 130).

It has been noted that educational leaders themselves have found value in pausing to reflect upon the meanings, theory, and practice of educational leadership as they have lived it. Danzig (1997) found that when educational leaders told their stories, they uncovered practical theories, deeply held images, and moral principles that guided their actions. They also learned about the importance of their own stories and the interpretive nature of their work. In this study, six Latina elementary school principals paused to tell
their own stories of leadership development and how they interpreted the charge to bring about change in their schools. Their metaphors and stories offered glimpses of the thoughts, feelings, intuition, and visions that shaped their leadership behaviors. The manner in which their stories were analyzed is described next.

Data Analysis

Transcripts of the completed interviews were made available on diskettes to each of the participants. They were invited to review their transcripts to expand, clarify, and/or retract their statements (see Appendix G). None of the participants requested changes or additions. Narratives were then analyzed to determine themes describing educational leadership, the leading change efforts, and Latina perspectives.

In looking for themes within a narrative and across narratives, the researcher entered into the phenomenological analysis of the narratives. Karlsson (1993) described the role of the researcher thus:

The meaning-structure of a phenomenon is the invariant “thread” which runs through all diverse manifestations of a phenomenon. To discover these structures one must reflect . . . . The subject describes something that is merely lived through, whereas the researcher attempts to bring the subject’s phenomenal level to a phenomenological level. That is, . . . the search for meaning-structure of the experience. The difference between the subject’s living through of the phenomenon and the phenomenological analysis is the difference between pre-reflective life-world experience and the researcher’s reflection upon this experience, which brings out the meaning-structure of the experience. (p. 93)
To determine common themes, interview transcripts were read systematically. Each participant’s response to one question was read. After reading the six responses to each question, each person’s responses were summarized in list or matrix form using key words and phrases. Each participant’s set of data was then compared to the others’ data sets. Recurring words and phrases pointed to emerging themes.

To check for researcher bias, a professor familiar with qualitative research from the critical theory and phenomenological perspectives served as a third-party reader. He reviewed one-third of the interview transcriptions as well as the subsequent analyses.

Summary

In addition to describing the research participants and research site, this chapter described two prevailing theories of leadership based on metaphysical and empirical studies—the platoic idealism view that leaders are born and the positivist view that leaders are made. Two alternative research approaches for examining educational leadership beyond traits and behaviors were described—the critical race theory and phenomenological perspectives. Leadership examined through the lens of critical race theory asked who told the leadership story and to whom, thereby establishing who was included and excluded in the audience, and how that story promoted or hindered social justice. Leadership studied through the lens of phenomenology examined aspects of leadership beyond observable traits and skills. Phenomenologists examined subjective feelings and attitudes, dreams, illusions, irrational views, and even the meanings of ideals, symbols, rituals, legends, myths, history, and heroic images of a leader’s cultural
context. The unit of analysis common to both research perspectives was the personal narrative or story.

Personal narrative was discussed from three vantage points—the critical race theory perspective, a cognitive view of leadership advanced by Gardner (1995), and the use of leader stories by educational leadership investigators. Three in-depth phenomenological interviews (Seidman, 1998) were described as the method of inquiry for drawing out the leadership stories of six Latina elementary school principals. Their stories became the data source for analysis. Chapter 4 reports the results of this study.
CHAPTER 4
RESULTS

Overview

The study reported here examined in detail the responses to the two central questions stated in Chapter 1: (1) How does the Latina elementary school principal define and enact leadership for school change? and (2) How does the variable of ethnic culture interplay in the Latina educational leadership role? The chapter is organized in terms of the two central research questions. The first section introduces the six participants and reports how these participants defined educational leadership and how they led others through school change. The second section reports how the Latina culture played a part in and influenced these women’s leadership development and present leadership style as elementary school principals.

The Results: Part I

The Participants

Six Latina elementary school principals from a Southwestern urban school district agreed to participate in the study. Of the six participants, five were Mexican Americans, four of whom were born and raised in the United States. The fifth was born in Mexico but immigrated to this country with her parents as a two-year-old child. She became a naturalized citizen in her early 30s. One participant was born in the United States but was raised in Panama until of college age. Each participant chose her own pseudonym. Each participant’s biographical background and career path are presented next in alphabetical order by pseudonym.
Cecilia was a second-generation Mexican American born in California, the third of five children who grew up in a low socio-economic family. She identified herself as a Chicana, explaining:

I consider myself a Chicana because I grew up in the Chicano movement when Ronald Reagan was Governor of California and they asked him a stupid question. . . . . “Well, why do they call themselves Chicano? Is it Mexican American or American Mexican?” That’s a stupid question. Luckily, my father had not admitted to any name at that time other than mexicano. He said, “Well, I think they’re Americans first before they are Mexicans.”

During her college years, she was active in the Chicano movement through involvement in a student organization as well as a farm workers’ organization. Cecilia and her family had personally experienced the work of harvesting. Her earliest work experiences were as a child tomato picker for a tomato processing company. The last time she worked in the fields was in August of 1975, the summer she earned her teaching degree.

Cecilia received an associate’s degree in social sciences from a community college in Southern California. She then attended a state university in Southern California for a year before having to withdraw when it was no longer financially possible to continue. She explained, “I couldn’t continue because I had two brothers in college, and I couldn’t continue going to school.” She subsequently applied to a teacher preparation program and, through this program, was able to continue her studies in Southern Colorado. This program paid her tuition and provided teaching and mandatory
community service experiences. After completing the program, she returned to Southern California and began teaching in Title I (Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) Spanish immersion programs. She then taught elementary classes in south-central Colorado before moving to northern Colorado where she attended the university and earned her master's degree in three areas of specialization: bilingual education, special education, and school and community partnerships. She remained in northern Colorado for six years before moving to Southwestern Arizona.

Cecilia had lived in Southwestern Arizona for 20 years and had worked in the same urban school district for 14 years as an elementary classroom teacher; bilingual education resource teacher, school improvement facilitator; technology specialist; and at the time of the interview, as principal of a bilingual education magnet school, Grades K through 8. She earned her administrative credential through one of the Arizona state universities in 2000. She was contemplating applying for an elementary school principalship for the 2003-2004 school year followed by retirement in the near future.

Isabel was born in a Southwestern Arizona mining community to parents born in Mexico. She was the ninth of nine children, two of whom died in infancy. When she was born in 1943, her family had gone through the Depression Era, and her older siblings had helped the family rise to a middle class standard of living. She says of her siblings and father:

In 1946, when I was two-and-a-half, M. went off to college, G. went into the service . . . and he always sent a little stipend to the family. You know how most Mexican families are . . . B. and M. were working at the Fort while they were in
high school—at the laundry over there—so they helped with the family. . . . My dad was always a go-getter. He worked whatever job. . . . They had a little grocery store for a while, but he was the type of person . . . , you know, so that didn’t go over too big because too many people owed them, but that’s the type of environment that I come from. If you have, you give.

When asked to describe her ethnic origin, Isabel responded, “I’m a Chicana. My parents were born in Mexico in Sonora . . . any of those born in the northern states, especially Sonora, must have some Yaqui blood in them.” She then explained why she identified herself as a Chicana:

I am a Chicana. I don’t call myself Latina or Hispanic. I am a Chicana . . . . We have to educate people on what a Chicana is. In ’83 . . . we were having a conference . . . [during the] time of the Chicano movement . . . [In] the early 80s, everywhere you went, [you heard], “What are you? Chicana? Mexican American? Mexican? Hispanic? What are you?” And that day, we were planning . . . how we were going to label these workshops. Is it for Hispanic children, Mexican Americans, Mexicans . . . , so they asked us, “What are you and what does this mean? What is Chicana?” . . . The other people, *mexicanas* from [Arizona border towns] said, “Wow, Chicanos are scum. They are the bottom of the barrel. They don’t care about education. They’re gangsters . . . low-riders . . . regular,” and when it came to my turn, I said, “Well, I have never heard myself described in this manner.” You know, I had another idea of myself. “I am a Chicana and I think I’m the only person in this room with a Ph.D. I’ve never been in a low-rider
car . . .” Anyway, I went through each point that they made and said, “That’s not me . . .. You are seeing that in movies. How many of you know a Chicana?” . . .

So, I am a Chicana and this is my belief of what a Chicana . . . [is taken] from Ramon Salazar—he was an editorial writer for the *Los Angeles Times*. . . . He would take on the system, and [he] said a Chicano is an American of Mexican descent without an Anglo in themselves. And that fit me perfectly because although my parents were from Mexico, I considered myself *muy mexicana*, but I felt that I could function in the U. S. just as well as in Mexico, and there was no way with my upbringing I could have an Anglo image of myself . . .. The goals of the Chicano is to better other—our people, and I always felt that.

Isabel described her career path by saying, “You know what? I never liked school!” She never wanted to leave her town and expected to marry and have children after high school. However, her parents and older siblings expected her to go to college, so she sought out her counselor’s advice during her senior year in high school. The counselor’s response was, “Well, your grades are good, and you could go on to college, but why? You know, you can get a job at the five-and-ten . . . [but] I know your family so they’d expect more and I can get you a job at the [mining company] . . . store and it’ll be a good job.” Her parents and siblings would not hear of it, so she enrolled at one of the Arizona state universities. She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in secondary education, specializing in Spanish and business, but never taught in these areas.

Isabel began her career as a research assistant working with elementary school children in an early childhood project sponsored by the educational psychology
department of this same university. She worked next as a teacher assistant in a pre-school program. Eventually, she acquired her elementary teaching certification and began teaching in a Spanish-English Title I (Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) pre-school program in a large urban school district in the Southwest. She then became a multicultural resource teacher, traveling to various schools in the same school district. Following this position, she became the coordinator of bilingual education programs in an Arizona border town. From 1975 to 1987, she taught bilingual education methodology classes at one of the Arizona state universities while concurrently earning her master’s and doctoral degrees in the fields of early childhood, elementary, and bilingual education. She said of this period, “The dean said, ‘I can keep you on as long as you’re working on your master’s.’ So then I finished my master’s and [the dean again said], ‘Okay, I can keep you on as long as you’re working on your doctorate . . .’ That is how I got all the schooling done, not because I loved school but because . . . I was there, and why not?”

Eventually, she became a curriculum specialist and principal at an elementary bilingual education magnet school. She retired at the end of the 2002-2003 school year after 14 years as principal.

Lynn was born in the United States, the only child of a Panamanian mother and German American father. She returned to Panama one month after her birth and did not return to the United States until 1966 after her high school graduation. She was raised by her mother and maternal grandparents in a middle class home. She described her ethnic origin as Central American, specifically, Panamanian, but preferred Latina rather than Hispanic when these categories were used.
Lynn received her bachelor’s degree and teaching certification for Grades K-12 with majors in Spanish and English from a southern Texas state university. Her intent was to teach at the secondary school level. Instead, her first teaching assignment was as a long-term substitute teacher in a bilingual education first-grade class in southeastern New Mexico. After that spring semester, she was hired by a regional resource center funded by a Title I (Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) federal grant program. She worked as a reading and math resource teacher for three years, serving elementary school children for one year in each of two southeastern cities of New Mexico and in one southwestern Arizona city. During her first year as a resource teacher, she began to take special education courses at the state university serving southeastern New Mexico. After the third year as a resource teacher, she moved to southwestern Arizona where she took a job as a special education resource teacher and eventually completed her master’s degree in the field of learning disabilities at a state university in this area. She worked in this capacity in various schools until becoming an assistant principal in January of 1994 for the last school in which she had worked as a special education resource teacher. She became the principal of this same school in 1997. She summarized her career by saying, “I went full circle . . . . I’ve been a resource teacher, and I’ve kind of left my first love which was [teaching] Spanish . . . . except that I was always in schools that had a lot of Spanish-speaking children . . . . Even though I did my student teaching in middle school, I wound up in elementary and stayed . . . . because I love working with little kids.” She looked forward to retiring and writing children’s books in the near future.
Malintzin was born in Mexico and immigrated with her parents to California when she was two years old. Her father did not allow her to become a U.S. citizen while she lived at home, though she could have become a citizen at age 16. She eventually became a naturalized citizen in her early 30s. She was raised in northern and southern California. She was the eldest of three in her home though she had two older half-siblings. She recalls her family “living well” during her early youth. She related,

I remember ladies cleaning my house; wearing very, very fancy dresses; owning several houses in San Francisco . . . . Then we owned the apartments on top of the restaurant and the bar, and I think it was the bar that probably brought in most of the money.

However, problems in her parents’ marriage and in her father’s restaurant business led to her parents’ separation. Her mother moved to southern California and raised the children on her own, having to go on welfare for two years. She said of this period:

I think it’s rough when you have some money then you go backward, than to not have it and then have it . . . . But I look back and education was still there. As poor as we were, we always had books. We always had our encyclopedias. We always did our homework.

Malintzin identified herself as a Mexican American but preferred to identify herself as Chicana. She explained:

I have a definition for the word Chicana which only a Chicana can call herself . . . . I know Carmen Tafolla is one writer who writes that . . . you can only call
yourself a Chicana if you have done something to contribute to the betterment of your people. And so I’m thinking, wow, a teacher, what better way to contribute . . . . I went into the profession because of the research I had read—the Hispanic population denied in terms of their education so this was the whole point of going into bilingual education . . . . I associate heavily with that word Chicana.

Becoming a bilingual education teacher was not Malintzin’s original goal. She started college intending to specialize in computer science until a principal asked if she would set up a computer laboratory for her. While at the school, she observed a teacher conducting a lesson on Christopher Columbus entirely in Spanish using sheltered language teaching techniques. This intrigued her enough to seek counsel from university professors about becoming a bilingual education teacher. She earned her bachelor’s degree in elementary bilingual education with a minor in computer science. During the next 10 years, she taught in this field and earned her master’s degree in the areas of reading, language, and culture. For the next two years, she taught inmates through an adult education program. She then moved away from home to attend law school at one of the Arizona state universities. She attended for a year but did not do well. In order to keep her scholarship, she stayed another year to complete a second master’s degree in educational administration and certification to work as a principal.

Upon her return to southwestern Arizona, Malintzin worked as a bilingual education curriculum specialist for two years. This position allowed her to become familiar with the range of bilingual education program models and implementation in a large urban school district. Throughout this time, the director of bilingual education
programs encouraged her to apply for principalship positions. When she finally conceded to doing so, she was selected for the first position for which she applied. At the time of the interview, she had worked as a principal for four years, was enrolled in a doctoral program at an Arizona state university, and served as co-president of an association of Hispanic school administrators. She said of her co-president’s role, “I take my job seriously in terms of mentoring my teachers in the building but also the Latinas in the community to become administrators.”

Sylvia was born in an Arizona border town, the middle of three children. Her parents raised her until her mother died when she entered eighth grade. She then moved to a larger southwestern Arizona city to be raised by her aunt and uncle. Until that time, Sylvia described her family’s standard of living as lower income, though she recounted, “We were never hungry, and we never went without clothing. My mom could sew beautifully, and she was very creative and talented, so she made our home look like a palace. I am just amazed.”

When asked to identify her ethnic origin, Sylvia explained that her father always told her they “have Spanish blood from Spain” and “some Native American blood” from her mother’s side of the family. Nonetheless, she concluded, “I have no clue. I refer to myself as Hispanic or Mexican American. I don’t think I’m Chicana—absolutely not. I have never identified—I’m not sure what I think that is but it’s definitely not me.”

Upon high school graduation, Sylvia was offered scholarships to attend out-of-state universities. However, her family did not allow her to leave home, so she attended the local state university. In 1983, she earned her bachelor’s degree in secondary
education, specializing in Spanish and business. For the next 12 years, she worked as a middle school teacher teaching Spanish, math, computers, and social studies. During those 12 years, she also completed her master's degree in educational administration at an Arizona state university. She then became an assistant principal at another middle school for a year. The following year, she became principal of the school where she had taught for 12 years. She described her first two years as a principal as “the toughest two years of [her] life—a very difficult situation.” She attributed the difficulty to the year-round calendar of the school not being in concert with her husband’s job as a principal of a school on a traditional calendar, raising two young children, and having to deal administratively with staff members who had once been her teaching peers. For these reasons, she chose to transfer to a school with a traditional calendar. She was then assigned to an elementary school where she had served as principal for six years at the time of the interview. She reflected on this position: “I love it. I don’t have elementary training. My background is . . . middle school/secondary . . . and having my kids that little and being the principal there, it’s like ‘hugs and kisses . . .’ and that’s me.”

Tango was born in southwestern Arizona to a Mexican American father and a Mexican mother from the Mexican state of Sonora. She was the elder of two children. She described being raised in a lower middle class family during the years that her father worked as a mail carrier while attending the university on a part-time basis. The family then became middle class when her father became a teacher and eventually a principal.
Tango identified her ethnicity as Chicana. In addition, throughout the first interview, she referred to her contemporaries of Mexican origin as Chicanos. She said of this choice:

I do consider myself Chicana . . . . I know it’s because, historically, in 1968, 1970-72, during that year, that was the term we used–Chicanos, Chicana. But I also understand that within the demographics, there are more Latinos who come from other countries who have parallel or similar experiences . . . . Even now I consider myself–at head of my priorities–Chicana, then Latina but Hispanic at the same time – but I always remember the joke about [how] I wouldn’t want to be part of a group that has “-panic” in its name! . . . And definitely American because when I travel outside the United States people . . . [ask], “Where are you guys from?” And I tell them, “I’m from the United States . . . .” “Yeah, but you’re just not American. What are you?” So some cultural groups understand that I am not just a blue-eyed, blonde American, but yet [are] interested in the discussion about, “Oh, there’s [sic] Mexican Americans in the United States from the Southwest.” And then they get interested and say, “Oh, you speak Spanish. How is it that you’re bilingual?” Well, a lot of Americans aren’t bilingual . . . . Other groups and other countries have perceptions about what an American is.

Tango never doubted she would go to college given her mother’s background as a teacher in Mexico as well as her father’s accomplishments as a college student, teacher, and principal while raising their children. Her peers in the mostly Mexican American neighborhood also shared her educational goals. She said of her neighborhood friends:
We just assumed we were all going to college, and sure enough, the majority of us did . . . A lot of it had to do with the support system of our parents—families in the neighborhood, but also just among ourselves knowing that we were going to be leaders . . . [even] in high school . . . We became the student body president. We became the editors of *The Chronicle*. We became the football captains. We became the cheerleading captains. It was all Chicanos. Then we thought, “Yeah, we can do this.”

In 1970, Tango was offered a scholarship to a private northwestern California university. After some initial resistance by her parents to the idea of her leaving home, she was allowed to enroll. Subsequently, she earned her bachelor’s degree in Spanish from this private university. She then completed her master’s degree in bilingual education as well as teaching certification courses at a southwestern Arizona university.

Tango began her teaching career at an elementary school in the area in which she had grown up. She then resigned from the school district and spent the next five years as a full-time doctoral student in the area of curriculum and instruction at the same university where she had earned her master’s degree. Upon completion, she returned to the school district and taught in primary-grade classes. She then began to be encouraged to apply for principal positions and, once again, took a leave from the school district to take courses for an administrative certificate. Shortly afterwards, she became a principal. At the time of the interview, she had served as a principal for 10 years. The day of the first interview, however, she had interviewed for a central office administrator position. She began her new position as “chief academic officer” for her school district in the
Summer of 2003. Her new role was to lead the principals and assistant principals of 104 elementary and secondary schools in leadership development.

As a group, the six Latina elementary school principals represented a variety of backgrounds. Such demographic features as places of birth, family size, birth order, and economic status varied. Three were born in Southern Arizona. Two were born and/or raised in California. One was born in the United States but was raised in Panama. Two participants were the firstborn in their families. Two were middle children. One was the youngest of her siblings, and one was an only child. They generally grew up in low socio-economic to middle class families that ranged in size from nine children in one family to families of two to five children to a family with an only child.

More commonalities were found in comparing educational histories. All six participants told of at least one family member who inspired them to pursue post-secondary education and/or to become educators. Half of the participants encountered resistance from their parents in moving away from home to attend college. Two participants spoke of the familial expectations of contributing to the financial well being of the family, in general, and specifically, to help siblings acquire a college education. All participants had acquired at least one master’s degree. Two of the six had earned doctoral degrees. All shared the specialization of bilingual education in their preparation to become teachers and administrators.

The strongest common feature shared among the six participants was related to ethnic identity. Four of the six participants identified themselves as Chicana and provided immediate explanations for this preference. Cecilia, Isabel, and Tango spoke of
being a part of the Chicano movement as it emerged on college campuses during the early 1970s. Malintzin, who was the youngest of the participants, became aware of this movement during her high school years in southern California in a large urban city noted for its historically high Latino population. Their explanations revealed some defining characteristics of what it meant to identify oneself as Chicano/a. For Cecilia, Isabel and Tango, it seemed to answer the question, “What are you if you are of Mexican descent and cultural traditions but have grown up in America with mainstream traditions as well?” For Isabel and Malintzin, being Chicana meant something more than this. Both explained that a Chicana could call herself a Chicana only if she had done something to contribute to the improvement of the Latino population in this country. Conversely, Sylvia indicated discomfort with the use of the term Chicana. She preferred to call herself Mexican American or Hispanic but could not explain why. Lynn, who grew up as a Panamanian citizen, described herself as Latina.

After each participant described her biographical background and her educational leadership career path, she was asked to define leadership. Though the intent of the question was to identify characteristics of leadership in general, their responses were reflective of their educational leadership experiences. For this reason, the responses given to two questions posed later in the interviews are brought together here: (1) Describe your leadership style as a principal and (2) describe a critical incident that illustrates your educational leadership in action. Their individual responses to these three questions are reported below. A collective summary of the leadership characteristics and principal leadership styles they identified completes the following section.
Defining Leadership and Principal Leadership Styles

Cecilia defined leadership as a collaborative act requiring more than one entity and charged with arriving at some defined end, be it a personal or organizational goal. It is the act of moving, motivating, and mentoring others to reach their potential. Successful leaders, she pointed out, are those “who can find those attributes or those talents that people have and direct . . . and move them forward.” She expressed a particular need for women “to help each other; to pull each other on in leadership roles” to counter the “old boys club,” which she believed still existed in the year 2003.

Cecilia described her leadership style as a principal as “personable” because she had to “find the manner to make [supervision] applicable person-to-person.” She described the supervision process as “complicated” and the number of staff to supervise as “phenomenal.” In her role as principal leader, she began with the premise that “all people are good” and that “they believe they are doing the right things.” She then made it her goal “to get to know people and . . . trust them to the point that they show . . . [her that they cannot be trusted].” When she had to intervene to correct a situation, she used various means to help the staff person understand what needed correction and why. In one case she described at length, she was finally able to help a teacher understand how the way she handled a student was inappropriate by treating the teacher with the same method used against the student—Cecilia wrote her a referral for leaving a faculty meeting before she had formally dismissed the staff. That action coupled with a detailed evaluation citing the infractions of policies and procedures finally resolved how the teacher handled the student. This incident demonstrated Cecilia’s belief that being a
leader requires more “than just following policies and procedures.” Policies and procedures, however, served as her “backbone.” They were what kept her from bending “beyond someone else’s whim.”

When asked to describe a critical incident demonstrating her leadership in action, Cecilia immediately responded that leadership was about “modeling” in order to develop leadership in others. She described a federally funded program whose aim was to get computers into homes where financial resources did not allow for this expense. Cecilia coordinated the training of teachers, parents, and students in computer use. The program initially began at one school site. Within four years, it expanded to 12 more school sites. By training the various personnel even after the funding ceased, Cecilia modeled how to use short-term funding to design an eventually self-supporting program by being judicious and creative in the use of seed money and available school district resources. This included offering teachers salary increment credit for their voluntary participation and using classified employees to train certified and classified employees. Cecilia reflected on what she had accomplished: It was “going beyond . . . barriers and making them feel that they [could] do it with or without the money . . . that they [could] do it on their own if they [had] the desire.” Today, the school district distributes obsolete computers to homes lacking them. The effort to narrow the gap between homes with computers and those without computers was a leadership action that Cecilia counted among her “success stories.”

Isabel described two types of leadership, citing examples of Latino community leaders of her generation and her own leadership. Both types of leadership pointed to the
action of bringing about change for the resolution of a problem or to make an improvement. She distinguished between hard-core activist leaders and non-hard-core activist leaders responding to social and/or political issues. “Hard-core activist” leaders bring attention to a problem through counter-cultural means. Non-hard-core activist leaders use more socially acceptable ways that include working within systems and dialogue among various dissenting voices to bring attention to a problem. She saw herself as a non-hard-core activist leader who had stepped into positions of supervisory leadership in response to the encouragement of others. Note how she came to be a curriculum specialist: “I told the teachers when I came here [that I am here] porque me dijeron”—“because they told me to.” Others thought she had the knowledge and skills to do the job. This explanation was evident in her description of her career path—that sense of not intentionally seeking leadership but being led into leadership. In her various leadership roles, she worked “with people to bring about change so that no one [felt] disenfranchised.” Overall, she alluded to a collaborative style of leadership using examples from her educational leadership roles, as illustrated by the following manner used in speaking to teachers:

No, I didn’t come here to make changes. If change occurs, great, but we have to work with it together . . . . I will be more than happy to help, but I also want to learn what you are doing and what is good and how we can improve . . . . and I’m not going to tell you which way is best for you to improve.

As a principal, Isabel saw herself as an “umbrella” responsible for making sure that “the total school functions for the children and the parents” even as she allowed
teachers to be autonomous. She explained, “I'm not looking over their shoulder, but I know what they are doing. And if need be, I will go in and say, 'You know what? This is what I'm seeing. Tell me about it.'” She began conversations with teachers in this manner to avoid encumbering the students’ learning. In addition to individual consultations with teachers, she encouraged and modeled participation in professional development. She said,

I would not ask them to do something that I would not do myself. I... take classes... and I come back and I discuss it with them: “This is what I am learning and... some of these things seem really good and I would like for you to try it.”

In summing up her years of experience as a principal, she believed she had been a risk-taker and that she had always expected her teaching staff to be risk-takers as well.

When asked to describe a significant incident that would demonstrate her leadership in action, Isabel prefaced her story with a working premise: “[We] have to look at the total picture where you can take individuals and work with them... but... always keep in mind that it is a total school.” In this situation, she made the difficult decision to initiate the transfer of an exceptional education resource teacher who was not bilingual and therefore unable to work with Spanish-dominant exceptional students. She likened the experience to having to get “rid of a family member.” A committee of teachers who had developed the dual-language program had also come to the same conclusion, “We love her but we know what we need.” Throughout the process of preparing for the school’s dual-language program, Isabel encouraged the staff to make their suggestions and recommendations and to simply express their feelings. However,
she knew that the final decision was hers to make because ultimately her “neck was on the line.” A court order mandated the change, but more importantly, Spanish-dominant exceptional education students required the instruction. She reflected on the role of principal in this situation:

I think that an administrator has to understand that you can’t hold grudges . . . . You have to allow people to say what they feel . . . [or there will] be retaliation . . . If they trust you they will understand. They may not go along with you, but they will understand, and I think respect will grow, a mutual respect that you are doing what is best for the children.

This example of leadership in action seemed to correspond to Isabel’s description of her leadership style—being the protective umbrella over what “works for the total school.”

Lynn described leadership as a guiding and supportive process. In reference to her role as a principal, she first described her role as one who supports teachers who must comply with school district mandates to implement new instructional practices. However, because teachers “are removed” from the first order of mandates, they may “hear, but . . . [not] really know” what they are to do. At that point, she acknowledged the need to step into the more directive role of instructional leader “who must set the stage and then . . . [serve] as an assisting guide . . . for helping them to get from this level to this level.” In that role, she placed great emphasis on the need to be knowledgeable of the curriculum at all grade levels represented in the school.
Lynn described herself as a “nurturing” and “partnering” principal. She viewed herself as a principal who worked in partnership with teachers to make “it easy for the classroom teacher as much as [she] can so that they can [go] on with the job [of] . . . teaching children.”

When asked to give an example of her leadership in action, Lynn described her role as a disciplinarian. It was the role she found most difficult as a principal. In her previous role as an assistant principal in the same school, she dealt primarily with discipline problems. At the time, she recalled going home Friday evenings “very upset because . . . the safety of . . . children was in doubt,” and she would worry that she could not “go back day in and day out and deal with this” because it took “too much” out of her. As principal, this role of disciplinarian was the one she considered the “cornerstone” of her job. She said of this aspect of her work:

It’s still the same. I still worry. I still worry about the safety. I still worry about the children in the neighborhood, all the negativity that goes on . . . . Yes, I’ve made it safer . . . and I’ve chipped away at it, but when I have a harrowing day-like today I had wham, wham, wham—three different things that happened in a crisis mode, and I can tell now that I just handle it.

Lynn then gave examples of the negativity—drugs, poverty, and single parent families. Though she “feels” for the children and their situations, she knew that she had to be “the one to call the police” and make other difficult decisions to maintain safety in her school. However, it was this side of being a principal that she reported keeping “well
hidden” from her faculty. Perhaps this practice of shielding her teachers corresponded to her desire to “make it easy” for teachers to just teach.

**Malintzin** described leadership as “scary” given all the responsibilities that came with it. She likened it to walking a tightrope in the school setting for this reason: “I think it’s . . . difficult because you are in the middle of what’s best for students and what’s more convenient for teachers.” The leader, she said, must “walk the talk,” and “live ethically.” Further, leadership was about mentoring and nurturing people to “boost them to the next level.” However, in order to do this effectively, it is necessary to be “aware of where [people] are at—at what stages of their lives or career.” She summed up her points by saying that leadership was a “give-and-take” nurturing process and being a friend who “is there when they need you so that they will be willing to work for you when you need it.”

Malintzin thought that others would call her leadership style “fair.” She began by saying that she had known of teachers who left her school “bad-mouthing” her by saying, “Oh, if she doesn’t like you, she goes after you.” Of her present faculty, she believed that “except maybe 2 out of the 21” would say that she was “there to support them and tell [her] it’s great there.” She believed it was her job “to do what needs to get done or else.” She tried to avoid confrontations with teachers but believed that simply “following the book scares a lot of teachers” when they have been accustomed to “people just telling them things and not following through.” She summed up her remarks by saying, “I think most people will say I’m fair . . . I’m just there to do my job.”
Asked to describe a critical incident illustrating her leadership in action, Malintzin said it was “a combination of incidents” that led her to “bring up a school to . . . where it needs to be.” To do so required that she “have confrontations with the teachers” who were “not doing what they need to do.” Because she had hired teachers who were once her students or who she had known in college, it was “harder” to “approach them.” She gave a recent example of having to face teachers with decisions that would make them uncomfortable. She was asked to house a program for three- and four-year-old disabled children in her school. When she agreed to house the program, she knew she would have to deal with the movement of six teachers in order to place the children in the appropriate classroom setting. She said of her decision to meet the needs of the students first:

I knew that it was going to mean moving . . . six adults, and five of the six understood because they knew me. Yes, they were upset because they had to move because Project X needed a [classroom with a] bathroom . . . but I said, “Yes . . .” The [gifted education] teacher was the only one that [sic] really didn’t understand. [She] put her selfish motives prior to thinking of these kids . . . . I explained . . . why I did it. “You have to move. I’m sorry. We have to move for theses kids.” And now everybody’s okay with it, but that was a tough one.

This incident and others like it were examples of the type of leadership Malintzin enacted on a regular basis. She reflected, “I’m willing to risk a friendship for the sake of students to give them a good quality education. And I think people respect me around here for that now . . . because they know where I stand.”
Sylvia stated her definition of leadership succinctly: "I think 99% of leadership is . . . getting people to do what you need them to do and they are happy to do it." She believed having charisma helped a leader achieve the outcomes they desire.

Sylvia described her leadership style as a principal as "caring, humanistic, compassionate, [with] a lot of heart.” However, she added that as a “sign of the times” in the education world she might be viewed as “a little more aggressive.” She believed it was necessary to first be liked as a principal before getting others to do what she asked of them “gladly.” She explained, “I think that you have to establish . . . some sense of who you are, or what you’ll stand for, and what your priorities are before you ask others to do that.” The key is to build trust first and “then pick your battles” in terms of making school changes.

When asked about a critical incident that shows her leadership in action, Sylvia described following a hunch about why teachers were struggling to implement a guided reading program. She stated, “If teachers can’t discipline their classrooms, they can’t teach.” So she purchased copies of the book *Teaching with Love and Logic: Taking Control of the Classroom* (Fay & Funk, 1998) for all of her teachers as a “subtle way of letting them know, ‘Look, if you can have discipline, you can do anything.’” She then used the book as the basis of a professional development meeting. She directed the teachers thus:

For these two hours, humor me and just read from here to here . . . and then if you want . . . , just e-mail me and let me know what you think . . . . It’s totally voluntary . . . . The book is yours to keep regardless of what you decide.
At first, the teachers looked at her as though they could not believe what she had asked them to do. However, the two hours of silent reading time as a group led to dramatic results. Teachers thanked her for helping them to understand what they needed to do to put the guided reading program into effect. As she recalled the incident, she thought it was “crazy to want to do this.” That her teachers complied led her to conclude, “When you get to that point as a leader . . . then you know you can take them anywhere.” This example seemed to reinforce her definition of leadership—getting people to do what you want them to do and do it happily.

**Tango** described leadership within education as a collaborative, dynamic, and synergistic “process of moving a group of people together for the benefit of student learning.” That process begins in a place within the individual leader and moves outward. The leader must be a risk-taker willing to make choices that may be wrong but are nonetheless valuable for learning. The leader must have the necessary skills and strategies to “communicate, energize, and motivate people . . . always with that focus of the goal and the goal is to learn.” In moving people toward the goal, the leader must communicate a sense and expectation of openness and trust such that people “feel comfortable to challenge [and] to ask . . . questions” so that “once the decision is made, [all] move forward.”

Tango described her leadership style as a principal as collaborative and professional. As an official leader in her school, she recognized the need to tell her staff that three kinds of decisions needed to be made. Some decisions she would make alone, others the staff as a whole would make, and other would be made by individual teachers.
She considered it important to articulate this expectation clearly at the beginning of each school year. She believed that it was important “to communicate precisely,” and for that reason she tended to monitor her words closely in her professional role. As a principal, she made the conscious decision not to socialize with those she supervised. She said, “I realize I am kind of distancing myself, but at the same time I think it’s much healthier for those people and for me.” This practice, she believed, allowed her to be “fluid” as she moved in and out of professional settings.

When asked to describe a significant event that illustrated her leadership in action, Tango described her initial reaction and subsequent response to receiving her school’s state rating on October 15, 2002: Underperforming. She received the news at home from her supervisor the evening before all administrators were to meet to receive the state reports. The following day, she recalled,

When I got it in written form, I started crying and had such a physical response. I didn’t know if it’s because I’m a Latina or because I am a professional or a principal but I was just weeping . . . . I’ve never wept in public in a professional setting.

As her colleagues reassured her, she was able to accept this response and eventually “get it out of [her] system” so that she could turn the emotional response into an intellectual one. As she said, “Then I could turn it to my head and say, ‘Okay, this is what I need to do next.’” With that, she was able to plot a course to address her faculty, parents, and students – to listen to all their initial venting, to be prepared with a plan of action and school data, and in general, to assure all stakeholders that they were going to work
through this together. This example of Tango’s leadership in action seemed to illustrate her earlier statement that leadership “begins in a place within the individual and moves outward.”

Prior to being asked to define leadership, the participants had been asked to describe the educational histories related to their career paths. Hence, their definitions of leadership were all related to their roles as educational leaders. All six participants shared the belief that leadership was about moving others forward toward some defined goal, generally some aspect of instruction that improved student learning. To accomplish this goal, all but one participant specified the need to mentor, nurture, or guide others from one level to another. Five participants described characteristics of collaborative leadership—identifying people’s attributes and talents, inclusion of all stakeholders in decision making, being knowledgeable of curricula, recognizing in others where they are in terms of life and career stages, and creating open and trusting environments where people were free to question and to challenge one another’s ideas and practices. Four leadership personality traits were specified—having charisma, walking the talk, living ethically, and being a risk-taker not fearful of making wrong decisions. One participant expressed a gender issue of leadership—women still need to help each other ascend to leadership positions given pre-existing “old boys club” perspectives. One participant illustrated the ambivalence she experienced as a principal through a metaphorical description—walking a tightrope—that act of balancing what is best for students with what is convenient for teachers.
The dominant leadership style of the participants was relationship-oriented versus task-oriented. Leadership style here referred to a personality characteristic rather than a consistent type of leader behavior. It is “the underlying need structure of the leader that motivates behavior in various interpersonal situations” (Hoy & Miskel, 1996, p. 387). Five of the six participants described a relationship-oriented style of leadership— one motivated by the need to maintain close working relationships with others. Note the descriptors they used to identify their styles of leadership: “personable;” “modeling;” “nurturing and partnering;” “caring, humanistic, compassionate, with a lot of heart;” and “collaborative and professional.” Only one participant described a task-oriented style of leadership, that is, being motivated by the need to accomplish assigned tasks. She described herself as “fair” and as one who believed in “following the book.” She summed up her remarks by saying, “I’m just there to do my job.” Conversely, the five relationship-oriented leaders were the same ones who had described collaborative-type characteristics of leadership.

When asked to recount a critical incident that illustrated leadership in action, three of the six participants described situations in which they were responsible for making difficult decisions ultimately based upon externally mandated policies and procedures. The remaining three participants described incidents that suggested “walking the tightrope,” as described by Malintzin—that dilemma of deciding what is best for students over what is most convenient for teachers. All the principals reported being open to staff input but recognized the usefulness of policies and procedures when confronted with dilemmas. Cecilia referred to policies and procedures as her “backbone” so as not to bend
“beyond . . . someone else’s . . . whim” when confronted with difficult situations. A summary of the participants’ examples of leadership in action follows.

Isabel, Lynn, and Tango cited examples of leadership actions based upon policies and procedures. Isabel had to transfer an exceptional education teacher who could not provide instruction in two languages, a requirement mandated by state certification requirements for teachers in bilingual education programs at that time. Lynn found the role of disciplinarian most difficult when she had to follow student codes of conduct that involved police or other authorities to address safety issues at the school or in students’ homes. Tango wept in front of her administrator colleagues when her school received an underperforming rating from state officials. The emotional response was short-lived, however. She immediately returned to her professional posture and planned a course of action that would involve teachers, parents, and students in the resolution of the problem.

Cecilia, Malintzin, and Sylvia described leadership actions based upon students’ needs. Cecilia described a modeling process that set the groundwork for a federally funded program to become self-perpetuating after its four-year grant cycle ended and that made computers available to students who lacked them. Malintzin faced upsetting six teachers by asking them to change classrooms to make room in her school for a group of disabled preschool children. Sylvia took a risk in asking teachers to read a book that would address classroom management problems when she intuited that her teachers could not effectively implement a district-mandated guided reading program until they could manage student behaviors.
In each case, all six participants exemplified leadership that functioned like the “umbrella” described by Isabel—a leadership that monitored what was best for “the total picture.” A common thread seemed to run through each of these stories—a reality of leadership admitted only by Isabel—that in the end, she sometimes had to make unpopular decisions because her “neck was on the line.”

The next section describes further reflections and definitions of leadership expressed by the participants as they were asked questions about their personal leadership development prior to entering the education profession.

*Personal Leadership Development Stories*

In an effort to delve further into the participants’ core beliefs about leadership in general, the participants were asked to describe early memories of leadership. They were invited to step out of current roles and to share memories of leadership behaviors from preschool days; play situations; and from home, school, and work settings all prior to entering the education profession. They were asked to tell how and when they became conscious of being a leader and to identify those who affirmed them and those who did not affirm them as leaders. These are their abridged stories.

*Cecilia* began her recollections by laughing as she described herself as *traviesa* as a child. In the context of Cecilia’s story, *traviesa* most likely means to be “lively, frolicsome, prankish, mischievous” (Peers, Barragan, Vinyals, & Mora, 1968, p. 754). Though small and petite as a child, she recalled being “feisty” and “aggressive” in order to survive growing up with two brothers. As a result, she said she became a leader among her girl cousins even though she was not a firstborn, like many of them. Cecilia did not
see herself as much a leader as she saw herself as a “determined” individual. She illustrated this quality through four examples of her determination to realize early personal goals.

Cecilia began kindergarten as a non-English speaker. Besides her determination to learn, she credited a “wonderful teacher” for teaching her how to begin speaking and reading English through music. She said, “Reading [in English] was not easy for me. . . . It didn’t click for me until I was in high school, and I started to learn Spanish. . . . but whatever I sought to do, I would do.”

Cecilia then gave an example of a leadership role she agreed to accept. She was attending religion classes at her church prior to her high school years. She had been asked to take charge of a booth “for a fiesta of some sort” and they asked her “to . . . make announcements on the PA system.” When she noticed that people were not buying items or playing games at the booths, she got upset and decided to take the microphone and “tell them what they [were] missing.” She took on the role of the shouting vendor. Her church-related leadership roles increased when she started high school. These roles included becoming president of her church youth organization.

Cecilia then recounted her earliest inclination to be a teacher. She was a freshman in high school when she decided to become a teaching nun. However, her father and an English teacher convinced her that she did not need to be a nun in order to teach. After graduating from high school, she became a teacher assistant in the catechism classes at the local parish school. She decided to work with the middle school students “because nobody wanted to teach middle school kids.” That experience confirmed her desire
(ganas) to become a teacher. She said of that experience, “That gave me even more ganas . . . to pursue . . . education because I really got a natural high . . . working with kids—even kids nobody wanted.”

When Cecilia became a bilingual education teacher, she soon realized that she was not fully prepared to teach reading in Spanish to her second- and third-grade students. She expressed being “adamant” about learning how to teach Spanish reading if she were going to be held responsible for these students’ Spanish reading achievement. She explained why she spent the next two-and one-half years studying how to teach reading in Spanish: “I couldn’t be a farce in what I was going to do. I had to do something” to prepare to teach only in Spanish.

Cecilia did not have a clear sense of being a leader until she had been a teacher for several years. Rather, she went “along with the motions” and did things because someone needed to do them or they would not get done or because she believed that certain things had to be done and were not being done. She then described a situation in which she took charge of bringing about a school change much to the chagrin of her principal. The school had been cited for not providing bilingual education classes to all of its identified English-language learners. At the time, the school had only one bilingual education class per grade level. However, there was a need for a fuller second language program involving more classes. Cecilia began to meet with teachers to ask, “Well, what do we do about it? It’s not just the bilingual teachers. All of us have to get involved in teaching a second language.” Subsequently, she and the other teachers formulated a proposal for a second language program that would involve all teachers whether or not
the teachers held bilingual education endorsements. The principal’s response to their proposal, and in particular, to Cecilia’s leadership for taking charge of the school problem, was “Why are you being so cliquish?” Cecilia was “taken totally aback.” She had involved all teachers and did not understand the principal’s response. What she did come to realize from this experience was her success in leading fellow teachers toward a necessary and officially mandated instructional change.

When asked to name a significant person in her leadership development, Cecilia named her father, even though he “did his best to keep [her] from doing the things” she did. She described the mission he set for her and her siblings: “His whole thinking was that we were going to go to school, and we were going to do something for ourselves, our family, and for our raza [race].” She described her father as always being “very determined.” He expected his children to do well in whatever they set out to accomplish. He saw education as the way to rise above one’s present station. Cecilia and her four siblings met these expectations in their various professional careers. Further, among her cousins on both sides of the family, only her family yielded the “professionals.” In sum, she described her father as a “rock” and “patriarch” whose “determination” made a difference in her life because, she explained, “No matter who you were, or what you were, he loved you for what you were just because it’s you.”

Conversely, Cecilia spoke of colleagues and people around her who had been “threatened” by her leadership. She offered an explanation as to why she believed her leadership had intimidated some colleagues: “It’s kind of like survival of the fittest. They don’t want you to succeed because then they don’t look good.” She then spoke in
particular about a principal who accusingly said to her, “I know why you’re here. You’re here to take my job.” At the time, Cecilia did not “even want to be a principal.” However, the remark motivated her to “imagine being a principal.” She thought, “I have the commitment and dedication and the language and everything that these families would need and deserve.” That new awareness of self led her to declare, “If these idiots can do it, why can’t I?” With that declaration in mind, she began to move in the direction of a principalship.

Isabel did not identify herself as a leader prior to college age. However, she did describe herself as the “rebel” of her family. Being the youngest of nine children, she “hated” having to live up to her siblings’ reputations of being “good students, respectful, nice.” Though she was “respectful,” whenever she heard her teachers say, “Oh, you’re a G---- (family name), therefore, . . . you are going to make good grades,” she countered in her mind, “Na-uh, not me. I am going this way not that way . . .. They were going to go to college. Not me.” She never dared be disrespectful at school because she knew the news would quickly get back to her parents and, worse, to an older brother—the one all her siblings looked up to and for whom they all “had to mind [their] Ps and Qs” when he was present. To show that she was her own person, she “had to break away from [being] the nice, sweet girl that” her two sisters were. Her mother would say to her, “Ay, tus hermanas nunca hubieran hecho eso”—your sisters would never have done that—and she would respond, “Que dichosa que tuviste dos hijas that would do that . . . ya la tercera, no”—how fortunate that you had two daughters that [sic] would do that, but the third one won’t follow suit. She did not recall taking on any leadership roles throughout her
primary and secondary school years. As the youngest of nine, she said she "preferred to be a follower." It was not until she attended the university that she took on leadership positions.

During her sophomore year in college, Isabel became secretary of a college organization and began "fighting" against things she heard her professors or other students saying "about Hispanics, about minorities, in general." Her reaction was, "Somebody has to set these people straight. They don't know what they're talking about." As an example, she cited a college class situation in 1968 just as "bilingual education was really taking hold." Because her classmates knew of her interest in the emergent bilingual and multicultural education movements, they asked her to make a class presentation on the subject. Her professor called her aside and said, "Isabel, I don't want you to talk about bilingual education. You can talk about multicultural [education] and what you are doing at the student [center] . . . but let's not bring bilingual education into it." Her response to the professor was, "How can you talk about education and the way I feel about education if I don't bring bilingual education into it?" She then prepared her presentation on bilingual education, its philosophy, English as a second language, and her experiences working in these programs. She received a "C" for the presentation and her essay. That grade lowered her class grade from an "A" to a "B." She remembers thinking at that point, "Okay, the grade does not matter. I talked to people that [sic] might make a difference." She realized then that she was "going to be a leader in that sense." Her leadership would not happen by "yelling," she said, but she "was not going to do what they told [her] to do if it went against what [she] believed."
Isabel named her husband as a significant person in her leadership development. The irony was that he told her before they married that his wife “would never work.” That suited Isabel perfectly because she never aspired to go to college. However, he also said to her, “I do want you to finish college in case you ever need to go to work—si algo me pasa a mi—in case something happens to me. When Isabel did finish college, her husband said to her, “Okay, . . . your brother is looking for bilingual teachers. He is working nationally. He is fighting all these people . . . and you have your little certificate and you’re bilingual. How can we sit back and say you’re not going to work?” She credited her husband for encouraging her at every turn in her career. The more positions and leadership roles she was offered, the more he would say, “You can do it. You can do it. Seguro que si!”—surely, you can do it. Were there people who tried to dissuade Isabel from taking on leadership roles? She said there was no one—not even the professor she cited earlier. Situations like that just “made [her] want to work harder.”

Lynn recalled being a leader as early as first grade. She started school already knowing how to read because her grandmother had taught her at home. Her grandmother had been a Spanish teacher in the local high school. By the time she got to fourth grade, Lynn was made to sit next to her teacher as all the reading groups rotated through to read aloud with the teacher. The teacher “didn’t trust [her] to read and then go back” to her seat with her group because she would give out answers. She said she saw herself as an “assistant teacher” because she could read well. The teacher, however, “punched” her anytime she heard her give away answers while she sat next to her. This role of teacher continued to evolve when she was in high school. As a member of a future teachers
student group, she was assigned to tutor second graders during her lunch hour. By that
time, she said, “the teachers all trusted [her] explicitly” to tutor the young children. She
knew at age 16 that she “was destined to be a teacher.” When asked if she was conscious
of being a leader, she responded: “Never conscious . . . other people saw me that way, but
I never saw myself [that way]. I just saw myself as a teacher.”

Lynn named a principal she had worked with as a significant person in her
leadership development. Mr. J. saw her as a leader and took her under his tutelage by
saying, “I never really have sponsored people [to be principals] . . ., but I really think that
you will be a great principal someday, and I want to help you out.” With that, he
encouraged her to take on extra duties that would place her in a position to work with
central office personnel and to disseminate information to colleagues. He also “spent
many hours with [her] after school explaining why he did” what he did. She described
him as being “able to just very calmly dominate a school.” Everyone worked well for
him. She tried to emulate his “smooth” style when she became a principal. Conversely,
she could not recall anyone ever not affirming her in a leadership role.

Malintzin’s earliest recollection of being a leader was of leading her playmates in
such games as hide-and-seek. She said, “I always read the rules and made sure everybody
followed the rules.” However, she was known for breaking certain unspoken societal
rules as a junior high student. She found it easy to move among the different racial
groups in her school. She had friends from Guadalajara who were called Tijuanaeras, a
derogatory term for the newly arrived Mexican immigrants. She was “accepted” by the
cholos and cholas – a Mexican American group. She went surfing with her surfer friends
and dancing with her African American friends. She summed up her ability to be “flexible with all races” thus,

I could even hang with the Orientals . . . I was accepted in all groups . . . so I had many friends and many different cliques . . . They were definitely segregated in the school, but I was everywhere. I was able to do that, and that’s when I recognized, “I think that’s real leadership.”

This ability to move among diverse groups was noticed by adults. On one occasion, the adult leaders of a mini-bike drill team to which she belonged during her junior high school years commented, “You know, you are so-and-so’s friend, and you are so-and-so’s friend. You’re here. You’re there. When you’re ready to go to college and high school, you look us up. We’re going to help you get in.”

Though Malintzin saw herself as a leader during her junior high school years, the full consciousness of being a leader came in adulthood when she became a principal intern. She reported being “scared” at the conflict she “felt” between teachers and students. She began to see teachers from an administrative perspective and discovered practices that she “never in [her] wildest dreams” thought she’d see. She had presumed all teachers did “a good job” as she had. However, prior to this experience, she said she had not been “afraid” of her leadership. In fact, she thought she “was pretty bold.” She gave an example of her boldness.

Prior to becoming a principal, she worked as a bilingual education curriculum specialist for the school district. One of her tasks was to meet with parents to discuss bilingual education programs and to help them decide on the best school placement for
their children. Each time she was successful in placing a student in the appropriate program, principals would typically remark, “How the hell did you do that? We’ve been trying to convince this family for two years.” She used her persuasion skills citing litigation cases like Lau v. Nichols (1974), case scenarios, personal stories, and statistics to convince parents to place their children in bilingual education programs. Having experienced this success, she then felt ready to “go into the community and convince parents to sign their kids up for bilingual programs regardless of [Arizona Proposition] 203,” legislation repealing Title 15, Chapter 7, Article 3.1 of the Arizona Revised Statutes.

Malintzin named five significant persons in her leadership development. The director of the district bilingual education programs—her supervisor when she was a curriculum specialist—encouraged her to seek a principalship. When she became a principal, a close colleague who was a practicing principal became her primary mentor. She recalled how this mentor as well as other principals “helped . . . get [her] though [her] first year” as a principal. They would call her in the evenings and ask, “How are they treating you? How’s it going? What kind of problems are you having? Okay, then you can do this. I am going to e-mail you . . . . how to do this.” She pointed out that being a curriculum specialist serving the entire district proved advantageous in meeting and befriending the principals who then offered her their support when she joined their ranks.

A third colleague who inspired her leadership development was the assistant superintendent who supervised her first years as a principal. She said of him, “He had a lot to do with . . . allowing me to have my success even though it was intense, let me tell
you!” Her fourth mentor was a superintendent of instruction who encouraged her to begin doctoral studies. Finally, she named her husband as one who had always been “very supportive” of her leadership development. She said of him, “[He] lets me do what I need to do.”

When asked who had not supported her leadership, she could not identify anyone except two parents—“dos locos, muy pocos”—two crazy ones, very few. However, she conceded that “there’s [sic] always going to be a few” who will not affirm her leadership.

Sylvia did not share any stories of early leadership. She explained, “Truthfully, I don’t know that I’ve ever seen myself as a leader until recently as an administrator.” Instead, she described herself as “a person who listens and observes” and one “rather on the quiet side.” Other people, however, have commented to her, “You know, you’re very bright. You have talent. You have leadership qualities.” Yet, she did not see herself that way until she became a principal—“because it’s survival,” she added. As a middle school teacher, she knew she was good at doing class scheduling using the computer. Others knew that they could go to her, ask her questions related to scheduling, and she could “very easily put them in the slots and make the thing work.” But she never thought that was a leadership skill. As she got older, she identified another leadership skill: “I can think quickly on my feet and so I think when I say something, people . . . say, ‘Oh my gosh, I never thought about it that way,’ . . . except that I don’t say it often. I keep quiet. I keep it to myself.” Her husband, who was also a principal in the same school district, would say to her, “You should say that at the meetings.” Sylvia’s response was, “No way.” She repeated how “extremely shy” she was and recalled a time when she used to
“get sick” whenever she “had to speak in front of people.” She acknowledged that she had “important things to say” and “good ideas” but preferred to say them “in the background” or give the idea to another person to tell a group and not “take credit” for the idea.

Sylvia named her husband and an associate superintendent who was her supervisor at one time as significant people in her leadership development. Her husband was the one who encouraged her to pursue a master’s degree and to become a principal, telling her, “You can do it. You’re very good.” Sylvia remarked, “He literally pushed me to do it,” then reflected, “I’m not sure that I would have done it on my own. I’m not sure.” The associate superintendent also supported her move into administration, telling her, “You have to do this. You’re very good at this.” When asked if anyone had ever failed to affirm her in leadership roles, she answered, “I don’t think there’s anybody.”

Tango recalled three elementary school experiences and one high school experience that illustrated early leadership behaviors. The opening example was of being invited to perform the role of a trapeze artist in a circus play by her first-grade teacher, Mrs. A. Tango remembered Mrs. A. saying, “You know, you are going to be a good high-trapeze actor because even though you don’t have words your body motions show what it is to be a trapeze artist.” Tango interpreted this expectation to mean, “That’s your unique gift.” This same teacher also invited her to sing a solo in a music production for visiting teachers in her classroom and taught her how to read in English using music. She credited Mrs. A. for identifying her art talents and using them to teach her and to inspire her.
The summer between fourth and fifth grade, Tango was enrolled in a summer recreation program at her school where she took dance classes. One day, the principal invited her and two friends to help stamp new textbooks for 25 cents an hour. She and her friends agreed to take the job and soon applied what they had learned in the classroom. She recalled:

What was wonderful about this was that the three of us would work as a team . . . .
We all had finished reading about the factory line—the assembly line—and so . . .
[we decided to] have one person put all the books out, the other person stamp the books, [and] the other person flip them over and put them away . . . . We figured out how to do this. It was problem solving.

In high school, Tango took on the job of being the co-editor of the school newspaper. She knew she had to write every day and did not worry about whether or not it was “good writing.” This daily practice made her feel more “confident” in her willingness to take writing risks.

When asked if she was conscious of being a leader, Tango responded, “I was conscious of the fact that I knew how to take risks, and that it was okay.” As she reflected on her first-grade solo song performance, she recalled how her teacher had practiced it with her and that made her confident in taking the risk of singing before her audience. She expressed being able to recognize at that age the feelings associated with risk-taking: “I was conscious of the idea that you’re going to feel butterflies. You are going to feel nervous and anxious, but you can do this.” At such moments, she felt like she entered a “whole different world” and because she “was in that moment,” she enjoyed it.
Tango named a number of significant people in her leadership development. She began by identifying her mother who left her rural home in Mexico at age 22 “to marry an Anglo—a gringo—even though he was Mexican American.” She came to a new country, married on a July 4th, and two weeks later, her husband was shipped out to Korea. She commented to her mother, “Mom, do you know what kind of a change that is on your life?” Her father was also a model of leadership. She cited the 17 years it took him to complete his undergraduate and graduate university studies. He set the example of “stick-to-itiveness” for her. During her undergraduate college days, she remembered “mingling socially and academically” with graduate students and thinking, “Oh, after BAs, there’s still more school!” Some of these Latino graduate students of the time have remained influential figures in her leadership development. A Latino educator known for his leadership in the community encouraged her to pursue doctoral studies. She recalled being at a university workshop when he said to her, “Tango, you are working on your master’s. You need to think about working on your doctorate.” Her unspoken response was “Doctorate, whoa!”

There was only one person Tango identified as not affirming her leadership. It was a principal who stopped her from speaking Spanish in a school hall when she gave a new student and her mother a tour of her junior high school. Mr. F. said, “Tango, you know at [this school] we speak English.” The student and her mother were newly arrived from Mexico. She was “dumbfounded” at this reaction. However, in retrospect, she explained it this way: “He had no context. It was just total ignorance. He had no
emotional context. I don’t believe it was racist . . . . I really think he was just in his role of
being very consistent that we speak English.”

The participants’ recollections of early leadership development revealed two
findings. First, four of the six participants were not conscious of being leaders until well
into adulthood and then mostly because others told them they were. Secondly, their
leadership development stories revealed no single personality trait that defined or
predicted leadership. Using one word to describe each participant, given the stories they
told, note the variety of personality traits they ascribed to themselves. Cecilia spoke often
of being “determined.” Isabel called herself a “rebel.” Lynn saw herself as a “teacher.”
Malintzin described herself as “bold,” and Sylvia described herself as a “quiet observer.”
Tango described herself as a “risk-taker.”

When asked who affirmed them in their leadership development, all six
participants named male figures. Only two named females among those who influenced
their leadership development—a mother and an educational administrator. Four
participants named male educational administrators, educators, or graduate students as
mentors. Three cited their husbands as supporters, and two named their fathers as models.

How did these individuals influence the participants’ leadership development?
All of the participants received some form of verbal encouragement and affirmation of
their leadership. Isabel’s husband initially persuaded her to go to college for practical
reasons—“in case something happens to me.” Once she earned her degree, he encouraged
her to put her teaching degree to work as a way to join her activist brother in his “fight”
for the nascent bilingual education movement of the early 1970s. From that point on,
Isabel’s husband encouraged her to accept positions of leadership with the words, “You can do it! Seguro que si (Sure you can)!” Sylvia credited her husband for encouraging her to get her master’s degree and administrative certificate telling her, “You can do it. You’re very good.” An assistant superintendent encouraged her to be a principal in a similar manner: “You have to do this. You’re very good at this.” Malintzin said of her husband, “He lets me do what I need to do.” Malintzin and Tango both credited educators they admired for advising them to enroll in doctoral studies.

In addition to words of encouragement, how did others influence the positive leadership development of the participants? Two participants reported receiving not only verbal encouragement but also mentoring from principals. Lynn was encouraged to be a principal by a principal who saw her leadership potential: “I really think you’ll be a great principal . . . and I want to help you.” He created opportunities for Lynn to take on leadership positions by asking her to attend in-services and meetings where she could interact with central office administrators and then formally present the information to her colleagues. Once Malintzin became a principal, another principal took an active role in mentoring her throughout the first year. The principal would call her at the end of the day to ask, “How’s it going? What kinds of problems are you having? . . . You can do this.” Finally, two of the participants reported encouragement by way of parental expectations and lived examples. Cecilia’s father expected his children get an education in order “to do something for [themselves], [their] families, and for [their] raza [race].” She spoke often of her father’s “determination” in helping his family rise from their
humble beginnings as migrant workers. In all, the six participants experienced at least one significant source of support for their leadership development.

Conversely, when asked who did not affirm their leadership, fewer individuals were named, and there was less similarity in responses. Two participants said no one had stood in the way of their leadership. One recalled a principal when she was a seventh-grade student; one recalled a professor in college. One cited fellow colleagues in the school setting, and one mentioned that occasionally a "crazy" parent did not affirm her leadership as a principal. Overall, the participants seemed to place little stock in people who did not affirm their leadership. Two said such people motivated them to aspire to higher goals or to "work harder."

To conclude the first series of questions focused on leadership and educational leadership in the context of the role of principal, the participants were asked to describe educational leadership using a metaphor. Their analogies follow.

**Metaphorical Definitions of Educational Leader**

The six participants used a total of eight metaphors to describe an educational leader. Six metaphors suggestive of movement conveyed dispositions and behaviors of educational leaders—teacher, octopus, hat-changer, juggler, rallier, and tango dancer. These are presented first. Two metaphors illustrated what an educational leader should know—heart and flowerpot. These are presented last.

**Cecilia** initially described the educational leader as a "collaborative worker." When encouraged to use "picture words," meaning something concrete to represent an educational leader, she used the word teacher. An educational leader, she said, is "a
teacher first" responsible for "teaching, . . . demonstrating and guiding others." Teachers are those who are unafraid "to go into the trenches and do things themselves." A teacher is also one who "stands [her/his] ground and word," though it "is very hard to do especially with the business of children" given the number of "things thrown at" them from the outside. Teachers are those who are "able to mold" external mandates to better conform to the children who "don’t always fit the mold of the four walls and a building." Teachers do this by first identifying a child’s interests, strengths, and needs before applying any outside requirements. A teacher is most successful in learning about the children by "listening" and "meeting with them and having . . . camaraderie." In sum, Cecilia described an educational leader as a teacher—one who was unafraid to roll up his or her sleeves to do what had to be done, acted from firm convictions, kept his or her word, and strove to learn what was most suitable for his or her staff by listening, building rapport, guiding, and making decisions collaboratively.

Lynn’s first response to the question of using a metaphor to describe an educational leader was, “Frazzled! Is that a word picture? Can you see it?” She then went on to describe the educational leader using three different metaphors. The first and most descriptive metaphor was “octopus.” She elaborated, “You know, with all these different hands and every one of those tentacles . . . [doing] something . . . all at once . . . all day.” She then offered a number of purposes for several of the tentacles: “cooperation, agility, no sleep, no eating, running, chasing, and being a mother.” All the tentacles are needed “to run the show.” She then switched from the octopus metaphor to the metaphor of
"hats"—an educational leader is one who wears many hats. Finally, she concluded that educational leaders are jugglers. She reflected:

I see myself as a circus juggler . . . . Sometimes a school is a real circus, and then when you get the downtown [central district offices] people . . . involved in it, then it becomes even more of a juggle—of wearing different hats because you have this one, and this one, and this one, and everyone wants a piece of it.

Lynn described a “frazzled” educational leader using three analogies highly suggestive of movement. The incessant motion of an octopus’ tentacles in different places all at once seemed to be a useful image for conveying the “agility” needed by an educational leader to be in touch with the various members of a school community. Given the number of “hats” worn by educational leaders, it followed that tentacles were “handy” for changing hats often as one responded to the varied constituents of education. Finally, the motion of changing hats often required the deft choreography of a juggler.

Malintzin found it difficult to “think of” one metaphor because principals “play so many roles.” She recalled an assistant principal who “felt like he was a broker” who “would get different things and then . . . had to issue them out.” She reflected on how she is not “only a manager . . . because [she sees] the bird’s eye view of things.” She then settled on the term rallier—“a pep-rally person.” She described a rallier thus:

Someone to cheer everyone up, to control the environment and make sure there’s an environment—to motivate everyone and add something new . . . . I’m responsible for being a change agent. I feel that I have to change the structure of
how teachers think . . .; to look at student work, to improve . . . It’s getting the
bigger picture; motivating everyone; the mission, and bringing everyone along.

Malintzin’s metaphor of an educational leader—the rallier—described the dynamic
of motivating, cheering on, and moving along a group of people to create an
environment, or climate, with a team mentality and spirit. The implied goal of the rallier
was to heighten the team’s resolve to aspire to be a winner in whatever “bigger picture”
or “mission” they set for themselves.

**Tango**, like Lynn, described an educational leader using a metaphor implying
movement. However, rather than describing “frazzled” movements, Tango’s analogy was
one of choreographed movements. She used her pseudonym as the metaphor—a tango, a
dance form she had practiced for five years. She began by explaining that the leader in a
tango made the decisions about “where to go.” She clarified that the leader “doesn’t have
to be the male.” It is the partner’s responsibility to respond to and to embellish the
movement. The tango requires an unspoken communication between the two dancers “in
the midst of all . . . this chaos that can go on around” them. The dancers around them,
however, are creating a separate choreography. All dancers must not only focus on their
respective partners, they must also keep from bumping “into other people [with] . . . their
own deals of where they plan to go.” The dance really has no end given the interchange
of embellishments. Tango said, “You realize that for three or four minutes, you’re in the
beating—you’re in the moment.” Then you’re in a different dance all over again. Tango
concluded her description with a reflection:
It helps me realize [that] I’m dispensable but I need to make choices and decisions in the moment. I have to have an idea of where I’m going. I do have to follow my leader, but yet I . . . need to be responsible enough to make my own initiatives and embellish as I see fit.

Tango’s metaphor of the tango described an educational leader as one who continuously “makes choices and decisions in the moment.” Like a tango dancer, the educational leader must “communicate constantly” to know when and how to respond to the changing dance partners without bumping into the others on the dance floor. The metaphor implied that leadership was interchangeable—the partners in the dance take turns leading as they read the signs and cues in the other. The leader makes the decisions about where to go and how to get there after having “read” the partner’s cues as well as having scanned the dance floor so as to avoid “bumping” into others. Finally, like Cecilia, who spoke about the need to “mold” outside directives to conform to her school community, Tango also spoke of her responsibility to “embellish” her superiors’ directives as she “sees fit” for her organization.

“The heart—that is what the educational leader has to be,” responded Isabel without hesitation. She recalled a poster with a multicolored heart in the center of a black background on which the following message was printed: “Art is the heart of education.” She explained the various colors of the heart: “Some of those colors are . . . the academic . . . , but along with the academic, you have to be a clown . . . [and] be musically inclined.” She then explained that the educational leader must be a risk-taker in “educating the full child.” She expressed her belief that “every child is gifted” in some
area—be it the visual or performing arts or science. The educational leader is one who looks for the giftedness of each child and is one who understands how “all the colors that make up the heart” are “intertwined and work together.” This metaphor served as the working premise for how Isabel worked with the adults who worked with the students. Effective educational leaders understand that adults, too, hold unique gifts that need to be identified and used to create rich learning and working environments for students and school personnel.

Sylvia described an educational leader as a flowerpot. She said, “You have to have . . . soil for the little seeds to grow and flower.” She then described how she found “the right balance in the soil for things to grow.” She belonged to a study group that “forces [her] to make the time to read” literature pertinent to educational leadership on topics such as cognitive coaching (Lipton & Wellman, 1998; Lipton & Wellman with Humbard, 2001). Though it was difficult to set aside this time for study, she believed it was “the best thing” she did for herself to keep “the right combination of things” in the “flowerpot.” She was motivated by her desire to leave her school “better than she found it.” From Sylvia’s description, it appeared that she has found it necessary to enhance her knowledge and skills continually in order to be more effective in leading her staff to new growth.

All participants contributed pieces to a mosaic that formed a multihued image of an educational leader. Isabel emphasized that an educational leader believed that all individuals possessed unique gifts. Cecilia and Tango both spoke of the need to modify and customize external schooling mandates to conform better to the children who “don’t
always fit the mold of the four walls and a building.” Lynn pointed out the necessity of
being agile as an “octopus” and “changing hats” in response to the various groups with
whom educational leaders interact. Malintzin emphasized the “bird’s eye view” of the
educational leader such that he or she could act as a “rallier”—motivating and cheering on
a team to aspire to the goals they set for themselves. Tango described the educational
leader as one involved in the careful choreography of a dance-sometimes leading,
sometimes following—but always careful not to “bump into other people” doing their own
dancing.

All participants stated or implied that educational leaders were self-directed as
well as collaborative. Cecilia emphasized that educational leaders were cooperative,
nurturing, and communicative. They reached out to others to build rapport and
camaraderie. They had a sense of humor. Sylvia described educational leaders as those
who continually increased the breadth and depth of their own cognitive knowledge in
order to lead those who educate children and youth. Tango spoke of educational leaders
as those who constantly risked “[making] choices and decisions in the moment.” Perhaps
those decisions were based not only on the cognitive knowledge Sylvia referred to but
also on the heartfelt intuitive understandings and skills of discernment implied in Isabel’s
metaphor of the educational leader: “the heart.” In Isabel’s opinion, “that is what an
educational leader has to be.”

The mosaic image of an educational leader that emerged from the participants’
various metaphors and stories strongly suggested that the raison d’etre of the educational
leader was to promote growth in others—to educate. Sylvia’s image of the soil in the
flowerpot now seemed more telling. The educational leader possessed the “soil” of knowledge and intuition in which ideas germinated and eventually led to his or her observable behaviors—now reiterated through metaphor: the octopus juggling responsibilities and changing hats, the rallier cheering on the team, the dancer choreographing a tango among tangos, and in the quiet pauses, the heart listening to its own beat, and the soil waiting again for watering and sun to germinate new seeds.

This section concludes the responses to the first interview eliciting personal stories of leadership development leading to the role of educational leader, specifically, as elementary school principal. The first interview was intended to “establish the context of the participants’ experience” (Seidman, 1998, p. 11) as an educational leader. In the second interview, the participants were asked to reflect on the meaning of education, how they led adults to educate children, and how they effected school change.

Enacting Leadership to Develop Human Potential

All participants began their careers as teachers, and all spoke of their principal roles in terms related to teaching. Their metaphors describing educational leader seemed to indicate that a key function of the educational leader is to educate. Lynn described her principal leadership style as “instructional.” Cecilia used the metaphor of teacher for educational leader. Isabel and Sylvia spoke of the necessity of being lifelong students themselves in order to teach others. Malintzin presented facts, statistics, case scenarios, and personal stories to teach and persuade teachers to use best practice in their teaching. Tango defined educational leadership as the “process of moving . . . people together for the benefit of student learning.”
How do educational leaders lead other adults for the benefit of student learning? To answer this question, the participants were asked to describe their school community, their beliefs about human nature and the ability to learn, and what it means "to educate." They were then asked to describe how they led others to educate children, the extent to which their staff shared their beliefs about developing human potential, and how they handled adults who struggled with the process of educating. To elicit further underlying beliefs about the process of educating, they were asked to define education using a metaphor.

Cecilia was the principal of an inner-city bilingual education magnet school for Grades K-8. During the 2002-2003 school year, 140 students were enrolled in Grades K-5; 350 students were enrolled in the middle school. The majority of students (80%) were of Hispanic origin. Anglo students comprised 17% of the population. Native Americans (2%) and African Americans (1%) were few in number. At the elementary level, there was only one class per grade level. Students at the primary level each were assigned two teachers—one who taught in English and one who taught in Spanish, to provide dual language instruction. Cecilia did not specify how the curriculum content was divided and taught by each pair of teachers. At the middle school level, all teachers were certified in bilingual education and could provide instruction in both English and Spanish. Three-fourths of the students resided outside the school boundaries. Their parents had chosen this school for its dual language program.

When asked to describe her beliefs about human nature and learning, Cecilia began by saying that parents send schools "the best that they have." Unlike a factory
where products are fashioned from raw materials that can be sorted for imperfections, and
the imperfections returned or disposed, schools must accept who they receive and
“maintain and enrich” the resources within each student. Cecilia explained the business
of developing human potential thus,

Our belief is that we are to develop children the best that we can in the time that
we have and not only in their first language but in their second language. We have
to find their interests . . .; what turns them on . . .; what captures them in their
learning . . . They have to want to learn whatever it is they’re studying.

In addition, Cecilia believed that students should have “choices” and be allowed
“input” in their education. All students should be treated equally. Cecilia explained that
rules and a code of ethics facilitate treating students equitably and help create
consistency, structure, and safety in the school environment. Such an environment is
especially necessary for students who come from displaced families. A number of
elementary school students came from shelters for the homeless. Cecilia said of this
group of students, “We keep them [at this school even after they move out of the area] so
that they [can] have that one normal something [in their lives] . . . We’re really there to
serve the family, and whatever it takes, we will do.” “Whatever it takes” included
Cecilia’s willingness to “fight the magnet [school] office . . . to accept . . . middle school
brothers and sisters” in order to keep siblings in the same school. Her goal was to “look at
the whole child” and to “look at everything” in that child’s life in order to provide the
best education possible.
When asked to tell what it meant to educate, Cecilia responded with what she called a “bicultural” explanation:

We know that it isn’t just to learn to read and write and do math, but it is also to educate the soul and the being, you know. You have to show children how to care if they don’t have that; how to love if they don’t have that. We have to show them how to have self-control . . . . But being an educator, you can’t help but think of the academic side of it.

Her definition seemed to describe the cognitive as well as affective dimensions of learning.

Cecilia went on to describe education as “the key to the world,” “powerful” and that which gives “pride.” It is “a way for [people] to know who they are and who they want to become.” Because it is all this, education can also be used “to hinder” the advancement of certain groups. She spoke specifically of movements that have tried “to hinder” Latinos “by not allowing them to learn in their language.” She gave the following reasons: “They want to be able to keep us in labor roles because they want to be able to control us. They believe if we become too educated, we’re going to be taking over their jobs . . . , politics, and government.” Cecilia’s definition of education implied that the process had a political nature as well.

In addition to teaching children and youth in schools, Cecilia believed it was important to educate parents, particularly of middle school students. She had observed an increasing number of parents who seemed to be ruled by their adolescent children. Thus, she often recommended that families attend parenting classes offered by community
agencies. Lastly, Cecilia discussed the need for educators to be “upfront” in discussing results of standardized tests in detail with students and their parents. This, too, involved educating the learners about what they needed to do for themselves and enlisted the support of parents in the education process.

In leading teachers to educate students, Cecilia tried to get “others involved” in solving instructional problems; otherwise there was no “buy-in.” She brought together teams of teachers to figure out how to implement new instructional programs. Alternative models were suggested and then presented to parents, students, and teachers for their review. The school governing council, comprised of both teachers and parents, made the final decisions based on a group’s recommendations for a new program. Cecilia concluded that if she were “dictating” a particular vision for the school, she “would get nowhere.” Instead, she “guided” others toward her vision. To what extent were others in agreement with her vision?

The fundamental goal of Cecilia’s magnet school program was to teach all students a second language and to teach all subjects via two languages. Nonetheless, Cecilia discovered that though her teachers knew the school’s mission to create bilingual learners, they “[didn’t] really believe it.” To address this issue, she created a learning opportunity through a study group on the topic of bilingual education. Teachers used a book to guide their discussions. On one occasion, after reading about the philosophy of bilingual education, teachers “talked about faith and beliefs.” She posed questions such as, “Do you really believe [in this philosophy]?” “How do you demonstrate your beliefs about education?” “Do you actually practice what you say you believe in?” After each
reading and discussion, Cecilia directed teachers to look for “examples of [practices]
either for or against bilingual education” within their own classrooms and school to bring
to the next discussion. This process led to what Cecilia called “aha” moments and
changed practices because teachers themselves had made the new discoveries. Of this
process Cecilia said, “I can’t say that everybody believed in it or jumped in with both
feet, but the . . . fact that they came to these awareness levels was . . . much better than
anything else that I had seen.” What of those teachers who struggled to change practices
that did not conform to the school’s mission? Cecilia identified the practices that needed
changing and included a plan for improvement as part of those teachers’ evaluations.

To conclude this portion of the interview, Cecilia used two metaphors to describe
what it meant to educate others – the home and the world. She returned to the original
idea that students come “from what parents have developed and nurtured in their own
home”–that whatever began in the home served as the “foundation” for learning. The
metaphor of home was followed by the image of the world. Cecilia explained it by
recounting an experience with a substitute teacher during her first year as a principal:

The substitute asked, “Why are these children studying Africa? They’ll never get
there. They’ll never be there.” And I said, “Well, thank you for your opinion. You
can leave.” “Why? I didn’t say anything wrong.” I said, “Yes you did . . . . Your
job here today is to continue the education of these students and if you don’t
believe that these children need to learn about Africa, then you don’t deserve to
be here because you don’t . . . have any idea where these children will go and
what they can do. It’s possible for these students to go to Africa . . . . It is not for
us to judge. We are here to educate. That’s our job—to educate—and if we refuse to
and don’t believe in it, then go home,” and he was appalled that I would just say,
“Go home.”

To further substantiate her belief that “there’s no stopping” what students can learn, Cecilia told another story of a former student whom she had taught during her first year of teaching who had graduated from a nationally renowned oceanography institute. She says of the day this former student visited her, “That day was the highlight of my year to know that that’s where he came to be.” Then she went on to express what it meant to educate: It is to “find that spark—that flame—and ignite it . . . to motivate [students] to want to learn, and everything else is in the palm of their hand.” However, the learner must have “ganas” to learn—“that determination that you are going to . . . overcome any and every obstacle . . . . [If] you have the ganas, then you can have the determination to do anything that you want.” Further, education is a lifelong endeavor if one expects to realize dreams. Cecilia ended her comments with a statement that perhaps clarified what education was not: “What’s so difficult now is all the regulations—the requirements that they’re expecting of students. But that, too, will turn, I’m hoping.”

Isabel was the principal of a small bilingual education magnet school, Grades K-5. There were 262 students during the 2002-2003 school year. Of these, 75% were of an ethnic minority group; 25% were non-minority children. Half the population resided within the geographic school boundaries. The majority of students (80-85%) were dominant or monolingual English speakers who attended the school in order to learn
Spanish. Because the school was small, she got to “know all of [the students] and their families.”

When asked about her belief in human potential, Isabel stated that she believed “everybody is gifted” including exceptional education students even though “they may have a slow start in reading or math.” She believed “all children are sponges.” Isabel cited some research that reported that 80% of kindergarteners began school believing “they are the center of the world” and “feel good about themselves.” Once they arrived at the schoolhouse, it became the educator’s duty to help them continue building their positive self-esteem as they learned how to share their universe. Secondly, educators must “find out where [each student’s giftedness lies] and take that route in helping all children.” Isabel wished that more money was available to “provide that extra adult or to train . . . parents, . . . grandparents, [or] senior citizens” to help more students be successful.

In response to the question, “What does it mean to educate?” Isabel answered without hesitation, “To educate . . . means to open the door and let the people come in.” She realized that teachers cannot teach everything, but they can provide students with “a taste” of what they want to learn about and “let the children explore and discover.” In her school, teachers were proactive in surveying their students to find out what they wanted to learn about. Teachers then used the expressed interests as “the vehicle” for carrying “the standards” or “the basics.” Teachers planned their lessons around the students’ interests but remained “flexible” because when “something . . . gels” in one area, students often said, “Well, let’s find out more about this.” As a principal, Isabel supported her
teachers in finding ways to “group the standards” and how to teach them through the arts as well as through the academic subjects.

When asked to describe the process she used to lead teachers in educating students, Isabel began by saying that she relied on “the strategies that were used to motivate [early childhood] students” that she learned in her college days. She then described what had come to be known as an experiential, or project approach, to learning. Through this approach, students were encouraged to use all their senses to learn. She gave an example from her early teaching experiences:

One time I remember that the kids led us to this project because one child had—he was a great artist—but he had the view that all trees looked like this . . . or it wasn’t right. He was a perfectionist. So it was, “What can we do to help this child to see that there’s variety and not be putting others down?” . . . So we went out on a walk . . . [and] started looking at leaves. “Are all the leaves the same? What is the difference in the leaves?” And we went into botany—math how are they shaped? We made a big tree using leaves that we had collected . . . From there we . . . went into different areas, and we had parents come in and talk to us. So it was . . . using all your senses to learn and not telling somebody, “Oh no, that’s not true,” or “Don’t do things like that,” but opening their eyes . . . to differences . . . [and to] variety.

She then shared a second story to illustrate that students need to have a reason for learning—they need to see “a need for it” in their own lives.
Did everyone on the teaching staff share Isabel’s education beliefs? Isabel began by saying that committees of teachers interviewed applicants for teaching positions. The central question in hiring new teachers was, “Are they going to fit into a philosophy?” Isabel explained that did not mean they had “to agree with everything.” In fact, they occasionally had “knockdown drag-outs on certain issues” as a staff. Still, once they had reached consensus, they could all say, “Okay, . . . we’ve come this far. This is what we’ve talked about, now this is our decision, and this is what we need to do to move on.” Through various examples, Isabel demonstrated her ability to lead teachers to reach their own conclusions after studying and debating issues in small teams and as a total faculty until they could reach the consensus that was best for students and still fit within the school’s mission.

What of teachers who did not share in the school’s mission? Isabel used cognitive coaching (Lipton & Wellman, 1998; Lipton & Wellman with Humbard, 2001) to move teachers in new instructional directions. She began the process by meeting with the teacher to ask the following questions: “What am I going to see when I go in and observe? . . . What do you want me to focus in on?” During the observation period, she scripted what the teacher was doing. The observations were then discussed at a separate meeting. Isabel then gave the teacher the opportunity to say, “Well, what you saw was either not what I usually do, or this happened, or I had to go back to this.” Isabel, in turn, had the opportunity to ask the teacher “questions for clarification” and when there was concern, say, “I am not seeing what I feel I should be seeing in this classroom. Have you been doing this? Have you been doing that? Have you worked with your team and what is
it and why?” She found that this process helped the teacher recognize what needed to be changed. Isabel subsequently had another teacher or herself model the expected behavior.

When asked to describe education metaphorically, Isabel, like Cecilia, envisioned the world—a globe. She pictured first the continents, then the different countries within each land mass, then the individuals within each country. She spoke of drawing out the “music from around the world—the lively music . . . [and] the serene music” from each cultural group and from each individual. She spoke of the uniqueness of each individual even as she saw the similarities across cultural groups.

**Lynn** was principal of a school situated in one of the lowest socio-economic areas of the city in 2002-2003. Most of the 650 students in Grades pre-K through 5 received free or reduced-rate lunch. The school had received Title I (Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) federal funding for many years. Ninety-six percent of the students were of Latino origin; two percent are Native Americans. Anglos and African Americans comprised the remaining 2% of the population. The school operated on an extended year-round schedule divided into trimesters and summer classes and housed a program for bilingual gifted and talented students drawn from throughout the school district.

Lynn believed that human potential could be developed even among learners who came from low socio-economic environments. She said she often told her “faculty or anyone,” “Yes, we are in a poverty area, but we don’t need to treat our children like they are poverty-stricken.” Instead she constantly pushed for “high expectations for them all.” Helping students rise to the expectations meant teachers must “pull” and “tutor” students
beginning at their respective ability levels. This required teachers to use materials of varying grade levels so that “students can be successful” at each level of progression.

Lynn defined the process of educating students and teachers as the process of nurturing them “so they can learn . . . [and] grow to their fullest potential.” She spoke of providing children with materials at their individual ability levels. To nurture teachers meant providing them with professional development opportunities. She said of professional development:

> I’ll always say to them at the beginning of every year, if you go to a conference . . . [or] to a training . . . [session or] to the university, it doesn’t matter what you study but it’s what you bring back—the tricks and the tools . . .. Even if you get one idea that you didn’t have before and you put it in your bag of tricks, that’s one more than you had . . . before [that can] benefit the children.

How did Lynn lead teachers to educate the children? Lynn clarified that she did not teach the teachers. She “guides them.” Although she attended training sessions with the school’s curriculum specialist, the curriculum specialist was responsible for “the individual training in the classroom” and modeling the practices. Lynn viewed her role as one of overseeing professional development—“guiding [teachers’] educational growth.” When teachers struggled to educate children, then her intervention was more direct. She met with teachers to discuss the practices that needed to change and the kinds of professional development that would be useful. She also recommended mentors and assistants to work with them. On rare occasions, she had to “put them on a plan” for improvement. She said of this experience, “It may be painful for me, but it’s necessary
for the individual.” Yet, she had observed that an improvement plan “begins to shape the individual,” and they tended to “seek more help.”

When asked to what degree the staff shared in Lynn’s beliefs about education, she responded only in reference to the school district’s mandates to conform to the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. She expressed her expectations thus:

I would hope that . . . everyone would see that the district is going in one direction. That we are all going together and we are all into accountability because with “No Child Left Behind” we don’t have a choice any longer.

She thought that 50% of the staff agreed with this direction at the beginning of the school year. This figure grew to 75% by mid-year and to 90% by the end of the school year. She reasoned that the staff had gradually come to “realize that this is where it’s at,” and she seemed pleased to have this many “on the same page.”

Lynn used the metaphor of teacher to describe the process of educating others.

She said,

I see a female teacher leaning over a bunch of little children . . . with a book and a pen or a pencil or maybe with a big piece of paper and drawing . . . . I always see a female with long hair because that’s the way I was 20 or 30 years ago. . . -with the group of children watching, aware, and participating; raising their hands.

Lynn’s teacher metaphor was consistent with earlier descriptions of her leadership style.

Malintzin was principal of an elementary school of 504 students during the 2002-2003 school year. The majority of the students (76%) were of Hispanic origin. Anglo
students comprised the next largest group (16%). African American students (7%) and Native American students (1%) comprised the smallest groups.

Malintzin believed that students’ ability to learn is proportional to the level of expectations teachers hold for them. She explained:

I really do believe that your expectations of students will motivate you or will drive what you do as a teacher or as a person. If you don’t think they’re going to do it, you’re going to do less. If you think they can, you’re going to move it.

You’re going to do more and you’re going to seek out new ideas.

She reiterated that “the potential of teachers and educators is going to be relative to [their] expectations [of] their student population or their adults.”

Malintzin reported that “educating people” was about “convincing them to do certain things and that certain things are right for kids.” She acknowledged that all people have “agendas” of what they “think is important” enough “to convince… people to take certain actions.” As an educational leader, she had “decided” to place her “agenda on the plate” along with every other person’s agenda. In her case, she had “convinced Latino and African American and Anglo parents” to place “their kids in bilingual programs.” She accomplished the “convincing” by providing her audience with a “good rationale” and “research” and by “being persuasive.”

When asked how she led others in the process of educating students, Malintzin described her school’s “12 lead teachers.” Of the 12 lead teachers, 10 were “phenomenal” in making “phenomenal teachers of the others.” They were “like vice-principals” for each grade level and were “very powerful.” They were well respected by their peers. The
purpose of having lead teachers was to ensure that instructional decisions made as a staff or grade-level team had continuity over time even if the principal left. In fact, Malintzin commented, “My AP [assistant principal] and curriculum specialist [have said], ‘Wow, these girls can run this building without us,’” and “that’s been my goal since I got [to this school].” The lead teachers received orientation and continual training from the principal, assistant principal, and curriculum specialist on such things as the political nature of working with colleagues, how to move agendas forward, how to analyze and explain test data, and how to create strategic plans for implementing new instructional programs. They attended retreats and met with the principal on a regular basis. Lead teachers met with their grade-level colleagues at least once a week, and more often than not, three times per week. They “give each other [teaching] strategies.” They took turns observing in each other’s classrooms. They analyzed standardized test scores to determine what needed to change in the instructional program to increase scores. They helped the principal determine “who should be moved to what grade levels . . . based on student achievement . . . results.” Because they had established a trusting rapport with the principal, they were able to report poor teaching practices they observed and then determine a plan of action to help the struggling teacher colleague. Malintzin commended the ability of her lead teachers to remain professional and discrete in their work with peers. Of this process of leading those who educate the students, Malintzin expressed exuberantly, “Wow, this is so powerful!”

Did every staff member share in Malintzin’s beliefs about how to educate students and the use of lead teachers in promoting the school’s instructional mission? Malintzin
could name only two teachers who struggled with meeting the school’s objectives. One of these teachers had allowed “her personal life to get in the way of her job.” With this teacher, Malintzin tried to be “as humane as possible and as understanding as possible.” Still, she must “write them up” when nothing else has made a difference in their teaching practices. Malintzin said of this responsibility for accountability, “I’m honest with them, so I take that pill and I walk in and tell [them] how it is or write [them] up . . . [using] a lot of evidence–documentation.” Ultimately, she must put them on a plan for improvement as the final attempt at remediation before dismissing a teacher.

As with Cecilia and Isabel, Malintzin concluded this part of the interview with an image of the world as the metaphor for education. Yet, her description added another dimension to the two previous metaphorical definitions. She envisioned a Diego Rivera painting of the world, but as one looking at the planet from afar and reflecting:

You’re here for a certain amount of time. Make the best of it for everybody around you and for yourself. Don’t make your life ugly. . . . I remember when I took astronomy, and I used to think of all those beautiful places in the world, and I used to think, “God, our little problems we have here. Why do we make problems for our minds the way we do, politically, when we could be good to each other and get by the day without big issues? Be nice to each other. Being nice to each other means don’t ignore each other. Don’t ignore the culture that people come from and bring things that are important to them. If there are requirements our society wants our kids to be able to meet or to get the material things or . . . happiness and peace . . . Let’s give it to them.
As with Cecilia, mention of "requirements" came at the end of Malintzin’s metaphor for education. Perhaps she, too, had separated out "requirements" as that which belonged to schooling rather than to educating.

Sylvia was principal of a Grades K-5 school during the 2002-2003 school year. There were 584 students at the time. The percentage of Anglo and Hispanic students had fluctuated between 49% and 51% during the first four of five years that Sylvia had been principal of the school. During the 2002-2003 school year, two new elementary schools created new school boundaries and changed the proportion of these two groups in the school to 71% Hispanics and 25% Anglos. Native Americans (3%) and African Americans (1%) were few in number. The majority of students (70+%) received free or reduced-rate lunches. Of her school, Sylvia commented, “I have the best staff in [the school district] because we have nothing. The district gives us not one extra anything, and we manage to maintain in the [school performance ratings].”

Asked her beliefs about human potential and the nature of learning, Sylvia responded, “I think anyone has the ability to learn” but “not everyone learns like you learn.” She added that this was true of children as well as adults. As for how one taught others, she explained that there must first be a relationship between teacher and student. She described the relationship thus,

I think it’s how you treat people that you’re going to get the most results. I was brought up by an aunt after my mom died, and I loved that woman. She could get us to do anything and be so happy doing it for her . . . . It’s how . . . you make somebody want to please you, want to do it for you . . . . It’s building those
relationships, having that communication . . ., having [an] open-door policy where someone can come in and disagree with you and it’s going to be okay . . .. [It’s knowing] that there are different ways of giving . . . information.

Sylvia defined the process of educating others as that process of teaching “skills” and a “foundation of common knowledge” that enable the learner “to live, to work, [and] to be a respected member of society.” It was showing others “how to get the information because . . . information [changed] so quickly.” However, a teacher can only do so much. Sylvia used the adage, “You can lead a horse to water, but you can’t make him drink.” It is not the teacher’s job to supply the “water all the time” but rather to teach the student “how to fend for [himself/herself]” so as to be an independent learner for life.

Sylvia led her teachers to educate students by first identifying “what [she’s] up against or what [she’s] trying to convey to them.” The next step was “finding the way that works best for [her] to get people to do what they need to do and hold them accountable.” She believed that the best way to lead her staff in educating children was to “treat them as individuals.” By establishing a level of trust, she and her teachers could then have “substantive conversations [and] be able to [say], ‘Okay, let’s get to the real, real truth about what’s going on here, and why, and how can I help you?’” She believed that, like children, adults would “come through for you” when they knew you “care for them and you respect them.” Conversely, she knew as an educator what hindered learning:
When teachers are mean, when teachers aren’t treating [students] fairly, when teachers are not prepared, students know this. They pick up on it right away and they can tell you, “You know, she doesn’t care for me. She doesn’t like me.”

It appeared that Sylvia applied her same beliefs about teaching children to teaching adults—establish a caring relationship and be prepared. Then they will “want to come to school . . . and you [will] be able to teach them.” She found this relationship with adults to be crucial in the process of educating children. She concluded after eight years of working with children and adults: “If we don’t start with the adult, the child will never benefit.”

Of 22 teachers, all but five shared Sylvia’s beliefs about the way of education in their school. Her first year as principal, she realized that she had to “pick her battles” given that some teachers had been “there 37 years . . . in the same classroom.” So, she began by changing a structural problem with lunch schedules. The following year, she proposed grouping teachers in the building by grade level to facilitate such things as “buddy reading.” Sylvia mimicked the response from some of the long-time teachers: “Well, are you kidding? You can’t move me out of this room! I’ve been in this room 25 years.” Eventually, most of these teachers retired. Teachers who shared Sylvia’s education philosophy have since joined the faculty. She said of the new teachers: “There’s a lot of buy-in, and I have a lot of young teachers. There’s a lot of energy. They are movers and shakers, and if they feel supported, they can do anything, and it’s amazing!” She spoke of the camaraderie shared by the teachers beyond the school day and classroom. “If somebody gets sick, everybody else will get a collection, cook them
dinnners, and . . . take them to the house . . . We get together for breakfast, for lunches.”

What of the few who did not share Sylvia’s views of education?

Sylvia maintained an open-door policy as a principal. She said all teachers “know that they can” talk to her about their disagreements or what they hear through “the rumor mill.” She had found the need to admonish teachers—especially the younger ones—to say nothing if they have nothing good to say about a colleague or the school in general. With two teachers who are “in bad shape” and “five who could use a little more help,” Sylvia used the strategies of cognitive coaching (Lipton & Wellman, 1998; Lipton & Wellman with Humbard, 2001) which involved scripting teachers as they taught and asking questions about their teaching objectives and practices. She talked with these teachers about what they were doing in their classrooms and why they did what they did. For those teachers who struggled with some aspect of instruction, she sought out mentors provided by the district if they were receptive to mentoring. During the 2000-2001 school year, there were “five mentor/mentee” pairs. She showed them how to write lesson plans. Even those who may not have agreed with certain expectations eventually discovered that the expectations did help them grow as professionals. Sylvia gave an example of a teacher who disliked submitting detailed lesson plans as e-mail attachments. The teacher prepared lesson plans for teaching summer classes at another school and asked Sylvia, whom she called “Cheese-for Big Cheese,” to review them. When Sylvia commended her work, the teacher admitted to her, “You made me work really hard, but you taught me something. I learned something from you, and now look, I can apply it over there.” And to that comment Sylvia replied, “Oh gosh, you made me feel so good! That’s wonderful.”
Sylvia imagined making salsa when asked to describe education through a metaphor—"you put in a little bit of this, a little bit of this," and you create a unique blend of ingredients to call salsa. The salsa represents the "individual who has learned something" from every other individual who has interacted with him or her as well as from the circumstances of his or her life. The educator's role is to take "that child from where they are at and . . . [teach] them something that is going to benefit them-make them better learners, better individuals . . .. You take them and you expect the most that they can give you." Sylvia believed that "children will rise to [the teacher's] level of expectations" only to the degree that teachers were willing to "tweak" the curriculum standards to respond to the unique needs and "natural gifts" of their students. She gave an example:

We have two kids who are selective mutes. They will not talk. They supposedly talk at home. They've brought in videotapes, but . . . how do you know what you've taught this child who will not speak in school, in class? Maybe he will whisper to the teacher but will not . . . read a report . . .. So it's . . . taking the individual child and saying, "Okay, he whispered it to me. He pointed at it . . .."-somehow, where you know that that child knows.

A teacher's expectations must also include the belief that children can rise above challenging circumstances in their home environments. She gave an example of having grown up around an alcoholic grandfather. From him she learned what not to become and how not to fall into a pity trap—"pobrecita (poor me)." She repeated the "poor thing" image again as she reflected: "Poor things, their fathers . . . drink too much and their
mothers beat them up . . . They don’t have enough money . . . Those things do influence [education], but you can’t stop the education because of those things.” She seemed to concur with Lynn that it was the duty of the educator to see that all learners achieved their own level of success in spite of the unequal distribution of wealth and health of mind, spirit, and body found within any one classroom.

Tango had just completed her fourth year as principal of a Grades 3-5 elementary school at the time of the interview. There were a total of 380 students during the 2002-2003 school year. The two largest ethnic groups were of Native American (55%) and Hispanic (45%) origins. Anglo students comprised the remaining group of students. The school was located in the area of a Native American reservation. Tango spoke of her first few months as principal of this school:

I needed time to quietly observe and feel trust with the Native population. I didn’t go in assuming that because I was Mexican American that the population would embrace me . . . [It] was funny because I would look at the students, and I would say, “Well, I don’t know which ones are [Native Americans] and which ones are Mexican Americans.” You know, they have various Latino/Hispanic last names. It took me . . . three months to realize [who was Native American and who was Mexican American].

Tango pointed out the ethnic composition of her teaching and support staff: one Yaqui, one Navajo, one African American, seven Latinos, and eight Anglos. She commented, “We respect each others’ cultures. We are very aware of the dignity of the
two primary cultures and yet aware that it's our responsibility to let the children know
that there are also Anglos, Mexican Americans, and Asians."

In response to the question, “What are your beliefs about human nature and the
ability to learn?,” Tango responded that “the ability to learn is borne in everyone.” She
pointed out that she did not believe a premise that purported that “one ethnic group or one
cultural group has more abilities than others.” Rather, she believed that socioeconomic
levels had more to do with differences in learning. She then expressed a caveat. More is
required of teachers working with children from low economic groups and for those
working with groups of diverse ethnic backgrounds. She elaborated,

[It’s] most important that children from low economic groups have very effective,
productive teachers. They have to be good with their craft and have a repertoire of
teaching strategies and [be] very knowledgeable in content areas . . . because I
think it’s harder for a teacher to work with a diverse population . . . [The] teacher
always has to be thinking about . . . the needs of the particular student . . . [as] an
individual but also the particular student in terms of an ethnic group, and also in
terms of a socio-economic group. So it becomes a multifaceted structure for the
teacher to work from as opposed to a teacher who makes a broad statement,
“Well, I treat all children the same.” That always frightens me. “Uh, oh! What
does that really mean? Does this mean the teacher can’t provide different learning
experiences for different children depending on what their needs are?” So my
basic belief is that, “Yes, all children can learn.”
Tango added that she believed the same about “adult staff.” With adults, she had “to be very strategic in providing professional development, or experiences, or conversations . . . to make sure that they are continuing in their schooling.” As an educational leader, she found that sometimes she needed to “suggest or recommend . . . that maybe education is not the best” workplace for an adult. However, she found that to be true of less than 5% of the teaching staff. For the majority of teachers, their conversations were in response to her questions, “What would you like to improve in the next six months? What can I do to support you in improving?”

The role of the educator as support person seemed to underscore Tango’s definition of what it meant to educate others. Tango assumed first of all that “the person’s intention is to learn.” She said, “I have to trust that that person is going to work with me, so . . ., I give trust.” She then “enters [into] a relationship with learning with any adult or child.” That relationship is based on her belief in cognitive learning theory—“that a person is going to construct the learning . . . the knowledge.” Her role as an educator was “to be present as the person is constructing it.” To be present did not mean that she had “all the knowledge . . . to pour into [his or her] head.” Instead, it meant being “available for that person to challenge ideas . . ., to bring up concepts, . . . to ask questions, and then [say to that person], ‘Here’s your question. Let’s see what you and I can do to research it together.’” She restated her definition of “to educate” thus,

To be open and [to] have a high repertoire to support that learner at that moment [then] leave . . . for a while and go look at another learner . . . then come back to that first learner . . . to see if there’s anything else that can be provided to support
that learner. There is discipline and . . . a broad structure [of] where this child or person needs to be supported, but at the same time being very open to what that child needs at that moment . . . I don’t want to give the impression that there’s a laissez-faire kind of attitude about learning, . . . but there is . . . a broad structure as opposed to a behaviorist view which is very—“This is what you need to learn and I’m going to teach it to you.” The other extreme is, “Well, you can choose whatever you want to do today.” No, there is structure. “There are some skills you need to learn, and I can provide you these opportunities, and I have some repertoire to draw from to help.”

When asked how she led adults in educating children, Tango first described how she came to believe in cognitive learning theory. Tango explained that the perspective of cognitive learning theory matched her belief system more than a behaviorist learning theory. She began to formulate her understanding of this theory as she worked on her master’s degree and more so during the five years that she worked on her doctorate. She began to understand that “people who write curriculum . . . write from different belief systems [and] different practices.” Her years of study away from the classroom allowed her the “time to ask those questions” about learning. As a practicing teacher she was more “in the mode of ‘I have to do what they tell me to do,’ and very much relied on structured curriculum and scope-and-sequence thinking.” As a veteran educator, Tango understood how “first-year teachers need to do that” as well as the need for educators to know their own beliefs “deeply.” She reflected, “As a teacher you make a phenomenal
amount of choices and you have to be able to know why [you made] them or what was [your] belief system” that led to particular choices.

Tango concluded that she “tries to provide . . . [cognitive learning] experiences to the people” she works with. However, she also specified the three kinds of decisions they would make as individuals and as a staff: “I’ll let you know if it’s an authoritative command decision that I have to make, if it’s a collaborative decision that we as a staff can make, or . . . [if it’s] a decision that you can make.” Within this broad structure, Tango strove “to be parallel and consistent” in leading adults as she would have them lead students using a cognitive learning theory perspective—to be “available for that person to challenge ideas . . ., to bring up concepts, . . . to ask questions, and then [say to that person], ‘Here’s your question. Let’s see what you and I can do to research it together.’”

Most teachers shared Tango’s education beliefs and the mission of the school. Evaluations on her performance as principal from her teachers revealed comments such as this, “You’ve been able to give us support but you’ve also given us a vision and a focal point so we have noticed how as a staff . . . you’re focused on where we are going.” She attributed this success in educational leadership to “personal interactions . . ., modeling . . ., [and] opportunities for people to sit together and converse” and not because she made some “authoritative decision.” After four years as principal of this school, Tango believed that if one were to ask teachers how they perceived her leadership of adult learners, they might describe it this way:
Tango is letting us into her thinking process and letting us know why she’s saying that we need to do this, and as a staff member, I have to be able to process and question what I don’t understand and then make it part of me.

From her report, Tango appeared to have succeeded in leading most of her staff to look “deeply” into their beliefs and practices such that teachers could own the decisions they made as individuals or as a group. What of the few who may not have shared in her education leadership?

Tango admitted that her “automatic” reaction was “to avoid” those who did not share her educational mission. Instead, she decided, “I’m going to go with those who already get it, and we as a group are going to pull forward, and either these people are going to stay behind or are going to choose to move away.” She believed that this choice of moving ahead with the “critical mass that does work” with her, “has worked well.” She noted that they “get a lot of support because then that energy” led to comments such as, “Hey, this really worked. Boy, this is wonderful. I’m going to have to try this again.” In turn, those kinds of comments became “those little rumors [that] go filtering through the building. Then people realize, ‘You know, the majority of people think this is worth it. I need to start it.’” Nonetheless, “there comes a time” when Tango had to “talk to those laggars or move them out.” As the educational leader, Tango had to determine “what [her] intent is at that particular moment with that particular person” and made a decision about the kind of conversation that would communicate her intent. She may have begun by saying, “You know, I made this decision. You need to follow it,” or she may have said, “You have heard our staff discuss the idea. We’re going in this direction. Let me
hear what your responses are. Let me hear what you are thinking.” The flow of the conversation then determined the role she would play—“evaluator . . . , coach, . . . consultant, [or] being very direct.” Tango concluded that educational leaders “have to be conscientious” about the “very personal choice” they make in directing “those difficult conversations” to determine whether or not “the laggers” will stay or be dismissed.

When asked to describe education metaphorically, Tango first described what she believed schooling to be as a preface to the distinction she would make between the American mainstream concept of schooling and her Latina perspective of education. Cecilia alluded to a similar distinction in her definition of what it means to educate. Tango explained, “When a person says they’re educated in mainstream American culture, I think they mean educated in terms of formal schooling.” Tango believed that public education was “about schooling and making sure children . . . have opportunities to learn in a setting that is consistent.” Further, schooling was “an organization” central “to our democracy.” It was what she considered “the one common thread that helps the . . . American culture thrive.” On the other hand, Tango contrasted education or, more specifically, being educated, as the following:

I believe a person can be educated—ser educado—without having formal schooling. That distinction . . . allows me to interact with people with respect. It allows me to feel confident . . . with whoever that person is and after a conversation draw out from them what their strengths are. And they may know very well what those strengths are, but until it’s communicated to me, it then helps us to connect. And that might become the whole notion of having moved—feeling real comfortable
toward different ethnic groups or different socioeconomic groups . . . . It's a very
different concept when you say, "Es educado," and you're talking to a Latino
because there is that . . . idea that a person can be educated without having formal
schooling . . . . But, no, I'm not assuming that the word educated when you say it
in English means the same thing as educado in Spanish.

With this preface in place, Tango went on to describe education in the form of metaphor.

Tango envisioned "the traditional schoolhouse" with a different "feeling tone" as
her picture of education. She described it thus,

What I'm smelling are tortillas and hamburgers and pizza . . . . I'm hearing
children speaking in different languages to different people depending on what
they feel comfortable. There [are] some children code-switching, . . . some
children speaking only Spanish . . . , some people speaking English . . . , some
speaking Yoeme. So the visual is the traditional, but the sense—the smell is
different—. . . and the hearing is definitely more enriching.

In Tango's "traditional schoolhouse," the smells of a variety of foods and the
sounds of three different languages may have simply reflected a particular school's
student population. Perhaps it may also have pointed to Tango's belief that all learners
contribute in unique ways to the educational process and milieu of the schoolhouse.

Like all participants, Tango worked from the belief that "the ability to learn is
borne in everyone—[that] all children can learn." However, Tango explained, not all
children have the same opportunities for learning. The varying socioeconomic levels of
their families and communities determined learning opportunities. In addition to
socioeconomic factors, children brought with them their ethnic cultural experiences and their own learning abilities. Tango believed that teachers who worked with widely heterogeneous groups must have a wider repertoire of content knowledge and teaching skills to help their students “construct the learning.”

This section detailed how the six participants enacted leadership to develop human potential in their teaching staff and, through them, their students. Six questions related to the development of human potential were asked: (1) What are your beliefs about human nature and the ability to learn?, (2) What does it mean to educate?, (3) How do you lead others to educate the students?, (4) To what extent does your teaching staff share in your educational mission?, (5) How do you handle teachers who do not share your educational mission?, and (6) If you could draw a picture of education, what would it look like? In addition to these questions, five participants unexpectedly answered an unasked question: What are necessary conditions for optimum learning? A summary of their responses to the seven questions follows.

All participants responded to the question of human nature and the ability to learn. Three principals directly stated their beliefs about learners. Isabel believed “all children are sponges” and that “everybody is gifted.” Sylvia thought “anyone has the ability to learn,” but people learn in different ways. Tango believed that “the ability to learn is borne in everyone,” and that she disagreed with those who believed that “one ethnic group or one cultural group has more abilities than others.” Cecilia and Lynn stated that learners have the potential to learn. Cecilia spoke of the educator’s responsibility to accept all students and to “maintain and enrich” the resources within each student. Lynn
believed that human potential can be developed even among learners from low socioeconomic levels. Malintzin emphasized that the students’ capacity to learn is proportional to the level of expectations teachers hold for them. Most participants followed these responses by conditions that should be in place to develop human potential. These are discussed following their definitions of to educate.

All participants defined what they believed it meant to educate. Two participants prefaced their answers by an implied or direct statement that they were aware of two ways to answer the question—from a mainstream American perspective or from a Latina perspective. Cecilia responded with what she called a “bicultural” explanation that appeared to presume an understanding shared by the researcher when she stated, “We know that it isn’t just to learn to read and write and do math, but it is also to educate the soul and the being, you know.” (Italics added to indicate the presumed inclusion of the researcher’s understanding.) She then went on to define education as showing children “how to care . . ., how to love . . ., how to have self-control.” The rest of what is done in schools, she called “the academic side.” Tango contrasted the bicultural perspectives by prefacing her definition of education with the mainstream American definition of schooling: “When a person says they’re educated in mainstream American culture, I think they mean educated in terms of formal schooling.” That is, “making sure children . . . have opportunities to learn in a setting that is consistent.” On the other hand, Tango pointed out that

It’s a very different concept when you say, ‘Es educado,’ and you’re talking to a Latino because there is that . . . idea that a person can be educated without having
formal schooling . . . No, I'm not assuming that the word *educated* when you say it in English means the same thing as *educado* in Spanish.

Tango then explained that being *educada* had allowed her "to interact with people with respect" and "to feel confident . . . [to] sit down with whoever . . . and after a conversation draw out from them . . . their strengths" and "connect" with people. Both Cecilia and Tango viewed *being educated* as having the capacity to successfully interact with others no matter the differences in social standing or schooling status. In later portions of their interviews, Cecilia and Tango defined what it meant to educate within the structure of public schooling in America.

Cecilia believed that to educate, one must "find that spark-that flame-and ignite it . . . to motivate [students] to want to learn." Isabel said, "To educate . . . means to open the door and let the people come in"—people who could share their knowledge with students as students explore their own questions. Lynn believed that to educate was "to nurture" learners so they could "grow to their fullest potential." She spoke often of being a "guide" and providing a variety of material and human resources to the learners.

Malintzin equated educating others to "convincing" others through "persuasion," "a good rationale," and "research" to "take certain actions." Sylvia defined the process of education as teaching "skills" and "common knowledge" that would enable the learner "to live, to work, [and] to be a respected member of society." This process included showing the learner "how to get information" so they could "fend for themselves" as independent learners. For Tango, educating children and adults was about entering into a relationship with the learner who is ultimately responsible for constructing his or her own
knowledge. In this relationship, she played a supportive role—“to be present, . . . to be available for that person to challenge ideas, . . . to bring up concepts, . . . to ask questions.” These participants’ beliefs about the process of educating children and adults seemed to indicate a belief that learning was a collaborative process and that their roles were to guide the learning.

In defining the process of education, the participants generally added their opinions about the conditions necessary for optimum learning. Though not a specific question in the interview, their responses are summarized next.

The potential to learn lies within each learner, according to Cecilia. The learner must have the “ganas” to learn—“that determination that you are going to overcome any and every obstacle . . . to do anything you want.” Sylvia also spoke about this determination when she used the adage, “You can lead a horse to water, but you can’t make him drink.” She also specified the need for learners to rise above challenging circumstances in their home environments saying, “Those things do influence [education], but you can’t stop the education because of those things.” Tango entered into learning relationships assuming that the “person’s intent is to learn” until proven otherwise by the learner.

What is the role of the educator in providing optimum learning conditions? Isabel spoke of the way in which most children began formal schooling - with a healthy self-esteem and the belief that they were the center of the universe. The educator’s job, she said, was to identify each learner’s giftedness and interests. Cecilia concurred saying that the educator’s job was “to find that spark—that flame— and ignite it . . . to motivate
What do teachers do once they have identified their students' strengths and interests? Isabel believed that the students' interests could be used as the "vehicles" to carry the curriculum standards. Sylvia believed that teachers should know how to "tweak" the curriculum in order to impart "basic skills" and "common knowledge" in a way that each learner could receive it. Malintzin used her skills of persuasion to convey "a good rationale" supported by "research" to educate others.

How does the educator interact with the learner? Sylvia believed that the relationship between teacher and student would determine the extent to which the student would engage in the learning experience. She cautioned teachers not to be "mean" and to "be prepared" so that students knew they "cared." Communication, including the agreement to disagree, was essential. Isabel believed teachers should remain flexible in their lesson plans. Students led by their own questions may move in a different direction than originally planned. Because all learners do not learn in the same way or at the same pace, Sylvia and Lynn believed that teachers needed to determine different means for imparting information and make accessible a variety of material and human resources to the learners. Lynn further stated that it might be necessary to "pull" and "tutor" the struggling learners. Lynn and Isabel each specified that students could benefit from an increased involvement of parents, grandparents, and community members as tutors and mentors.

Lynn and Tango both addressed the factor of socio-economics on learning opportunities. Lynn seemed fervent in her belief and statement to her teaching staff: "We don't need to treat our children like they are poverty-stricken" even if they come from
low-income areas. Tango believed that socioeconomic differences created the disparities in learning opportunities more than race or culture. Lynn expressed the need for teachers to have "high expectations for... all" students in spite of poverty. Tango believed that teachers who worked with a wide mix of socioeconomic and ethnic minority groups must have a wider repertoire of content knowledge and teaching skills to help their students "construct the learning."

How did these principals lead their teachers in the process of educating students? Cecilia and Sylvia both used processes that engaged teachers in study and conversations to understand their beliefs about pedagogical theory and instructional practices. Sylvia believed it was important to first identify "what [she’s] up against or what [she’s] trying to convey" before engaging staff in professional development. Further, she tried to discern the "way that works best... to get people to do what they need to do and then hold them accountable." Cecilia avoided "dictating" instructional approaches. She found that teachers "buy in" to concepts and practices more readily if they have had opportunities to study and discuss a topic as a group. Sylvia shared this belief. She liked to "treat [teachers] as individuals" and encouraged them to have "substantive conversations" that led to "the real, real truth about what’s going on, ... why, and how [she] can help."

Isabel, Lynn, Malintzin, and Tango guided professional development primarily through other providers. Isabel and her curriculum specialist worked closely with teachers modeling expected teaching behaviors after the teaching staff had discussed and agreed upon the "need" for the professional development. Isabel believed teachers were
more open to the learning once they understood the need. Lynn worked closely with her school’s curriculum specialist to work directly with teachers in the classroom. Overall, she encouraged teachers to take advantage of any learning opportunities that would add even “one idea” to their “bag of tricks” to benefit children. Malintzin organized a 12-member cadre of lead teachers who were responsible for grade-level curriculum decision-making, modeling teaching strategies, observing each other’s teaching, and analyzing test data. Tango strove to be “very strategic in providing professional development, . . . experiences, or conversations . . ., to make sure that” teachers continued to grow professionally. Overall, these educational leaders appeared to serve primarily as guides in their teachers’ professional development.

To what extent did teachers share in their principal’s educational mission? Three of the participants claimed that the majority of their staffs shared their educational goals. Malintzin stated that 98% of her teachers were in agreement. Sylvia thought that 22 of 27 teachers shared her mission for educating students. Tango said “most” of her teachers agreed. Sylvia and Tango each gave possible explanations for the high rate of agreement by their staffs. Sylvia credited “picking her battles” as a new principal, hiring teachers who shared her education beliefs, quelling rumors, and maintaining an open-door policy. Tango credited her “personal interactions, . . . modeling . . . [and] opportunities . . . to sit together and converse” for her success in this area.

The remaining three principals did not state specifically their teachers’ extent of agreement to their educational mission, but they each spoke of how they arrived at agreement. Cecilia found study groups effective for increasing shared understanding of
certain pedagogical beliefs and practices. Isabel and her hiring committees selected new teachers who shared the school mission and teaching philosophy. In addition, she accepted “knockdown, drag-outs” debates that sometimes occurred in order to arrive at group consensus on certain issues. Lynn did not answer the question directly. Instead, she spoke about leading her staff to 90% agreement with the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 goals through the deliberate selection of professional development opportunities related to these nationwide, state, and district goals.

What of teachers who did not share in the educational goals, or mission, of their principal? All six principals used formal plans for improvement to deal with teachers who struggled to conform to or resist teaching practices that were required of them or that the majority had agreed to implement. Isabel and Sylvia both specified the method of cognitive coaching (Lipton & Wellman, 1998; Lipton & Wellman with Humbard, 2001) as the intervention they used. This method provided a formal structure for pre-observation, observation and scripting, and post-observation conversations with the “laggers,” as Tango called them, to identify what needed to change. The principal and teacher then discussed alternative means to make the changes. Tango described what occurs when she intervened in this manner. She chose which role to play as she observed and listened to the teacher—whether to be the “evaluator, . . . coach, . . . consultant, . . . [or] being very direct” which meant dismissing a teacher. All principals stated or implied their distaste for these situations.

How did these principals describe education metaphorically? Cecilia, Isabel, and Malintzin used images of the world to describe education. Cecilia spoke of children
leaving home to step into the wider world. Schooling helped learners widen their horizons. She believed educators should teach about the world because they had no "idea where [the] children will go and what they can do." Education, she concluded, was the "key to the world" and "a way for people to know who they were and who they wanted to become." Further, it was "powerful" in that education could be used as a political tool capable of building up or destroying individuals or groups. Isabel and Malintzin envisioned aesthetic symbols of the world. Isabel heard distinct cultural strains of "lively" and "serene" music being emitted from the world as well as similarities in music—symbols of the uniqueness of individuals and cultural groups as well as the shared characteristics across groups. Malintzin saw a Diego Rivera painting of the world in her mind. She saw the world in the cosmos and its beauty but then reflected on how people can "make life ugly" by "making problems for our minds." Cecilia, Isabel, and Malintzin each conveyed the value of exploring the world and its culturally diverse inhabitants. Additionally, Cecilia and Malintzin reflected on the conflict that is inherent in cultural diversity. These images as a group seemed to reflect the Latina perspective of education described by Cecilia and Tango—education as a means for caring, respectful interpersonal connections.

The remaining three metaphors for education described by Lynn, Sylvia, and Tango seemed to describe education within the context of schooling. Lynn saw the image of a young female teacher with long hair as metaphor for education. It was the image of a teacher at the head of the class with children seated before her "watching, aware, and participating, and raising their hands." Sylvia envisioned making salsa as the process of
education. Each person was the salsa-in-the-making. Parents, teachers, and all others in their lives, "put in a little bit of this, a little of this," and, in time, each person became his or her own unique batch of salsa. Tango described a "traditional schoolhouse" emitting smells of "tortillas and hamburgers and pizza" and sounds of English, Spanish, Yoeme, and code switching. The image reflected a diverse student population and perhaps an implied belief that all learners contributed in unique ways to the educational process and milieu of the schoolhouse. In sum, the metaphorical descriptions of *education* were evenly divided between the affective and cognitive domains of education—the education of the heart and the mind.

The development of human potential or learning presumes change in human behavior. Learning is "the relatively permanent modification of responses as a result of experience" (Barnhart & Barnhart, 1989, p. 1192). Educational leaders charged with leading teachers to lead students in the learning process are consequently charged with leading teachers through changes related to instructional practices. The following section discusses how the participants responded to questions related to school change.

*Enacting Leadership for School Change*

This section reports how the participants viewed school change in four sections. The first part reports responses to questions related to who determines change in their school and the means of persuasion or communication they used to lead others through change. The second part reports the participants' knowledge of the predictable stages of the change process and their knowledge of leadership strategies useful for leading others through change. The third part reports how the participants responded to changes
imposed upon schools by state testing requirements and an example of how each led others toward a successful change. This section concludes with the participants’ metaphorical descriptions for the phenomenon of school change.

Initiating and Promoting School Change

School changes are initiated by various sources. In this section, the participants described who or what determined a school change and what they said or did to persuade others of the necessary change.

Cecilia stated that “test scores” were “the driving force at the moment” for school change. Of test data, she commented, “It’s good in that it gives us a clear direction for instruction, but it’s bad in that we forget all the other things about schooling.” She said using test data alone to promote change did “not . . . cut it.” It was also important to review the school vision statement “year after year.” As a staff, they reviewed by asking questions such as, “Is there something we need to change? Do we not believe in this anymore? Where are we? . . . Have we forgotten?” She stated that parents also influenced decision making about needed changes.

Cecilia described in detail how she led teachers through change. She began by pointing out that initially she thought the position of principal was “key” in making decisions for change. However, she “found out the hard way” that principals “don’t really make those decisions.” Though principals did make “quick . . . management [decisions],” she acknowledged that “educational change . . . [was] not cut and [dried nor] a ‘yes’ and ‘no’” type of process. Instead, the process required a “collaborative manner” in decision making and “a vision,” or “goal” to guide the process. To promote collaboration, Cecilia
“had to learn . . . to plant seeds in different people to get them to think in a way that [she] would like to see the school [change].”

To promote change, she used “facts, realizations, [and] real-life situations” to persuade teachers to move in new directions. She tried to win teachers over by “telling them how good they are and what they’ve done using real-life examples” she had personally observed in classrooms. She also liked to “celebrate” accomplishments on a weekly basis because “[educators] don’t get enough positive strokes.” She “guides people” in the direction she wanted by involving her staff in decision making and discussions, including her “custodians and kitchen people,” who generally responded with, “Why are you asking us? Why don’t you tell us?” For example, she met with the custodians regularly to plan. When the custodians failed to meet the cleaning schedule they chose, she referred to their prior agreement and asked the questions, “What were you supposed to do these days? . . . It didn’t happen . . . . So, what are we going to do about it?” She found that peer pressure resolved these kinds of situations more readily than if she simply gave orders.

Guiding her staff also required “planning ahead.” To illustrate this, Cecilia described how she dealt with a group of teachers who had received “bargaining training” from the teacher union. These teachers “strategize what they’re going to say and when they’re going to say it so that they can play the people” in a meeting. Cecilia deliberately mixed these teachers in with other teachers with “different thinking” so that they did not “all congregate to the same area with the same people.” Though this process was
“long . . . and done in bits and pieces,” she believed it was a process that created “an environment that is conducive to learning...[and] welcoming.” She believed “it makes people conscientious about what they are supposed to be doing and how they’re supposed to be doing it.” Overall, Cecilia felt “very happy [and] very successful” with her efforts to bring about needed change even though she was still not “where [she] wants to be yet.”

Cecilia identified achievement test results as “the driving force” of the many changes her staff has had to make to help students raise test scores. In addition to test data, the school vision statement and parents’ input served as change agents. To persuade teachers of a need to change, Cecilia used “facts, realizations, [and] real-life situations.” She complimented teachers for their efforts and “celebrates” their accomplishments. Whether talking to custodians, kitchen workers, or teachers, she sought their input in decision-making. When meeting with all teachers, she planned for the predictable sources of resistance to change by creating small groups comprised of people representing various beliefs and dispositions. Cecilia believed her leadership had created a community that was “welcoming” and “conducive to learning” for dealing with school change.

When asked who decided what needed to change at her school, Isabel responded that it was whoever was “having a concern.” Sometimes it might be all the teachers who “[heard] something at a professional development” session and exclaimed, “Aha! That’s what we need to do! . . . Esto es lo que necesitamos!” Sometimes it could be a single teacher who perceived a “need to do something in order for kids to” do something better. She described at length how one teacher’s concern coupled with the same concern from
some parents led the staff to engage in study groups to determine how to create a dual language program. Isabel attended meetings from time to time. She “wanted them to feel that they could say and do whatever they wanted . . . and then they could present to [her] whatever” they created. As the teachers designed the dual language program, they also consulted with experts in the field of second language development. The change was then implemented one grade level at a time. The teachers documented the steps leading to biliteracy, and two university researchers used their program for studies on biliteracy development. By the second year of implementation, teachers were more ready to embrace the program with an attitude that conveyed, “Okay, this is what I have to do.” Isabel believed change happened “best if it comes from the teachers.” As teachers worked on this particular change process, Isabel observed “motivation, excitement, [and] discovery—just like . . . kids learning.”

In the previous example of leading teachers through change, Isabel demonstrated her ability to let teachers identify their concerns and work together to propose solutions. Like Cecilia, she involved people in the change process rather than dictating the changes. She explained that changes “have to be gradual” and that she would not say or convey, “Sabes que, ahora lo vamos hacer así.” (“You know what, now we’re going to do it this way.”) The process also involved the use of outside sources of knowledge and the documentation of what the teachers were learning. The information they collected proved useful in persuading teachers to make the change. In addition, Isabel used test data to convince teachers of the need to make changes in certain instructional areas. She made presentations using overhead transparencies of Stanford 9 test results, for example, and
then raised the questions, "What are the weak areas? What do we need to do in order to bring those up, and are they consistent across the board with every grade level?" The changes dictated by such "black-and-white" test results were those that Isabel and her teachers "HAD to make" to comply with district and state curriculum and test achievement requirements.

How did Isabel communicate the program changes to parents? Isabel spoke about keeping parents informed about any change process. In the case of the dual language program, she communicated to parents "every step of the way." "This is what we are doing. This is what we are finding . . . These are the reasons." In communicating the goals of the program, however, Isabel chose to use the term *Spanish enrichment* rather than *Spanish immersion* because the latter term had a "negative" connotation. In general, Isabel pointed out that it was important to know the audience and to "know what it is . . . they want to hear" when leading the various groups through change efforts. In time, she reported, one "has to develop trust . . . [then] they will listen to you."

Isabel identified three sources of change—individual teachers or parents, groups of teachers in response to new insights gained in professional development situations, and standardized norm-referenced achievement test results. She allowed teachers to study problematic issues and to seek viable solutions. This sometimes included seeking outside expertise. In addition, the teachers engaged in continual program assessment to document progress made for purposes of replication and/or adjustment. The documentation of desirable results appeared to be a tool of persuasion for skeptics in the example of the change cited above. Isabel took the lead in making formal presentations regarding test
results to address weak academic performance on a school-wide basis. In making such presentations, Isabel knew it was necessary to approach her various audience members emphasizing information “they want to hear,” but, in all cases, communicating the goals, purposes, and methods for what was to change.

Lynn attributed school change efforts to the external forces of federal and state regulations that in turn dictated what “the district ultimately tells . . . administrators” to do. Because her school received Title I funding, they had “to follow . . . federal guidelines.” In addition, she cited the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (reauthorization of the Elementary Education and Secondary Education Act of 1965) as the driving force behind achievement and accountability measures. She summarized:

I guess in a school such as this, you have so many responsibilities to the state and the “feds” and to the district, it’s all kind of mish mash, but ultimately, the way I understand it, is the “feds” give the money, and we stay within those guidelines.

Lynn stated that she took a “direct route” when persuading others of necessary changes. She believed that there would “be less goods and services” for education in the 21st century “so there will be more [directives] to get from Point A to Point B.” Thus, when she talked to teachers, she was “direct.” She explained, “I use the information that is given to us through the district. I share all the time, probably to their dismay, the scores.” She imparted “information in formal “training [or] professional development” sessions to teachers. When she spoke to parent groups, Lynn shared information “in generalities-‘This where we want to be. This is where we are going. This is how we are
going to get there.” She spoke of emphasizing to parents that new practices were in response to “the accountability issue” and following “the law.”

Lynn ascribed school changes to the external forces of federal, state, and local school district mandates. She spoke of using the federal Title I (Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) and No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 regulations, test scores, and outside directives to justify needed changes in instructional practices. Subsequently, those directives appeared to set the course for professional development sessions–learning how to address the “accountability issue.”

When asked who initiated school change, Malintzin quickly responded with laughter, “My curriculum specialist, myself, my lead teachers, and my custodians, of course!” However, she elaborated on the role that lead teachers play in initiating change. Because Malintzin and lead teachers at each grade level had established a practice of visiting classrooms as a team and as colleagues, lead teachers were more apt to identify instructional practices that need to change. Malintzin first created the climate and expectation “Let us go into your room. We’re going to give you feedback, but I promise it’s not going to be on your evaluation.” As a result of this routine practice, lead teachers were more inclined to think and act on the premise that “I’m not infringing on private ground here if I suggest changes.” As for the custodians, Malintzin said that it had been more difficult to motivate them to make necessary changes. She believed that they had not taken “ownership of their building,” so she was more direct in moving them to make needed changes.
How did Malintzin persuade others of needed change? Malintzin gave examples of three audiences—parents, teachers, and custodians. With parents, she played the consultant role, especially when they asked for suggestions and ideas. With new teachers who needed to improve some aspect of instruction or classroom management, Malintzin used both the consultant and the coaching roles. She first directed teachers to observe a few teachers using an observation guide where she had specified “suggestions or things to look for” related to their area of need. After their observations, Malintzin asked, “Okay, now you’ve observed. What do you think you can do about this?” The teachers suggested what they needed to change. She then entered into a coaching role with these teachers by “going into their classrooms and what-not” to observe their progress. With successful, veteran teachers, Malintzin focused on how to be “a resource” for them and encouraged them to continue their professional development. Conversely, Malintzin reported that she “just hadn’t developed a bond with [the] custodial staff” and so she still had to use directives to persuade them of changes.

Though Malintzin reported that the curriculum specialist, lead teachers, and the custodians initiated school changes, she focused her remarks on the role of the lead teachers as change agents. Unlike the three previous participants, she did not mention test scores or external government regulations as sources of school change. Instead, change efforts were identified internally as a result of classroom observations made by lead teachers and the principal. Malintzin stated that she used a consultant approach with parents and teachers, a coaching approach with new teachers, and a direct approach with
custodians to effect change. As with Cecilia and Isabel, Malintzin seemed to resist dictating change but did so on occasion.

_Sylvia_ identified three sources of change—teachers, outside mandates, and herself. “Sometimes teachers do the talking among themselves” and then send in “certain teachers that they feel . . . can get away with coming and talking to me—so they always send the same ones,” said Sylvia. She laughed as she added, “It’s hilarious. It’s like, ‘I figured you out, guys.’” At other times, Sylvia simply passed on “a directive” she had received from her superiors. She said of outside directives, “If it’s coming from someone else, I tell them . . . It’s not like . . . you can choose not to do it. When it’s coming from up above, we can’t really negotiate that.” Sometimes Sylvia observed “some things not working” and initiated the change.

Sylvia used story and humor to persuade teachers of needed changes. She explained, “I don’t stomp and rave and go, ‘Bleh!’ It’s just absolutely not my personality to do that, so it’s more through kidding, saying jokes . . . that I give them the good news or the bad news.” Overall, Sylvia found that most teachers wanted to comply with changes because they wanted to please the principal. Her job was to give them “a direction” and hold them accountable.

Sylvia identified teachers, outside mandates, and herself as sources of school change. She expressed openness and willingness to meet with individual teachers to discuss needed changes. When dealing with external directives, she made it plain that there was no room for negotiation and stated the facts: “This is what we’re doing. This is why we’re doing it and we’re going to do it to the best of our ability.” In initiating any
type of change, Sylvia used story and humor to move her staff in the direction they needed to go.

Tango named “the principal, . . . the primary leader,” as a source of instructional change along with “policies or . . . mandates [originating in] politics.” Unlike Sylvia who identified herself as one who initiates change, Tango spoke in the third person of the principal as instructional leader. Note her reflections:

It took me a long time to come to the realization . . . that the principal is the primary leader. What’s exciting to me is that there is an opportunity for principals to take on the role or . . . to become champions of the idea that they are the instructional leader . . . . In the past, . . . principals have been seen as supervisors, the manager-the business model. Yes, you do have to be manager. You do have to keep the building clean. You do have to make sure reports are finished, but . . . principals can become educational leaders . . . . If I’m able to focus even 60% of my time . . . as instructional leader, those other things seem to take care of themselves.

Tango then gave examples of how she persuaded others of the necessity of change. She spoke of professional development, conversations, small group discussions, and the teacher evaluation process. Tango found it “helpful to have somebody else lead . . . professional development.” By “drawing on people who are very good” in their particular areas of expertise, Tango was able to participate as an audience member along with her teachers. By doing so, teachers viewed her “as a learner . . . taking notes . . . [and] trying to articulate . . . a comment.” Later, she engaged others in individual or
small-group conversations about the work at hand. She believed that in doing so, “people realize, ‘Oh, I can ask questions and [Tango] doesn’t think that I’m ignorant.’” Or they heard her ask a question and they thought, “Oh, she doesn’t know the answer to that question.” Through this practice, Tango sought to develop collegial relationships that demonstrated that they were “all studying . . . and moving . . . on this together.”

During individual conversations, Tango encouraged teachers in their new work and asked how she could be supportive. It was during those conversations that she also discovered who still had questions about the work and who was reticent to move in the new direction. She asked herself, “Is this a person who really can learn this or is this person not going to do it?” Ultimately, she decided whether she would have a to write “a letter of recommendation for improvement.” She noted that the process involving an evaluative plan for improvement could take as long as two years.

Tango found that small group discussions were “most effective” in leading others through change. She explained that “there has to be a leader who makes a general declaration” of the expected change. The message should be “clear,” “precise,” and “well articulated.” Tango believed that “within two or three days, if not immediately, there’s got to be small group discussions.” Discussions afforded the leader an opportunity to check on how the message was heard, anticipating “that each person [will have] interpreted it very differently.” After small group discussions, each person was asked to try out the new practice, and “within one week,” they were asked to return to the small group and report their experiences: “I found this to be really difficult, or I was able to achieve this, or I still need more information about it.” Tango summarized the process of
leading the change effort thus, “It doesn’t just happen by declaration. It needs to be practiced, ... coached, ... practiced again, ... and then you have to have some way to document ... any growth that may have occurred during that period.”

Tango named two sources of school change—the principal and outside policies “originating in politics.” As the instructional leader, she led others through change via professional development, individual conversations, and small group discussions. She participated in professional development sessions as a way to model that she, too, was a learner and inquirer who did not know all the answers. During small group discussions, Tango determined how the audience interpreted the directive for change and clarified points that may not have been understood. During conversations, she gauged the level of support that each teacher would need to implement a new practice. If necessary, Tango used the evaluative plan for improvement with teachers who struggled with making the change or who appeared to resist the change. Tango outlined a plan for leading others through change: declare the change, provide time for practice, support through coaching, provide more time for practice, and document the progress made.

This section reported the participants’ responses to two questions related to school change: (1) Who determines change in their school? and (2) How did they persuade others to make the proposed change? What forms of communication did they use to lead others through change? Five of the six participants identified “external forces” as agents of school change. Lynn specifically identified Title I federal regulations and the No Child Left Behind legislation as sources of change. Sylvia spoke of “outside mandates” as any directive that came from outside the school. Tango referred in general to “policies or ...
mandates originating in politics." Cecilia, Isabel, and Lynn specified achievement test data—an external force—as a source of change in their schools. Cecilia called test scores the "driving force at the moment." Lynn repeatedly referred to "the accountability issue" as the primary reason for keeping teachers informed about test results. Isabel talked about making presentations using Stanford 9 test results as "the black-and-white" rationale for making changes in her school. Three participants named teachers as change agents. Three participants named principals as sources of change. Isabel's first response to the question "Who initiates changes in your school?" was "anyone with a concern." Cecilia identified the school vision statement and parents as catalysts for change. Malintzin included custodians among those who initiated change in her school. Given the reports made by this group of educational leaders, it appeared that external forces tended to drive school change more than internal forces identified by the school community.

How did this group of educational leaders persuade others to make changes? All six participants engaged teachers in some form of focused group discussion to effect change. Cecilia spoke of consulting with all staff members to make decisions affecting their work, be it teachers, custodians, or "kitchen people." In an earlier portion of the interview, both Cecilia and Sylvia described leading the reading and discussion of a book to set the stage for an impending change. Isabel said that change happens "best if it comes from the teachers." She encouraged the use of teacher study groups and outside sources of information. Lynn provided professional development on topics related to changes mandated by "the district." Malintzin relied on her lead teachers to lead other teachers to change through grade-level study groups and meetings. Tango invited "people
who are very good” in their area of expertise for professional development related to a change. She then modeled being a learner and inquirer among her staff.

Three of the six participants spoke in general terms of how they introduced change. Cecilia began by complimenting individual teachers, citing examples of “what they’ve done” well in their classrooms. She also made it a point to celebrate teacher accomplishments on a weekly basis. Sylvia said she used stories and humor to introduce “the good news or bad news” of change. Lynn said she was “direct” in communicating top-down district directives for change, the only type of change source she mentioned. Lynn described communicating these directives to parents by telling them, “This is where we want to be. This is where we are going. This is how we are going to get there.” Sylvia and Lynn both stated that they make it clear to their audience that the directives came from the outside.

In three cases, the participants mentioned political strategizing as a means for moving a change agenda forward. Cecilia “planted seeds in different people to get them to think in a way that [she] would like to see the school [change].” She also assigned teachers to small discussion groups to allow teachers with different beliefs to interact. This was a way to break apart a group of teachers well versed in bargaining strategies who typically opposed change. Isabel said it was important to anticipate what a particular audience wanted to hear. She gave as an example the purposeful choice of words *Spanish enrichment* rather than *Spanish immersion* to describe a key feature of their school’s dual language program when speaking to a parent group. She explained that the term *Spanish immersion* would have negative connotations.
Once a change process was set into motion, two principals discussed the use of individual conversations to support teachers making a change. Malintzin encouraged teachers who might be struggling with making a change by having them observe other teachers and then coaching them as long as necessary. Tango spoke of the value she placed on individual conversations after a group discussion to gauge the level of understanding and ease with which the teacher would make the change and whether or not she would need to intervene. Both Malintzin and Tango reported that they occasionally had to use a formal plan for improvement to convince reticent teachers of the need for change or face formal dismissal.

The participants’ responses to the two questions—“Who initiates change in your school?” and “How do you persuade others to make the change?”—contained elements of Fullan’s (2001) and Heckman’s (1996) notions for leading in a culture of change. The participants’ responses to questions related to leadership in a culture of change are summarized next.

Leading in a Culture of Change

The second portion of this section reports the participants’ knowledge of the predictable stages of the change process and their knowledge of leadership strategies useful for leading others through change. Specifically, they were asked the following questions corresponding to components of effective leadership for change identified by Fullan (2001) and Heckman (1996):

1. Describe what you have come to know as the predictable stages of change.

2. How do you support others through the change process?
Responses to each of the above questions follow.

*Predictable Stages of Change*

**Cecilia** identified three predictable stages of change. First, one “definitely [has] to go through the grieving process.” Cecilia described this phase as “the hardest part because people go through it at different stages.” The second stage is the anger stage. In Cecilia’s words, the anger stage is when “you’re mad at the world, and you’re mad at everything and everybody, and you don’t look . . . within.” It is not until one looks within to ask, “Where do you play? How do you fit [in]?” that “learning can occur.”

Introspection, the third stage, is what leads to change. Of this process, Cecilia said, “You’ll live through it, and you’ll be a better person for it because you learned something from it. You gained a different perspective.”

**Isabel** prefaces her remarks about school change by describing an observation she has made of the process of change. Individuals tended “to gravitate” toward people with similar beliefs. The individual may be willing to “venture out a little” with the group.
in responding to change. Some individuals, however, may “venture out a lot” with certain
groups. She gave an example of her son after his first experience of a mariachi
conference—“[nos] volvio mas mexicanos que los mexicanos; mas mariachi que los
mariachis (he turned us more Mexican than Mexicans, more mariachi than mariachis
themselves). In other words, some people become “activists . . . and go for [a] cause.”
She then went on to state a caveat about change:

   In making changes we have to be careful that we don’t put down or leave that
which we knew . . . was not working and just embrace the new . . . [as] . . . our
salvation. We have to be very careful that we don’t do that because even though
this may not be working . . ., there are still some good things . . . that you need to
hang on to.

   Isabel identified two predictable stages of change—denial and the subsequent
integration of the known with the unknown. She cited a personal example of life as a
minority child learning to integrate two cultures. To concretize what she meant by denial,
Isabel shared her grade school experience of Thanksgiving as a Latina:

   When I was little. . . we didn’t celebrate Thanksgiving . . . and when we would
come back to school y que nos preguntaban los maestros [the teachers would ask
us]. “So what did you have for Thanksgiving dinner?” . . . “Oh, we had turkey . . .”
Mentiras! -un caldito de lo que sea [Lies! We had some sort of broth.]— but you
knew basically what the answer was and you kind of felt like, “What’s wrong
with my family because we’re not doing this?” Hasta mentirosa me estan
haciendo! [They’re even turning me into a liar!].
Eventually, integration of two cultural systems followed. After denying “family” ways in order to take on dominant culture ways, Isabel reflected on that which was left behind and acknowledged that which she could no longer leave behind: “Okay, esto había dejado pero no puedo dejarlo even if it’s tortillas and frijoles—esto no lo puedo dejar. (‘This I had left behind but I can’t leave it behind, even if it’s tortillas and beans—this I cannot leave behind.’) She realized then that there were ways “to accommodate and bring both [cultures] together.” As she did so, she “became bicultural.” She likened this process of integration of the known with the unknown as the same process that occurs in promoting change in education. It is important “to be very careful” in making education changes—not to leave “strategies behind”—simply because someone is exhorting educators to do so. Isabel spoke of the need to watch for results when implementing new instructional methods, and if the expected results were unsuccessful, then ask, “Que si le mezclo un poquito de esto con un poquito de esto? (What if I mix a little of this with a little of this?) Integrating some of the known with the new can create “something good” for students.

When asked to describe the predictable stages of change, Lynn described how she stood before her faculty “every Wednesday . . . talking about achievement and how to get there” at the beginning, middle, and end of the year. She described sensing resistance at the beginning of the year when she “was painting the picture for them” but less so as the year progressed. She theorized that change came about as “the big picture got clearer” for the faculty. Given this response, perhaps Lynn was implying two stages of change—initial resistance and increased clarity of goals.
Malintzin identified two stages in the change process—anger and the period of trial-and-error, which she called the “transforming” phase. Malintzin explained that if the “change is not overwhelming,” “healthy” people take “a month to get over things.” They then begin the “transforming” phase when they begin to try out the new behavior.

Sylvia named reluctance, discomfort, practice (“training”), and evaluation as predictable stages of change. She believed that reluctance was a natural response to change “even if it’s [to remediate what’s] not working.” For change to occur, people must “feel uncomfortable,” or things will “stay the same.” Practice of the new behavior occurs next. Sylvia emphasized the need for “training” at this stage until “they can do it in their sleep;” otherwise the change will “not . . . happen.” She added that the training should take into account the various modalities in which people learn best. Once the new practice was in place, Sylvia expected teachers to demonstrate through “data” that the practice “is working.”

Tango identified six stages of the change process—denial, grief, planning, practice, reflection, and evaluation. Tango described denial and grief through the comments one might make: “No, this can’t be happening to me! . . . What do you mean? I’ve worked so hard . . . No, the statistics must be wrong.” She believed it was necessary “to vent . . . to get it out . . . to feel it” before one could enter the planning stage. In the transition between denial and planning, there was a pause to consider: “These are the data . . . This is what needs to be done.” Then the planning begins—“How am I going to do this?” Tango acknowledged that she was “not real concrete with . . . plans,” but she was “very intuitive.” She found it easier to draw up “detailed structured plans” with others.
Once a plan was in order, practice began. Practice may have included observation by an outsider and was followed by periods of reflection followed by more practice. The final stage, evaluation, or what Tango called “accountability,” was based on mutually agreed-upon criteria. All teachers knew what the “benchmark” of performance would be.

Michael Fullan (2001) posits that effective leaders understood the process of change as an on-going reculturing process. Of the six participants, three were able to identify three or more stages of change. Two identified two stages of the change process, and one indirectly alluded to two stages of change. What were the named stages of change?

All participants identified resistance as the first predictable stage of change using the following labels—anger, denial, discomfort, grief, reluctance, or resistance. Four participants discussed a second stage which involved moving toward acceptance of the change. Cecilia described the act as “looking within” for direction. Isabel cautioned against accepting the new as “salvation” without question. She gave personal examples that implied the integration of the known with the unknown after careful analysis. Lynn implied that continually repeating the same message of the goals to be achieved increased the clarity of the goals over time. Tango talked of pausing “to get a grip” of oneself and then to devise a plan to make the change. Three participants identified a third stage of change—practice. Malintzin called this period the “transforming” period. Sylvia called it “training.” Tango referred to it as practice and reflection. Sylvia and Tango were the only two participants who identified evaluation as a stage of the change process.
Once a change process has been declared, how do educational leaders support others through this process? The participants’ responses to this question are reported next.

Supporting Others through Change

Cecilia reflected on times she had “embraced change and [flown] with it” because other people around her provided a “safety net” to take risks and “not care what the consequences” would be because it was a win-win situation. Hence, she spoke of “being there” for teachers “to fall on . . . to rely on” as they tried out new practices. She also believed it was important “to give them information that they need when they need it—being instant.”

Isabel encouraged teachers to be “be open” at weekly faculty discussions. She encouraged teachers to share their disagreements openly. She would say to them, “I don’t care if you disagree with me . . . because it’ll make me think about it . . . . Don’t keep it inside porque ya una vez que digamos esto es lo que vamos a hacer (because once we say this is what we are going to do), it’ll be harder to change it.” Her aim was to develop a climate of “trust and respect” in which everyone could voice their opinions in order to move forward with change.

Lynn “has been teaching . . . guiding [her] adults more so than in the past years because the district is switching, and everything is accountability and achievement.” Lynn attended training sessions with her curriculum specialist and a team teacher to learn “best practices.” In turn, the curriculum specialist provided “individual training in the classroom and modeling for the classroom teachers” while she monitored the professional
development. However, Lynn worked with teachers who may have required more individual assistance in implementing a new practice. She spent “a lot of time on an individual basis” working with teachers in their classrooms “shaping or assisting them.” She discovered “things that are typical to their classroom and their ideas” for professional development.

Malintzin cautioned that in leading others through change, “you can’t just throw everything at people.” There must “be something in it for them, always.” Change happens “in steps.” Therefore, it is the leader’s job to “coax people in chunks.” Throughout a change process, Malintzin “praises” her teachers for their efforts. She referred to “timely encouragement as soon as they start trying” the new practice. She engaged teachers in informal conversations and asked, “How’s it going?” She met with her grade-level lead teachers and passed along observations for them to make at their grade level meetings: “The next little ceremony . . . encourage so-and-so and tell them I mentioned to you they are good at this.” In doing this, she ensured that praise also came from the teachers’ peers. In addition, Malintzin used the school newsletter and announcements over the public address system to thank teachers for their accomplishments publicly.

Sylvia supported teachers through the change process by continuously showing them how to implement the new practice. She stated, “If they need to see it a different way, you do it at every level [until] there is no reason they can’t do it.” Each time a teacher acquired a new practice or enhanced an existing practice, Sylvia considered it new professional growth. However, she noted an observation about teachers trying to make a number of changes at any one time:
I have workhorses. They do and do and do and do and do, but they don’t see the full picture, and that is my goal right now—that they all understand why we have A, why we have B, and why we have C, and how it’s all going to equal this—what this means. And that’s one year’s teaching for one year’s growth. End of story.

There can’t be less. There can be more . . . but there can’t be less.

Thus, part of supporting teachers through change was to help them “make the connection” between “A, . . . B, and . . . C.” Sylvia stated that she “definitely [believes]” that if teachers did not “make the connection” between what was on a “checklist, . . . a lesson plan, and . . . data,” then they are going to “work a lot harder, not smarter.”

Tango prefaced her response to the question, “How do you support others through the change process?” by noting certain assumptions about the process. She recognized that change was “a journey” that “takes a long time.” She said it required “a certain level of trust” and the expectation “that it’s got to work.” To do that, it was necessary to “gather . . . data” and “focus [their] conversations” on the data “rather than the stories—the side trips, [like]: ‘But I really can’t do that . . . because . . . these students come from low-income families and they can’t do it.’” Tango believed it was important to “listen to those comments” because they revealed a “person’s belief system.”

However, her role as the educational leader was to refocus the conversation by comments such as these: “So, what is it that you’re doing right now in your classroom?” “And now, let’s get back to the data here.” Tango ended this question’s response by describing how she strives to listen: “My whole body is there. My mind’s there, my eyes. I try not to be
writing at the same time . . . so that that person really feels that this is the time for good conversation. It also is non-judgmental.”

The participants’ responses to the question “How do you support others through the change process?” varied with each person. Isabel and Tango were the only two participants who reported a similar response—establish a climate of trust in which teachers could share their beliefs and opinions, including disagreements. The remaining responses could serve as a guide for supporting others through change. Cecilia was “there” for teachers “to rely on” and to “give them the information they need when they need it.” Lynn provided support through on-going professional development related to the “district’s switching . . . [to] everything [being about] accountability and achievement” as well as through individual consultations with teachers who needed more individual assistance. Malintzin “coaxes people” along “the steps” of change and provided “timely encouragement as soon as they start trying” the new practice. She also used informal conversations to check on progress and used various public means to recognize teachers for their efforts and accomplishments. Sylvia emphasized the importance of teaching the new practice until teachers “can do it in their sleep” and helping teachers “make connections” between points “A . . . , B . . . , and C” so they could see how their work fit into a broader picture. Tango found it important to listen carefully to all comments and to accept them all without judgment but still redirect discussions to the data at hand rather than to “the stories.” Conversely, how did the participants deal with teachers who resisted change efforts?
Countering Resistance to Change

Cecilia made it a point not to “counter-attack” teachers who might be struggling with or resisting a change process. Instead, she approached them with this statement: “You know, we have this situation, and I just can’t think of what else to do. Can you give some ideas of how we can go about addressing it?” The teachers would then elaborate their ideas. By doing this consistently, Cecilia was able to gain the teachers’ trust enough such that anytime teachers had questions they would send student messengers to her saying, “You know, you need to speak to Senora X because Senora X can tell us what we need to do.” By “humbling” herself and “asking for advice,” Cecilia demonstrated her willingness “to learn, . . . gain their ideas, and value their opinion.”

Isabel told a story of a teacher who insisted she could not teach entirely in Spanish when the school initiated a Spanish immersion program. The teacher argued with her, “I just can’t teach all in Spanish.” Isabel would say to her, “Yes you can . . . I know you can. You’re an excellent teacher. You speak Spanish very well. You have your endorsement.” The teacher continued to resist until one day, Isabel had to say to her, “Sabes que (you know what), I love you very much. You are an excellent teacher. I will write you a very good letter of recommendation, but I have to respect you. I believe you can do it, but if you don’t, that’s what counts.” The teacher responded, “You are serious.” Isabel said, “Yes I am . . . We know what is necessary. Now if you can’t do it, I understand [that you might have to leave].” The following day, the teacher returned with a new attitude: “If you think I can do it, I can.” With that, this teacher went on to become “a shining star.” Isabel called her one of her “Chicken Little” teachers who finally
overcame the belief that the sky was falling. Eventually she accomplished what she did not think possible. In sum, Isabel reiterated that if she perceived the change to be a positive one, then it was her duty to see it through by helping teachers make that change. If the resistance was high, she would insist, “Porque así es (Because this is the way it is), and I’m sorry if you feel the other way, but it has to be this way. Now we’re going to try it.” With that she would press on and use the threat of dismissal only as a last resort.

Lynn identified two strategies she used to counter resistance. In faculty meetings, she purposefully moved about the room to be within arm’s length of people to increase the numbers “attending” to the information. She explained, “They say that if you go out like this with your arms, all the people that are in this area you catch, but everyone else on the periphery you don’t.” Secondly, she followed up with individual conversations where she could “keep going at it,” that is, “chipping away” at their resistance. She did not specify the content of those conversations.

Malintzin reported that “there were very few” teachers who resisted change. As mentioned earlier, occasionally she had to say, “You know, X, this is not working out” and had to place the teacher on a formal plan for improvement or dismissal. Malintzin described a consequence of having placed one teacher on a plan for improvement: They went from “hugs and kisses and caring for each other” to “zero” signs of affection and from the teacher calling ‘Malintzin’ by her first name to only referring to Malintzin only by her last name, “Mrs. X.” Malintzin simply noted that “this has to happen” from time to time in dealing with changes.
Sylvia believed she countered resistance to changes by the manner in which she presented the need to change, generally a directive from the outside. She avoided giving a directive to her staff “the way it’s given” to her by her superiors. Instead, she asked herself first, “Okay, I have to get from here to here. How do I get there?” even “when every bone in my body is . . . going ‘EEK! This not the way I want to have it.’” Then she came up with “ideas . . .[that] pretty much work.” Her way was to use “please and thank you so much” that it became a joke among her staff. She laughed as she gave an example: “Can you please turn in your lesson plans? Can you turn in your lesson plans, please? Would you please give them to me?” Sylvia then reflected that she may have gotten the lesson plans quicker and more often if she had commanded, “Give me your darn plans!” However, she concluded, it simply “isn’t in [her] nature to be so blunt and abrupt and rude.” Then she offered an afterthought—“this is probably culture, too, now that I’m talking to you about this.”

When asked how she supported others through change and how she countered resistance to change, Tango gave only one answer. It was the recognition that change occurred over an extended period of time, that there must be trust, work effort, and use of data to justify the change and the results of new practices. In other portions of the interviews, she identified using plans for improvement or dismissal for struggling teachers as a last resort in the change process.

There seemed to be an implication from most responses to the question “How do you counter others’ resistance to change?” that though there was initial and predictable resistance to change, few teachers resisted change to the point where they were faced
with a plan for improvement or a dismissal. Only two participants specifically identified this last resort for teachers who did not meet their instructional goals. Instead, all participants described communication strategies that helped them lead others through change. Cecilia directly asked teachers for advice on how they might address a particular situation. Isabel communicated belief and confidence to teachers who doubted their abilities to succeed in a new practice. Lynn moved strategically about a room when speaking to her staff so that more people would “attend” to her. She followed group discussions by engaging individuals in conversations in order to keep “chipping away” at resistance. Malintzin emphasized the need for “timely encouragement as soon as they start trying” the new practice. Sylvia consciously changed the tone of directives she received from her superiors to avoid sounding “blunt and abrupt and rude” when presenting them to her staff and used “please” and “thank you” often in making her requests. She made plans for moving people from one point to another. Tango spoke of the importance of listening carefully in order to determine the need for support or direct intervention in moving others toward change. In all, whether listening to or speaking to staff, these principals appeared to agree that the communication manner made a difference in bringing about change.

Generating and Sharing Knowledge to Effect Change

In addition to the communication strategies reported above, how did the participants generate and share knowledge with and among staff to bring about change on a school-wide level? Their responses follow.
Cecilia had observed her staff’s resistance to professional development sessions presented by outsiders. For this reason, she surveyed her staff to learn “what they’re able to do . . . and willing to share” for professional development with their peers. Because “they’re willing to listen to each other,” Cecilia used her staff to generate and share knowledge that promoted their school instructional goals. Occasionally, she invited an outside presenter that she knew her staff would accept.

Conversely, Isabel reported that her staff invited “people from the district . . . [and] from outside the district” to discuss topics they want to learn about “because . . . [they] don’t have all the answers.” For example, after autistic children enrolled in the school for the first time, they invited an autism expert to help them understand this condition. They learned they “had to change some of the ways” they did things in order to provide appropriate instruction for their students with autism.

Lynn believed there were “two things that . . . are the most important” for generating and sharing knowledge to promote change—knowledge of curriculum and experience teaching curriculum. If the leader has knowledge of these, then one “can guide the individual” teacher.

Malintzin spoke about “protecting” her teachers’ professional development time. Though Wednesday afternoons were meant to be used for professional development across the school district, Malintzin told her staff to use that time to plan their agendas and quarterly calendars, do lesson planning, review test results, and group students accordingly. Instead of biweekly staff meetings on Mondays, those Mondays were used for professional development. To handle “management things,” Malintzin used a weekly
newsletter. She protected her teachers’ time by avoiding unnecessary interruptions in the school day that other principals allowed into their schools. She did not specify what those interruptions might be.

**Sylvia** did “a lot of reading” and shared what she learned with her staff. Sometimes she shared articles with her staff that were “incredibly motivating [and] inspiring.” Sylvia also considered it important to communicate via e-mail, occasional “FYI” newsletters, and at grade-level meetings. She said, “I’m very honest with them, so I always keep them on the level of whatever’s happening . . . that was really appropriate or something that I needed to communicate to them.” In addition, Sylvia pointed out that the “two doors into [her] office” were always open and teachers “come and talk all the time.”

**Tango** identified three avenues for generating and sharing knowledge to bring about school-wide change. First, Tango believed that the procedures to generate and share knowledge “really start with looking at data,” meaning student achievement test scores. Tango reported that “teachers are open to discussing it—it’s not a hidden secret anymore,” especially since the school was identified as an underperforming school in 2001. Teachers identified the subjects and grade levels that needed improvement and planned their professional development accordingly. Tango felt “fortunate” to have staff members “who are very knowledgeable in their particular areas . . . who . . . set up the agenda . . . or reports from five minutes to a half hour of professional development lessons.” She observed that teachers were “more engaged” in the professional development when their colleagues were the presenters. Secondly, teachers and parents
worked together to make school-wide decisions through the school site council. Site
council decisions were also based on test and other school data. Tango found the decision
making through the site council to be “a very open process” and that the staff and parents
“own” their decisions. The third avenue for generating and sharing knowledge with staff
was the annual retreat for setting school program goals based upon the allotted Title I
monies the school received. The staff was charged with discussing the “pros and cons” of
programs, reviewing school data, and then “secretly prioritizing” the programs for the
new academic year. She reflected on this process:

> And so they’re grappling with, “Gee, I really wanted all 20 [programs], but I only
> have room for these top seven. So, what are my true top seven?” It’s become a
great process. Once [the priorities] are there, another person tallies them all up
and we have a mathematical equation that works out . . . and I don’t have to do
it . . . . By the end of the hour, we know what our priority list was as a group . . . . I
was surprised at how much owning the budget helped teachers to own [the
programs].

In all three instances of opportunities for sharing knowledge, Tango noted that when
teachers (and parents) were involved in the decision making based on specific test or
other school data, there was increased ownership of the goals set by the group.

Four of the six participants identified professional development as one forum for
generating and sharing knowledge to bring about school-wide change. Of these four
principals, only one reported using outside presenters for professional development. The
remaining principals noted the advantage of teachers presenting to colleagues—increased
engagement in the presentations. One principal identified two other group processes for generating and sharing knowledge—site council meetings and annual retreats to set school program goals. Two principals identified communication means they used to generate and share knowledge. Malintzin used a weekly newsletter to handle "management things" with her staff. Sylvia passed on pertinent information from professional reading and district-wide meetings via e-mail, "FYI" newsletters, at grade-level meetings, and in impromptu conversations in her office with the "two [open] doors." One principal underscored the need to "protect" teachers' planning and professional development time. One way she did this was by keeping out external interruptions to the school day. Lastly, one principal named knowledge of curriculum and experience with teaching curriculum as a means to "guide the individual" teacher.

Self-Reflection as Part of the Change Process

Though group interaction is necessary for promoting school-wide change, Heckman (1996) maintained that self-reflection is also necessary. Heckman believed that if change were to be more than structural or cosmetic, then individuals must also examine current practices and the explanations underlying those regularities. The participants' responses to the question, "To what degree do you use self-reflection as part of the change process?" follow.

Cecilia's immediate response to the question of self-reflection was "Constantly!" However, she then reflected on how much her husband, also an educator, had been her "balance, conscience . . . the person [she bounced] ideas off" when she was a teacher. They "had each other to give resources to or ideas." Since she became a school
principal, however, she “no longer” had him as a sounding board. She regretted that loss.
Though Cecilia did not explain why she “no longer” had her husband’s “willingness to
listen,” there may be two reasons. First, they no longer shared the same job functions.
The second reason may perhaps be gleaned from a portion of the interview that is
described further in Part II of this chapter-the Latina perspective of educational
leadership. Cecilia shared, partially through tears,

> When you’re in a relationship you have to give more than you receive, and I think
> the reason why I didn’t accomplish all my goals was because I wanted to make
> sure that my husband did. And I honestly believe that’s still a mistake because I
> became a principal before him . . . . My husband wants me home at a certain
> time . . . . After this year, I won’t be at [this school] . . . . But if you want to keep a
> family and if you want to keep a marriage for 28 years, you have to make
> sacrifices.

**Isabel** reported that she engaged in self-reflection “about 70% . . . maybe . . .
even more” of the time “because you have to look at what you know and really look deep
down inside.”

**Lynn** did not respond to the question of self-reflection in terms of the degree to
which she engaged in this process. Rather, she spoke about its importance: “You have to
do that on an on-going basis because . . . you can’t fine-tune and you can’t grow if you
don’t use self-reflection.” The rest of her response described the importance of listening
to others and validating their ideas.
Malintzin said of the practice of self-reflection, “This last year I was probably so caught up with catching up that I probably was not doing enough ‘til the end [of the school year].” Then she detailed a situation in which she had responded in an “unprofessional” manner to a teacher in the presence of other teachers. She described how she “started looking” at herself to evaluate the situation. She then asked “five different people” who had observed the interaction to give her “feedback.” She “took notes” and asked if she had been “unprofessional.” Though four of the five teachers said she had not acted unprofessionally, one teacher, a “lead teacher” whose opinion Malintzin “takes very highly,” told her, “Well, [Malintzin], it embarrassed us . . . . Maybe it could have been handled differently.” Malintzin’s response to this teacher’s feedback and to this question was, “‘Okay.’ So that was a reflection for me.”

Sylvia reported using self-reflection “probably 100%” of the time.” She added, “Reflection is the way to go” in the process of change. She then referred to “reflective practice” and described what she meant:

It’s . . . how you have . . . conversations, how you talk to each other as a group, and how you decide what you feel is important, and what you’re willing to step out and try. If you don’t reflect on those things—and it takes time—and that’s what we’re building.

She did not complete the thought about what happens if one does not “reflect on those things.” She concluded her remarks by saying that her staff knew they were expected to engage in “reflective practice.”
Tango did not answer the question regarding the degree of self-reflection in which she engaged. Instead, she discussed how she was “not disciplined enough to write” self-reflections as she knew some principals did on a “weekly or daily” basis. However, she mentioned that her supervisors had required written narratives—“one page at the beginning and one page at the end” of the school year that had “helped in terms of . . . documenting” her own professional development. She also described meeting with another principal “two [or] three times a year” to “self-reflect . . . strictly on the learning” they had acquired. They “might meet for either breakfast or lunch,” and they found it “really helpful for each” other to do so. Aside from personal self-reflection, Tango mentioned briefly that it was helpful for “the group” to “do a written self-reflection” that she then used as a “benchmark” of the group’s progress. She did not specify who comprised “the group.”

The question “To what degree do you use self-reflection as part of the change process?” yielded briefer responses than did previous questions. Four participants reported some amount of time during which they engaged in self-reflection. Cecilia said, “Constantly!” Isabel and Sylvia gave percentages—70% and 100%, respectively. Malintzin said she “was probably not doing enough.” Lynn and Tango did not refer to any measure of time. Three participants commented on some aspect or advantage of self-reflection. Isabel thought it was important “to look at what you know and really look deep down inside.” Lynn said that without self-reflection “you can’t fine-tune and you can’t grow.” Sylvia stated that self-reflection helped one know “how you talk to each other . . .; how you decide what you feel is important, and what you’re willing to step out
and try.” She acknowledged that it takes time to reflect. Three principals provided examples of how they engaged in self-reflection. Cecilia spoke of speaking to her husband, also an educator, throughout the time she was a teacher. After she became a principal, that practice ceased. Malintzin related a story of a conflict between herself and a teacher witnessed by other teachers. She reflected on her behavior by asking teachers for feedback and “taking notes.” Tango spoke about using written reflections to note yearly progress in her role as an administrator and about meeting two or three times per year with another principal to discuss what they are learning in their roles as principals.

The use of dialogue appeared in these last three examples of self-reflection practices. The next section addresses the question “To what degree do you use dialogue around particular issues to bring about change with your staff?”

The Use of Dialogue to Effect Change

Cecilia stated that “dialogue is very important.” She then described the importance of dialogue as it related to child study team meetings when teachers, special education personnel, administrators, and parents convened to discuss the instructional plan for a particular student. Of this process she said, “It’s a necessity for [the student’s] academic achievement.” She then described dialogue as something she and her staff “were forced to do” when the school was identified as an underperforming school. Having to work on “school improvement” “brought [the staff] together for a common cause.” She reflected on the necessity for dialogue: “Even affectiveness [sic] has to improve because if we’re not together emotionally and we haven’t bonded, then it’s not going to happen with kids.”
Isabel responded succinctly about her use of dialogue: “That we use a lot . . . because if that is not there, you don’t go anywhere.”

Lynn also responded briefly to the matter of dialogue: “That’s all I do! . . . Dialogue is what starts it all and I have to dialogue with the individual. Sometimes it’s . . . in the hallway . . ., other times, it’s in a formal setting . . . .”

Malintzin described the different ways in which a change process was initiated when posed the question of the use of dialogue. When the grade-level lead teachers stated there was a need for some change pertinent only to their grade level, then Malintzin “lets them do the change.” If change involves the whole school, then Malintzin “brings [the changes] up to the staff . . . almost every other Monday” at staff meetings. If individuals wished to see a change made, they recorded their ideas on “a white board” in Malintzin’s office and it was placed on the agenda for the Monday meeting. She tried using surveys in the past but did not “get that much response.” She received greater response from teachers by asking directly at staff meetings during “the last ten minutes,” “Is there anything else that I, or my curriculum specialist, or . . . AP can do to make your life easier, your job easier?” She responds at that moment whether their request can be met and why not if it cannot be met. Her goal was that “before [she] walks out the door, before the meeting is over, [that everyone] come to some understanding of it.”

Sylvia thought she probably spent “50%” of her time in dialogue with teachers to bring about change. She planned to make more time for this “in the future” especially after receiving written feedback to a question she posed for reflection at the end of the school year: “If I could do something different, [what would that be]?” “Every single
paper” the teachers turned in noted “more time to talk to each other.” Her response to the feedback was, “Man, that was an eye-opener!” She then explained why she and her staff had not engaged in more dialogue:

I think it’s a sign of the times . . . . There’s just so much that came down on principals and . . . . it depends . . . . on whatever region you’re in . . . . but in my . . . case, we just got hit–poof! And so a lot of what I did was . . . . reflecting on what I needed to do or changing what I was told to a way that would be more human to my staff . . . . I worked really, really hard on that, and I don’t think I always got their input because I needed to be more . . . . sure of where I was headed and time was of the essence . . . .

She acknowledged the need for more dialogue and, like Isabel, reached a similar conclusion about its place in promoting change: “You have to be able to talk and give them time to dialogue or nothing’s going to happen.”

Tango’s immediate response to the notion of dialogue was, “It’s very important.” She then described Wednesday afternoon staff development sessions as the time when dialogue related to the “formal lesson being presented by the leader” occurred. She reported that there was

Always that dialogue, that discussion among them: ‘Okay, what did you learn right now? What are you going to do tomorrow in the classroom? What are you going to use to document that you tried it? What are you going to use to document that your students learned it?"
She believed that once this structure was in place, that dialogue happened automatically when the staff gathered for professional development.

Though four participants stated that dialogue was important or that "nothing's going to happen" without it, only two participants' responses to the question "To what degree do you use dialogue around particular issues to bring about change with your staff?" seemed closest to answering this question directly. Sylvia responded with an actual percentage of time she thought she engaged in dialogue with her staff — "50%." She offered an explanation for not spending more time on dialogue — too many external directives for change that she "worked really, really hard" to translate into "more human" terms before announcing them to her staff. Tango reported on the weekly staff development sessions in which she and her staff engaged in dialogue related to three central questions — how to apply the new knowledge to classroom practice, how to evaluate the teacher's new practice, and how to evaluate whether or not it made a difference in the students' learning. Cecilia, Lynn, and Malintzin provided examples of settings for dialogue. Cecilia described child study teams to develop individual education plans for special education students and school improvement discussions — a process "forced" upon teachers as a result of an underperforming school rating. Lynn referred to individual conversations. Malintzin described how change is initiated in her school through individuals who record their ideas on "a white board" in her office. Changes involving the whole school were brought "up to the staff... almost every other Monday" at staff meetings.
Thus far, participants’ reports of how they led others through predictable phases of the change process revealed the use of strategic planning for initiating, implementing, and evaluating change efforts through self-reflection and through individual conversations, grade-level or focus-group meetings, full staff meetings, and professional development. Their responses alluded to the fact that change efforts were interpreted and acted upon differently by each of their staff members. How then did they promote a sense of coherence and commitment to change? Their responses follow.

Promoting a Sense of Coherence and Commitment to Change

Cecilia responded to how she promoted commitment to a change effort by first stating that without “children, . . . [educators] don’t have a job” and that there are certain things educators “have to do ethically.” By way of example, she referred to the importance of preparing students to take mandated tests otherwise educators are “not educating kids” for testing situations outside the school such as a “driver’s license . . . [or] college entrance exam.” Cecilia believed that if educators said, “We believe that all children can learn, then, by golly, teach them so they can learn” and part of that responsibility was teaching them “how to take a test”-irrespective of a teacher’s “philosophy” about required standardized testing. She spoke next of “bringing [commitment] to the forefront” rather than “negating it” by having teachers “confront their mission statement . . . [and] their beliefs.” She believed she and her staff have made progress in “moving” in the direction of the school’s original mission. Still, she had said to her elementary school staff, “If you are not committed to improving the school, then go somewhere else.” Though she found it “difficult” to give such an ultimatum, Cecilia
concluded, “that’s the hard reality” of what it means to have commitment. She did not specify how she promoted a sense of coherence.

**Isabel** pointed to a school change that initially involved only kindergarten and first-grade teachers to show how she promoted a sense of coherence and commitment by the entire faculty. She said the “other teachers kept involved in it” by “helping the kindergarten and first-grade teachers.” The entire staff was kept appraised of the progress and had a voice in answering questions such as “What more can we do or what do we need to change to better the [program]?” In addition, the kindergarten and first-grade teachers shared their good news as they saw changes take place: “Miren lo que estan haciendo los niños! (Look at what the children are doing!)” Isabel concluded, “It was a total school being involved in knowing what was going on.”

**Lynn** commented that promoting coherence and commitment to a change effort was “very difficult.” She said, “You can work and you can discuss, and you can share ideas . . . , and you can assume that this is happening.” However, there was not always coherence or commitment because “people may have other things going on” such as “a crisis in their life or in their family and they’re listening but not buying into it.” She then told how she shared material (books, articles, or pamphlets) with her staff to “interpret it” and “try it,” if they were so inclined. Otherwise, she asked that the item be returned to her anonymously. She never received “anything back.”

**Malintzin** did not specifically state how she promoted a sense of coherence and commitment. Instead, she shared that her teacher-led grade-level teams “are more highly encouraged” and “courageous” to propose changes.
Sylvia promoted coherence and commitment to change by “communicating to [teachers], keeping them informed as to what’s happening [and] why.” When she could not spend much time in classrooms, she explained what was keeping her from classroom visitations. She reflected,

It’s in being honest with them and saying this is where we’re at right now. This is what we have to do, and this is how we’re going to get there. I have negotiables and non-negotiables . . . - this is what I’m definitely not going to change . . . so let’s find a way to do it where we’re all happy. And this we can talk about . . .

They know that’s how I do it.

Like Sylvia, Tango identified communication as a tool for promoting coherence and commitment to a change effort. In her case, she specified three strategies for informing staff: adhering to rules for professional staff interactions, the use of meeting agendas, and training provided to the entire school staff by an outside sociological consultant group on the dynamics of “leadership, . . . change processes, . . . resilience, and systems.” At an “initial meeting,” Tango and her staff decided on the rules for their meetings and professional development sessions. She gave examples of some of these rules: “One person speaks at a time.” “What we say here stays here.” “The decision is the decision that all of us commit to.” “We can have fun.” “We’re going to be on time arriving.” “It’s unacceptable to have parking lot discussions.” Their meetings followed written agendas including time frames. Before adjourning the session, an agenda consisting of unfinished business and new questions or issues that emerged during the session was prepared.
In addition to weekly meetings, certified and classified personnel received 20 hours of training by an outside consultant to learn to identify how “systems . . . assumptions . . . and foundations” function in the “personal journey” of change. The training was followed by reading staff-selected literature such as literature on the topic of poverty and its effects on education. Tango reported that this training yielded “cohesiveness” in their “professional interactions” and the avoidance of “backstabbing or . . . sabotaging” in their school climate. In sum, she said of this program,

People now work from strengths. Instead of a teacher saying, “A child can never do that,” or “I can’t do that,” you realize, “How am I going to do this?” “What do I need to do this?” “Well, I’ve got to get professional development and I need to practice it. And I need to discuss it with another person.” It becomes a real strengthening procedure.

Four participants directly or indirectly identified communication avenues as a means for promoting coherence and commitment to a change effort. Tango reported four specific communication strategies: setting rules for staff interactions, setting agendas with time frames, training for all personnel to learn about the “systems . . . assumptions . . . and foundations” inherent in the “personal journey” of change, and reading literature related to their topics of study. Sylvia kept her staff informed as to “what’s happening . . . [and] why” as she was informed by her superiors. She also clearly informed her staff what items were open to negotiation, which were not, and why. They then worked to make the “non-negotiables” work in a way that made them “happy.” Isabel described their staff practice of keeping each other appraised of progress in the implementation of
new practices. They questioned continuously how to improve their efforts, and they
shared their accomplishments along the way. Cecilia emphasized the need for a staff “to
confront their mission statement . . . [and] their beliefs.” If teachers were “not committed
to improving the school, then” they should “go elsewhere.” Further, she referred to the
necessity of putting aside philosophical differences when it came to such matters as
mandated achievement testing. Lynn and Malintzin did not directly describe how they
promoted coherence and commitment. Lynn said promoting coherence and commitment
was “very difficult” when not all staff members “[buy] into it.” She then said she liked to
share materials (books, articles, pamphlets) with her staff. Malintzin responded that her
grade-level lead teachers were more “highly encouraged” and “courageous” in proposing
changes. When principals had led their staffs through successful change efforts, how did
they celebrate their accomplishments?

Celebrating Change Accomplishments

Cecilia reported various and frequent means of celebrating her teachers’
accomplishments: blowing bubbles at each other “every time . . . scores go up in certain
areas;” distributing copies of certificates issued by the state education office for rising
achievement test scores; assemblies, breakfasts, ice cream socials, and meals to recognize
teachers and students; mementos with brief notes attached in teacher mailboxes such as
“a Lifesaver on a business card” with the message, ‘You’re a lifesaver;’” apples on
teachers’ desks the first day of school; and recognition in weekly school newsletters. Of
these practices, Cecilia shared two responses she received: “I have teachers that [sic] say
that for the three years I’ve been there that I am the only one that [sic] ever recognized
them for whatever they do,” and one teacher assistant told her, “I have never eaten more in my life in this school than I have since you’ve been here!”

Isabel, who had just retired at the time of the interview, ruminated about how she wished she had done more celebrating of change efforts. However, she had celebrated accomplishments “in the faculty meetings or the PTA meetings” and during “Monday morning assemblies” by pointing out, “Look at what is going on. Look at what this teacher did. Look at what the students . . . are doing. Look at how well something is going on.” She concluded, “So we celebrate by having it be out . . . [but] I wish I would have done more of it.”

Lynn’s immediate response to the question, “How do you celebrate successful change efforts?” was, “With a party! . . . We celebrate [even] if we are a maintaining school (performance rating) and whatnot, and I do all the bells and whistles, and the food.” On professional development days, she and her curriculum specialist made “sure [there was] chocolate at every table.” She also made her homemade salsa a staple of professional development “Wednesdays.” She said, “They like my salsa so . . . I always have salsa and chips and soda and that sort of thing.” Like Cecilia, Lynn made sure food part of the celebrations.

Malintzin and her lead teachers used the school’s public address system to “praise grade levels” that had accomplished some goal. In addition, she wrote at least “seven” thank you notes a week because she believed in “verbal notes.”

Sylvia’s immediate response to the question of celebrating successful change efforts was like Lynn’s—“Oh, we party!” The staff “has several parties throughout the
year. One of them is . . . at Christmas” at her home. At school, they “put lunches together” during which they sing the “Celebrate” song and “throw confetti at each other” as they “chase each other around the cafeteria.” Of this practice she commented,

We’re ridiculous, but it’s really funny. The secretary . . . [who’s] real proper . . . came into the library [one day] while we were going crazy and I got a thing of confetti and I poured it on her and she just looked at me like, “What happened?”

But she started chasing me around . . . trying to get me back . . . .

In addition to these activities, Sylvia also talked about meeting for breakfast at school and during summer vacations, meeting “for movies or for lunches.”

Tango laughed as she responded to how she celebrated successful change efforts: “I sing. I get on the intercom, and we start singing songs.” Then she went on to describe more daily practices of acknowledgment for accomplishments: “daily smiling . . . [and] welcoming;” commenting as she made observations—“Hey, I just saw that great lesson when I went by your room;” writing “once every month or so . . . a note specific to a teacher about what I saw.” She reported that her staff also planned “events or occasions” to celebrate such as breakfasts on “payday Fridays” and catered luncheons where they took turns giving “a two-minute affirmation for something that they thought was successful.” What she practiced most consistently, however, was “that daily greeting or pat on the back . . . and being available.”

All participants publicly acknowledged successful change efforts. Four participants identified food as a mainstay of celebrations—everything from Lifesaver candy in teachers’ mailboxes; an apple on each teacher’s desk on the first day of school;
chocolate and homemade salsa at every Wednesday afternoon professional development session; and “payday Friday” breakfasts, luncheons, and ice cream socials. Malintzin and Tango used the public address system to recognize their staff’s successes. Both also wrote thank you notes regularly to praise teachers for specific observations they had made. Isabel gave public recognition to her staff at faculty meetings, parent group meetings, and at weekly school-wide assemblies. Cecilia distributed a weekly school newsletter detailing teachers’ accomplishments. In addition to the kinds of celebration events described above, Tango celebrated others through her daily welcoming, smiles, pats on the back, and striving to “be available” to others. From a simple smile to the most elaborate “party” complete with “confetti” and the “Celebrate” song, it was apparent that these principals recognized the value of making time to celebrate their change efforts.

The next section reports how each participant led a change effort—one imposed by state mandate and one in response to a perceived school need.

*Responding to Change Directives*

Participants were asked to tell two stories about change efforts they had led. The first story was in response to an event that all participants experienced as an externally imposed directive for school change—receiving notice of the State Department of Education’s assessment of their school’s performance in October 2002. The second story was about a change effort that the principal chose as an exemplar of her leadership abilities in bringing about school change.

When the State Department of Education rated the elementary grades of Cecilia’s K-8 school as “underperforming” in October 2002, she and her staff were not surprised—
the school district had already identified the school as underperforming for the two previous years. She was familiar with the “federal guidelines” that were dictating the “consequences” for underperforming schools—that the schools “would be accountable for themselves and their performance levels and what [they] were doing to improve” the situation. However, the school received “less and less help” with each passing year. The elementary school lost Title I (Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) funding, “math support [and] literacy support” the second year of the underperforming rating. Cecilia reported:

We were . . . at the bottom of the chart. So, when the second year came, I said, “Listen, this is the second year. By the third year we’re going under review. What can you give us? [How] can you help us?” “Oh, we’ll send you a math resource teacher once a week.” Well, I never got that . . . It has been a lonely road, very lonely . . . We are . . . identified publicly as an underperformance school with no help, no support system, no nothing! . . . What’s so frustrating for me . . . is that here are these schools that have been in it for two years already and here we are . . . [having] to invent the wheel. Why can’t we learn from their mistakes, learn from what works and what didn’t work? No. Everybody’s got to do their own thing, even though their own thing is the same thing. It’s the same standards—the same performance objectives that we have to test and we have to assess. We’re on our own. We have to recreate all this.

Cecilia went on to explain that when she lost Title I funding, she lost the ability to “collaborate” with other principals of Title I (Elementary and Secondary Education Act
of 1965) programs on “a monthly basis.” They used to meet to “give each other ideas . . . to fall back on each other on what they can do and not do, what works/what doesn’t work.” Further, because the school district had eliminated most support personnel, if Cecilia needed “tutors,” she had to “go out and find them [herself].” She was left with only two other principals of underperforming schools with whom “to congregate.” Hence, she found it “very difficult as . . . an instructional leader . . . to move forward” because there was “no support.” Cecilia concluded from her experiences: “The state monitoring is based on their expectations, so now we’re having to live up to what the state wants us to do. So why have us write a [school improvement] plan?”

Isabel’s school received an “underperforming” rating from the State Department of Education in October 2002. Her response? “I cried and many of our teachers did, too.” She first heard the news from her supervisor: “Don’t talk to your teachers yet . . . because the state is going to publish it, and nobody is supposed to know before the state publishes it.” The following morning, Isabel called a meeting and broke the news to her teachers thus,

You know what? Hold your heads up. We are among the top schools in the state, the district. Yes, we did go down in our scores; therefore, we are “underperforming.” Where can you go if you were 100%? Anytime that you are so high you can expect . . . the law of averages. I wish 100% of our students were at 100%. We have to strive for that, but we have to be realistic and understand that this does happen. You are the best faculty and you know that . . . the parents
know. When the kids came in, they felt bad. Many of them were... saying, "Ms. X, it’s a lie."

After the initial crying, Isabel and her staff discussed what action to take. When they “asked the district for help [and] didn’t see anybody moving within the district,” except for one school board member, they went to the state capital to speak directly with legislators. The school board member joined their meeting with legislators because she believed no one should “put up with things like this.” They felt they “were listened to [by the legislators and that] changes were trying to be made.” Apart from speaking with state legislators and making school improvements locally, Isabel believed that educators must “continue to work on” making changes “at the federal government level.”

Lynn celebrated “with beads and food” the week before receiving notice of her school’s state rating, which they expected to be “maintaining” or “underperforming.” She told her staff, “We are going to celebrate now... that either we are maintaining or that we have work to do but we are still celebrating because you’ve worked hard and we need to validate that.” A week later, Lynn was “excited” to learn that their school received a “maintaining progress” rating. However, a “maintaining” rating posed its own “twofold” problem. Lynn explained,

If you move up in increments... of 5-10 NCEs a year, eventually when you get to the top, even if you drop a little bit, then you fall back, so I’m not sure that that is the best way. I mean they want every school [to be] a 90... a 100% school. That’s the plan and that’s difficult to maintain over a year... [If] you go backward, then that’s when you’re in danger... [of] becoming underperforming.
Lynn also pointed out that their school’s overall performance scores were affected by the fact that there was a high student “turnover” rate. She looked forward to the time when state and district officials “disaggregate the data” and used only the data of students who “had been [enrolled] a year or more.”

Malintzin was “happy” to receive her school’s “improving” rating from the State Department of Education. She added, “We didn’t get a ‘U’ or an ‘M.’ We got an ‘I,’ and we’re going to keep it.” Then she made an observation about an “unpublished” consequence of publishing each school’s performance rating in the local newspapers, related to what she perceived as a racial disparity:

If you are an employer and you’ve been seeing these postings (standardized test scores and school performance ratings) every single year, the poor Latino kids—they don’t do good—they’re underperforming. Of course they’re going to ask you for [proof of] a degree to see how stupid or bright you are—to see if you’re one of the many that don’t get that degree, or if you’re one of the few that [sic] went to college . . . “Okay, we’ll hire you.” But yet that mentality isn’t published every year. The Anglos are not oppressed every year by this—by the system—by having this published.

Malintzin based her conclusion on unspecified “research” and personal observations made when she worked for a county adult education program and a prison high school equivalency degree program that “Anglos are not oppressed every year by . . . having this published.”
For Sylvia and her staff, receiving a “maintaining” rating was “very good news” and a “non-event” in her school. They simply sent home a letter “in Spanish and English” summarizing what they “were doing and where [they] were at . . . and maybe two people called to ask” for further information.

In contrast to Sylvia’s uneventful response to the school performance rating, Tango described at length her deeply emotional response to receiving an “underperforming” school rating. She was the only participant who named an exact date of the public announcement—October 15, 2002. She received a phone call from her supervisor the “night before” and at that point “responded just through [her] head and said, ‘Thank you for letting me know.’” The following morning, “when all the administrators got together . . . [for] a formal administration meeting,” each of the principals “got folders with each of [their] classifications.” It was treated in a “real private and very dignified” manner. When she saw the rating “in written form, [she] started crying and had such a physical response” that it “surprised” her. She found herself “just weeping.” She reported never having “wept in public in a professional setting” and wondered if it was a result of being “a Latina . . . or a professional or a principal.” The “principals around [her] were very supportive and dignified.” One “hugged her and . . . said, ‘Tango, I know you’re doing a good job,’” and she was “grateful” for that support. She felt it had been “appropriate” to have a “physical response . . . to get it out of [her] system” before returning “to [her] head” to plan how to tell her “faculty, . . . parents, . . . and students.”
Tango recalled taking a weekend to call each of her teachers personally rather than through a “phone tree” system, assuring them, “I just want you to know that we’re going to be fine.” In the telephone conversations, Tango heard responses such as, “We’ll get through this. We’re a strong enough staff because of what we do and we know what the plan is.” Thus, all teachers “knew before they came to school on Monday and saw it in the newspaper.” The next step was to inform the students that Monday morning. This was done initially through the school’s morning news program—a “20-minute [television] program [run by] student newscasters.” Tango went on air to say, “Students, you are going to see in the newspaper . . . . I want you to know that it means that the school needs to work harder. I want you to feel that you’re in a good school; that you’re in a safe school . . . .” Teachers then followed up with class discussions. At the end of the day, the students carried newsletters home to their parents. The newsletters were followed by “real informative parent meetings” set up “during the daytime and in the nighttime” with English and Spanish sessions. The staff continued their work of emphasizing daily school attendance and preparing students to increase achievement test scores. Nonetheless, Tango also had “very gut-wrenching conversations” with parents considering the option of taking their children out of the school. By the end of the Fall 2002 semester, 20 parents chose to withdraw their children from the school.

The above stories revealed a variety of responses to an event that all participants experienced as an externally imposed directive for school change—receiving notice of the State Department of Education’s assessment of their school’s performance in October 2002. Two of the three principals who received “underperforming” school ratings,
however, reported similar responses. Isabel and Tango both cried initially, but both took action in response to the assessment. Isabel, her staff, and one school board member went to the legislature to share their concerns about “labeling” schools and the need for state and local support to make changes. Tango made immediate plans to inform her teachers, students, and parents via individual telephone conversations, a newscast for her students, and newsletters and meetings addressed to parents. Teachers continued their work to encourage daily attendance and to prepare students for achievement tests. Cecilia was not surprised because her school had received the same “underperforming” rating from the school district the two previous years. Her response revealed her “frustration” at the declining help in the form of support personnel from the school district. The loss of Title I federal funds meant she also lost monthly “collaboration” with principals of other Title I (Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) schools. Further, she expressed frustration at having to write school improvement plans that reflected their school’s needs when, in the end, school performance ratings were based only on the state student achievement test standards.

Two principals received “maintaining” school performance ratings. Lynn was “excited” to receive this rating but discussed how difficult it was to maintain progress if the school were already achieving high standards and/or the student data were not “disaggregated” to separate out students who had been enrolled in the school for less than a year. Sylvia described the public announcement of her school’s “maintaining” rating as a non-event and simply sent a letter to parents informing them of their ranking and what their school was doing to continue to improve.
Only one principal received an “improving” school performance rating. Malintzin briefly stated that she was “happy” with this score. However, she pointed out what she perceived as a racial disparity that she attributed to the annual publication of test scores and school performance ratings in the local newspapers. She believed that employers requested evidence of degrees more readily from potential Latino employees than from potential Anglo employees based on what was reported in the newspapers. When Latinos first “enter the work force,” they must show proof of being “stupid or bright” based on a high school or college degree before an employer agrees to hire him or her. Conversely, “Anglos are not oppressed every year by . . . having this published.”

In the previous set of stories, the change effort was imposed by an external agent—the State Department of Education in response to the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965). The following stories were chosen by each of the participants to describe a change effort that illustrated their leadership in bringing about school change.

Cecilia cited “three success stories” that she believed demonstrated her ability to lead others through change. The first two were briefly summarized—increasing the number of magnet school students (students from the extended community) and “leading the school” in the development of a “dual-language program.” She also described the third example—re-establishing the school council as a working governance body. When she became principal of the school, she discovered “things that [she] had never heard of” happening with the school council that “would make [one’s] hair stand on end.” She decided that “this [would] not go on” and with “integrity or determination,” she set out to
“clean” up the process of elections and meeting procedures. She began by asking for help from the “central office” in the form of “secretaries, or someone-who . . . had [nothing] to do with the school, [was] not related to anyone, [who] didn’t know anyone who was Hispanic-who could manage the election process.” She then initiated a campaign for parents “to be on the school council.” She created a list of all parents of enrolled students, and only those parents whose names were on the list could vote. She conducted the voting at a neutral site—a neighborhood church during a co-sponsored “Halloween event.” The central office entities came in to manage the election process. “To this day” Cecilia has “every ballot [for] every position . . . so that if ever anyone asks” about the process, she can account for it and show proof of its “integrity.”

Isabel identified “going from the traditional bilingual [education] program to the dual-language” program as “the biggie” change effort she led. Because the dual-language program did not include English-language instruction until the second grade, Isabel faced the dilemma of whether second-graders would perform well on the English-only national and state academic achievement tests. Nonetheless, she and her staff requested her supervisor’s permission to maintain the dual-language program as the school designed it and to test their second-graders even though they did not receive English-language instruction. The supervisor agreed. Isabel explained what she had proposed to her supervisor and the outcome:

If we see that [the dual-language program] is not doing what we want it to do—the kids don’t perform well—then we’ll add English to first grade and more to second grade so that they’ll be ready, pero me gustaria primero ver eso [but I’d like to
see that first]. Gracias a Dios [thank God] that she said, “Okay, let’s take the baseline and see what that data shows [sic].” But as soon as the scores came out, me llamo [she called me], “Isabel, that’s fantastic! Your second-graders are way at the top of the district.” . . . So . . . we went with it from there. Our program looked good. The kids knew English.

**Lynn** did not refer to any particular change effort that would best describe her leadership in effecting school change. Instead, she spoke about doing “a lot of guided training, guided systems, shaping.” She explained that she used the word *shaping* “a lot” because she believed she was “trying to shape [teachers’] behavior so that they become better teachers.” However, teachers cannot be “shaped” if they have no “tools to go forward.” Lynn said, “I try to give them as many tools—whether it’s materials or methodology or whatever.”

Like Lynn, **Malintzin** did not identify any particular change effort illustrative of her ability to effect school change. Instead she identified her shared leadership style as the means to bring about school change. She spoke of “creating” teacher teams. The “lead teachers” were the “professional developers . . . the ones that [sic] train the other” teachers. She reflected on “the shared leadership concept” as one she also used when she taught fifth-grade students. She reminisced, “I had my kids run the show. I mean the only time I was [running the show] was when I was actually teaching and delivered the lesson.”

**Sylvia** described how one teacher was able to move her staff into the practice of guided reading instruction. Her role in bringing about this school-wide change was
simply choosing a teacher who had “a passion for reading” to attend year-long training sessions on the procedures of guided reading. Sylvia saw her as “a good teacher but . . . not pushed to her limit.” When Sylvia asked her to accompany her to the first meeting, the teacher said, “Well, if you think I can do it.” After the initial training session, a second teacher was chosen to attend the meetings. Sylvia reported that the two teachers became “quite a team.” The first teacher she invited became the curriculum specialist for the school the following year. Sylvia reflected on the teacher’s role in transforming reading instruction in the school:

Because of her passion . . . and commitment to this new program and the training that she’d received, she single-handedly convinced the whole staff that that was the way to go. Had I done it, they probably would have done it, but it wouldn’t have been the same. It was because that particular person has so much credibility with the staff as a work dog, as a person who knows language arts . . .. They’re still congratulating her for becoming the curriculum specialist.

Sylvia summarized this experience by saying that leadership was about discovering “where the strengths are in people” and asking them to take on positions of leadership.

Like Sylvia, Tango described how teachers moved the rest of the staff into the practice of guided reading. Tango selected three teachers to accompany her to the guided reading training sessions “once every two months . . . for a three-hour workshop.” During the workshop, they learned “concepts” and were given “time to practice them” and “ask . . . questions.” The teachers returned to their classrooms to practice the new strategies, and their principal was required to provide coaching. The three teachers then taught their
peers during their weekly professional development time. Tango reflected on this model of professional development and its effectiveness in bringing about change:

What was really effective ... was ... how coaching and peer mentoring is much more effective than just seeing ... [and] taking down notes and [wondering], “Okay, now what do I do with it?” ... If you just hear it in ... class, you are only going to remember 5% of it the next day. When you practice it, it increases your effectiveness ... by at least 60% ... So it’s a shift in my idea of what professional development is.

The participants were asked to describe a change effort that illustrated their leadership in bringing about school change. Four of the principals identified specific change efforts; the remaining two principals did not specify any particular change effort. Cecilia and Isabel both identified developing a dual language program in their schools. In addition, Cecilia explained how she re-established the school council as a working governance body. To ensure the integrity of the voting process, she invited a non-partial outside “entity” to manage the voting process and the use of a neutral voting site open only to parents of enrolled students. Sylvia and Tango both described how teachers they had selected became the catalysts in teaching their peers guided reading. In doing so, they commented on the merits of teachers leading change efforts. Sylvia recognized the importance of identifying the strengths of each person and encouraging them to take leadership roles suited to their strengths. Tango praised the effectiveness of professional development that included practice time, coaching, and peer mentoring. Malintzin reported that her “shared leadership style” had been effective in promoting change. She
"creates" teams of teachers led by "lead" teachers who became the main professional developers in her school. Lynn spoke of "shaping" teacher behaviors to "become better teachers" through "guided training, guided systems" and the requisite "tools," i.e., "the materials or methodology" to make the changes.

Thus far, the participants' knowledge of the predictable stages of the change process, their knowledge of leadership strategies useful for leading others through change, and how they responded to two types of change directives have been reported. The final section of the interview related to leadership for school change asked participants to describe "change" through metaphor.

**Metaphorical Descriptions of Change**

To further draw out characteristics of change as perceived by this group of educational leaders, the participants were asked to describe the phenomenon of change as a metaphor. Except for one metaphor, all metaphors conveyed a sense of movement: "climbing a hill," a pulsing "heart of education," a "tug-of-war," "interlocking wheels in a clock," and a "tango." The remaining metaphor—a white four-sided space edged by a wavy "blue or yellow" line was "not necessarily a metaphor," said the participant before leaving it to simply describe how she experienced change. Their metaphorical descriptions follow.

**Cecilia** described change as "climbing a hill." In her words,

You take a few steps, and then you trip . . . and you go down a little bit more, then you go up higher. It's a struggle every step of the way, but when you see the results and you see the vision and the accomplishments, then you reach the top
and you are ready to enjoy the ride down. Unfortunately, in education, it doesn’t last too long. She described the change process as one requiring “sacrifice” and “grieving.”. Those “committed” to change “will carry [one] through” and “those that [sic]do not, pull [others] down. Still, Cecilia stated that the “benefit that . . . children receive . . . is the climax” of the journey up the hill. Educational leaders need to understand “what [they’re] doing, and why [they’re] doing it, and why it’s worth it.”

Isabel pictured the same poster of “the heart of education” she had used earlier to describe educational leader to describe change through metaphor. The heart was where the change took place. She reflected, “We have to keep moving and changing colors . . . in that picture” of a multicolored heart “to make it better.”

For Lynn change was a “tug-of-war.” She described it thus,

I see two people pulling . . . a rope. We are pulling this way and that . . . Sometimes you inch a little bit. I can see the person pulling this way and then the other person pulling back. The other person may not be a person. It may be the situation. It may be the material . . . It could be a language barrier, but it’s a tug-of-war.

Malintzin described change as “something revolving like those interlocking wheels in a clock. [It is] something that never stays the same . . . In a way it’s a cycle, too.” She then went on to note that change included “history.” She gave an example: “Like whole language will come again. Things will always come back in cycles, but we are always moving forward.”
Sylvia described change as a "square or rectangle" with a "wavy line going around it." The inside of the quadrilateral was white. The wavy line was "blue or yellow," and the "white meshes into the blue" or yellow of the wavy border. Sylvia interrupted her description to say, "It's not necessarily a metaphor" and went on to describe characteristics of the change process: Change is not "so black and white . . . it's more subtle." Change is "long-lasting. That's when [one] knows" it has occurred. Change is not in response to "fear." Change is "that little thing that from this day forward you are going to do because it worked, and it was the right thing to do."

When asked to describe change with a metaphor, Tango's immediate response was, "They moved my cheese the whole time!" in reference to Johnson's book *Who Moved My Cheese?* (1998). She stated, "Change is part of what we do, and we have to learn how to do this without being threatened" before revealing her metaphor for change—a tango, one she used earlier to describe educational leader. Why a tango?

The tango is not a prescribed dance. You never know what your partner is going to choose depending on the mood and on the musical piece and so you always have to be the follower that takes up the cues from your leader . . . [thinking], "Oh, here is the tango. I can embellish it, or I can add this detail, or make it much more demonstrative or expressive . . . by doing this." [In the tango], . . . there's always somebody else who initiates the change . . . yet you as the follower in the tango realize that . . . [you can] offer [your] own changes, [your] own responses to it. And so one . . . of the first . . . tango lessons is realizing that both partners have to have equal pressure on each other . . . . There has to be that tension—physically,
that contact. That’s why it’s so important for both of you to mark your framework so you have your space because each of you are 50% of what this whole dance is going to be about. So, yeah, that’s a good metaphor for change—the tango.

All but one of the six participants described change with metaphors suggestive of movement. Cecilia saw change as “climbing a hill,” which required “sacrifice” and “grieving” to arrive at “the climax” for the “benefit” of children. Isabel envisioned a picture of a multi-colored heart. Though she did not specifically describe the beating nature of a heart, a heart implied a steady pulse. Change was about “making it better,” she said. Lynn saw a tug-of-war between two forces, one not necessarily a person but perhaps “a situation . . . material . . . or a language barrier.” Malintzin described change as “something revolving like the interlocking wheels in a clock.” She pointed out that “history” is inherent in the change process because change happens “in cycles.” Tango used the tango to describe change as a dance between two partners who alternately led and followed and who created “embellishments” in response to each other’s cues.

Whether leading or following, Tango concluded that “change is part of what [educational leaders] do” and that it was best “to learn to do this without being threatened.” Sylvia’s image of white space bordered by a “wavy blue or yellow line”—a line that blurred, was not suggestive of movement. After saying it was “not a metaphor,” she described characteristics of “long-lasting change” as “subtle” and not a result of “fear.” It was “that little thing that from this day forward you are going to do because it worked, and it was the right thing to do.”
This section concludes the participants’ responses to the second interview related to the themes of education beliefs, how they led adults to educate children, and how they effected school change. The second interview was designed to prompt the participants to “reconstruct the details of their experience within the context in which it occurs” (Seidman, 1998, p. 11). In the third and final interview, the participants were asked to reflect on what it meant to be an educational leader in light of their leadership histories, their past and present experiences as elementary school principals, and what they foresaw for their futures as educational leaders.

The Meaning of Educational Leadership

This section reports how the six participants characterized educational leadership, how they viewed their role as educational leaders responding to external directives for school change, current and future reflections about life as an educational leader, and their metaphorical descriptions of educational leadership. Specifically, their responses to the following questions are reported:

1. Describe characteristics of educational leadership that you believe are unique to this field.

2. How do present-day reform agendas influence or circumscribe your role as an educational leader?

3. Given the present role of government in the schooling process, what advice would you give to government leaders about what is necessary for improving schools?
4. If you were mentoring an administrative intern, what advice would you give that person for life as an educational leader?

5. Given your reflections throughout the last two interviews, how will your leadership evolve? Where do you see yourself going in the future?

6. Describe educational leadership using a metaphor.

Characteristics of Educational Leadership

The participants were asked to describe characteristics of educational leadership that they believed may be unique to this field or that might not be as dominant in business, industry, or government.

Cecilia’s immediate response was, “Children . . . Our product is not a thing or an object—it’s a child.” She stated that “many times [directives for] change come from the business sector, and it doesn’t always work because . . . [of] the human element . . . the business of people.” As an “idealistic teacher and administrator,” she “wanted to turn the pyramid upside down and have the child first . . . not the administration [first].” However, her experiences as an educational leader have led her to observe that such business practices as “downsizing . . . and [cutting] out . . . middle management” applied to education translated to “cutting out the services . . . children need and the support that . . . teachers and the schools need for . . . children.” She pondered the notion that principals “will have autonomy” by posing the question, “What’s the sense of having autonomy if you have no support? If you don’t have the people that you need to help you make . . . decisions . . . it just doesn’t work” to try “to infuse . . . businesslike management to children.”
Isabel laughed as she pointed out a unique characteristic of educational leadership: “Hey, we can’t reject the ingredients! We can’t say, ‘We don’t want this product or we don’t want this.’ We have to accept everybody . . . and I think that should be the heart—the meaning—of education.” She believed that was the intent of the “forefathers” of public education, even though initially there was a “separate-but-equal” practice of public schooling. She underscored educators’ main responsibility as taking “a look at the whole child and [accepting] the whole child.”

This is the way we got this person, and this where we need to take them . . . . We have to realize that we might have to take different routes with different children . . . . not only [with] the minority [child] but [with] the non-minority [child]. They all come with their own baggage, with their own experiences. We have to value that. We have to legitimize what they bring and take them . . . to their optimum, whatever that might be.

Lynn, too, pointed to the “people” nature of educational leadership. She said, “This is a child-centered, child-oriented business,” and for that reason, it may be difficult to apply “ideas that work in business” to a school setting. As an educational leader, “you deal with so many different people all day long . . . children, . . . adults or parents or with . . . workmen.” In contrast, she believed business is more “focused” on “selling a product or . . . making a product . . . [from] a mold.” She described the contrast between business and education:

As long as the mold is correct and you fill in all the pieces, you are going to get pretty much . . . what you have made from the mold whereas [with] children, you
can’t make a mold. They are all individuals. You want them to be sponges and to learn . . . and ideally you want them all to learn at the same time, but that’s not the way children learn.

She ended her remarks by saying that “education is very, very hard” because it requires giving “100% of yourself everyday” to helping children learn.

Malintzin identified a second unique characteristic of educational leadership—“being able to deal with little budgets.” Because there are limited funds for education, Malintzin found it necessary to be “creative [and] resourceful” with “tax credit dollars” in a school with no “Title I money—nothing, zip, zilch.” She related a story illustrating her need to be “creative [and] resourceful” to purchase two-way radios for her school safety monitors. When “the district” did not respond to her request for new two-way radios after the original ones had been stolen and she could not use tax credit money for this purchase, she sought out the help of the PTSO, the parent-teacher-student organization. She communicated to them how she was getting “really nervous about safety.” The PTSO subsequently took their concern for children’s safety to “the district,” and the school finally received the two-way radios, and “nobody got in trouble.” What would have caused “trouble?”

Malintzin alluded to the fact that her decision to ask the PTSO to intervene on her behalf could have appeared to be an act of her “insubordination” to the “school board.” In her mind, however, she believed she was “being resourceful [and using her] people skills to get what [she needed] through the community . . . by being persuasive and [by] being sincere and . . . generous.” Malintzin explained what she meant by saying she was
“generous” with the PTSO. The previous administrator had “not allowed [PTSO] to use the [copy] machines, or paper or toner,” and she had seen this as unnecessary “strife” between the principal and the parent organization. She said, “I’ve got to trust my parents . . . because I know if anybody can fire me, it’s the parents. It’s not the teachers. So I opened my doors . . . . The last two years . . . the same five (PTSO) ladies . . . work hard . . . We’re friends.” She concluded her story by saying that “constant communication” was essential in “being creative [and] resourceful” with the limited capital resources apportioned to most public schools.

“Our youth, our children, are at stake,” responded Sylvia when asked to compare leadership in education to leadership in business, industry, or government. In education, “you’re looking at a child and trying to turn that life around to make a difference.” However, Sylvia implied that educational leaders furthest removed from schools can forget that “children are at stake.” She gave an example: “Trust me, you get a call from downtown [central administration] that a parent is upset, and . . . you do whatever it takes to make that person happy. It has nothing to do with the child.” Though this situation may reflect the school district’s attempt to provide “customer service” as businesses do, when the child’s needs are not taken into account, then “it’s very sad,” concluded Sylvia.

“While I think education can learn from the business world, I’m always sensitive to the fact that we’re dealing with children . . . and adults who are working with children,” responded Tango about unique features of educational leadership. She pointed out that the education and business worlds both utilized “long-range planning, . . . decisions [based] on data, . . . professionalism, and . . . ethics.” However, educators deal
with the complexity of children who are “very unique with different socio-economic . . ., cultural . . ., [and] racial backgrounds, and the dynamism and synergy that occurs every single day [in] relating to children.”

Tango also described a characteristic of her educational leadership - “just listening.” She first became aware of the strategy of “complete listening” at a workshop “four years” prior to this study. She began to listen with the intent of fully “processing” what the speaker said “without [her] brain already thinking of an answer.” In addition, she came to recognize the value of simply listening to another person without having to “respond or . . . help them resolve . . . or . . . help them interpret their experience.” Her goal was to be “fully at that moment with them.”

All but one participant identified children and youth as the one distinguishing characteristic of educational leadership. Cecilia said “the product” of education is not “an object.” Lynn contrasted objects in a factory with children—children are not “cast from the same mold . . . . They are all individuals.” Isabel pointed out that educators “have to accept everybody” who enrolled in their schools—all with their assorted “baggage . . . and experiences”—and “take them to their optimum.” Tango spoke about the complexity within and among school children given their “very different socio-economic . . ., cultural . . ., [and] racial backgrounds.” Sylvia stated that “most” educators go into the profession to “make a difference” in the lives of children and youth who are “at stake” in public education.

Two participants noted features shared by the education and business worlds. Sylvia spoke of the quest for satisfactory customer service even though sometimes
children were not taken into account when “downtown” administrators only responded to a parent’s interpretation of a concern. Tango noted that educators “can learn from the business world” such practices as “long-range planning . . . , decisions [based] on data . . . , professionalism, and . . . ethics.”

Malintzin identified the fact that public education leaders must be “able to deal with little budgets” in creative and resourceful manners. She pointed out that being in “constant communication” was essential for dealing with “little budgets.”

Tango identified one other characteristic of educational leadership—perhaps this feature was only germane to her leadership style—that of striving to “listen completely” to others in the school community. Through this practice, she recognized that listening fully was all that was necessary at times—that there was no need to “respond or . . . help them resolve . . . or . . . help them interpret their experience.”

Another characteristic of educational leadership in the public school arena since the 90s ushered in the present “Reformation Era” (Murphy & Adams, 1998) has been the expectation that principals bring about school changes in response to government legislation, the market place, and other special interest groups. The next section reports on how the participants viewed their roles as educational leaders in terms of external directives for school change.

Educational Leaders, Reform Agendas, and Government Directives

In the previous sections related to definitions of educational leadership and school change, the participants described a variety of ways in which they developed shared vision, created productive work cultures, and shared leadership as they respond to mostly
external directives for school change. How had present-day reform agendas influenced or circumscribed the roles of these six educational leaders? Given the present role of government in the schooling process, what advice would these Latina elementary school principals give to government leaders about what is necessary for improving our schools? Their responses to these two questions are reported below.

Educational Leaders and Reform Agendas

When asked how reform agendas influenced or circumscribed Cecilia’s role as an educational leader, she immediately responded with, “They want,” then clarified, “the federal government in our state and in our district demands accountability . . . . When it comes down to the wire, . . . the principal is accountable for whatever happens in that school.” The State Department of Education, she explained, required principals “to sign an affidavit stating that [her] teachers were . . . using the four competencies in state standards, . . . that we evaluate them based on those standards, and that we monitor them.” When the state department asked principals, “What kinds of things do you need . . . to accomplish this?” Cecilia responded that “all teachers” needed to sign the same affidavit. She stated, “It is not just my responsibility . . . it is their commitment as well . . . to do the same thing.” Further, she needed “people to go to” for help. However, the district had just restructured during the year of this study and many central office administrators and resource teacher positions had been cut. Hence, accomplishing the goals set forth in the affidavit was “going to be very difficult.” She expounded on the effects of a minimal school budget, the loss of her area superintendent, and the loss of support services that in the past had allowed her “to better serve . . . children:”
It aggravates me that I don’t have people that I could just grab and say, “Hey, . . . what happened here? What do I need to do?” . . . I don’t even have the support of an area superintendent who I could question . . . he could tell me if I’m off the wall, or not, or [if] I’m expecting too much, or if I’ve lost half my budget, [or] if . . . the school has accomplished all its goals in three years. What does that say to that school? What does that say to a faculty and people who’ve worked . . . to reach those goals . . . . So, it’s like it doesn’t matter what you do because they’re going to do whatever they want. So, it’s not that child centered, or that we think of students first.

In contrast to Cecilia, Isabel reported that the federal and state accountability mandates had not had an effect on her role as an educational leader. She commented, “Isn’t that what we have all been striving for throughout? This is not anything new.” However, she did point out that the schools should not be the only institutions charged with realizing the goals of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965). The “federal government” needs to “look at the whole child, the whole system.” It must “look at health care” and the “poverty level.” She pondered, “How is the state government going to help the children here?” and elaborated with examples:

If at home they don’t have running water—and that is still real . . . - ninos que no tienen muchas cosas, y lo principal, la salud (children who don’t have much, especially the main thing, good health)—but they can’t go to a doctor. They can’t just call up the pediatrician . . . . They have to wait . . . . As I tell the teachers, there
are certain things we cannot change . . . What can we change here? How can we provide for them here? Our cafeteria-thank God, our manager is so good that if a child comes in very late, has missed breakfast . . . she’ll find something, or we’ll have crackers . . . One child needed to take a nap first thing in the morning porque no dormia bien (because he didn’t sleep well) . . . Is he going to lose the whole day or [do we] let him take a half-hour nap, and then go in a little bit later? So all those things, we need to look at.

Lynn identified reform agendas for accountability as that which influenced or circumscribed her role “first and foremost.” Though “there is no prescribed plan,” the goal is to arrive at the “100% mark.” She reported that when a school is identified as an “underperforming” school, “then [the principal has] to do this and this and this and then they give you all the assistance in the world.” Otherwise, principals are given latitude to “figure out what’s best for [their] school and . . . go forward but [they] need to be consistent . . . the consistency is what makes the child learn.”

Malintzin believed reform agendas “direct” her and “directly impact all” educators. She stated, “Every single year, it seems like we start the year differently.” She briefly mentioned legislation that placed restrictions on bilingual education programs and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) as examples of legislation that directly impacted everything from enrollment procedures, to the “forms to be used,” to classroom instruction and testing.

Sylvia reported that in her “eight years” as a principal she had not “had authority . . . to make certain changes and decisions . . . because someone is always
telling you what you have to be working on.” In fact, she did not think principals had “any authority whatsoever” though they “may think [they] do.” On one occasion when she tried to initiate a change in the middle school where she was previously the principal, she was not allowed to do what she deemed appropriate. She reflected on this experience:

I know that I had a certain vision for the middle school that I was at and had I been allowed [to make] a few changes . . . and been supported in doing what I felt needed to be done, the school would have been in a little bit better shape. But you couldn’t. You know, within their parameters, you have some flexibility—until you make a parent unhappy. And then you have absolutely no parameters—you just make the person happy . . . . That’s the bottom line. Don’t let anybody call downtown and be upset.

“They rule my world!” exclaimed Tango when asked how present day reform agendas influenced or circumscribed her role as an educational leader. As a result, Tango found “being a principal . . . a demanding job.” As a principal, she explained, one has “to be knowledgeable about instruction, . . . learning, . . . curriculum, . . . child development, about learning theories so that when you’re being bombarded by . . . [reform agendas] you can make decisions that . . . are consistent.” She gave two examples of legislation that “ruled [her] world”- the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and Arizona Proposition 203, the repeal of Title 15, Chapter 7, Article 3.1 of Arizona Revised Statutes passed in November 2000—and described at length how she must “interpret, make judgments [and] decisions from policies [and] from laws . . . for [the] school.” Note how the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 had an effect on her decision-making:
With No Child Left Behind, now there’s a lot of money for businesses to contact directly school districts or principals to say, “Oh, my program has been approved by No Child Left Behind Can I have said representative talk to you about it?” And as a principal you have to be savvy enough to say, “Does that fit into what my idea of learning is?” because not all the products have a very consistent learning theory or belief system about learning so you have to read between the lines.

In her second example related to changes made by the passage of Arizona Proposition 203 in 2000 (repeal of Title 15, Chapter 7, Article 3.1 of the Arizona Revised Statutes) which severely restricted enrollment in and the structure of bilingual education programs, she illustrated how reform agendas led her to pose the question: “How am I going to be able to implement this but still stay within the law, but yet do what I believe is good for children?” Note how she addressed part of this instructional dilemma:

Yes, there’s no bilingual education, but, yes, there is bilingual education. It just means that I’ve got to make sure I dot my Is and cross my Ts and be able to let a parent [ask], “I thought bilingual education was eliminated. Why are you speaking to us in Spanish and English at a parent meeting?” Am I able to tell this parent, “Yes, you are right. You just have to agree it had nothing to do with my conversing and welcoming parents to my meeting. It does allow me to provide bilingual education.” So, it’s being able to listen to this parent and realizing she misunderstood this whole law, and my being able to at least be assertive enough to let her know this is how our school works.
In sum, Tango reflected that it was important to be able to respond to parents, the legislature, the community, and board members about how the school responds to the directives of reform agendas in such a way that the law is observed while providing what is “good for students.”

Five of the six participants reported that reform agendas definitely influenced or circumscribed their roles as educational leaders. All cited reform agendas tied to government school accountability edicts. Sylvia did not believe principals had “any authority whatsoever” though they might “think [they] do” because “someone is always telling [them] what [they] have to be working on.” Conversely, Lynn believed that principals had the latitude “to figure out what’s best for [their] school” even though she, too, reported reform agendas as “first and foremost” in her experience as an educational leader. Cecilia spoke about federal, state, and district entities who “demand accountability” from principals. She believed “all teachers” should sign the same state affidavit she signs assuring compliance with accountability measures. She did not believe the current reform agendas were “child-centered” when those same governmental bodies that issued the directives did not issue the corresponding funds to improve student performance. Malintzin stated that reform agendas “direct” her and “directly impact” everything thing from enrollment procedures, to forms used, to the content and methods of instruction. Tango reported that reform agendas “rule [her] world.” However, she appeared to have found a way to have a say in how external directives were applied in the school setting. She relied on her knowledge of instruction, curriculum, child development, and learning theories to make decisions that satisfied two requirements: the
policies and laws as well as what was “good for students.” Isabel alone seemed to take reform agendas in stride, saying, “Isn’t that what we have all been striving for throughout?” Instead, she expressed her desire to see other social institutions such as health care agencies take more active roles in looking “at the whole child, the whole system” so that no child was left behind.

All six participants testified to the role of federal, state, and local government in the schooling process. When asked about the place of reform agendas in her experiences as an educational leader, Isabel reflected on the role of government promoting and facilitating collaboration among social service agencies to assure that no child was left behind. She did not know that the next interview question would be the following: Given the present role of government in the schooling process, what advice would you give to government leaders about what is critical for improving our schools? The participants’ responses follow.

*Educational Leaders and Government Directives*

Improving schools cannot “occur in a vacuum,” began *Cecilia*, in response to what she would tell government leaders about what was critical for improving schools. She went on to describe at length a comparison between the current superintendent and the former superintendent. The former superintendent had been known as “a collaborative worker” who “would meet with the community . . . [with] different focal [sic] groups to find out what situations were.” The current superintendent’s “main voice,” however, was “a realtor who’s telling him what the community wants . . . and expects.” Cecilia questioned, “So are we collaborating with the people . . . we need to reach the answers
that we need?” She then described how some school district personnel and community members reacted to the “drastic measures” the superintendent had taken in response to the accountability measures stemming from the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001: “Is that [superintendent] crazy, or what? When is this [superintendent] fiasco going to end? [We] want to stop seeing [the superintendent] on the front page [of the newspaper] every day.”

To return to the original question, Cecilia was asked, “So, what would you like to say to the government, or to President Bush himself, about all these things affecting... this school district?” Cecilia responded:

Unfortunately, they’re misguided and I don’t know how to say it any nicer than that, but their focus... is not on kids. They use students as a means but they’re back again at wanting to label schools... I don’t believe that the labeling and the restrictions of funds is [sic] going to help improve student achievement... I believe if you are bullied just like a child... and if you are made uncomfortable, you can’t learn. You can’t grow because you are so worried about what’s going to happen to you next and how it’s going to happen.

She concluded her thoughts by reiterating that when the “state’s not giving [the schools] any money” and the school district has to rob “from Peter to pay Paul” and her school loses a “full FTE [full-time employee],” then educators can not “reach [their] goals.”

“I would love to give [government leaders] that advice of having agencies working together” to improve schools, said Isabel. She described some form of “benevolent umbrella” structure from which various agencies could “take a look at
everything to help a child. Not to point fingers... no, just working together.” This is what she would say to President Bush:

You know, by demoralizing the education system, ... you are not creating a better place for each child not to be left behind. You’re not doing what needs to be done. Yeah, your mind is in the right place. You heart is, I guess, in the right place, but let the educators... take more of a stance on these things—especially the early childhood educators.”

**Lynn** did not mind government leaders having “the say in [education] provided they provide the materials, the goods and services, and that boils down... into money.” She would say to government leaders, “Give us this and we’ll produce.” At the same time, Lynn believed that government bodies were currently saying, “Well, we gave you this and you’re not producing, so now we are going to take it and run the show.” Still, she did not believe that they wanted to “get into the business... of education” but that they simply “want to make sure that [educators] are doing the right things and that [schools] are keeping up with all the other countries.”

“What would I tell [those state] legislators?” paraphrased **Malintzin**. She would tell them what she thought of Arizona Proposition 203 (repeal of Title 15, Chapter 7, Article 3.1 of the Arizona Revised Statutes) that placed restrictions on bilingual education programs and emphasized English-immersion programs for English-language learners:
Oh, God, you made a big mistake with this 203 thing... because Lau vs. Nichols is a dormant giant and it’s going to come back to you... Unfortunately, a lot of children are going to suffer between now and then.

She would also tell government leaders that “corporate tax cuts” do not help education. She would ask them to “stop leaving the country... instead of looking after the big bucks somewhere else. That money can come back... to educate” students here.

When asked what she would like to say to government leaders to improve schools, **Sylvia** had a ready response: “Go... see what’s happening. What’s working and why? What isn’t and why?” She then explained why this was necessary using two examples from her observations and experience. When 21 schools were identified as “underperforming schools” in the school district, “they were told yes to everything. They got all the funding they wanted... all the programs... all the tutoring.” Sylvia believed the district should have “taken three of those schools, the very worst, and done whatever they needed” and examined “what works” before extending resources to all the other underperforming schools. Instead, the “resources” given to these schools became “so watered down” it did not “make a difference.” Sylvia commented, “They tried 21 different things at the 21 different schools.... Not good.”

Sylvia cited a second example—her attempt to raise student achievement scores at the previous middle school where she had previously been principal. She wanted to declare the school “new” so that she “could hire people” who would know how to work with “kids from lower socio-economic backgrounds” who “couldn’t do math and whatever.” Nonetheless, she knew from having taught these students in previous years
that they were “smart and [could] learn” albeit “in a different way . . . and with people . . . trained for that” kind of student population. The district “wouldn’t let [her]” declare the school new for re-hiring. Instead, “they put these people that have no concept of this thing” who “[work] their tails off” resulting in little improvement. Subsequently, Sylvia took control of what she could do as the principal. She began insisting that failing students attend school during inter-session times. She described it thus:

Okay, you’re in a year-round school . . . If you’re getting a D or an F during the nine weeks, you’re going to stay for the inter-session. You have no summer vacation . . .? Guess what? I’m not letting you off the hook.”

She credited this practice for bringing up scores from 10-15 % to 15-30% commenting, “Thirty [%] is so pathetic, but it went to 30 . . . with nothing” provided by the district or any other external source. She lamented, “If the district just supported some stuff more, I don’t think we’d be in the shape we’re in. I don’t know.”

Tango offered four ideas for improving schools. First, she wished state and federal “legislators or representatives” had an “understanding or at least an acquaintance with pedagogy or education” because “political decisions may not always be consistent with pedagogy or research.” Secondly, she would ask government leaders for more money for education. She stated, “I don’t buy this notion . . . that we have enough money to do what we need to do.” Her third suggestion mirrored Isabel’s advice. Government leaders need to “understand” and work with “other social structures that can support education, or school . . . specifically, healthcare [agencies].” She gave examples:
When you start knocking down health care for children, . . . it affects . . . the schools directly—everything from dental to physical health care to mental health care. When CPS [Child Protective Services] is cut down or curtailed it affects us at schools. Those social structures are just so important, and I don’t think that legislators are addressing those issues . . . . Even things . . . [as] simple as telephones—I . . . took for granted that [all] people had telephones. [All] people do not. I would surmise [that only] 30% of the community I work with have telephones.

Lastly, Tango hoped that many of the retiring educators would consider becoming “candidates for legislative positions.” She told “some of the retirees,” “You know, you’re still pretty young, and you could still be a very good advocate for us.”

Four of the six participants identified increased funding for education as one way for government leaders to improve schools. Three participants called for increased collaboration with “the people . . . we need to reach the answers that we need,” as Cecilia pointed out. Isabel and Tango called for government leaders to find ways to bring social service institutions together to assure that children’s basic needs were met. Both specified the need for health care agencies to work with school systems. Isabel and Sylvia asked that educators be allowed greater freedom to determine how best to bring about school improvement. Sylvia and Tango would prefer government leaders have more knowledge of education so that their policies would be more consistent with pedagogy. Sylvia would invite them into schools to observe and ask, “What’s working and why? What isn’t and why?” To that end, Tango encouraged retired educational leaders to become candidates
for legislative positions. Malintzin would warn government leaders that the legislation restricting the implementation of bilingual education programs would “come back” in the form of another Lau v. Nichols (1974) civil rights case.

In addition to what these participants might say to government leaders, Cecilia and Isabel each expressed a sentiment toward the external forces with which they must comply for accountability. Cecilia likened her experience to being “bullied” by the state “labeling” of schools. Isabel wanted to tell President Bush to stop “demoralizing the education system.”

These participants' experiences responding to federal, state, and local accountability and student achievement mandates revealed a tension in their roles as educational leaders. They were expected to comply with external directives while also being expected to develop a shared vision, create productive work cultures, and share leadership in their own school communities. Given this tension and their experiences, what might they tell future educational leaders, and how did they foresee their leadership evolving?

*Current and Future Reflections on Being an Educational Leader*

These principals' stories confirmed Murphy and Adams' (1998) assessment that the role of the principal has become highly complex and diverse in response to the many voices competing for his or her attention since the emergence of the “Reformation Era” in the early 90s. As apprentice and neophyte school principals take the places of exiting and retiring principals, they may be interested in what these six Latina elementary school principals have learned from their experiences. This section reports their responses to two
questions: (1) If you were mentoring an administrative intern, what advice would you
give that person for life as an educational leader? and (2) Given your reflections
throughout the interviews, how will your leadership evolve? Where do you see yourself
going in the future?

Advice for Administrative Interns

Cecilia would advise administrative interns to be “good” listeners and “be visible
. . . there and everywhere.” She believed it was important to “be open to receive anyone,”
though that practice could also be “a downfall.” In her quest to be “collaborative” with
“parents and faculty and students,” she had also found it difficult to find time for reading
“email” and “mail.” She intended to “develop office hours” during the next school year.

She reflected,

We need to be able to work with parents and faculty and students to make
decisions for the school. We cannot do it alone and if you try to, you’re going to
make life difficult for you and everyone around you and you’re not going to have
the learning environment that you want to create for kids . . . . Yeah, I can sit up
here all day long and close my door and get my work done but that’s not why I’m
here . . . . So that’s the time and energy that as an administrator you have to take.

“Love your faculty,” is what Isabel would tell an administrative intern. She
elaborated,

Know that they are all different and that they will need different things . . .
Provide for your faculty and staff . . . . Help them do a better job by shielding them
from some of the negatives . . . and keep telling them that they are doing a great
job. Yes, let them know where we need to improve, but that they are very valuable, and that they can make changes, but respect them and love them and shield them.

**Lynn** recalled the advice she had given her administrative intern the previous year. An educational leader, whether an “administrative intern or . . . a classroom teacher” needs to “be there for the children.” That leader must “stay true” to whatever he or she feels “is important.” Lynn would tell a new educator:

You need to be on at all times. You need to be teaching at all times. That’s the business you are in. You can’t sit back and do ditto work . . . and . . . expect them to learn . . . . Give them all the tools.

**Malintzin** also recalled advice she had given an administrative intern the previous year: “If you don’t think you have the guts to risk telling a teacher that what they’re doing is wrong, then this is not the field for you.” Being able to do this requires using appropriate “terminology.” If a teacher called “a child stupid,” she would say to the teacher, “It’s of no self-redeeming value to a child to do that and that’s not what we’re about here.” Because it is “a tightrope” between correcting a teacher and “respecting them at the same time,” it is important to “go into [the] building and start working on building those relationships.” More precisely, she advised:

Spend one-fourth of your day visiting with the teachers—visiting, visiting, visiting.

If I started at another school, it would be different-[that is,] my approach the first year. Instead of doing a lot of the paperwork and catching up, I would spend more
time building relationships because then they can work for you and help you with other stuff later.

Sylvia gave a compact answer to what she would tell an administrative intern:
Learn. Be positive. Have a good sense of humor . . . Be knowledgeable . . .
Things look really different when you’ve read . . . at least to compare: “This is what I want to do, or this is not what I want to do.” But if you do not know, you’re working so much harder. Invest the time in reading to stay current . . .

Tango offered three recommendations to administrative interns. First, she counseled, “Take care of yourself physically and mentally.” Keep “a real peaceful, calming ego” to avoid setting yourself up “for frustrations” because being a principal is “a real challenging job.” Secondly, know the answers to these questions: “What is your passion? What’s your focus?” Finally, principals need to know the underlying learning theories of curriculum and instruction. They need to understand when there is “a mismatch” between “behaviorist learning programs and cognitive learning programs” within one school so that there is consistency.

The participants identified three fundamental keys for life as an educational leader, specifically as an elementary school principal—build relationships with all members of the school community, be knowledgeable, and know the reason for being an educational leader. What did these women recommend for building collaborative relationships? Malintzin would spend less time doing paperwork and more time “building relationships” from the first day of work as a principal. Cecilia believed the principal must be “visible . . . everywhere” and be “a good listener” “open to [receiving] anyone.”
Isabel succinctly stated, “Love your faculty . . . respect them and love them and shield them” even as you must tell them what needs “to improve.” Malintzin said one had to have the “guts to risk telling a teacher that what they are doing is wrong.” Sylvia spoke of being “positive” and having “a good sense of humor.” Tango recommended that the principal take care of [himself or herself] physically and mentally” in order to maintain a “peaceful, calming ego” to avoid the “frustrations” that come with the demands of the job.

Beyond knowing one’s staff, Sylvia and Tango believed it was also necessary to be knowledgeable. Sylvia spoke of the importance of reading professional literature. Tango emphasized the need to know and understand learning theories, curriculum and instruction. Two participants specified the importance of knowing why one chose to be an educational leader. Tango would ask an administrative intern, “What is your passion? What’s your focus?” To those questions, Lynn would likely add, “Stay true” to whatever you believe “is important” and “be there for the children . . . be teaching at all times,” and provide “all the tools” necessary for teaching and learning.

In June of 2003, Isabel began retirement life, and Tango left the principalship for an executive officer position serving the school district. Cecilia was not sure whether she would continue working as principal of the K-8 school where she had been for three years. Lynn, Malintzin, and Sylvia expected to continue in their principal roles. In the final interview, the participants were asked to reflect on how they believed their leadership would evolve in light of their current and past experiences as educational leaders. Their responses follow.
Participants’ Reflections on Future Leadership

Cecilia’s “dream” was “to be able to teach in the university” when she retired from the school district. She explained that as a potter “molds clay,” she, too, could help shape “teachers’ behavior and teachers’ expectations” as preservice professionals. In addition, she would like to “support . . . teachers who are minorities.” She noted specific ways in which she would do this:

Because of our family structure and because of our community, we’re pulled in so many ways . . . because we’re all so dependent upon each other to survive as a family . . . . We need to provide structures in education . . . [like] a loan program . . . or group sessions where we could just talk . . . “Well, how’s it going at home? . . . As Chicanas, what support systems do [we] need? Do we need family planning? Do we need our own therapist, our own counseling?” . . . We don’t have a high graduation rate in college because our families somehow . . . and our community even pulls [sic] us back. The kind of structure I would like to see is a more flexible structure . . . with alternative scheduling . . . We need time to . . . relax and have fun as a group so that we can bend . . . I think all minority students need much more support and cushion to make it through the system.

In addition to increased support systems for minority teacher education students, Cecilia would add one component to the preparation of all teachers, “how to work with the community,” and one component to the preparation of bilingual education teachers, “how to teach literacy in Spanish.”
Isabel’s immediate plans for her future were “inviting people to her retirement party—her surprise retirement party!” Then she became serious and said she would become her school’s “madrina (godmother)” because she believed all schools need a “madrina.” She said she would not choose to be a principal again. However, “every time” she has said she did not “want to do something, es lo que es (it is what it is).” Instead, she would like to “go to the legislature and . . . speak to more legislators on education.” Most people making the laws, she said, “are not educated.” She would educate “the governor, . . . the president, and the people from the Department of Education.” This is what she would convey to them:

We have to help them see that we’re not working with a bunch of grapes or oranges . . . but [that] we are working with humans that [sic] have little minds that bring baggage with them; that some of them are very excited to come [to school]. How do we help them? Anybody can teach a child that [sic] doesn’t need teaching. But, like I tell teachers, the only way I’ll know you’re a good teacher, is if you reach that one child that [sic] we thought was unreachable. And that is what I would want the government to see—that we are not standing up here just talking at a group that is all the same, but that every child is perceiving everything a little bit different—that every human being, como dicen, que cada cabeza es un mundo [as it’s said, that every mind is a world].

Lynn laughed as she responded that “retirement” was where she saw herself going in the future—“six, seven years” hence. She believed that she “would always be
involved in some form” in education, perhaps through “tutoring.” In addition, she would like to try “writing a children’s book.”

**Malintzin** was “going to school” to acquire her doctoral degree at the time of the interview. She saw this degree as widening her work options given that she was an “at-will employee.” She had also applied for a “principal coach position.” She did not expect to “get that” position because “it’s very political and there [were] only three positions.” Once she completed her doctorate, she envisioned relocating to Hawaii or Nevada or another state” to be a “principal there for five years or so” and then return to her home state.

**Sylvia** wanted to see her educational leadership evolve into more “reflective practice” and to be a “number one” principal, though “not in a cut-throat kind of way” but because “it is the right thing to do.” She wanted to do “a really good job at helping . . . teachers help the students succeed.” She reflected on why she should let teachers “come up with more . . . answers” for helping students succeed: “There will be more change if I let them. Even if I guide them in that direction . . . . I think I might get more bang for my buck.”

**Tango** reflected on how she had arrived at her principal role before responding to the question of her future as an educational leader. Throughout her career, she made “short-term goals” and was “very interested in the knowledge.” She explained,

Yeah, I had to get my masters because I had to learn about bilingual
... and when the doctorate came along it was, Yeah, I can get a doctorate... and really learn about early childhood and bilingual [education] and how politics play into schools.

Tango avoided “the issue of getting an administrative certificate” as she worked on her doctorate because she was “so focused... on learning and figuring out” how to take theory back into the classroom “to see if it worked” in practice. After she had experienced applying theories to classroom practice, she decided that part of keeping her “options open,” meant getting the administrative certificate and becoming a principal. In June of 2003, she was ready to take her principal experiences to another level. “Realizing that the literature [was] right on the mark when they [said] the principal does have the most significance in a school,” she applied for a position that would allow her to “help other principals understand the power they do have.” If she could have that opportunity for the next three or four years, she envisioned being able to help principals “improve their effectiveness as teachers” of teachers to “increase student learning.”

At this point in Tango’s career, she was also beginning to hear from “other leaders,” “Tango, you need to get [the superintendent’s certificate].” Her response? “But I don’t want it.” Nonetheless, Tango acknowledged that because she needed to “have the options open,” she would eventually acquire superintendent certification to be ready if she were “placed in leadership positions.” When asked what she meant by being “placed in leadership positions,” she responded thus,

Colleagues [place you in leadership positions]–people who have been retired
and . . . turn around and say, “You’re the next person.” It’s an outward thing because right now, it’s not an internal thing [to get the superintendent’s certificate] . . . That’s how it happened when I became a principal. It wasn’t an inward thing . . . The administrative [certificate] was because other people kept telling me, “Tango, you’ve got to get your administrative certificate.”

In reflecting upon future roles as educational leaders, all participants saw themselves continuing to be educators in some form. In addition, the participants’ responses seemed to be indicative of their proximity to their retirement stage of life. Isabel, Cecilia, and Lynn envisioned themselves as educational leaders teaching yet another group of students—Isabel “educating” government leaders, Cecilia “molding” preservice teachers, and Lynn “tutoring” individual students. Isabel, who had just retired at the time of the interview, wanted to remind local, state, and federal lawmakers that educators work with individuals, each of whom brings a world of his or her own into the schools. Additionally, she wanted to serve as her school’s “madrina (godparent)” because “all schools” need one. Cecilia dreamed of teaching at the university when she retired. She would require that all student teachers were trained on how to work with communities, and that bilingual education student teachers would be required to take a class on how to teach Spanish literacy. Further, she saw a need to help create support systems for preservice “teachers who are minorities” through loan programs, peer support groups, family planning and counseling services, and through flexible and alternative college schedules. At the time of the interview, Lynn’s retirement was “six, seven” years away. She saw herself “tutoring” and writing “a children’s book” after retiring.
Those participants who perhaps did not see retirement in the near future spoke of future roles within public schooling. Tango was ready to leave the school administration role to work with principals on a district-wide basis. She wanted to help them understand the “power that they do have” to be instructional leaders who can teach teachers how to “increase student learning.” Sylvia’s goal was to increase her “reflective practice” and be “number one” in “helping . . . teachers help the students succeed.” This would include having teachers make more decisions about how to help students learn. Malintzin was pursuing her doctoral degree. After completing the doctorate, she hoped to work as principal in another state.

To further explore the participants’ understanding of what it meant to be an educational leader, they were asked to provide a metaphorical description of educational leadership. Their descriptions follow.

*Metaphorical Descriptions for Educational Leadership*

**Cecilia** described *educational leadership* as being in a pinball machine in which students are the targets. She described what it was like “to be like a pinball machine:”

You hit one area, which . . . is curriculum and instruction. You bounce back to “How does that relate to what teachers have to know to get there?” Then you bounce the other way—“Do you have the budget to do that?” And then you bounce the other way . . . “How many people are willing to follow you?” You have to bounce another way to see about the involvement of the parents in this collaboration. The target is still our students and we can’t lose sight of that.
Cecilia added that educational leaders “need all those entities and . . .
collaboration . . . to be successful.” She remarked that she did “not think that [she] would
have this same outlook” if she had become a principal before she had a variety of
teaching experiences and “many leaders” in her career. She likened it to teachers who
come into the profession after raising their families—they bring “wisdom . . . to their field
and are a lot better teachers.” She was glad to have been a “late bloomer” principal.

Educational leadership “is an iron hand in a velvet glove,” stated Isabel as she
laughed in response to the question calling for a metaphorical description of educational
leadership. She went on to say “most leadership has to be that—as a mother, or whatever—
but especially in educational leadership:”

In any other profession no somos tan tiernitos como en la educacion [we are not
as tender as in education] because in education you get everybody and they say,
“Education is not good,” in general. Then if you support bilingual education, oh
boy, de donde quiera te viene [you get it from all sides]. So you have to be strong
and firm and know who you are, and know what you are striving for, basically
how you are going to get there . . . You don’t have all the answers, but you know
basically what you need to know. That framework has to be there and it has to be
firm and steady. Then you put the velvet glove on—awfully good work!

Lynn remained consistent in following her previous “teacher” metaphors when
describing educational leadership. She envisioned

a woman standing up in front of a group . . . with all kinds of ideas . . . [looking]
haggard, with her hair standing straight up because it’s been one of those days and
now she has to stand in front of a total group and look the part, and I’m thinking, “Oh, no, that doesn’t happen.”

Lynn cautioned the researcher not “to walk away with the idea that” she did not “feel validated” as an educational leader. Though she implied feeling like the “haggard” woman of her description, she stated that “at times” the role was “still very rewarding . . . when [she saw] the nods” in the group before her.

Malintzin was unable to arrive at a definitive metaphor for educational leadership, though she searched her mind for some sort of “animal” like one that might be a character “in a fable.” Such an animal would be “subtle and kind and compassionate” yet “aggressive.” The animal would be “shrewd and wise” so as to be able to approach those teachers who needed to be told, “I don’t want to re-hire you next year because you did this.” Upon being asked the same question later in the interview, she described educational leadership as “a big basket of gifts . . . motivators and ideas and a caring attitude for the kids.”

Sylvia described educational leadership as “an umbrella.” “The tip of the umbrella is educational leadership.” However, if the umbrella were opened and placed handle up, educational leadership would slide to the tip of the handle as “everything is going into the curve of the umbrella.” The bowl formed by the open umbrella held the “changes or whatever [the educational leader] does to inspire that.” As a leader, she wanted to be a source of support “that’ll last . . . and [be] . . . with them whenever they need it.” Ultimately, Sylvia wanted “to leave [the school] better than [she] found it or at least different . . . in a good way.”
Tango described educational leadership as "a tango dance on a high wire suspended over the San Andreas Fault." Once again, she used the image of dance because a dance required "a partner," as did educational leadership. She then explained the added imagery of the high wire and the San Andreas Fault:

In education, you not only have the teachers, the community, because you have site council members and . . . students . . . you have your colleagues, your peers . . . . You have to make sure that all of you are moving at least forward in the same direction, not pulling apart . . . . The high wire because politically there are a lot of influences that affect our educational or pedagogical decisions and over [the San] Andreas Fault because we live in a society where we still are impacted by federal guidelines . . . . The high wire line [represents] . . . our state decisions but . . . still suspended over the [San] Andreas Fault, . . . our federal decisions.

The metaphors describing "educational leadership" lacked a unifying theme. Instead they appeared to form a collage of educational leadership constructed from seven separate images. Cecilia contributed the image of the pinball machine. One question led to another and each question involved a response from a different stakeholder in education. Hence, for Cecilia, collaboration was essential in educational leadership. Tango also implied the collaborative nature of educational leadership as in a tango dance. Educational leadership is a tango "with other people" danced on the high wire of state decisions suspended over federal guidelines or what she called the San Andreas Fault. Isabel contributed the "iron hand in the velvet glove." Her image represented what she believed educational leaders should be—"strong and firm" leaders who "know who [they]
are . . . and what [they] are striving for.” Lynn placed an image of a “haggard”-looking woman “standing . . . in front of a group . . . with . . . hair standing straight up” and still striving “to look the part” of an educational leader. Malintzin envisioned an undefined animal character from a fable representing the “subtle and kind and compassionate . . . yet aggressive” nature of educational leadership. Secondly, she described educational leadership as “a big basket” filled with “motivators and ideas and a caring attitude.” Sylvia contributed a picture of an umbrella. The bowl of the open umbrella held school “changes” and “whatever” the educational leader “does to inspire that.” She spoke of the need to be a source of support and her desire to leave her school “better than [she] found it.”

This section completes the responses to the third and final interview. The final set of interview questions were meant to elicit the participants’ reflections “on the meaning of their experience” (Seidman, 1998, p.12) as an educational leader in light of their leadership histories, their past and present experiences as elementary school principals, and what they envisioned for their futures as educational leaders. This section also completes Part I of this chapter in response to the first central question of this study: How does the Latina elementary school principal define and enact leadership for school change? The next portion reports the participants’ responses to the questions related to a Latina perspective of educational leadership.

The Results: Part II

Throughout the three interviews based on the themes of leadership development, definitions of educational leadership and education, leadership for school change, and the
meaning of educational leadership, the participants were asked questions to determine whether variables of ethnic culture interplayed in their roles as Latina educational leaders. Their responses follow in the same order as those for the previous topics.

*Personal Leadership Development as Latinas*

The topic of the first interview was *leadership* in the context of the participant’s personal leadership history. The questions designed to draw out any Latina perspectives of educational leadership were the following:

1. As a Latina, describe any barriers and opportunities you may have encountered in realizing your career goals.
2. Describe any conflict or ambivalence you may have experienced between home and work life as a Latina leader.
3. Describe your earliest memory of any cultural-difference awareness in your leadership development.
4. How have you responded to this cultural-difference awareness?
5. How has being Latina influenced your leadership roles?
6. Describe any situations in which being Latina has caused tension in your leadership.
7. Describe any situations in which being Latina has proved advantageous in your leadership.
8. Describe any leadership attributes and/or practices that you might define as being *Latina*.
9. Using a metaphor, define *Latina educational leader*. 
Their responses to each question follow.

**Barriers and Opportunities in Realizing Career Goals**

Cecilia’s immediate response to the question about barriers and opportunities she had encountered in realizing her career goals was “Well, I think being a Chicana was enough, you know?” And the stories of the obvious and the “subtle” barriers began to flow.

The first story she related was of a high school experience with English classes during her sophomore and junior years. She had asked her counselor “for the more advanced English classes . . . because [she] wanted something more difficult.” The counselor denied her request saying, “No. This is the track that [you] are in,” and, furthermore, that she “was never going to go to school [college]” anyway. Cecilia remarked that it had not made a difference to the counselor that her aunt and “madrina (godmother) was an English teacher” in the same school. Cecilia was assigned to her madrina’s regular English class that year. She described the experience of having her madrina as a teacher during her sophomore year:

I worked extremely hard . . . to do a good job—and she was really my aunt, but, you know, she was my madrina—and as hard as I worked, I would earn a “B” all the time . . . I would show everything to my dad, and [he would ask,] “Y porque no puedes coger una “A” [And why can’t you get an “A”]?” Le digo, “Pues, no se Papa, he hecho todo [I’d say, “Well, I don’t know, Dad. I’ve done everything.”],” and I didn’t know why. She said because I was a relative she couldn’t give me an “A.”
The following year, Cecilia “published in the school magazine,” a feat she accomplished as a “junior in high school” before her madrina, a writer, ever got published. She “aced all [her] classes [that] ... year” because she was “determined” to “get out of there”–to graduate from high school. She was “not going to be . . . Chicana, pregnant, and in the kitchen” . . . and she “had to prove it to [her] . . . educated madrina that [she] could . . . do it.”

In the first story, an extended Latina family member and a counselor placed barriers in Cecilia’s path toward advanced high school English classes. In the second story, Cecilia’s parents placed another obstacle in her path to higher education, though it was one she was able to overcome. Cecilia could not “go away to school” as her brothers did. She explained, “You don’t leave home unless you are married . . . . I was not married, and I wanted to pursue a career. Even though they supported that career, they just didn’t want me to leave home.” A brother living away from home helped her solve this problem by inviting her to live with him so she could attend the university where he lived. When financing college became another obstacle, Cecilia applied to a teacher preparation program that “paid . . . tuition, . . . room and board, and . . . a stipend for food.” To apply, she had to drive to another city. Note how her parents tried to “keep [her] from going:”

They sent me with my little brother and little sister with a package of crackers and a tuna can . . . to [the big city] to interview . . . . The director [of the program] asked me, “Are those your children in the hallway?” I said, “No . . . they are my parents. They’re just doing the best they can to keep me from anything that would mean I have to leave.” “And you’re that determined?” [asked the director]. I said,
“Yeah, I need to finish school, and the only way I could . . . is to get [into] a program like this that would pay [for] my education.” So, after the interview, we went to [a very popular Mexican mercado (outdoor market) street in this big city] and ate our tuna and crackers watching the bailes (dances) and enjoying it.

Cecilia reflected on another obstacle for women. “Besides being Chicana,” she faced the “sexual revolution” of the 70s. If you were a woman in the university, you were “there for pleasure . . . not there to learn, or anything, so why bother” going to college. As a Chicana woman, she felt she “always had to prove [herself] 2 times, or 10 times.”

Cecilia was accepted into the teacher preparation program in another state. She found it “very difficult . . . to leave [her family]” but “knew it had to be done.” She remembered her father’s words when the decision was made, “Pues, mis hijos nunca se han ido de mi, y ahora mis viejas se me van (Well, my sons have never left me, and now my old ladies leave me).” A sister who was nine years younger “encouraged” her to leave home pleading with her, “Cecilia, if you don’t go, I’ll never go.” And with that precedent set, all five children in the family eventually moved “away from home.”

Cecilia spoke of feeling “very empowered . . . as a woman and as a Chicana” as she gained “more knowledge” at the university. With increased knowledge came “more confidence.” At that time, she became “heavily involved” in an activist Mexican American student group. While going to college, she also “[worked] in the fields” picking potatoes “just to send money home.” The work was not new to her. She had grown up as a migrant worker alongside her parents. She shared additional stories of life
as a migrant worker and then returned to the topic of “subtle” barriers along her career path.

Cecilia reflected, “As time went on, barriers were more subtle in education. “People don’t come right out and say things, you know,” she began. She told of principals in one school where she worked for a number of years who “were more threatened by [her] abilities and [her] leadership than they were wanting to . . . utilize them . . . so they would keep [her] down that way.” The discrimination she experienced was not limited to her school site.

In 1990 when Cecilia received a prestigious national award for her contributions to the field of education, she “discovered how much discrimination still existed nationwide.” She sensed that as others learned that she was a “bilingual educator” award recipient that they thought, “you’re not the best caliber; . . . you’re just a token; [it’s] why they chose you—that kind of thing.” As she “traveled all around the country doing presentations” about the need for “systemic change” in education, she encountered “prejudice” toward “hispanos [Hispanics].” She presented “data” about the increasing numbers of Hispanic school children and the need for educators “to be ready; to know the culture . . ., the ways of thinking, and the language in order to service these children.” In her opinion, “Washington, [DC] just turned a deaf ear” to the message. After reflecting on her experiences at the national level, Cecilia returned to the local topic of the day—restructuring in the school district.

In the Spring of 2003, the school district in which Cecilia worked reduced its administrative and resource teacher staffs significantly in response to a budget deficit.
Two of the top-ranking administrators who were abruptly terminated were of Latino heritage, and a third administrator was of African American heritage. She described how the school district “culture [had] changed” with the arrival of the new superintendent. It was no longer the culture in which school district employees were “a family . . . [working] together to serve children.” Rather, it had become a culture sending the message, “Hey, you’re on your own now.” Cecilia expressed her dismay at how “long-standing individuals” in the school district could simply be terminated. The action had made her question the value of an employee’s “longevity.” Further, it aroused suspicion. She described it thus:

Now you don’t know who to trust and you don’t know who to call, where before I could name you women—primarily women—that I could call and count on. I cannot call . . . . It’s scary because before we had a tight network of individuals who were working for the betterment of children . . . - I thought—now, it’s [for] survival . . . And so now the barrier is, “Are you in or are you out?”

The researcher asked Cecilia to explain “the barrier” of not knowing whether one was “in or out.” Cecilia explained that she perceived “the district looking for Chicanas to put in the forefront to say, ‘See, they support them.’ But they don’t know the Chicanos that [sic] don’t” support them. She was referring to one of the high-ranking Latina administrators with close to “30 years” of service to the district whose position had been cut, and the Latino superintendent who informed her of the decision in a manner that Cecilia described as not “dignified” or showing “respect.” She concluded from this action that her position could be done “away with . . . at any time” and that it no longer mattered
if you were “Chicana or not” but whether you were “with him or . . . not”—meaning in or out of the superintendent’s circle.

Cecilia did not specify any opportunities she may have encountered in realizing her career goals as a Latina.

When asked if she had encountered barriers along her career path, Isabel responded, “Barriers, yes.” She gave one brief example. When she and “a few” others who had majored in “secondary Spanish” graduated from the university “there was “one opening . . . for a Spanish teacher. . . and they went to the Midwest and brought a non-native speaker to teach that one class . . . . They gave it to an Anglo instead of to a Latina.” She said she saw that happen on “different occasions” over the years. However, she also made opportunities for herself by being “persistent” and “well-trained” and by “refusing to be a window-dressing.”

Isabel described at length how she eventually got hired as a “research assistant” for an early childhood program directed by an educational psychologist professor at the university after the Spanish-teacher position was filled. When she initially applied for the research assistant position, she “of course . . . didn’t get it.” However, the professor’s secretary encouraged her to attend training sessions. She told her story:

There’s always a way cuando Diosito nos quiere en algun lugar [when God wants us in some place] . . . [The] secretary kept telling me, “Come back. There are positions and if you don’t mind not getting paid for a while, just keep coming to our training.” And I would go to the training. All the others were hired. I wasn’t–eran puras gringas [They were all Anglo women]–and myself, the only minority.
Dr. X was very nice. Every day she would tell me, “Honey, I’m so glad you’re coming, but I’m so sorry I can’t hire you. I don’t have that position. I don’t have the money.” I said, “No problem. You know, I’m really enjoying this training and right now since I don’t have any other prospects, I’m going to continue to come. I know that whatever I gain here is going to help me wherever I go.”

Isabel continued attending the training sessions and, at the end, took the exit exams. “One of the tests was working with children and giving them [a] test.” Isabel “came way up on top” of the class because she “had put the children at ease by talking to them in Spanish.” When the program director saw that her “scores were the highest,” she was finally hired.

In recalling this experience, Isabel noted that she “encountered both” barriers and opportunities along her career path. She acknowledged, “Some people aren’t going to hire us because of who we are.” However, she thought that by being “persistent and . . . well-trained for any position” that others could “never say, ‘Oh, well, they hired you just because you’re a minority.’” She figured they would “say it, anyway, but so what?” She concluded with what she thought essential for being more than “window-dressing:” Be “qualified . . . keep up to date with what is going on and how we are doing it, and do the research.”

Lynn thought there might have been barriers along her career path but that she was “oblivious” to them. She explained, “I think I’ve always been kind of unassuming so I get into a situation and I make it work.” She saw herself as “non-threatening” whether it was “a group of women or men.” When asked if there were career opportunities as a
result of being Latina, she responded by sharing an example of a barrier she had faced
more for being a woman than for being Latina:

Well, I may not have gotten a principalship as quickly as . . . a man . . . . I
interviewed for several jobs and the men always seemed to get [them]. Not
necessarily the Latin men, just men in general . . . . That may have been [because]
I don’t come on aggressively and many times men do-[are] direct. Yes, I am
direct, if I need to be . . . but for the most part, I work collegially. So I guess that’s
probably being . . . Latina. You know, it’s the mother; it’s the collegial, . . .
cooperating individual.”

Malintzin replied that “there were little” barriers along her career path but that
she was “determined” to do what she chose to do “regardless of what people” might say
or imply. Malintzin described barriers placed by her “own people–Latinos or Latinas.”
They would say things to her that made her “feel like, ‘Oh no, you can’t do it, even
though . . . so-and-so or my Anglo wife . . . or my friend can’ or ‘This is hard to do. I
don’t know about law school for you.’” Malintzin remarked, “It’s just so subtle how
people of our own race and background . . . .-our own culture–have been so brainwashed
to put each other down.” She made a distinction as to how she responds to defeating
comments from Anglos and from Latinos: “If an Anglo tells me something I can’t do, it’s
like, ‘You watch. I’ll do it!’ But if a Latina tells me that, it hurts.” For this reason,
Malintzin was “determined to open doors of leadership for Latina teachers and for
administrators” through her involvement in a Hispanic school administrators’
organization. She shared what she told her “fellow Latina colleagues” and others:
Our own people will tell you can’t do it, but ignore them. They’ve been brainwashed all these years, so if they can’t do it, they pawn it off on others . . .. So, you just do it.” I do the same thing with my children and with my teachers and with anybody. I think that’s part of leadership.

Malintzin then reflected on people who had been sources of support along her career path. A well-known local Latina attorney and activist in Latino civil rights “encouraged” her “to go into law school.” “People from [an immigrant civil rights] organization” have also helped her “when important issues” in her teaching and principal career have “come up.”

Sylvia reported a similar high school English class experience as Cecilia as a barrier in her career path. When she was a junior in high school, she “needed to get the approval” of a teacher to enroll in “advanced placement English.” It was a class intended “for students that [sic] were going to go on to . . . the university.” The teacher “would not give [the] approval because [Sylvia] was Hispanic and because, especially, Hispanic females, had no business going to the university.” Sylvia resorted to taking “her aunt and uncle [her guardians] to visit the teacher at the school.” She was admitted on a provisional basis after signing “something that said [she] would fulfill [her] obligation of being in the AP class and that the [assigned teacher] would allow [her] . . . in his class.” She “got an ‘A’ in the class.” She then took her grade report to the teacher who had originally denied approval and said, “Here. You thought I couldn’t do it.” She described this experience as “the first time” that she felt that “because of [her] culture—being a Hispanic female—that [she] couldn’t do what [she] was supposed to do.” Up until that
point, “it had never crossed [her] mind that [she] couldn’t do anything.” She shared one other experience that occurred “a couple of years” after this incident.

When Sylvia made the decision to move out of her aunt and uncle’s house, she “rented an apartment and paid rent . . . for six months” before she ever told her family she had “rented an apartment.” She explained why not:

I was so scared, and I was the good one. I was the one who never went out, They would say, “Go out, go out.” I’d . . . read . . . . I wanted to be home, but the minute I said I wanted to move out, my stuff was thrown out. “So you want to be out, okay, be out.” Poof. So they threw my stuff out and . . . . I picked it up and took it to the apartment.

During the time she lived at the apartment, she recalled a male neighbor saying, “Don’t you know Mexican brains aren’t as developed as Anglo brains?” She “looked at him and . . . thought, ‘What are you talking about?’” These were the two instances that Sylvia recalled as having called attention to “being Hispanic, . . . being female, . . . [being] any different than anyone else.” In addition, her Anglo husband has told her “he experiences” “a kind of prejudice” whenever “[she’s] around.”

Sylvia did not specify any opportunities she may have encountered in realizing her career goals as a Latina.

When asked to describe any barriers or opportunities Tango had encountered in realizing her career goals, she immediately responded: “I do want to give two examples.” She described an incident that had occurred when she was in sixth grade and one that had occurred during her high school years. Tango was giving a “girlfriend [and her mother]
who had just moved into the neighborhood from Mexico” a tour of her school. She spoke to them in Spanish because “of course, they don’t know how to speak English.” During the tour, the principal approached her and said, “Tango, you know at [X School] we speak English.’ Tango was “dumbfounded because this [had occurred] during an evening program.” Tango responded, “Oh, Mr. F., I’m sorry” just as her father stepped in and said, “Oh, Mr. F., let me introduce myself. I’m . . . Tango’s father, and let me introduce you to Mrs. F. She just got here from Mexico two weeks ago, and her daughter M. is going to be attending [this school].” The principal’s face “turned red and then . . . [he] said, ‘Oh, Tango, I am so glad you are showing them the school. Thank you very much’ and . . . walked away.” Tango recalled thinking at that moment and about that incident:

“Hey, Dad, that was very nicely done . . . . You said something that preserved everyone’s dignity, but yet it was real assertive.” And I remember clearly from sixth grade that he was there to be a stick for me because I couldn’t do that. I couldn’t do that at that time because . . . I was a young adult who had been shown you have to revere your elders, and . . . Mr. F. was my elder, and . . . [because] I didn’t know how to respond.

The second incident describing a barrier along Tango’s career path happened during her high school years in the early 70s. Tango considered this incident more of a “benchmark” than a barrier in her career path. It symbolized perhaps a momentary pause along her career path to take stock of her “reasons” and “decisions” related to social-political issues. She related her story:
We had the walkouts at [my high school]. It was very much a national movement. Los Angeles high school students had walked out because Mr. Salazar had been killed but also because [of] . . . the needs of students of color . . . I remember talking to other students . . . “Are we going to walk out? Are we not?” and making these decisions and having meetings at X [Catholic] Church with other adults . . . present . . . and feeling from my parents that this was a decision I could make. So at that time I decided not to walk out . . . and [being] one of the few people to remain . . . Our . . . teachers . . . [in] some of the classes allowed us to talk about why some people [walked out].

Tango went “to some of the planning meetings” and ultimately made the decision that “it would be better to stay in school” but also understood “why . . . some Chicanos decided to walk and others didn’t.”

Tango noted three other “benchmarks” along her career path—she described these as moments along the way when there was “definitely a process of thinking.” Her African American high school counselor served as an “advocate” for her. He called her to his office one day to tell her, “Tango, we’re going to have to write a letter to [the private university] explaining that even though your name is [Jones], you really are a Mexican American.” Of this experience, she reflected, “Here’s another person that [sic] understands what this means much more than [I] do at that time, and realizing he needed to be an advocate for me.” She submitted her college application and subsequently graduated from that private university.
While Tango was at college, she would meet with other Chicanos “for lunch . . . [or] for dinner.” They would discuss “class work” and what that work meant “in terms of being Chicanos.” Additionally, she would meet with other Chicanas and “have these great discussions” and “rich experiences” exploring questions such as, “Are the barriers because we are Chicanas or . . . because we are women?” Of these discussions, she said, “We never came up with answers, per se, but it was that whole process of just talking about it and realizing [that] these are leaders of the future.”

As a married couple, Tango and her attorney husband made “little conscientious decisions” like where to send their children to school—public school rather than private school, for example. They “[realize] that there’s a history” influencing those kinds of decisions. Their adult children have also come to realize how their parents’ “growing-up” history and their circle of “Chicano” college friends influenced how they grew up. This group of friends—Chicano “lawyers, doctors, pediatricians, . . . judges, people . . . in policy-making”—“meet at least twice a year.” Tango reflected on their reunions over the years:

Yes, we all realize we are part of [the University’s] affirmative action program but, regardless, we passed the same tests, we all graduated, we all went into our professional fields and were able to meet those benchmarks . . . -the Ed. CATS, the residencies, the judgeships, the internships, the doctoral candidates, and yet, we were able to move forward . . . It’s not as if we feel that we’re not competent in our fields, but we do know that some people may perceive that . . . It’s their perceptions, their stories. That’s not what we individually feel.
The participants were asked to describe barriers or opportunities they may have encountered in realizing career goals. In all cases, they described barriers at length and did not cite examples of opportunities. However, some participants did describe how they avoided obstacles to create their own opportunities. Their reflections on obvious and "subtle" examples of barriers are summarized generally from the more obvious examples to the less so.

For Cecilia and Sylvia, being a Hispanic female posed an obvious barrier in pursuing advance placement (AP) high school English classes and for pursuing higher education simply because "Hispanic females had no business going to the university." When Sylvia did become a university student, a male neighbor asked her, "Don't you know Mexican brains aren't as developed as Anglo brains?"

Being a Hispanic female also caused Cecilia and Sylvia to experience tension in leaving home to attend the university. Their parents expressed ambivalence in their support—they encouraged higher education but found it difficult to allow their unmarried daughters to leave home. Cecilia may have identified a prevailing notion of the early 70s—women who go to college are "there for pleasure... not... to learn, so, why bother?" Being both a woman and an ethnic minority, Cecilia described feeling that she "always had to prove [herself] 2 times, or 10 times."

Isabel and Lynn identified hiring practices that appeared to show preference to Anglo females and/or males over Latinas as barriers along their career paths. Isabel, however, overcame obstacles by being "persistent and... well trained" throughout her
career life. Lynn thought being “the mother . . . collegial, cooperating” type might have been the reason for early unsuccessful attempts to be hired as an administrator.

Cecilia discovered “subtle” forms of discrimination within the education arena. Principals who were “threatened by [her] abilities and . . . leadership” kept her “down” rather than encouraging her to share in their leadership. As a recipient of a national award for contributions to education, she perceived that others saw her award as a “token” given to a bilingual educator. Finally, she suspected her superintendent, a male Latino, of not supporting Latinas in their ascent to higher-level leadership positions.

Malintzin identified psychological barriers placed by Latinos in the education or career path of other Latinos. She attributed the practice of a Latino’s questioning another Latino’s abilities as a result of “brainwashing.”

Tango described “benchmarks” rather than barriers along her career path. The benchmarks represented times when she pondered the social-political implications of being a person of color. The first “benchmark” caused her to think about the propriety/impropriety of speaking Spanish in the school setting. A second incident caused her to weigh the merits of public demonstrations in defense of civil rights. The third example described the advocacy role of an African American counselor who opened doors for her to attend a private university. Finally, she spoke of the value of “just talking” with Chicano peers about their higher education experiences, affirmative action, and their current success as Chicano professionals in spite of others’ “perceptions.”

The previous section sought to draw out barriers and/or opportunities faced by the six participants along their career paths. All participants reported barriers or, in Tango’s
case, “benchmarks,” that caused them to reflect on their status as Latinas. Most of the participants identified incidents from middle school, high school, and college years. The next question focuses on the connection between home and work life as Latina leaders, hence, later years along their career paths.

Conflicts or Ambivalence – Latina Leaders at Home and in the Workplace

This section reports the responses to the question “Describe any conflict or ambivalence you may experience between home and work life as a Latina leader.”

“Well, it’s fairly evident . . . that as a Latina it’s very difficult to have it all, “ responded Cecilia. Why? Because a “Latina woman, or . . . a Chicana,” has to “serve so many roles,” explained Cecilia. She reflected on past and current “subservient” roles:

All my life I could never, except once, confront my father because . . . he was the head of the household. He was my father. I had great respect—the same thing for a priest. I had the same respect . . . . Even though I knew they were wrong and they were making poor choices, I always had . . . to submit to it. Then being married . . . becoming a wife and mother and everything—I never thought of myself as subservient but . . . I identify it more now because I’m conscientious of it. When you’re in a relationship you have to give more than you receive. I think the reason why I didn’t accomplish all my goals was because I wanted to make sure that my husband did. I honestly believe that [it’s] still a mistake [that] I became a principal before him. For him and [for] ourselves as a family and for his ego . . . it really hinders me to do the kinds of things that I want to do because . . . my husband wants me home at a certain time. He wants home-cooked meals.
Cecilia spoke next of her role as a mother—the struggle to let her daughter move out of state and the changes that her son’s high school graduation would soon bring. Cecilia admitted that her husband had found her move into the principalship “difficult” three years before. That change compounded by the changing parent-child relationships had “made life difficult” for the family. As a result, she did not foresee returning to her present school site the following year. She said through tears, “If you want to keep a family and you want to keep a marriage [of] 28 years, you have to make sacrifices.”

Isabel identified feeling “guilt” at not being at home for her children while they were growing up. She recalled how she had grown up:

We’d come home and we’d smell *las tortillas que se estaban haciendo* [the tortillas being made]. I always remember *el arroz con leche* [rice pudding] on cold days... We’d come home on the bus and walk... home... and we could smell that and it was such a feeling of love and security... I kept feeling, “My kids don’t have that.”

Isabel recalled working as an early childhood educator and instructing the children’s parents “to read to them, [to] cook with them” while her own young children missed out on these practices with her. She remarked, “That was really, really bad.” Nonetheless, she expressed thanks to “God for extended family members” who stepped into this role: “My mother-in-law, gracias a Dios [thank God],... mother and sisters... -they were the ones... doing the things that I kept telling these parents [they] must do in order to succeed.”
When Isabel began her doctoral studies, her son was 13 and her daughter was 5. Because the children were in school, she thought she could “concentrate on [her] studies.” However, she then had two more children. She said of those years of study,

When I was studying, I kept thinking, “What am I doing? I should be home with the kids.” I was home with the kids and I’d be thinking, “I have all that stuff that I have to do. I have to read all these articles . . .” It was a double-edge type thing. No matter where I was I had a guilt feeling. I spent a lot of time at the [Catholic student chapel] praying, ‘Diosito [God, affectionate term], do you want me to get a doctorate for some reason? I don’t know what it’s for but if you want me to get a doctorate, then you better help me with this or that. . . . And he always answered my prayers, so I thought, “Okay, you want me to be a doctor. Why?” And I’m still asking, “Why?”

As Isabel looked ahead to her retirement years, she said she continued to ask God, “What’s my mission? What is the next part of this?”

Lynn stated that she had had not experienced “any ambivalence” between home and work life as a Latina leader. She stated that her “husband and son” had “always seen [her] in the role of a leader, or as an assistant principal, or the principal.” She called her husband her “greatest supporter.”

Malintzin reported that her husband “always supported” her in her roles as a teacher, curriculum specialist, and as a principal . . . even if she “got home late.” However, the support she received as a principal was probably owed to marriage counseling after a year’s separation. Malintzin told how she had married “young” and
after “17 years of marriage,” decided to leave her family to go to law school in another city. She left with the intention of “[not] going . . . back to her marriage. When [she] went to law school, [she] knew there was life beyond [her husband].” She expressed “feeling guilty” about getting home late from work though her “husband has [never] said anything about that.” Of her roles at home, she said,

There were issues with the cleaning of the house and I just paid somebody. I said, “You know what, if I’m going to stay in this marriage, I’m going to have to pay somebody and never count on that salary again . . . .” That’s made my life happier because as we grew up, we always had to clean up after the men . . . . I still want it to be clean when I get home. I’m not going to change him. He’s not going to clean up after himself. I mean, now he does a lot more, but not enough to . . . . how I want it. So I’ll just pay someone.

Malintzin concluded that she wanted “to keep dedicating . . . a lot of hours to [her] work.”

Sylvia, too, expressed a need to “spend . . . more time at [her] job.” With each year of experience as a principal, Sylvia has come to realize how she got “deeper into the nuts and bolts” of leading a school and “building relationships.” However, “one of [her] inner struggles” came from what her husband expected of her as the mother of their two young children. She described her conflict between work and home:

My husband, who’s Anglo, sees me as, “But you have a family and you have a responsibility,” and it’s just like OKAY! It used to be he could work late, and he would have meetings . . . . as a principal. Then I became a principal. Our biggest
issues are time and his expectations that as a mom—I don’t think he cares about the Latina part . . . but as a mom, I have a responsibility to my children. And I tell him, “I’ll quit. I have no problem with that.” “No, no, no, [he says,] you’re very good at what you do.”

Sylvia concluded by saying she does “okay” as a principal but “knows [she] could do better.”

Tango identified the “constant decisions” she must make about “spending time with . . . family” as a conflict between work and home. She described a game she played with her daughter from kindergarten through college years to transition from summer vacation back to school. They had a ritual of shopping for school supplies together and returning to their “regular sleeping patterns.” The night before the first day of work and school, Tango and her daughter would “[hug] in bed” and M. would ask, “Mom, do I have to go to school tomorrow?” Tango would respond, “M., do I have to go to work tomorrow?” They would hug each other and say, “‘Yes!’ and [be] . . . on [their] way” to a new school year.

Three of the six participants identified the need to spend more time with their families as a conflict they experienced between home and work life as a Latina leader. Cecilia was “conscious” of the “subservient” roles she has played over the course of her life as daughter, church member, wife, and mother. She had not accomplished “all [her] goals” because she believed it was necessary to “make sacrifices to keep a family . . . [and] a marriage together.” Isabel recalled her stay-at-home mother and the “love and security” signaled by the aroma of homemade tortillas and arroz con leche [rice pudding].
when arriving home from school. She experienced “guilt” for not providing the same experiences for her children. Nonetheless, she was grateful for extended family members who did provide her children with similar experiences. Tango always wanted to “spend more time” with family.

Sylvia and Malintzin experienced perhaps more ambivalence than a conflict between home and work. Sylvia felt that she could “spend more time” at work, but her husband had conveyed the message: “But you have a family, and you have a responsibility.” Yet, when she had proposed staying home with the children, he always said, “No, no, no, you’re very good at what you do.” Malintzin did not specify desiring more family time. Instead, she referred to the task of house cleaning. Her husband was not going to clean “how [she wanted] it,” and she was not going to “clean up after the men” like she did while growing up, so she solved the issue by hiring a housecleaner. She stated that she wanted “to keep dedicating . . . a lot of hours to work.”

Lynn was the only participant who did not identify any conflict or ambivalence between her home and work life as a Latina leader. She reported that her husband had always been the “greatest supporter” of her work roles.

To continue to draw out any unique characteristics of Latina leadership, the participants were asked to identify any cultural-difference awareness they may have perceived throughout their leadership development and how they responded to the differences. Their responses to these two questions follow.
Cecilia identified “friends and food” as central to leadership. She believed that food was “a great way to get people to open themselves and all their ideas . . . without having to worry about their own needs.” Serving food to others was Cecilia’s “cultural” way of helping others feel welcome. She said of this practice:

I’ve always found it very important . . . because when you have environments that I know so well—that are so cold and so closed to minorities and to others . . . because there’s nothing—no hay nada con que convivir [there’s nothing to enjoy together –convivir literally means ‘to live with’]. While if it were just a pan dulce [sweet bread] or a cup of coffee. I have a coffee pot in my office and cups. I’ll serve people on beautiful china . . . because I want them to feel at home and welcomed.

Cecilia said serving others food was “one of those skills that you learn as a woman.” It was a skill she combined with other leadership skills like being “personable” and being a “very good listener.” For her, offering food or drink offered “something . . . warm—a cup of coffee, juice, or bread” to help others “open up to . . . the real issues.”

Isabel identified two cultural differences that led her to make a leadership decision early in her career path through two stories. When she worked as a research assistant for a university early childhood program, she “saw that the people” who worked there “didn’t know anything about minorities—Blacks, Hispanics, Asian, whatever.” She elaborated,
They were trying to make them all fit into one certain pattern and if they didn’t fit there, that meant they were all deprived; that they were deficient. I think it was there that I started to think... “If I think the classes were bad and that the teachers were bad in that... area and these are the teachers that [sic] taught all these people and they took it for granted that... the teachers were right, [then], sabes que [you know what]. I’m going to have to take a leadership role” to correct stereotypes related to ethnic minority groups.

In the second story, she told about working as a children’s book reviewer for a national organization out of Washington, D. C. Her job was “to look at books for Spanish speakers [to] see which would be good for libraries and schools” in terms of “the cultural aspect.” She recalled one particular book:

I remember one book vividly... about a family that was totally culturally deprived that—no tenían nada, que el esto y que el otro [they had nothing, and this and that]—until an Anglo woman came and helped them and then their lives turned around. She taught the mother how to be a good mother, blah, blah, blah. I thought, “Why does this have to be a child’s book?”... I’m not saying that it never happens, but it doesn’t have to be in a child’s book... So the company wrote to the author, and I haven’t seen that book around.

Isabel surmised that just as she had found erroneous assumptions made about the Hispanic culture, was likely for Native Americans and Blacks to find similar erroneous generalizations about their cultures. She commented, “It feels like they have field days on us!... We still have to be very, very careful [about] that.”
Lynn, who had grown up in Panama, came to live in the United States when she enrolled in college in a city with a high Latino population. As a result, she said she never experienced "any negatives" when asked if she had been aware of cultural differences in her leadership development.

Malintzin described at length the success she had teaching Latino prisoners and sixth-graders how to read proficiently through Chicano literature—"literature that's relevant" to Latinos. She recalled how she first came to use Chicano literature to teach reading skills to prisoners, most of whom were "high school dropouts:

I couldn't get past the boring scripts from [a commercial reading program]. I started buying some stuff on reading comprehension . . . . It was through a company that had multicultural stuff and it had short excerpts of Chicano lit. with questions in the back. Then [I would use] strategies I had learned from the [university language, reading, and culture program] and from studying for the LSAT. I would teach them pre-reading strategies . . . . and it started working. Then they started taking my literature—they would steal my Chicano literature . . . so I went off and got $500 worth of literature . . . . So it was very successful.

From that success, Malintzin applied the same combination of techniques in teaching Latino sixth-graders, some of whom read at "first-grade level" when she began working with them. She began to document the students' success in increasing reading ability levels and soon began making presentations to state and national professional education associations. When she became a curriculum specialist in the school district, she was successful in creating the first Chicano literature collection of "$28,000 worth of
books” at the school district’s instructional resource center. This collection became available to teachers on a checkout basis. She taught teachers how to teach reading as well as the “history of the Mexican American people” given that this history was generally not taught in American schools. Now as a principal, she created not only a Chicano literature collection in her school library, but also “the best African American literature collection.” Malintzin stated, “You’ve got to walk the talk” and promote literature that is reflective of the student population in a school.

Sylvia, who had lived in a border town comprised of mostly Latinos “where everybody spoke Spanish,” experienced cultural differences when she moved to a larger city and started high school there. The school was more racially integrated. She recalled, “Man, this is really different,’ and 9 times out of 10, I would turn around and start speaking Spanish to somebody, and they’d look at me . . . I had no idea I was doing it. It was weird.” She did not recall having “a problem that [she] was Hispanic” in college. She felt that she “always got the professors’ attention [through] kindness . . . [and] they saw potential” in her and helped her.

Sylvia related a second story of cultural difference. However, this story may have illustrated more of a gender difference. She recalled being at a school district “talking about a technology room” where there were several men—“probably 99% of them were Anglo.” She remarked to an unidentified person or persons:

“You know what’s really sad is that if I was a male and I just went WHACK and . . . beat on the table and asked for whatever, I’d probably get it. And it’s sad that because I’m asking nicely that . . . I have a hundred obstacles. I have to
account to you, and you, and you.” And they all just sat back. It was ridiculous. I could just see my husband doing it and going, “But, ta, ta, ta!” and he would have gotten it . . . . I have to scream and shout and whatever . . . . And I think at that point, I remember thinking, “Well, there’s got to be a better way to do this,” and so, I’m still very polite, but I do bend the rules a tad.

*Tango* identified three areas of cultural difference awareness. When she heard the statement, “All children can learn,” she envisioned “children of color” but did not believe “other principals do that.” Rather, “they are still thinking about an Anglo child, totally oblivious to the fact that . . . [there is] this group of 10 people in front of you and 6 of them are children of color; the other 4 are Anglo.”

In addition to an increase in the number of children of color in public schools, Tango also pointed out an “increase of . . . students who come from poverty.” She found herself “grappling with the idea of which to focus on more.” “Though the educator may be at a school that does not have that [kind of] diversity,” Tango believed educators need to be “conscious” of knowing “what . . . to do” for children of color and/or of low economic levels “to make sure that that child moves.” As schools and school districts begin to examine and disaggregate achievement test data, the “conversation” about cultural differences may become more “consistent throughout the school district.” “The conversation has always been within the Title I schools,” noted Tango. Tango then identified a related concern to the examination of school data prompted by state and national accountability requirements. Tango was “very aware of [a] perception that might occur” when others noted that “a lot of Chicanos and Chicanas” worked in high ethnic
minority schools and made an erroneous “connection:” “Well, no wonder these schools are not doing well. They’ve got people of color as their leaders.”

As Tango anticipated moving into an executive school district position, she reflected on how it would be the first time in her career that she would be “working primarily with predominantly Anglo colleagues.” Of this new group of 104 principals she would oversee, she said, “That’s going to be interesting for me.”

Isabel, Malintzin, and Tango related examples of cultural difference awareness that could be categorized as the need to make education more culturally relevant to ethnic minority students. Isabel had observed university-level educators “who didn’t know anything about minorities” teaching other educators erroneous generalizations about ethnic minority groups. As a national children’s book reviewer, she read books that implied the “deprived” cultures of Hispanics and other minority peoples. Malintzin reported improved reading proficiency when she began using Chicano literature to teach reading to Latinos. Throughout her career, she promoted the acquisition of Chicano and other ethnic minority literature collections in the school district. Tango hoped educators who claimed “all children can learn” envisioned that in a group of 10 students, “6 of them are children of color” as well as the rising number of children who live in poverty. She looked for the day when “conversations” about how to serve a diverse student population would become “consistent” across her school district. Further, she wanted to dispel any notion that underperforming schools with high minority student populations were not underperforming because they had a high percentage of “Chicanos and Chicanas” as leaders.
Cecilia identified a cultural difference in how she served food to make others "feel at home and welcomed" as well as "to get people to open themselves." She thought this practice, along with "listening" and "being personable," were antidotes to "environments" that she described as "so cold and so closed to minorities and to others."

Sylvia described moving away from a border town to a bigger city where Spanish was not the dominant language. She "felt weird" about not speaking in Spanish to those around her. In addition, she described a gender difference she had experienced as a school administrator. Whereas males can "beat on the table" to get what they want, she felt that she must jump over "a 100 obstacles" to get the same request met.

Lynn did not recollect being aware of cultural differences throughout her leadership development.

The following section describes how the participants responded to cultural differences they may have perceived in their leadership development and practices.

*Responding to Cultural Differences in Leadership*

Cecilia believed that the "cold environment" she experienced along her career path occurred because adults had gotten "so far away from . . . children's agendas" and had "forgotten what we’re there for." In an effort to remain "child-centered," Cecilia "receives everyone—everyone that [sic] wants to see [her]." She "drops everything," especially when "it’s a child" who wants to see her. She attributed this practice to "being a woman and being Chicana."

When Isabel observed university instructors teaching their students incorrect or incomplete information about ethnic minority groups, she made a decision "to take a
leadership role” to educate herself and others about ethnic minority groups throughout her career.

**Lynn**, who was “nurtured in a Latin community . . . never felt any negatives” or cultural difference awareness in her leadership development.

**Malintzin** discovered that Latino high school dropout prisoners improved their reading skills when replaced the “boring scripts from [the commercial reading program]” with Chicano literature to teach reading. She had the same success with sixth-grade Latino students who were reading below their grade level. In her work outside the classroom, Malintzin carried her message to promote literature that was reflective of the student population by making presentations at state and national teacher conferences and in training sessions for teachers in her school district. As a curriculum specialist, she created the first Chicano literature collection-“$28,000 worth of books”-at the school district’s instructional resource center. As a principal, she made sure that the school library had materials reflective of their Latino and African American student populations.

**Sylvia**, who reported a gender difference rather than a cultural difference in her leadership history, stated that she continued “to be polite” though she did resort to “bending the rules a tad” to get what she needed for her school.

**Tango** reported three ways in which she has responded to cultural differences in her leadership development. When the question of affirmative action has been raised in her circle of “friends from . . . college years,” they “vent.” She said, “We tell personal stories about what happened to us when we were out in the field in our respective organizations.” Then they “reaffirm” themselves: “Our success has nothing to do with
your perceptions of my being an affirmative action candidate—[that] I'm not as successful as others.” Secondly, she was “very active . . . in leadership positions” of a state association for bilingual educators until she became a principal. As a principal, she was “connected with professional associations where there is a majority of people of color.” However, she found it “more effective” to “work with a . . . professional coach.” At the time of the interview, she had used this resource for four years. She met with her coach “three or four times a year . . . to make a professional plan.” She said of this experience,

During those conversations, sometimes I will bring up the subject of cultural identity, and that’s been helpful because the coach has said, “Tango, . . . is that a story that you’re making up about you, or might you be having challenges about working with predominantly Anglo people?” So, are those stories, or is there something you can do? . . . [It’s] talking one-to-one to really realize what my plan of action is.

There was no unifying theme in the narratives describing how the six participants responded to cultural differences they might have perceived in their leadership development. Isabel and Malintzin used their leadership roles to educate others about cultural differences. Cecilia had a clear sense that her “being a woman and being a Chicana” had something to do with her practice of “receiving everyone” who wanted to see her, especially children. This was her way to avoid creating a “cold environment” as a leader. Sylvia cited a response to a gender difference—she continued to “be polite” but did “bend the rules a tad” to get what she wanted for her school. Tango dealt with cultural differences in three ways. She and her college friends “vented” about times they had
perceived others questioning their success as the result of "affirmative action." They "reaffirmed" each other by accepting others’ perceptions as "their stories." Secondly, Tango had been "very active" in "professional associations where there is a majority of people of color" over her career. Finally, a personal coach had been "more effective" in helping her discern whether her questions of "cultural identity" might be "stories [she] makes up" or whether they are real situations for which she can create a "plan of action." Lynn had not experienced cultural differences—"negatives," she called them.

The participants were once again asked to reflect on the issue of cultural identity through a different perspective: How has being Latina influenced your leadership role? Their responses follow.

_Influences of Latina Culture on Leadership_

When Cecilia was asked, "How has being Latina influenced your leadership role?" she responded that "culture plays a big role," and she has "a lot of pride in what [she] does." She tried to "infuse that in [her] teachers and students—the pride of culture, striving for whatever we can to promote it." She then described at great length how she achieved getting "magnet [student] status" to "100%" of her middle school students—"every Chicano, every Anglo, every African American, every Native American now has magnet status, whereas before [her principalship], they didn’t." In the past, only Anglo students from outside the school’s geographical boundary received this status. She explained why she sought magnet student status for all middle school students at her school:
Having that status is so important because not only do they choose [this middle school], but they choose their own high school, so they’re really planning for seven years of their life, not just four, and I wanted to give that to our kids . . . to our families. They deserve pride—that’s the same pride that you have for your own raza [race]—so that they have the same rights as everybody else not just because of the color of your skin, but because it’s your choice. That is your God-given choice to choose what school you want . . . . No matter what ethnicity you are, you have that opportunity.

Cecilia described the strategy she used over the years to achieve this result. She would “take policies” from the district magnet school office and “live them to the letter, and . . . would make them live them to the letter. “ She became a “thorn on their side because they couldn’t argue with” the letter of the law that applied to all students. Ultimately, the district officials could not argue with Cecilia because she “was using their same words and their same policies.” Of this experience, Cecilia reflected, “I can’t believe that in the 21st century we’re still functioning in the 60s and the 50s with this ethnic balance and segregation and all that they’re making us go through, and reverse discrimination.”

Isabel responded to the question, “How has being Latina influenced your leadership roles?” only after she explained what it meant to be a Chicana rather than Latina or Hispanic, a discourse reported earlier.

We have to educate people on what a Chicana is. In ’83 . . . we were having a conference . . . [during the] time of the Chicano movement . . . [In] the early 80s,
everywhere you went, [you heard], “What are you? Chicana? Mexican American? Mexican? Hispanic? What are you?” And that day, we were planning . . . how we were going to label these workshops. Is it for Hispanic children, Mexican Americans, Mexicans . . . so they asked us, “What are you and what does this mean? What is Chicana?” . . . The other people, *mexicanas* from [Arizona border towns] . . . said, “Wow, Chicanos are scum. They are the bottom of the barrel. They don’t care about education. They’re gangsters . . . low-riders . . . regular,” and when it came to my turn, I said, “Well, I have never heard myself described in this manner.” You know, I had another idea of myself. “I am a Chicana and I think I’m the only person in this room with a Ph.D. I’ve never been in a low-rider car . . . .” Anyway, I went through each point that they made and said, “That’s not me . . . . You are seeing that in movies . . . . How many of you know a Chicana?” . . . So, I am a Chicana and this is my belief of what a Chicana [is] . . . [taken] from Ramon Salazar—he was an editorial writer for the *Los Angeles Times*. He was killed during the Watts riots by a policeman. He would take on the system and [he] said a Chicano is an American of Mexican descent without an Anglo in themselves. And that fit me perfectly because although my parents were from Mexico, I considered myself *muy mexicana*, but I felt that I could function in the U. S. just as well as in Mexico and there was no way with my upbringing I could have an Anglo image of myself . . . the goals of the Chicano is [sic] to better other – our people, and I always felt that.
At the end of her discourse, Isabel exclaimed, “I don’t know what your question was!” The question was asked again—“How has being Latina influenced your leadership?” She responded succinctly, “We have to better the goals of the Chicano—the Latinos.”

Lynn believed that being Latina had influenced her leadership in that it made it “easier for [her] because [she] understood [her school community] and they understood [her] . . . .” She stated that this was probably the reason why she had never left the “largest bilingual school” in the district since she began working there as a teacher and now found herself its principal. She commented, “Maybe whoever put me here knew that was the best place for me.”

For Malintzin, being Latina meant being observant of “equity missing in the schools when [she] was a kid” and thinking, “Those things aren’t going to happen where I go.” To that end, she had ensured that “teachers are aware, especially Anglo teachers, . . . that curriculum reflects [the] students’” especially when their students are “different from them.” It has meant increasing the collection of Chicano and African American literature in her school library. As a member of a Hispanic administrators’ organization, she “recruits other Latinas into the organization.”

Sylvia thought it “was a necessity” to be Latina in the schools where she had worked. At the middle school where she had previously worked as a teacher and later as a principal, not speaking “Spanish . . . would have been a crime.” Knowing the language helped her “communicate with . . . parents and . . . children.” Her ability to communicate in Spanish and “to relate to those families or to those children [took] on a different
meaning if [one was] Hispanic, or... understood the culture.” Further, Sylvia thought
that there were “certain little things” she could “get away with that other people couldn’t”
because of her ability to communicate in Spanish and having knowledge of the culture.

Sylvia was asked to give an example of a “little thing” she could get away with as a
Latina working with a predominantly Latino community. She shared how she interacted
with her students when she was a teacher:

When I was a teacher, ... I remember saying, “Orale pues! [Alright, already!]”
and they’d crack up but they knew exactly what I was talking about... That’s
not your most formal kind of expression... but those are the things I could get
away with in talking to my students. And the trick was I taught my students
through stories. They knew me. They knew my family. They knew when my
family had a birthday. They knew. So when they got me as a teacher they got the
full package. They had my life. And that is why I think I was so successful as a
teacher.

Asked if she would behave the same with a mainstream group of students, Sylvia
said she did not think she “could do anything different.” However, she then admitted that
she “missed... being able to do that because... it’s a different community” where she
was currently a principal. “Few of the [Hispanic] families... speak... Spanish.” Even
when she translated during “assemblies,” she did not feel “quite the way” she felt at her
previous school.

As a Latina leader who “can speak and write well” in Spanish, Sylvia strove “to
get... the information... or speak to the parents in the language that they are most
comfortable in." She believed that this “bonds people” to her “or the school.” She related a grandfather’s remark about his grandchildren who attend her school: “Ay, por fin tienen una directora [Ay, finally, they have a principal] that [sic] can speak Spanish.” At the same time, she heard from another Hispanic parent, “He’s Hispanic. He thinks that if you’re in the United States, you learn English, by golly, and you should not have to say anything in Spanish for anybody else.” Sylvia replied, “You have a right to your opinion.” More often, though, Sylvia received gratitude from parents for “being able to communicate with [them].”

Tango identified “real obvious things” that were “part of being Latina” in her leadership. She stated, “I was taught you need to shake people’s hands. You need to make people feel welcome. You need to make people feel that they are safe with you, and so I do feel very honest when I . . . greet people.” In addition, Tango recognized the different “filters” from which she could view “everything.” She could question herself thus, “Am I seeing this as a woman? . . . as a Latina? . . . as a professional . . .?” However, to see beyond the gender and race lenses, Tango was “drawn to get a doctorate.” She wanted to understand “the whole concept regardless of the color and the systems.” Tango explained, “I do think that having that knowledge outside of my being Latina has really helped me in moving forward . . . It makes you a little more grounded.”

Each of the six participants identified one of two Latina influences in their leadership roles—(1) a manner of connecting with all members of their school community as well as specific ways of connecting with their Latino constituents and (2) being observant of inequities that they then took actions to correct. Tango described “real
obvious things” that were “part of being Latina”-that “you need to shake people’s hands. You need to make people feel welcome. You need to make people feel that they are safe with you.” Sylvia identified speaking Spanish and “understanding the culture” as assets that “bond people” to her. Lynn stated simply that being Latina “made it easier for [her] because [she] understood [her school community] and they understood [her].”

Cecilia, Malintzin, and Isabel alluded to or directly identified their awareness of inequities that they took actions to correct along their career paths. Cecilia used the district’s “same words and . . . same policies” to win “magnet student status” for all students in her middle school. Malintzin recalled her own school days and being aware of “equity missing in the schools” and decided that “those things [weren’t] going to happen where [she went].” To that end, she created Chicano and African American literature collections where there were none before her arrival at the particular work site. She also recruited Latina leaders to join a Hispanic professional organization. Isabel described how she had come to see herself as a “Chicana” and what that has meant throughout her career—“to better . . . our people.” That included taking time “to educate” her Mexican American contemporaries who believed that Chicanos were “scum . . . the bottom of the barrel.”

In the next section, the participants described situations in which being Latina caused tension in their leadership.

Tensions in Latina Leadership

For Cecilia, a tension in her leadership resulted from believing that she did not need to “defend” or “prove [herself],” yet found that she must “prove [herself] over and
over and over again.” To illustrate, she spoke of getting her job as principal by learning "the hard way" to "sell herself" to get the position. She explained,

In our culture we don’t sell ourselves as women, and menos [less so], being mexicanos . . . . We don’t talk about ourselves. We don’t boast. So I would say that most of my life . . . in interviews . . . I’ve always been very humble in presenting myself. I think that as a Latina that is a common characteristic, and so it takes everything out of me to be other than that.

To get through interviews, Cecilia “psyched herself up like a boxer” telling herself, “If they ask you a question, you say what experience you have—not just the answer, but . . . with an example of what YOU did; how YOU did it.” She pointed out the importance of changing the word we used by “her culture” to “I did this . . . I did that” and had found it “difficult . . . to do” so. However, she believed she had to make these changes in interview situations “because it’s a fight to the finish.” She recalled being hired by an administrator “who did not want to hire” her after she “psyched [herself] up” to do “a very good job” of “selling” herself during the interview.

As a principal, the “hardest thing” Cecilia had to overcome was being “like a door mat.” She learned to “swallow tears” when someone else began to cry. When she had “to get angry; when [she had] to discipline; when [she had] to defend [her] school . . . . it takes everything out of [her] because it’s not part of [her] character.” She believed this tension “holds [her] back. It... literally exhausts [her]... because it’s not [her].” She described being “completely drained” by the time she gets home from work. The “best support” she has found to help her “overcome” being “like a door mat” was other “Chicana leaders,”
primarily “other principals or administrators.” She noted that she did not have the same rapport “with Anglo women.”

*Isabel* described at length a tension she experienced as a Latina throughout the years she worked at the university teaching elementary education courses as she completed her master’s and doctoral degrees. She recalled those years when she was the only “Chicana” on “the eighth floor:”

At faculty meetings, I was not there. I was invisible and that did cause a lot of tension. Thank God for . . . [two Anglo professors] because they always included me. They always made sure that what I needed to say was said even if they came to me beforehand and said, “What do we need to do?”

She recalled the tension it caused, particularly “when [they] were trying to get other Chicanos into the college.” She then related the story of one of the “worst days in [her] life.” During faculty meetings, she had heard discussions she perceived as “untrue, . . . discriminating, prejudiced” regarding a male Hispanic entry-level professor who “had worked so hard . . . [and] deserved tenure.” She spoke up in his defense:

“You know, when I came to this college, I became part of the eighth floor. I felt the prejudice. I felt the discrimination. But I thought that it was because . . . I did not have a master’s or a doctorate. Dr. X comes here well qualified, has done so much more work than many of you with students, with the community, in the college, on the campus, and now that I see that you are rejecting him, I have to arrive at the conclusion that it was not because I didn’t have a doctorate that you
treated me in the way you did but just plain prejudice. You are bigots, and that’s all there is to it.

She concluded her story by saying she experienced tension “anywhere on campus other than at [a center for Mexican American studies].” She believed that the same tension existed currently: “Even now they look at a minority and . . . say, ‘Oh, they’re only here because they’re a minority. They don’t know anything, but we had to have a window dressing.”

Lynn reported that she did not experience tension as a Latina leader because “the whole ambiente [environment]” where she works is “Latin.”

Malintzin reported two instances when being Latina had caused tension in her leadership. In the first instance, she and another Latina school principal advocated for establishing a position for a district director of a Hispanic studies department given that the district had long-established positions for directors of African American studies and Native American studies departments. When they presented the idea to the Latino superintendent, his response was, “No, I’m a Latino and I’m not going to go to the board and tell them that because I’m Latino.” Malintzin expressed “disappointment” over this decision.

In the second instance, Malintzin was quoted in “the press” as supportive of a district restructuring plan that sent resource teachers back to classroom positions. She supported this decision because as a past resource teacher herself, she had observed “some people [resource teachers] balancing their checkbook in their job and not going out to schools like they should have and leaving at 3:15.” Given that the district had a
shortage of teachers, she believed that the resource teachers could fill those positions. Malintzin “got some slack from [her] own community saying, ‘Oh, you crossed over.’ She questioned, “Crossed over to what?” She did not specify what others might have meant by “crossed over.”

Sylvia described one situation in which she had experienced tension as a Latina leader and had felt pressure to “choose sides.” Sylvia was adjusting to a new community of students created “when the district changed the boundaries of the school.” The “49% / 51% [ratio of Hispanic to Anglo students] became . . . 70-some / 20-some %.” What she discovered was that “the parents . . . coming from [the new areas] expect everything in Spanish.” This group includes “a few rebels” who think the “Hispanic way... has to be.” The Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) leadership also felt the impact of the new school community. Sylvia explained that their PTA had been “predominantly Anglo” but that it was “now getting some Hispanic parents . . . saying, ‘The Mexicans rule,’ kind of thing.” Of this change, Sylvia remarked, “It’s very tricky because . . . now they [Anglo parents] see me speaking Spanish . . . and translating . . . So now it’s like, ‘You have to choose sides,’ and I’m like, ‘No!’”

Tango did not respond to the question of tension in her leadership owed to her Latina culture. Instead, she described what she found advantageous about being a Latina leader. This is the topic of the next section.

No single theme emerged in comparing responses to the question “Describe any situations when being Latina has caused tension in your leadership.” Cecilia believed that as a Latina leader she continuously needed to “prove” herself particularly during
interviews. She had to learn “to sell herself” in interviews, a contradiction of who she was as a Latina—one who did not “talk about [herself]” nor “boast.” Further, she had struggled to overcome being “like a door mat” as a principal whose role dictated that she sometimes “get angry . . . discipline . . . [and] defend her school.” Isabel recalled the years she worked at the university where she felt “invisible.” At first, she thought it was because she had not yet acquired graduate degrees. Later, when a male Hispanic professor with a doctorate was refused tenure, she openly defended the professor and identified the refusal to grant him tenure as “prejudice.” Malintzin was “disappointed” when her Latino superintendent refused to recommend to the school board that a position for a director of Hispanic studies be created. He would not do it because he was “Latino.” Secondly, when Malintzin supported a restructuring decision made by this same superintendent, members of her “own community” claimed she had “crossed over.” Sylvia had been placed in the uncomfortable position of having to “choose sides” between Anglos and Latinos when the number of Latinos significantly increased as a result of school boundary changes. Lynn reported that she did not experience tension as a Latina leader because she worked at a school where “the whole ambiente [environment]” was Latino. Tango did not report any tensions she experienced as a Latina leader.

In the next section, the participants described situations in which being Latina had proved advantageous in their leadership roles.

Advantages of Latina Leadership

Cecilia stated that it has been advantageous to be Latina as a principal, teacher, and as a recipient of a national educator’s award. “It was important to be Latina,” she
said, “with [her] work with students and understanding parents and parenting and working with families.” It has also been “important to be Latina” in her leadership as a principal because when she first took the position, “there was so much conflict” that she “first had to win them over with [her] personality . . . , then win them over by [her] profession and . . . knowledge . . . to gain their trust.” By doing so, she was able to “steer” her staff in the new directions she wanted to go and yet allow them to conclude that it was “their decision” and not hers. Cecilia did not specify what the advantage or advantages were of being Latina.

**Isabel** found it advantageous to be Latina whenever a “community group” or “administrators’ really want to know, ‘What do Latinos need? What does the community need? . . . How can we better understand and better serve the Latino community?’” Isabel commented that “when people really are sincere about doing what is right,” that she found it “very advantageous” to be Latina.

**Lynn** stated that the advantage of being a Latina in her school community was an advantage in that she already had “an ‘in,’ so to speak, with the community.”

**Malintzin** reported that “many parents love [her] because they are all Latinos . . . seventy-something 70-something %–love [her].” She quoted a parent who asked her if she would be returning the following school year, “‘Va a estar aquí el ano que entra, Sra. Directora?’ ‘Si.’ ‘Ay, que bueno porque es muy buena directora. Es muy buena directora!’” (‘Will you be here next year, Mrs. Principal?’ ‘Yes.’ ‘Oh, that’s good because you’re a good principal. You’re a very good principal!’”)
When asked to describe the tensions and advantages of being a Latina leader, Sylvia described only the tensions she had been experiencing. However, as reported earlier, she did state advantages of being Latina. Knowing Spanish helped her "communicate with . . . parents and . . . children." Her ability to communicate in Spanish and "to relate to those families or to those children [took] on a different meaning if [one were] Hispanic, or . . . understood the culture." Sylvia also reported that there were "certain little things" she could "get away with that other people couldn’t" because of her ability to communicate in Spanish and having knowledge of the culture. To illustrate, she shared how she interacted with her students when she was a teacher:

When I was a teacher, . . . I remember saying, "Orale pues! (You speak/Alright, already!)" and they’d crack up, but they knew exactly what I was talking about . . . . That’s not your most formal kind of expression . . . but those are the things I could get away with in talking to my students. And the trick was I taught my students through stories. They knew me. They knew my family. They knew when my family had a birthday. They knew. So when they got me as a teacher, they got the full package. They had my life.

As a Latina leader who “can speak and write well” in Spanish, Sylvia strove “to get . . . the information . . . or speak to the parents in the language that they are most comfortable in.” She believed that this “bonds people” to her “or the school.” She related the remarks of a grandfather whose grandchildren attended her school: “Ay, por fin tienen una directora (Ay, finally, they have a principal . . . ) that [sic] can speak Spanish.” Sylvia received gratitude from parents for “being able to communicate with [them].”
Like Sylvia, Tango identified being “able to communicate in English or Spanish with any parent” as an advantage of being Latina. However, she pointed out that in her “particular journey” being a graduate of a prestigious private university had “been more advantageous” than being Latina. She believed the “recognition” was that “she must have something; she must at least know her skills.” Further, when “people realize that [she has] a doctorate,” they “start to realize, ‘Oh, wow, I guess I do need to listen.’” The advantage of having acquired a doctoral degree has made her “feel grounded . . . like having tried to prove what [she’s] learned.”

All participants acknowledged a sense of advantage in being Latina leaders. Sylvia and Tango identified their ability to communicate with their communities in English and Spanish as an advantage. Sylvia specified that her ability to communicate in Spanish and knowledge of the culture “bonds people” to her “or the school.” Isabel found it advantageous to be Latina whenever people were “sincere” in wanting to know “how . . . to better understand and . . . serve the Latino community.” Lynn reported simply that being Latina provided the “in” to work with her Latino school community. Malintzin stated only that “many parents love [her] because they are all Latinos.” Cecilia acknowledged that being Latina had been advantageous as a teacher, principal, and recipient of a national educator’s award for her work with students and parents. However, she did not specify the advantage or advantages. Tango noted that having graduated from a prestigious private university and having a doctorate had proven more advantageous than being Latina. These accomplishments appeared to convey that she “at least [knew] her skills” and that she had “tried to prove what [she had] learned.”
In the next section, the participants describe leadership attributes and/or practices that they thought might be more dominant among Latinos.

**Latina Leadership Attributes and Practices**

* Cecilia identified “respect” and “motherhood” as leadership attributes that may be more dominant among Latinos. With regard to respect, she elaborated, “You have to know who you are . . . where you came from . . . . You have to instill that pride in others of who they are and where they came from, and how they can benefit others.” She then explained what she meant by “motherhood”—“you take the ones the ones that [sic] need you the most and give them all that you can, when you can.” She gave an example of how “motherhood” was part of her leadership role. A middle school student had stolen “something from a TA [teacher assistant].” The disciplinary action she took was to assign him to be the teacher assistant’s TA for two weeks “to learn what it’s like to serve others and get that gratification.” In addition, he was to work in the cafeteria during the summer program by “helping the little ones . . . clean up . . . to learn to like it . . . and to be gentle with them.” Her reasoning was that these were skills that she did not believe were being modeled in the home by his mother. When she described the disciplinary plan to the boy’s mother, the mother commented in her son’s presence, “*Ni vale la pena* [He’s not worth the chastisement/pain].” Cecilia reflected on her “unusual consequence” for stealing: “We’ve got to be able to show them . . . [how] to serve other people . . . . It seems so minute but it is a life skill.”

When asked if a sense of service, generally characteristic of motherhood, was the attribute she was describing as a dominant quality among Latinas, Cecilia responded,
"Definitely." She explained it further as "commitment" and "loyalty" to her profession, students, parents, teachers, and to the district. She concluded,

It's just like . . . religion. Your religion is not based on the priest. Your religion is based on your faith. The priests come and go, and your faith depends on you and what you do. That's how I see my profession. It's based on what I do and for whom I serve and not the person. I can't say it any other way!

Isabel described having a sense of family—"la familia"—as a characteristic of Latino leadership. She described the school she was retiring from as having that sense of family even before she became the principal. She said, "It was so before I came . . . and a Latino was the administrator." She clarified that it did not mean that they "all always agree" or are "always happy with each other." Rather, it meant that they could "disagree and still have respect and love for each other." Isabel explained further what it meant to "love what you are doing and love the people you are working with;"

Sometimes you don't like 'em, but you love 'em. I think that is one of the main things—the warmth. That is what I hear from a lot of parents that bring their children here. When they first came to look around, they saw that there was warmth and that everybody—es como un pueblito [it's like a little town]—that everybody is responsible for all the children . . . . We all look after all children and call them mi hijito, mi hijita [my little son, my little daughter]—the hugs and all that. I think that is definitely part of the Hispanic/Latino community.

Lynn observed that Latinos seemed to "respect the person [and] . . . the position" of principal/teacher more than mainstream groups. When asked again to describe any
attributes or characteristics among Latina principals that differed from non-Latina principals, she described one of her character traits.

I'm a little more submissive, and I have learned to respect my elders and my family. I see that in myself in a group, and yet I'm seen as reticent. I guess that's the way they would see me, but that's not it because I still will eventually engage, but I do wait, and I do respect other people's philosophies and what not.... I think it has to do with our makeup and culture and where we've been. Whether it's Latina or whether it's just how we've lived our life, it's hard for me to say.

Malintzin identified the “giving” nature of Latinos. She reiterated several times, “We always give.... We give and we give... and food is always a very important part of our... caring for people.” She recalled an observation made by a colleague at a youth conference hosted by a national Latino organization:

We heard one of our friends... telling the kids that were running the conference...,” Hey, don’t forget to feed the bus drivers.” And my counselor said, “You know what... you can tell this is run by Hispanics... because in an Anglo conference... they wouldn’t have cared. They would have said, “Hey, they’re... union.... They wouldn’t have even thought of feeding the bus drivers.” And we do in our culture. So, I think that caring and giving and making sure people are okay [is a Latino characteristic].

In addition, Malintzin had observed that Latina educational leaders, especially those who were “moms,” were “100% understanding” of each other as “parents.” When a teacher had to be out of the classroom to tend to a child, Malintzin offered, “You go, I’ll
Malintzin summarized what she thought were “the important things” about Latina leadership thus, “It is making sure that the human being is okay first, then [that] their family is secure, and then just praise them with little goodies every so often, you know, food.”

**Sylvia** identified storytelling as an attribute of Latina leadership. However, she was unsure whether this was “Hispanic” or just “[her] way.” She described the aunt who raised her as “a storyteller by heart.” She reflected, “I don’t know if that’s where I got it from, or if it’s the main fact that I am Hispanic that I have it. I have no idea.”

To identify attributes or practices that might be more dominant among Latina leaders, **Tango** reflected on her experiences with “other Latinas in leadership positions.” She described her observations:

As a group, we tend to speak a lot from passion, speak a lot from personal experiences, with our faces and our hands and also tend to communicate with a sense of urgency as a group. Yet, I’m trying to think of some Anglo leaders. Yes, they’re committed, but their commitment—and I’m making this up—I think their commitment comes from educational experiences that are real different from my educational experiences.

Upon further reflection, Tango identified “empathy” as a characteristic that “was/is such a part of [her] and . . . other Latinas . . . [and] in other administrators who are people of color.” She described “empathy” as “the idea that [Latinas] see people with strengths not with deficits.” She believed this was a result of Latinas having “either experiences with poverty or low income or middle-low income” that allowed them to
“move very easily, fluidly between a parent who just came over from Mexico or who’s never had high school in Mexico but still is very cultured in Mexico.” She explained, “We’re able to communicate irregardless if they came from a ranchito [a little ranch] or from another cultural background . . . . It’s a social status awareness and also a cultural awareness.” As an educator, she believed that the ability to have “empathy” and to move “fluidly” between social and cultural differences was a “strength” that Latinas “bring to the table” in terms of “at least being able to share that viewpoint with other educators.” She described this “strength:”

A lot of it comes from having lived that experience and feeling real comfortable with . . . sitting down and eating tortillas and burritos . . . just because that’s a sign of respect or sign of being welcomed . . . . Sometimes you may not be welcomed— you may be standing outside underneath the porch, and that’s still acceptable . . . . There’s a deeper understanding of a strength . . . .the resiliency that people do develop regardless of their socioeconomic status . . . or their cultural status . . . . I feel very comfortable moving in and out much more than an Anglo person does, and I see that as a strength— Boy, I can go to a very affluent, very high-society home or event and be able to discuss literature and symphonies and concerts and feel comfortable . . . knowing I’ve learned about that, and yet I feel comfortable going to another home where it’s very rural and very low income and not feel ill at ease. I think I have that kind of ability much more than a person who doesn’t have this experience. I’m always aware of it, too, when I walk into conferences: “Okay, how many people of color are here?” And I never think Anglos think
about that—"Well, I wonder how many Anglos are here as opposed to people of color?"

The word respect was repeated six times among four participants as part of their descriptions of attributes or practices that appeared to be more dominant among Latina leaders. Cecilia spoke of "respect" for self and "where you came from" and instilling that "pride" in others. She also spoke of "commitment" and "loyalty" to her profession, students, parents, teachers, and the district. Lynn stated that Latinos seemed to accord more "respect" to the position of principal/teacher. She had "learned respect for elders and for . . . family." She spoke of having "respect for other people's philosophies and whatnot." Isabel noted that it was acceptable "to disagree" as a school staff but that they still had to "have respect for each other." Tango described "sitting down and eating tortillas and burritos" as "a sign of respect or sign of being welcomed."

In addition to respect, the participants also identified service, sense of family, empathy, the use of personal narratives, and submissiveness as attributes of Latina leadership. Cecilia spoke of "motherhood" and "service" to "benefit others" as characteristic of her leadership style. Malintzin identified the "giving" nature of Latinos, often accompanied by offering food. Isabel described her school community as "la familia" and "como un pueblito"—like a family or a small town where "everybody is responsible for all the children" and where children are called "mi hijito/mi hijita," my little son/my little daughter. Malintzin believed it was important to make "sure the human being was okay first, then [that] their family is secure." Tango defined "empathy" as "the idea that [Latinas] see people with strengths not with deficits." Sylvia thought
"storytelling" was "Hispanic" but was not sure. Tango had observed that Latina leaders "tend to speak from passion [and] a lot from personal experiences . . . with a sense of urgency." Lynn, however, considered herself "a little more submissive . . . [though] she eventually will engage," but first she waits and respects "other people's philosophies and whatnot."

In the next section, the participants describe Latina educational leader through metaphors.

*Metaphorical Descriptions of Latina Educational Leader*

*Cecilia* did not provide a metaphor for *Latina educational leader*. Instead, she described a behavior she ascribed to her "culture." She told the story of being "teased" by an "administrator . . . because every time [she] would walk into a room, [she] would always say 'hello' to everybody before [sitting] down–always acknowledge everyone."
The administrator commented to her, "Ay, como eres politica! [Oh, you are so politic or so like a politician!]" She explained,

> When you go into a home or a place and there are people you know, you acknowledge everyone . . . there. If you don't, it's like a put-down or [like] you don't want to recognize them, or you don't want to talk to them. I think that's something I do naturally, and I am not comfortable . . . until I speak to the people I need to speak to or to acknowledge.

Cecilia noted that this practice of acknowledging those in her company was what led her have an open-door policy at work and to serve "food . . . to open people up."

Finally, "knowing the [Spanish] language" allowed her "to serve more people."
Isabel described a Latina educational leader as a heart, as she had in previous metaphorical descriptions of educational leaders and education. She said, “I will use a heart because si no lo traes en el corazón [if you don’t carry it in the heart], you shouldn’t be in education.” She recalled what she used to tell her education students at the university:

I can teach you methods, strategies, lots of book learning . . . but I can’t make an educator out of you. I can’t make a teacher out of you. You either have it right here [points to her heart]—you love people. You love kids. You want to help. You want to be of service. If you don’t have that, forget it because you are not going to be a good educator.

She concluded her metaphoric description by reiterating: “So, you have to tener el corazón primero y las ganas de ayudar [have the heart first and the desire to help]” no matter “what the child looks like” and “bring la familia [family] into it.”

Lynn described a Latina educational leader as “the mother or the grandmother” depending on “how the child saw you,” but definitely “an extension of the home.” She explained that the role of mother or grandmother had “two sides”—“the protector side,” concerned with “safety” issues, and the “soft side” of a “mother.” She related a story of one of her previous elementary school students who visited her when “he was in high school” and again as a young man when he was working at the school “putting in the plastic around the baseboards:”

I had him from second grade . . . through sixth, so he sees me, I’m sure, as an extension—as a mother—because I was his advocate for special education, for
reading . . . So you see, I have to say I may be the teacher, but I’m also seen as the mother, and I’m going to be the protector there.

Malintzin first drew “a blank” when asked to provide a metaphor for Latina educational leader. Then she offered two metaphors—“an engine of a train” and “the Malinche.” The engine “takes a while to get going but once [it gets] going . . . once you have your people, . . . it gets going really fast. So, . . . a steam engine.” Malintzin explained the second metaphor, the Aztec historical figure Malinche, at length. Malinche’s Aztec name is “Malintzin”—the pseudonym chosen by this participant.

Malintzin saw Malinche as the “leader . . . of Latina women.” Malinche served as a translator for the Spaniards when they conquered Aztec land. Through her, “two worlds came together” when “she created the first mestizóchild.” Malinche’s world included “suffrage” [sic] and “conquest,” a parallel Malintzen drew to her life. She explained:

She was used and abused in society just like we are. I mean, I’ve been used and abused. I think of things that people tell me subtly—little racist things—“Oh, you’re not smart enough to do that,” or whatever . . . I . . . don’t argue with that. I say, “Okay, I’m going to prove to you I can . . .” I don’t let people’s opinions block me, and I try never to do that to another Latina. I try to be very careful with what I say . . . The Latina’s first leader was the Malinche. She was a smart Indian woman and, yeah, she stabbed someone in the back. But, you know, those same people sold her into slavery.
Sylvia did not provide a separate metaphor for *Latina educational leader*. Earlier, she had described an educational leader as a “flowerpot.” Instead, she described how much “harder” it was to be a Latina educational leader. Why? She responded,

I’m not sure why . . . I think it’s the obstacles and that it’s still very much a man’s world, and it’s not, as I perceive it, Hispanically inclined. I think that you have to work harder to prove yourself. I think that you can’t be just mediocre and it be okay. You have to be better than that.

As a Latina educational leader, Sylvia found it necessary “to be really strong” and “bright.” She had to “think really good on [her] feet” and have a “stinking strong” heart because “they break it a lot.” To “have balance,” she relied on her “spirituality.” She then related a story that explained who broke her heart. After teaching at a middle school for “12 years,” she became its principal. “People warned [her]” about what “people did in the classroom,” which she would discover as she began “to evaluate them.” She reflected on that year of experience,

I could not believe how humankind could be mean to each other . . . I thought, “Oh, my gosh, . . . you’re teaching these poor kids.” . . . The expectation was that our *mi hijito/mi hijita* [my little son/my little daughter], you know, they can’t learn, but they can . . . . Well, they’re going to rise to your level of expectation, and if your level is at the bottom, that’s exactly how far they’re going to get. And I couldn’t change that . . . the adults were so mean . . . I think that if I had stayed beyond the 12-month contract . . ., I probably would have had a nervous breakdown.
Tango once again referred to the tango dance as the description of a Latina educational leader. She explained how her Latina perspective influenced her leadership: “It’s the Latina who does the kicks and the more dramatic flairs … with confidence. She does it with the idea of supporting her partner but yet making it her own.” After completing her metaphorical description, Tango commented that it had been “helpful” to describe a Latina educational leader through metaphor and commented, “Now I know what a Latina leader does.”

Of all the descriptions of Latina educational leader, the most often spoken or implied words revolved around the meanings of “heart,” “service,” and “familia.” Isabel described a Latina educational leader as a “heart” because a “good educator” “[loves] people . . . [and] kids.” Sylvia spoke of needing a “stinking strong heart” and “spirituality” to “have balance” as a Latina leader. She found the role harder as a Latina because she had “to work harder to prove [herself]” in what she considered “a man’s world” and one that is “not Hispanically inclined.” Cecilia found it “natural” to “always acknowledge everyone” and to keep her office doors open. She made it a practice to serve “food . . . to open people up,” and she valued speaking Spanish “to serve more people.” Isabel and Lynn spoke of family images. Isabel added the component of “la familia” to the heart metaphor describing a Latina educational leader. Lynn described the Latina leader as “the mother or the grandmother” with “a protective side” and “the soft side.”

The metaphors provided by Malintzin and Tango implied women in motion. Malintzin saw a Latina educational leader as a “steam engine” with people on board “going really fast.” Malintzin also described the educational leader as “the Malinche.”
The Aztec Indian woman conveyed the “suffrage” [sic] and “conquest” that have been part of Latina women’s history as well as the “two worlds” through which Latinas move. Tango returned to her earlier use of the tango dance for educational leader and other terms. The Latina features of the dance were to be found in “the kicks and the more dramatic flairs” done “with confidence” with the intent “of supporting the partner” even as the movements were “her own.”

This section completes the responses to questions designed to delve into the Latina perspective of personal leadership development and definitions of educational leadership. In the next two sections, the participants shared Latina perspectives related to their notions of what it meant to educate and how they enacted leadership for school change.

*Latina Perspectives on the Process of Educating*

The topic for the second interview was leadership in the context of education and the principal’s charge to bring about school change. The first part of the second interview explored the participants’ beliefs about the process of educating. Two questions were designed to draw out Latina perspectives of what it meant to educate others: (1) How does being Latina influence your leadership role in educating children of all cultural groups? and (2) How does being Latina influence your leadership role in staff development situations? Their responses to these questions are reported next.

*Latinas Educating Children of All Cultural Groups*

*Cecilia* believed that “having worked with all the different minority groups and being a Chicana” had been of “benefit” to her. She said, “What I find being an advantage
in being a Chicana is that . . . my nature, the way that I am not cold . . . kids seem to open up to me.” She reported that she had had “very little difficulty with African American [and] Native American students.” With regard to Anglo students, Cecilia found that if they came “from a home that is nurturing, that is, accepting of them, and they know who they are,” they were “more apt to open up” to her, as well. In contrast, students who came from “homes that are very rigid; . . . that are very cold . . . come to you . . . defensive.” She believed that to be true of students of “any culture.”

Cecilia attempted to influence the education of children of all cultural groups by “[winning] them over somehow.” She tried to “find their interests . . . what they enjoy or like.” If “they don’t care about anything,” she tried to “get them interested in the kinds of things” she liked. For her, “winning them over” meant “having them give [her] their confidence by their interest and what they like.”

With difficult students, Cecilia found that being Latina pushed her not to “give up” on them. She thought that other administrators might say, “You know what? You broke the rules—outta here . . . Why bother?” Instead, she acknowledged,

I don’t believe that we need to throw kids away. I don’t . . . Even though it causes you a lot of grief, you’re going to do it because you have that—we’re back to determination again . . . . Your goal is, “You’re going to make it out of here,” and “We’re going to do it together.” And when I look at my colleagues in middle school, it’s so much easier [for them]—just throw them out and don’t even bother.
Isabel believed that being Latina “helps [her] a lot” in influencing the education of children of all cultural groups. She specified what she believed to be a Latina perspective toward children:

I think that it is our group that feels that kids are just a gift to us—que Dios nos los da [that God gives them to us]—they’re our little gift and they are so precious.

That is the way I feel about every child that walks into this school—that they are so precious—que son un tesoro [that they are a treasure].

Isabel communicated that message to the children’s parents, as well. She thanked them “for bringing us your most valued treasure.”

Isabel had the same feeling “about the teachers,” most of whom were “younger” than she. She felt like a “madrina” (godmother) toward them. To be a “madrina” meant “they are [hers] to guide, to protect, and to make sure they come into a good environment.” She believed that “if they are happy, the kids will be happy and the parents.” She shared a message that she received on a retirement card from one of the teachers to illustrate how she treated teachers. The teacher wrote on the card,

When I first came to [this school], I was worried. I had heard the best teachers were here. Everything was here. I thought they were going to be stuck-up. How am I going to fit in? How does one go into a situation like this and feel comfortable when you feel like you already don’t measure up? And you met us at the door and the first thing you said to me was, “Buenos dias, nalgas! [Good morning, buttocks!]” And I thought, ‘This is going to work!’ Then you were out there talking to the kids and the parents and making everyone feel welcome.”
Isabel reflected on how she was “validating the feelings people have.” She believed this notion of validating others came “from being comadres [co-mothers—the term used between a godmother and the mother of the godchild] out there . . . the whole neighborhood with the whole family watching each other.”

**Lynn** described a characteristic of her Latina background in detail before she could “get to the point” in answering the question, “How does being Latina influence your leadership role in educating children of all cultural groups?” Her eventual response to the question was, “The best way to teach . . . children . . . [is] to have some background information [in order to] go forward.”

Lynn had learned from a presenter about a pattern of speech typical of Latinas. She shared an experience of talking with her staff about “guided reading [and] . . . guided writing, and where [they] balance literacy.” In the middle of her discourse, someone asked a question and she responded with information about “achievement and scores.” She then “realized that [she] had forgotten [her] train of thought” and told the group, “Oh, no, I’m doing . . . what [the presenter] says when . . . you’re not direct, you go this way, and . . . finally get to the point.” She made a hand motion in the shape of an “S.”

She then explained how a Latina’s discourse might differ from someone who was “taught in the United States:”

It’s an ‘S’–a big ‘S’–like you go back and forth, or it can be jagged . . . . You find one thing and then you go to another and then you go to another. It’s very hard for me to start at the top and . . . go straight down as we are taught in the United States . . . . We are flowery and we talk and we all do this . . . . I do less of it than
some people straight from Mexico City. . . . There everything is very, very
flowery. . . . My thought waves are that way—they don’t get to the point right
away.

Lynn knew from her own experience growing up outside the United States that
she had been taught differently than students taught in the United States. She recognized
that “different cultures . . . teach their children in different ways.” She stated that “the
best way to educate” children of different cultural backgrounds was “to find the best way
to access and to teach . . . students . . . so they can really begin to blossom.” Lynn ended
her story by reiterating the difference in discourse patterns between American-educated
people and herself—a Latina educated in a Latin-American country. She stated that “if
you’re too linear” in communicating with a cultural group that communicates in the “S”
pattern—“going back and forth”—then communication may be hampered.

In response to the question, “How does being Latina influence your leadership
role in educating children of all cultural groups?” Malintzin said, “Having been a child
whose culture was on the sidelines, I don’t want that to happen to any child.” She then
gave an example of having “had a few Filipino children” in her school two years before.
She “made it a point to buy some Filipino books on the history of the Philippines for [the]
library” and to set up “several displays in the hall.”

In Sylvia’s school, 71% of the students were of Hispanic origin. Sylvia reported
that “when the Hispanic kids, or . . . the teachers who are Hispanic . . . hear [her]
speaking Spanish, they know they can approach [her] that way if they feel like it.” She
did not think it made “any difference” to the Anglo students that she spoke Spanish.
Sylvia explained that prior to her arrival, the school “was not a Hispanic-friendly community [and] never had been.” Until the district changed school boundaries, Anglo students had been the majority group. “If ever a Hispanic came, the principal would send them to [two other schools]--for a fact--that’s just the way it was,” explained Sylvia. By the time she arrived, the number of Latino students had significantly increased, and “the district” identified the school as “racially identifiable.” As a “young Hispanic female” principal, she found it “really tough” to have to change the composition of the teaching staff to reflect the new ratio of Hispanic students. She accomplished this “within . . . three years” by hiring “a bilingually endorsed teacher at every . . . grade level.” However, after the passage of legislation which limited access to bilingual education programs, “six of [her] eight teachers who were bilingually endorsed left” of their own volition.

Tango believed that “Latinas and [maybe] . . . Latinos . . . tend to focus . . . or read what the demographics are, or what the long-term look of education may be and it speaks to [them] directly.” She recalled reading about Latinos as “the fastest growing group . . . by the year 2010” in “1989.” She asked herself then, “What do I have to do now?” as a “teacher or educator or leader.” When she saw “the statistics that show what the academic levels are,” she felt it in “[her] heart.” She explained it thus, “It hits you where you live and you’re like, ‘You know, I’m not an exception. I just had some support systems that helped me get to where I’m at.’” As an educational leader, Tango reported “a sense of responsibility . . . to make sure additional resources are provided . . . for all [students] to learn.” Her knowledge of “what’s happening with children of color, Latino students,” led her to also question what it meant to educate “Anglo students, African
American students, and Asian students” and “to prioritize or be very conscientious” about how to provide “additional resources.”

Tango also reflected on the role of educational leaders of color:

What motivates me very strongly . . . is that . . . within [the school district], 60 to 65% of the children are already children of color, and the children who come from poverty levels is increasing . . . . Our school structures aren’t quite ready for that. We don’t know how to provide those structures to make this a success . . . . Latinos and other professionals of colors—we’re the brokers. We’re the bridge. If we don’t make it work with this group, it bodes very ill for the American society ten, twenty years from now. If we think right now we have a lot of gap in terms of income, poor versus the rich, it’s going to be even more devastating for the poor and the rich when there is an issue of color. So I see . . . us [as] the brokers . . . the ones who are going to make this work for the long-range future. Otherwise, we’ll have things that may occur like polarization, outright racial strife, outright battles and wars. I can see that occurring if we don’t attend to it now.

All participants acknowledged that being Latina influenced their leadership role in educating children of all cultural groups. Their varied responses suggest two underlying themes—the first, of inclusion or “welcoming” all students, regardless of cultural differences; the second, a desire for all students to be academically successful. Cecilia described her personality as “not cold” and one that wanted “to win [students] over” to gain “their confidence.” A teacher described Isabel’s manner as one that made “everyone feel welcome.” Isabel conveyed that as a Latina, she saw all children as “gifts” and
“treasures.” She viewed herself as a *comadre* [co-mother] with “the whole neighborhood.” As a principal, she felt like a *madrina* [godmother] toward her teachers. She saw her role as one ready “to guide, to protect, and to make sure they come into a good environment.” Malintzin did not want students of any cultural group to experience what she experienced as a child—one “whose culture was on the sidelines.” Sylvia knew that her presence in a school that had once turned away Hispanic students now allowed Hispanic students “to approach [her speaking Spanish] . . . if they [felt] like it.”

The second theme that emerged was the desire for all students to be academically successful. Cecilia said that being Latina pushed her not to “give up” on students and to help them have the “determination” to succeed. Lynn explained that “different cultures . . . teach their children in different ways.” Hence, she believed that “the best way to teach . . . children . . . [was] to have some background information [in order to] go forward.” Tango noted that as a Latina, she had “a sense of responsibility . . . to make sure additional resources are provided . . . for all [students] to learn.” As a Latina educational leader, she believes she is in a position, along with “other professionals of color,” to be a “broker” or a “bridge” to help “school structures” address the diverse ethnic and socio-economic groups represented by their students.

In addition to influencing the education of students, principals are also responsible for the professional development of their teaching and support staffs. The next section reports their responses to the question, “How does being Latina influence your leadership role in staff development situations?”
Latinas Leading Staff Development

**Cecilia** returned again to the topic of “food” when asked how being Latina influenced her role in staff development situations. She believed “a lot of people are not willing to learn or open their minds to anything when it’s . . . late in the day,” the time when staff development was typically scheduled. Hence, she “always tries to provide something for them [food]” as a way to treat them as “professionals [who] are worth something to [her] and the school.” Another aspect of her Latina leadership was to “give the same respect and the same clout and status to teaching assistants as [she] does to teachers.” She said that prior to her arrival as principal, both teachers and teaching assistants were “not used to” being accorded the same “respect” and “clout.” Cecilia demonstrated that “respect” by “sending [teacher assistants] to classes” and expecting them to attend staff development sessions in their own school. In addition, they were invited to serve on “committees for [the] school site council.” Why? Cecilia explained,

They’re a viable part of our network of our school. They have opinions and they know what’s happening. They know more than we do because they’re in there everyday. They have very good ideas . . . to share . . . So, I think the fact of giving everyone that respect that we’ve learned as Chicanas and as Hispanos—back to my religion and my faith—has really created many leaders that [sic] didn’t think they could be.

**Isabel** believed that Latinas “put in a little bit of spice” in “all the things that [Latina leaders] have to do in professional development.” She clarified further—“*la salsa, para darle el sabor* [the salsa, to give it flavor] . . . It can’t be all black and white.” If
there isn’t “spice and salsa,” then “it could be very boring.” When asked “how [she] made salsa,” Isabel replied, “With anecdotes—with things children say; things teachers have said . . . that focus in on what you’re trying to teach.” Isabel reflected on why she thought this was a Latina characteristic of leadership:

My tía [aunt] used to make us all our clothes . . . y lo hacía de pedacitos de lo que sobraba de aquí, de lo que sobraba de alla [she would make it from little scraps leftover from here, from whatever was leftover from there]— . . . you use everything and you value everything. You value from the older people . . . your grandparents, your great-grandparents, your tíos [uncles], your tías [aunts]—there’s a value, and there’s a way of behaving—el respeto [respect]—and to me that’s the most important thing at [this school]. The kids know it. “Que es lo más importante?” “El respeto.” “A quien van a respetar?” “A mi mismo.” “Y si te respetas tú?” “Voy a respetar a todos los demás” [“What is most important?” “Respect.” “Who are you going to respect?” “Myself.” “And if you respect yourself?” “Then I’ll respect everyone else.”].

Isabel explained how this Latina characteristic influenced her leadership role in professional development. She expected teachers to “respect [themselves]” as she expected the students to respect themselves. She expressed to her staff, “Know what you know and know what you don’t know. Don’t go out there and pretend you know everything, but gain from each other.” Her goal was to create “a community” of learners instead of seeing herself as, “I’m up here and you are down there.” She saw herself as “one of [the teachers].”
When Lynn reflected on her leadership role in professional development and how being Latina might influence it, she first described the teachers in her school. She said of them, “I don’t see them as aggressive ever . . . . They are kind of like a mom. They are there to support . . . to nurture . . . to cooperate.” She then reflected on how she saw “[herself] in them.” Yet, she thought her faculty expected her to address them in this manner: “This is the way it’s going to be.” However, she preferred to have teachers be “captains of their own ships” and to “get to that point” of whatever their professional development was about. When asked why she thought teachers expected her to be more “forceful” in directing professional development, she explained,

[It] comes from schooling in the United States . . . . I think you’re taught from the very beginning, very directly. “You will do this, and you will learn that, and this is what I want . . . .” On the other hand, I see the older . . . more seasoned teachers . . . wanting that respect. And we do respect. We respect our mothers. We respect our grandmothers. We have a matriarchal life . . . . I’ve never been the matriarch because I’ve always had at least one or two in my life that run my show. I’ve learned to do what they want and provide the respect, and then I’m put into that position. It’s an uncomfortable one, but I wind up filling it. But it kind of makes me [think], “Oh, okay, it’s time now.”

Malintzin believed that being Latina “heavily” influenced the “books [she chose] to read to the teachers and staff” as part of their professional development. For example, she guided an in-depth reading of Paulo Freire’s Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1970, 1993). She reflected on why she chose this book: “I think being a Latina made me choose
that book because I believe in what it says.” To “make it easier on [her] teachers,” she prepared “a pre-reading strategy vocabulary” guide. In addition, she prepared a “Power Point presentation” of the main ideas of the book and “a little bit of research on the life of Paulo Freire.” Her “lead teachers read the book ahead of time, and they discussed it with the staff.” As a staff, they then “made a long list of all the things that [they] do that are oppressing children.” Malintzin made a separate list of what she as a principal did that “oppressed children and teachers.” Out of these discussions, the staff was able to re-evaluate what they must “do by law” and what they could still do to relieve oppressive conditions. For example, the staff looked again at . . . the law that severely curtailed bilingual education programs in favor of sheltered English instruction (SEI) classes, but which still allowed bilingual education programs within stricter criteria. Their questions now were, “What can we do to make sure bilingual education stays?” and “What can we do with K-3 money to help the children in the SEI classrooms because . . . [those students] were being oppressed more than anyone else?”

Another book that Malintzin chose for her staff to read and discuss was *Transforming the Difficult Child* (1999) by Howard Glasser. The author met with her staff “twice a year” to talk about “respect for all children.” In reflecting about the books she has chosen to read with her staff, Malintzin commented,

> The professional development I give the adults . . . has a lot to do with respect for the child and the culture the child needs to be there. When we read . . . *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, I think they thought it was going to be something different . . . It’s just a pedagogy—how to get people out of their situation or to recognize . . .
oppression. Basically, we all decided that the way we were going to teach our children [was]... to empower our children before they left us... to defend themselves, to educate them about who they are. That enforced the fact that we used the Chicano and African American literature... in our everyday reading assignments.

Sylvia did not believe that a Latina perspective even entered into her professional development program because she had followed the superintendent’s call to have “laser-like focus.” She stated, “We’re so focused on what we’re doing that [the Latina perspective] doesn’t come into play right now.” She then described in detail the “plan for professional development” that she had submitted to the superintendent. Of that plan, she said, “For the most part, we stuck to that plan, and that plan [included] data analysis, SEI training, math,... reading, writing,... [and] science.”

When asked how being Latina influenced her leadership role in staff development, Tango reflected on two fundamental reasons that “drove her to get a doctorate:”

I wanted to be able to communicate... with a sense of knowledge for any person that was listening... I really felt I needed to let the Anglo person know that I am speaking from a sense of experience and knowledge. I needed to let the Latino know, “Hey, I can do this, too. You guys can do this, too.” So that’s the motivation... I yearned for that sense of knowledge. [It’s] not to say I have all the answers. It’s more that it communicates the idea to the people who are watching me that I have a sense of analysis, that I have a sense of understanding,
that I have a sense of a learning curve. I don’t think I could communicate as effectively, or with confidence, if I didn’t have the doctorate. That’s an interesting idea—like I had to prove myself. But I wanted to speak with a voice of authority, so I needed to have [the doctoral degree].

Tango ended her response by saying she “knew [she] had to be knowledgeable in education in general” with her “staff in the last two schools.”

Of the six participants, all but one identified Latina perspectives that influenced their leadership roles in professional development. Sylvia complied with the superintendent’s call to have “laser-like focus” in their professional development plans. To that end, her staff had focused on the topics of “data analysis, SEI [sheltered English instruction] training, math, . . . reading, writing, . . . [and] science.” Being Latina “[didn’t] come into play” for her. The remaining five participants identified various Latina perspectives that influence their leadership roles in professional development. Among their distinct perspectives, four participants included the notion of “respect” in their narratives. The four instances of naming “respect” follow.

Cecilia and Isabel both referred to food in describing Latina influences on professional development. Cecilia spoke in the literal sense; Isabel spoke of food in a figurative sense. Cecilia served “food” during professional development times to convey to her staff that “professionals are worth something to [her] and the school.” Those “professionals” included teacher assistants to whom she “gives the same respect and the same clout and status as [she] does to teachers.” Isabel believed that Latina leaders “put in a little bit of spice” in “all the things they have to do in professional development.” She
added *salsa* to professional development *para darle el sabor* [to give it flavor].” The “spice” and “salsa” of her presentations were the “anecdotes . . . the things children say; things teachers have said.” The anecdotes reflected her “use of everything and [valuing] everything . . . from the older people . . . [from uncles, aunts] . . .—*el respeto* (respect)” so as to “gain from each other.”

Lynn identified the Latina influence in her leadership of professional development being “a mom . . . to support, . . . to nurture, . . . to cooperate.” Though she found herself wanting to let teachers be “the captains of their own ships,” she seemed to have concluded that they still looked to her as a “matriarch.” Having had “at least one or two” matriarchs in her life, she understood how her teachers wanted to accord her the kind of “respect” accorded to “[their] mothers and grandmothers.” Though “uncomfortable” with the role, she [wound] up filling it.”

Being Latina “heavily” influenced the kind of books Malintzin chose to use for professional development. She reported that the books she chose had “a lot to do with respect for the child and the culture the child needs to be there.” Ultimately, she and her staff decided “to teach . . . children [to be empowered], to defend themselves, and to educate them about who they are.”

Tango seemed to discover the reasons that “drove her to get a doctorate” as she reflected on the question, “How does being Latina influence your leadership role in professional development?” She stated that she “had to prove herself” and that she wanted to “speak with a voice of authority” as a Latina. In general, she wanted “to communicate . . . [a] sense of analysis; . . . a sense of understanding; . . . a sense of a
learning curve.” Specifically, she wanted to communicate to “Anglos,” “I am speaking from a sense of experience and knowledge.” To “Latinos,” she wanted them to “hear, ‘I can do this, too. You guys can do this, too.’”

This section completes the responses to the questions related to the Latina perspectives of educating children of all cultural groups as well as the education of the teaching and support staff.

Latina Perspectives as Leaders of School Change

The topic of the second part of the second interview was leadership related to school change. Two questions addressed the Latina perspective of being a change facilitator: (1) Are any of your communication styles or techniques reflective of ethnic cultural differences between you and your audience? and (2) Are you perceived differently in the role of change facilitator than a person who is not a member of an ethnic minority group? If so, how so? Their responses to these questions are reported next.

Communicating School Change Directives as a Latina Leader

Earlier in the chapter, the participants reported the use of various communication strategies to move change agendas forward: focused group discussions; book study groups; teacher leaders facilitating grade-level meetings; professional development sessions; individual conversations; and political strategizing, such as forming small groups of mixed points of view, knowing how to approach various audiences, and choosing words to garner greater support for a particular change. The participants were then asked if any of their reported styles or techniques of communication were reflective
of ethnic cultural differences between themselves and their audiences. Their responses follow.

Cecilia discovered two types of responses to “anything [she] would say or do” depending on the group she addressed. She “found [it] funny” that her “Anglo staff were like . . . kiss-asses.” They “would do [whatever she asked] and it would surprise [her].” It did not seem to be a “sincere” response, and “it created less of a trust” in Cecilia. On the other hand, she found that the “minorities, and predominantly men,” were “more cautious, more careful” in response to her. This latter group was the one she had “to win over.” Because there was already “dissention and animosity going on between the staff,” Cecilia “had to be very careful” in “how . . . [and] what [she] did to whom.” She had “to be consistent” in applying “policy.” She said of “policy,”

> When it comes to policy, that’s the culture . . . the Anglo culture . . . I say...

Anglo culture because they’re the ones that [sic] developed the policy . . . that’s the system. But what you add to it is what you are and what your culture brings to the job.

What did Cecilia’s Latina culture “bring to the job” when applying “cut and dry” policy? She gave an example of an instance when she used her “style and . . . culture” as a “manager and supervisor” communicating the need for a behavior change in a teacher:

> Just treat people with dignity. Treat students, your colleagues, your T.A., the parents—treat them with dignity. You don’t have to raise your voice or throw people out of your classroom. You don’t have to treat people that way. You can still tell them what you need to tell them, but you don’t need to do it that way.”
think that’s where my style comes in. I don’t know if it’s cultural, or what, but it’s just me.

Isabel acknowledged that, “yeah,” there were styles of communication reflective of ethnic differences between her and her different audiences. For her, it was a matter of deciding “how much salsa” she was going “to put into” a presentation. She explained that it was not a question of “[changing] the facts” but, rather, asking, “How do I present it? How is this group going to understand it? . . . Que tanta salsa le voy a poner a esto? [How much salsa am I going to put into this?]” The salsa referred to the “anecdotes” she would decide to use. Finally, all her presentations included “visuals” because she “is a visual learner.”

Lynn reported dealing with a “Hispanic population most of the time,” be it teachers or parents. Hence, she did not “have to switch” communication styles. The only difference she noted was in the manner in which she shared information with the two groups. When she spoke to teachers during professional development sessions, she “[imparted] information” at an “in-depth” level. With parents, she spoke “in generalities,” as in, “This is where we want to be. This is where we are going. This is how we are going to get there.”

Malintzin felt that she “was embraced by the community,” be they “the African American population” or the “Latinos.” She reported that the “first year” she was the principal, she experienced “a little clashing conflict . . . with Mexican Americans . . . [who] thought the grass was greener on the other side and wanted to be in an eastside school and wanted an Anglo administrator.” “Two of them” told her they wanted “an
Anglo administrator.” Malintzin “encouraged them to go through open enrollment” because she did not think they “were ever going to please them no matter what [they] did.” Of the Anglo community, she reported that “three, four, maybe five [were] pretty racist and told [her] to [her] face . . ., ‘There’s [sic] too many damn Hispanic administrators around here.’” Her response was, “Well, you’re entitled to your opinion.” She accepted these kinds of situations as “part of the job.”

When asked if any of her communication styles or techniques might be reflective of an ethnic cultural difference, Sylvia responded, “That’s a hard question.” Then she offered possibilities. “I think too much, but it fits in my culture.” She grew up “in a very kidding kind of family [where] everybody laughed a lot.” In contrast, she described her Anglo husband’s family as “just a loud group of people . . . you think they’re mad at each other.” She thought that generally “el hispano [the Hispanic] is very humble,” though she’s “sure there are obnoxious ones.” She gave two examples of what she meant by “humble” in verbal expression:

If a Hispanic . . . wants to buy a bra, the Hispanic is going to want to whisper it, write it down, and practically mandate it out of her mouth to say what size . . . bra . . . they . . . wear. The Anglo could care less. “FORTY!” And I’m going, “32A…” [Hispanics] say “thank you” for everything. The poor waiter gets at least a 150 “thank yous” in a 20-minute period . . . Definitely my culture!”

Tango thought about “communicating with . . . parents” when asked if she used any style or technique of communication based on ethnic cultural differences between herself and a particular audience. Being “bilingual . . . increases the communication” with
her parent community. She did not “have to rely on an interpreter” who acted as a “filter”
between the speaker and the audience. Tango believed that her practice of writing a
“weekly newsletter . . . in both English and Spanish [sent] a very strong message to the
community.” As a result of her newsletter, she believed parents knew they could “come
in . . . to the school [and] talk in their home language and ask questions.”

In another example, Tango described “acknowledging” a Latina parent and
daughter waiting outside an office. She explained the practice of acknowledgment:

I acknowledged her . . . “Buenos dias [Good morning]” and I sat down next to
her. Then I was called into my interview. Twenty minutes later when I got out,
she was still sitting there, so I said, “I’ve got to at least gesture and ask her, ‘Have
you been served?’ Ya le estan ayudando? Cuanto tiempo ha estado esperando
[How long have you been waiting?]” It’s that . . . notion that parents are here and
they need to be at least greeted. But I did notice that . . . one of the administrators
came out, an African American, [and] she did the same thing . . . I thought . . . we
need to have that common courtesy with a group, but we also need to do it with
our written presentations . . . [and] in small groups.

Tango ended her statement by saying that because she was bilingual that “there
are specific strategic managerial decisions” that she was able to make when preparing to
meet with parent groups who required use of two languages. If a presenter was not
bilingual, Tango believed, “it’s to the benefit and credit of the school district . . . to
provide that [translation] service for anybody.”
As Latina educational leaders, five of the six participants acknowledged some style or technique of communication that they attributed to cultural differences between themselves and particular audiences. Cecilia thought she brought her “culture” into the role of “manager and supervisor” when she applied “cut and dry” policies from an “Anglo culture” by treating “people with dignity.” Isabel varied the amount of “salsa”—the “anecdotes”—she “put into” her presentations depending on the audience. Malintzin said that she was “embraced by the community” comprised of African Americans, Anglos, and Mexican Americans. She did not specify whether or not she changed her style or technique of communication depending on the audience before her. Sylvia thought that, in general, “el hispano [the Hispanic] is very humble” in expressing himself or herself. As a bilingual Latina leader, Tango noted her ability to make “specific strategic managerial decisions” to communicate with her parent community in two languages rather than depending on translation. She also spoke of her need to “acknowledge others” as a “common courtesy.” Her example was in reference to the Latino parent community. Because Lynn dealt with a “Hispanic population most of the time,” be it teachers or parents, she did not “have to switch” communication styles. The only difference was in speaking in “in-depth” terms with teachers and in “generalities” with parent groups.

In the next section, the participants revealed whether they believed others perceived them differently in the role of change facilitator than leaders who were not members of an ethnic minority group.
Latinas as Change Facilitators

When asked if others perceived her differently as a Latina change facilitator, Cecilia said it depended “on different individuals because [she had] inherited the stigmas of [the school]” when she became its principal. Over the three years she had been principal, she had “been able to show and prove who [she was] and what [she] can do” with “the majority of people.” Working with fellow middle school principals in “study groups and showing them that [she had] her own mind and . . . own ideas and . . . own thinking style,” she had “been able to influence a lot of people who had a lot of prejudices and perceived ideas about the school and about [her].” She described one example of how she set out to change perceptions of the school and likely herself.

As the principal of a dual-language magnet school, one of Cecilia’s tasks was to recruit students from throughout the school district. One of the problems she faced as a first-year principal was to “get schools to come . . . visit [the school] because [she] knew that was the best recruitment tool.” She enlisted the help of her area superintendent by asking him to host “a meeting at [her] school” and invite administrators from schools in the “southeast region.” He agreed. The day of the meeting, Cecilia had “[her] custodian park everyone.” The “librarian . . . hosted” the visitors in the library and “talked about the library” resources. A group of “parents . . . provided a breakfast” and “the office staff . . . helped with [the] meal.” Her student “mariachi [group] . . . serenaded them” and the student “folklorico [group] . . . danced for them.” At the close of the day, Cecilia “brought all the people out that helped with the day and . . . thanked them publicly.” In the end, “the school sold itself.” In reflecting on this experience, Cecilia concluded, “We
fear what we don’t know. Once they got to know who I was, then it was a different
story.”

**Isabel** believed that “at times” Latinas were perceived differently as change
facilitators because of their ethnicity. She cited as an example the process of creating a
“dual language program” at the school. She thought “an Anglo could have done it easier”
and explained why:

I think . . . we value the experiences of the Anglo more than that of a Latina. We
think, “Okay, they’ve been through it or their parents have, or somebody . . . and
they can make the change.” Whereas if you’re a Latina, you are getting
questioned more. “Why is it that you’re doing it? Is it just because you feel that
bilingual education is the only way to go, or have you thought of what it is doing
to the Mexican child, to the Anglo child?” They will question you more as to what
your motives are . . . . They ask us for more facts, more evidence, more research,
and then they say that the research is biased.

“So, yeah,” Isabel concluded that she had been perceived differently “at times” as a
change facilitator.

**Lynn** thought her staff saw her “very much in the Latina role” of “mom.” She
said, “There’s no doubt about it . . . . I’m a mom to everybody.” There was a difference in
the way men perceived her as a change agent—“men see” the way to change as “very
linear.” Providing no further explanation or transition statement, Lynn then stated,
“Latinas . . . don’t see it as vacillating. They see it as all the pieces being put together . . . .
Because they also identify themselves [as moms], they see it as collaboration.” This
statement seemed to allude to her earlier description of her communication style—the "S" pattern that did not "get to the point" in a straight line.

Malintzin thought that she had been perceived differently as a Latina change facilitator when she became principal of the school. "Two teachers . . . told others that [she] got [the] job because [she] was a Latina . . .-not so much because [she] had two master's [degrees] . . . and a year-and-a-half of law school." She thought that "maybe it was just those individuals" who had perceived her differently at that time.

Sylvia made an "observation" about who was offered "leadership roles" in the "present hierarchy of things" in her school district. She stated, "I see many more Anglo females or males moving up in the higher positions." She provided a possible explanation: "If the people in charge, or at least in charge of the hiring, are Anglo, it's a possibility that they're going to hire Anglo people." Nonetheless, she acknowledged not knowing the real reason—perhaps it was "by intent" or "simply [that] no Hispanics applied" for those positions.

Tango believed she was perceived differently as a Latina change facilitator. She thought people saw her as a Latina through obvious features—"the visual . . . the name . . .; she speaks English and Spanish." In addition, "she does things at administrative meetings that always ask the questions about 'What does that mean for our Latino students?'" However, she also believed "administrators see . . . [her] as . . . a person who's able to talk for the whole group" because she had been a "public spokesperson" for a "professional group for . . . principals" over the years that she served as president-elect.
and president. Nonetheless, Tango expressed an on-going concern as a "public spokesperson" for the administrators' organization:

I always double-guess myself. Am I meeting the needs of the Anglo principal . . . [and] the African American principals? Am I being articulate in terms of discussing their needs? I think it has a lot to do with the lack of opportunities to interact with a lot of Anglo principals . . . . I think it's not just because of the ethnic group. It's because of who we work with a lot.

Five of six participants reported that they believed they had been perceived differently as Latina change agents in some form at some time or another. Their narratives seemed to share two underlying themes—that of having to prove self and awareness of inequities in systems.

When Malintzin first became principal, "two teachers told others that [she] got [the] job because she was a Latina" not because she had the academic degrees and professional experiences to take on the role. In her first three years as a principal, Cecilia had "to show and prove who [she was] and what [she could] do" as she interacted with colleagues in "study groups" where she showed them she had "her own mind . . . ideas . . . thinking, style." In this way, she was "able to influence a lot of people who had a lot of prejudices and perceived ideas about the school and about her." Isabel, who retired the month of this interview, believed that "at times," Latina leaders were "questioned more . . . as to what [their] motives are." She said, "They ask for more facts, more evidence, more research, and then they say the research is biased." Tango reported that she was perceived differently by virtue of her "visual" features, her "name," and
because she “speaks Spanish and English.” Further, at administrators’ meetings, she often asked the question, “What does that mean for our Latino students?” As a “public spokesperson” for an administrators’ professional organization, she “always double-guesses” herself. She wondered if she was “articulate” in communicating the concerns of Anglo and African American principals.

Lynn thought the men on her staff would prefer that she be more “linear” in her approach to communicating change directives. She thought that because she and the female teachers saw themselves as “moms,” that they did not see her non-linear approach “as vacillating.” Instead, “they see it as all the pieces being put together.”

Sylvia did not answer the question, at least not directly. She made an “observation” about hiring practices in her school district—many more Anglo females or males are moving up in the higher positions. She added that she did not know if what she observed was “by intent” or “simply [that] no Hispanics applied” for those positions.

This section completes the responses related to how others might perceive a Latina leader in the role of school change facilitator. The next section reports the responses to a final question regarding Latina characteristics of educational leadership.

**Latina Characteristics of Educational Leadership**

In the third and final interview, the participants were asked to reflect on what they thought were unique characteristics of educational leadership, how reform agendas and government influenced heir roles, what advice they would give to administrative interns or neophytes, and how their leadership would evolve in the future. To draw out any further Latina characteristics of educational leadership, they were asked the following
question: “The voice of Latina educational leaders is scarce in the research literature. Describe characteristics of leadership that may be more dominant among Latina educational leaders.” Their responses follow.

Cecilia identified five characteristics she thought were dominant among Latina educational leaders—proving self, being more “caring,” “love of language and commitment to bilingual education,” doing “something for ... [la] raza [the Latino race],” and “the hunger to do more.” Cecilia believed that Latinas “have to do much more, work harder on [selves] than other people because [they] have to prove to others ... that ... [they] have the capability [and] ... the know-how.” She found this “very draining” but conceded that it was “an expectation” that Latinas “put upon” themselves, though “it eases off” in time. Still, she believed it was “something that [Latinas] constantly have to strive for.”

The second Latina characteristic of leadership Cecilia described was being “more caring.” When asked to describe what “caring” looked like, she responded that it was about being “child-centered” and “more affective.” It was about being “[concerned] ... about people being accepted for who they are and being respected.” She then provided an example within the context of her principalship:

When I came here, ... I would always say, “Buenos días [Good morning],” to the custodians and to the TAs [teacher assistants] and they would look at me like, “Why are you talking to me?” Before, they were invisible ... People would not recognize them, would not give them the dignity of a saludo [greeting] ... I always think people need to be recognized for who they are and be valued ...
You have to acknowledge that they’re among you or in your presence . . . . I’ll always apologize if someone comes in and I’m right in the middle of something and I have to finish that thought . . . . I’ll . . . say, “Forgive me but I needed to finish this thought, but que gusto me da de verte [how pleased I am to see you]!” … I believe it’s very disrespectful not to recognize them for who they are.

Cecilia described a third characteristic of Latina leadership. Her “love for the language and [her] commitment to bilingual education is a result of being Chicana . . . . it [derives] from being mexicana [Mexican].” When she “went into education,” [she] never thought that [she] would be a bilingual educator.” However, when she “found out about bilingual education,” she recalled her father saying she “needed to do something for [her] raza [race]” and discovered that “this [was] it.” She described the “route” she took after realizing this was a way “to do something for her raza.”

When I saw that opportunity, I embraced it and then looked to see what else I needed to do for myself so that I could give to others—like . . . special education because so many of our Chicano children were being classified in special education, go into school and community education because many people don’t understand how to work with minority students and their families.

Cecilia went on to describe a fourth characteristic of Latina leadership. She said, “When you come from a minority family or an immigrant family, [there] is the hunger to do more, and the hunger to survive, and a hunger to accomplish where others could not.” It was an attribute she wanted “to rebuild in [Latino] children and . . . families.” She spoke of seeing this “hunger” in the school’s “young families . . . [in the] parents that
have that drive and that willingness." However, she believed their "children [had] lost it." She reflected, "I guess our next challenge is how do I learn to regain that hunger to learn?"

Isabel described three characteristics of Latina leadership as she also compared Latina (female) leadership to Latino (male) leadership. Latina leadership is characterized by the "nurturing," "correcting," and "mentoring" spirit of "la madre hispana, la madre Latina [the Hispanic mother, the Latina mother]." She prefaced her description of Latina educational leadership by citing possible forces that led Latinas into positions of leadership:

I think ... by the time we become principals, we have become leaders. It may have started with wanting to help our own, that we saw injustices being done, and that continue to be done—whether they are the children, the parents, teachers—because those are still there. I think we thought, "Okay, I can help there." I think many of us did not start out saying, "I’m going to be a principal . . ." but we went through school . . . We became teachers and leaders in the teaching profession.

Isabel then commented that "Latinas have become better leaders than Latinos." She was asked to elaborate on the difference between Latina and Latino leaders. She believed that the Latinos "were the first window dressings" in positions of leadership and that it "wasn’t as difficult for them to get into leadership" as it had been for Latinas. She described her observations about how Latinos "got into leadership at the very beginning:"

Once they got into leadership . . . they were either activists or they were saying, "I got here because I’m intelligent and I deserve to get here. You will get here. I
don’t need to help you. Nobody helped me . . .” We see that in some Latinas but not as much as we did in the men . . . They don’t see how they can help others. They might be in professional roles . . . and helped to an extent, but they don’t have that nurturing that the Latina has.

Isabel then described “the role that [Latinas] have taken with the little ones and . . . the role that [she took] with her teachers:

*Tenemos* [We have] the nurturing, but at the same time we have the *pleito de la madre hispana, de la madre Latina que,* “*A mi me pueden hacer lo que les de la gana, pero a mi hijo, vale mas que no. No me tienten a mi hijo ni con palabras ni con nada* [the contention/pleading of a Hispanic mother, a Latina mother, that [says], “You can do whatever you want to do to me, but you better not do it to my son/child. Do not touch my child, not with words, not with anything.”].

In the same spirit as protecting children, Isabel described her role in protecting teachers: “Tell me whatever you want, but leave my teachers alone . . . They are out there fighting. They are doing a great job.” although a “*madre Latina*” is protective and “nurturing,” she is also “correcting” because “*el buen querer es el buen guiar* [loving well is good guidance].” She provided an example of how she filled this role:

I love the teachers here but I will sit down with them—“*Mira, esto es lo que oi; esto es lo que dijiste. No me gusto. Explicame lo.* [Look, this is what I heard; this is what you said. I didn’t like it. Explain it to me],” and give them an opportunity, give them the dignity, and be the nurturer but be the guide.
Isabel then spoke about seeking out "otras Latinas [para] platicar—'Que esta pasando [other Latinas to converse—What is happening]?" She expressed that she "liked to mentor other principals that [sic] are Latina mainly because [she felt] that the gringas [Anglo women], the dominant society, have their mentors." Further, she "still [felt] looked down upon as Latinas." She concluded her reflection with an example of how Latinas are "looked down upon."

"Oh, bilingual education is your big deal. You’re a Mexican.” And so what if it’s my big deal? Yours is something else, and I am not going to look down on it and say, “Oh, well, that’s because you’re a gringa.” So it’s good to meet with others . . . and know that I am not the only one going through it, and they will know that they are not the only ones.

Lynn, who again explained that she had “never been in anything but a school that is Hispanic,” thought that Latina leaders “feel that they have to compensate for the fact that, one, they are a woman and, one, that they are Latina.” As a Panamanian Latina working with mostly Mexican Americans, Lynn said that “culturally, [they] share much of the culture, [though their] dances . . . and food may be different.” However, their cultural “core is much the same.” She was asked to describe that “core.” She responded, I think it’s respect. It’s collaboration . . . I guess it’s working together . . . but there’s a way in which you do it culturally. It may be food because maybe not all faculties expect to have food every time they meet—maybe that’s just a mother type of role and yet this faculty wants it.
Besides food “every time they meet,” Lynn pointed out that her “faculty wants praise” and needed to “be validated.” She wondered “if . . . other schools go through this” or “if that’s being Latina or . . . being culturally sensitive or . . . [if] that’s just . . . good practice.”

**Malintzin** identified three characteristics of Latina leadership—“shared leadership,” “equity,” and “respect.” She “wondered” if “shared leadership” was a result of Latinas being “from a matriarch society of some kind.” She offered a second explanation: “We all probably come from families that are big, and so we tend to know that we can’t do it all ourselves so we have to share the duties.” She added that “caring” and “hugging” are part of this “shared leadership.”

Awareness of “equity, more than anything else,” was a Latina characteristic, reported Malintzin. “Looking at . . . equity situations . . . probably [comes] from . . . childhood . . . [when] . . . culture was ignored.” Hence, Latinas “want to make sure that nobody is ignored” and that there is “respect for all kids.”

**Sylvia** identified “determination” as a characteristic of Latina leadership. She defined what she meant by “determination:”

[It’s] kind of like a stubbornness- a certain “watch me” kind of attitude. I think that’s the only way to survive. It’s not size and it’s not appearance or anything like that. It’s a certain determination. It’s an “I’m going to win” attitude . . . It’s like a dog with a bone–you do not let go. Once you feel . . . -figure out what that passion is, it will be the sense of a dog with a bone–they will not let go.
Sylvia reflected on Latina leaders by describing them as "so strong . . . [of] unbelievable strength." The strength comes from having that "determination . . . that vision . . . [that] you want to make a difference because you get hit a lot." Sylvia ended her statement by reiterating, "You get hurt a lot, especially if you’re touchy/feely . . . My emotions are worn on my sleeve . . . So I think you have to be a strong person."

**Tango** identified two characteristics that she had observed "consistently with the Latinas" she knew—having "a sense of mission" and its corresponding call "to mentor others." Although she acknowledged that "other principals" may also have this "sense of mission," she felt this was dominant among Latinas. She described her "mission:'"[It’s] a sense of "I owe it to the communities." If I don’t do it, I have to make sure somebody else does this so it’s incumbent on me to make sure that I mentor others . . . I’m dispensable . . . that’s another reason I have to make sure I mentor others . . . to be leaders . . . not only Latinas but . . . Anglo principals to see what I can see. "You Anglo principals are still going to have to deal with children of poverty and children of color, so what is it that you need to be sensitive, aware of, and learn about?" . . . So, there’s a role for me regardless of the ethnic group of principals. I do see it as a sense of mission.

The participants identified seven characteristics of leadership that may be more dominant among Latina educational leaders. Four of the six participants made some reference to attributes ascribed to the mother role. The remaining characteristics were having a sense of mission and passion and a tendency to embrace the values of collaboration, mentoring, respect, and equity.
Isabel described Latina educational leaders as having the qualities of mothers—"la madre hispana, la madre latina." She described the "nurturing" and "correcting" nature of this role. Cecilia thought that Latina leaders were "more caring," meaning that they were "child-centered" and "more affective" in their interactions with both children and adults. Malintzin included "caring" and "hugging" in her description of Latina leaders.

Lynn thought that her faculty’s expectation “to have food every time they meet” was “just a mother type of role.” Her faculty also looked to her for “praise” and “validation.”

Tango and Cecilia each expressed having a sense of mission as Latina educational leaders. For Tango, it was something she ‘owed’... to the communities—teaching others how to work with “children of poverty and children of color.” For Cecilia, it was about doing “something for... [la] raza [Latino race].” Perhaps related to having a mission, Latina educational leaders tended to have a “passion” about something, as Sylvia stated. For her, it was figuring out a “vision” for making “a difference” and possessing “a certain ‘watch me’ attitude.” Cecilia spoke about her “love of language and commitment to bilingual education.” For Cecilia, passion seemed to be contained in her drive to “prove” herself and in her “hunger to do more.”

The values of collaboration, mentoring, respect, and equity were also shared among more than one participant’s description of Latina educational leaders. Lynn spoke about “collaboration” as a “core” of Latino culture. Malintzin “wondered” if being “from a matriarch society of some kind” led to the “shared leadership” style of Latina leaders. Perhaps the practice of collaboration leads Latina leaders to “mentor” others. Isabel
found it “good to meet with other [Latinas]” to “platicar . . . lo que esta pasando [to discuss what is happening].” Tango believed that it was “incumbent on [her] to make sure that [she] mentor others” about the “need to be sensitive, aware of, and learn about children of poverty and children of color.” Lynn identified “respect” as another “core” characteristic among Latina leaders. It was an attribute repeated by Malintzin as she described Latina leaders’ sensitivity to “equity situations . . . probably” as a result of “childhood” experiences when their “culture was ignored.” For that reason, she believed in “respect for all kids.”

This section completes the responses to the question of Latina perspective in the final interview designed to summarize what it meant to be an educational leader in the current era—“Describe characteristics of leadership that may be more dominant among Latina educational leaders.” The next section records remarks made by the participants at the conclusion of all three interviews.

Closing Remarks by Participants

At the end of the three interviews, the participants were invited to make closing remarks. Three participants offered final thoughts. Isabel thanked the researcher and commented, “I didn’t know I thought all these things. I am so glad that you are doing this and I look forward to reading your dissertation.” Malintzin stated only that she was “interested in reading . . . [the dissertation] because . . . leadership is important to [her].” Sylvia found the interviews “very interesting,” and reflected, “I’ve not had time to think of some of the questions that you’d asked—‘Why is it that we do what we do?’”
Tango reflected on two themes at the close of the interviews: (1) a “backlash” that may come against Latina school administrators related to the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 leading to the performance ranking of schools and (2) the value of Luis Moll’s (1992) research on “funds of knowledge.”

Tango expressed “concern” about “a possible backlash” against the Latina administrators who led the majority of “underperforming schools” in her local community. Her “concern” was that “rumor” or “misconception” could “occur” as a result of anyone making the observation that the schools were underperforming “because they all have Latinas for principals.” Though she did not think that anyone had “mentioned it yet,” she did believe that Latinas “have to face it, . . . acknowledge it, . . . be aware and . . . sensitive to [it] . . . in case that . . . does come down.” She had shared this concern only “with two other colleagues who are Latinas” but thought that she should bring this concern to the attention of a Hispanic administrators’ group at their next conference.

Secondly, Tango “wanted to bring up [the] funds of knowledge” research of Luis Moll that “reinforces . . . that notion about resiliency and being able to identify the strengths of people.” Being able to identify people’s strengths “drives” her and helps her deal with the “recalcitrant teacher” and “most high-maintenance students.” She concluded her thoughts by pointing out that the Moll’s (1992) funds of knowledge research had been the work of “Latino researchers.” She identified it as “a body of knowledge that we need to develop within our own groups.”
This section concludes the report of the participants’ responses to questions designed to elicit Latina perspectives of educational leadership and the entire report of results. A summary of the major findings for each of the two central questions of the study follows: (1) How does the Latina elementary school principal define and enact leadership for school change? and (2) How do the variables of ethnic culture interplay in the Latina educational leadership role?

Summary

Summary of the Results: Part I:
How Does the Latina Elementary School Principal Define and Enact Leadership for School Change?

Six Latina elementary school principals from a Southwestern urban school district participated in this study. Five of the participants were of Mexican origin; one was of German/Panamanian origin. Four of the six participants identified themselves as Chicana. One participant preferred to call herself Hispanic, and the Panamanian participant called herself Latina. The participants were not a monolithic group. They represented a variety of backgrounds in terms of birthplaces, family size and income, and birth order. More commonalities were found in comparing educational histories. All participants identified at least one family member who inspired them to pursue postsecondary education, though half of them encountered some parental resistance to moving away from home to attend college. Two participants spoke of the familial expectations of contributing to the financial well being of the family or siblings. All participants had acquired at least one master’s degree; two had earned doctoral degrees.
All shared the specialization of bilingual education in their preparation to become teachers and administrators. Each took part in three interviews.

Part I of the results reported the participants’ responses to the first central question of this study: How does the Latina elementary school principal define and enact leadership for school change? This two-part question sought to discover how they defined leadership for school change and how they enacted leadership for school change. To define "leadership for school change," the participants were asked to define leadership, educational leader, and education. The terms educational leader and education were additionally defined through metaphor. To learn how they enacted leadership for school change, they were asked to define their notions of change. Specifically, they defined the stages of change and described how they supported others through change, how they countered resistance to change, the procedures they used to generate and disseminate knowledge related to a change process, the degree to which they used reflection and dialogue in effecting change, how they promoted coherence and commitment during a change effort, and how they celebrated successful change efforts. To elicit further notions of change, they defined change through metaphor. In the closing interview, the participants identified characteristics of educational leadership, described the role of educational leaders in response to reform agendas and government directives, offered advice to administrative interns, and reflected on their future roles as educational leaders. The final question asked them to define educational leadership via metaphor.
Defining Leadership for School Change

The six Latina elementary school principals defined leadership in the context of education, even when the modifier “educational” was purposefully omitted in asking the question. All participants shared the belief that leadership was about moving others forward toward some defined goal, generally of improving student learning. To that end, all but one participant specified the need to mentor, nurture, or guide others from one level to another. Five participants described characteristics of collaborative leadership such as identifying people’s attributes and talents, shared decision making, and creating open and trusting work environments. Four leadership personality traits were identified—having charisma, walking the talk, living ethically, and being a risk-taker. One participant noted that women still need to help each other ascend to leadership positions, and one participant expressed the ambivalence she experienced as a principal—“walking a tightrope” as she discerned what was best for students and what was convenient for teachers.

In describing their own leadership styles, five of the six participants described a relationship-oriented style of leadership—one motivated by the need to maintain close working relationships with others. They used the following descriptors of this style: “personable,” “modeling,” “nurturing and partnering,” “caring, humanistic, compassionate, with a lot of heart,” and “collaborative and professional.” Only one participant identified herself as having a task-oriented style of leadership, that is, being motivated by the need to accomplish assigned tasks. She described herself as “fair” and “following the book.”
The participants' recollections of early leadership development revealed two findings. First, four of the six participants said they were not conscious of being leaders until well into adulthood and then mostly because others told them they were leaders. Secondly, their leadership development stories revealed no single personality trait that defined or predicted leadership. Using only one word to describe each participant given the stories they shared, note the variety of personality traits they ascribed to themselves. Cecilia spoke often of being “determined.” Isabel called herself a “rebel.” Lynn saw herself as a “teacher.” Malintzin described herself as “bold,” and Sylvia described herself as a “quiet observer.” Tango described herself as a “risk-taker.”

The participants used a total of eight metaphors to describe educational leader. Six metaphors suggestive of movement conveyed dispositions and behaviors of educational leaders—teacher, octopus, hat-changer, juggler, tango dancer, and rallier. Two metaphors conveyed the affective and cognitive dimensions of educational leaders—heart and flowerpot. The participants’ explanations of these metaphors conveyed various dimensions of educational leaders.

Cecilia’s concept of a teacher educational leader was someone who was unafraid to do what had to be done; acted from firm convictions; kept his or her word; and strove to learn what was most suitable for his or her staff by listening, building rapport, guiding, and making decisions collaboratively. Lynn’s “frazzled” octopus-hat-changer-juggler conveyed the “agility” needed by an educational leader to respond to the varied constituents of education. Tango’s educational leader as tango dancer moved fluidly rather than “frazzled” in continuously “[making] choices and decisions in the moment”
and "[communicating] constantly" to know when and how to respond to the changing dance partners without bumping into the others on the dance floor. Malintzin's rallier emphasized the "bird's-eye view" of the educational leader necessary for motivating and cheering on a team to aspire to the goals they set for themselves.

Affective and cognitive dimensions of the educational leader were suggested by the heart and flowerpot metaphors. Isabel described an educational leader as a multicolored heart that understood the need to "educate the full child" and recognized every child's "giftedness." Such an educational leader would understand how "all the colors that make up the heart" were "intertwined and work together" within a person as well as within a system. Sylvia's "flowerpot" educational leader contained the "soil for the little seeds to grow and flower" and found "the right balance in the soil for things to grow" in. For Sylvia, that meant staying abreast of current literature pertinent to the work of educators.

The central role of an educational leader is to educate. Before asking the participants to define their notions of "education," they were asked to share their beliefs about human nature and the ability to learn. All participants who responded believed that all students could learn in some form to some degree. Two participants addressed what they considered untrue assumptions of learners of color and poverty. Tango disagreed with anyone who believed that "one ethnic group or one cultural group has more abilities than others." Lynn believed that human potential can be developed even among learners from low socioeconomic levels and that children should not be treated "like they are poverty-stricken."
The participants then defined the process of education, for children or adults. Five of the six participants defined what the process of educating others. Cecilia believed that to educate is to “find that spark . . . and ignite it . . . to motivate [students] to want to learn.” Isabel believed it meant “to open the door and let the people come in”—people willing to share their knowledge with students as students explored their own questions. To educate was “to nurture” and “guide” learners so they can “grow to their fullest potential” by providing a variety of material and human resources to the learners, said Lynn. Sylvia defined the process of education as teaching “skills” and “common knowledge” that enabled the learner “to live, to work, [and] to be a respected member of society” who could “fend for [himself/herself].” For Tango, educating meant entering into a relationship with the learner in a supportive role—“to be present . . . to be available for that person to challenge ideas, . . . to bring up concepts, . . . to ask questions . . .” Cecilia and Tango also contrasted their mainstream American perspective of education with a Latina perspective that had little to do with formal schooling accomplishments. Instead, being educated meant having the capacity to successfully interact with others no matter what differences existed in social standing or schooling status.

The participants’ definitions of education generally quickly led to their opinions about the conditions necessary for optimum learning, though this was not a specific question posed by the interviewer. Cecilia and Sylvia pointed out the role of the learner in education. Cecilia said the learner must have the “ganas” to learn—“that determination . . . to overcome any and every obstacle.” Sylvia used the adage, “You can lead a horse to water, but you can’t make him drink.” She specified the need for learners
to rise above challenging circumstances in their home environments. Tango assumed that the “person’s intent is to learn” until proven otherwise by the learner.

The role of the teacher in education was pointed out as well. Cecilia believed it was the educator’s job “to motivate [students] to want to learn.” Isabel emphasized the educator’s job in discovering each learner’s giftedness and interests. The students’ interests can be used as the “vehicles” to carry the curriculum standards. Sylvia expected teachers to know how to “tweak” the curriculum in order to impart “basic skills” and “common knowledge” in a way that each learner understood it. Isabel concurred that teachers should remain flexible in their lesson plans. Because all learners do not learn in the same way or at the same pace, Sylvia and Lynn believed that teachers needed to determine different means for imparting information and making accessible a variety of material and human resources to the learners.

The affective nature of the teacher-learner relationship was also addressed. Sylvia believes that the relationship between teacher and student determined the extent to which the student would engage in the learning experience. She cautioned teachers not to be “mean” and to “be prepared” so that students knew they “care.” Lynn and Isabel each specified that students could benefit from an increased involvement by parents, grandparents, and community members as tutors and mentors.

Lynn and Tango both addressed the factor of socio-economics on learning opportunities. Lynn did not believe in treating children as though they were “poverty-stricken” even if they came from low-income areas. She encouraged teachers to have “high expectations for . . . all” students. Tango stated that socioeconomic differences
created disparities in learning opportunities more than race or culture. To deal with a wide mix of socioeconomic and ethnic minority groups in the classroom, Tango believed teachers needed a wider repertoire of content knowledge and teaching skills to help their students “construct the learning.”

How did these principals lead their teachers in the process of educating students? Cecilia and Sylvia both used processes that engaged teachers in study and conversations to understand their beliefs about pedagogical theory and instructional practices. Cecilia avoided “dictating” instructional approaches. She believed teachers “buy in” to concepts and practices more readily if they have had opportunities to study and discuss a topic as a group. Before engaging staff in professional development, Sylvia first identified “what [she’s] up against or what [she’s] trying to convey” and tried to discern the best way “to get people to do what they need to do and then hold them accountable.” Sylvia tried to “treat [teachers] as individuals” and encouraged them to have “substantive conversations” that led to “the . . . truth about what’s going on, . . . why, and how [she] can help.” Isabel, Lynn, Malintzin, and Tango guided professional development primarily through other providers such as curriculum specialists, outside presenters, peer presenters, and any other learning opportunities that would increase their repertoire of knowledge and skills to benefit children. Overall, these educational leaders appeared to serve primarily as guides in their teachers’ professional development.

To further define the process of educating, the participants were asked to describe education using a metaphor. Cecilia, Isabel, and Malintzin used images of the world to describe education. Cecilia said schooling helped learners widen their horizons.
Education was the “key to the world” and “a way for people to know who they are and who they want to become.” Education can be used as a political tool to build up or destroy individuals or groups. Isabel and Malintzin envisioned aesthetic symbols of the world. Isabel heard distinct cultural strains of music being emitted from the world as well as similarities in music—symbols of the uniqueness of individuals and cultural groups as well as the shared characteristics across groups. As Malintzin recalled a Diego Rivera painting of the world in the cosmos and its beauty, she wondered how people can “make . . . life ugly” by “making problems for our minds.” Cecilia, Isabel, and Malintzin each conveyed the value of exploring the world and its culturally diverse inhabitants. Additionally, Cecilia and Malintzin reflected on the conflict that was inherent in cultural diversity.

The remaining three metaphors for education described by Lynn, Sylvia, and Tango seemed to describe education within the context of schooling. Lynn saw the image of a teacher at the head of the class with children seated before her. Sylvia envisioned making salsa as the process of education. Each person was the salsa-in-the-making. Parents, teachers, and others in their lives, “put in a little bit of this, a little of this,” and in time, each person became his or her own unique batch of salsa. Tango described a “traditional schoolhouse” emitting smells of “tortillas and hamburgers and pizza” and sounds of English, Spanish, Yoeme, and code switching. The image reflected a diverse student population and perhaps an implied belief that that all learners contribute in unique ways to the educational process and milieu of the schoolhouse. In sum, the metaphorical
descriptions of education were evenly divided between the affective and cognitive
domains of education—the education of the heart and the mind.

*Enacting Leadership for School Change*

Educational leaders charged with leading teachers to lead students in the learning
process are consequently charged with leading teachers through changes related to
instructional practices. A series of questions was asked to learn how these elementary
school principals led their staffs through school changes.

External forces appeared to drive school change more than internal forces in these
principals’ schools. Five of the six participants identified “external forces” as agents of
school change such as Title I (Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) and the
No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary
Education Act of 1965) federal regulations, and achievement test data. Other “outside
mandates” included directives that came from outside the school and “policies or . . .
mandates originating in politics.” Three participants named teachers and principals as
change agents. Other initiators of change were the school vision statement, parents,
custodians, and “anyone with a concern.”

This group of educational leaders used a variety of approaches to persuade others
to make changes. All participants engaged teachers in some form of focused group
discussion to effect change. One participant consulted with all staff members to make
decisions affecting their work, be they teachers, custodians, or “kitchen people.” Two
principals described leading the reading and discussion of books to set the stage for
impending change. Two others encouraged teachers to form study groups and to use
outside sources of information to lead each other through change processes. Two principals used professional development on topics related to specific changes.

Three of the six participants introduced change by complimenting individual teachers for their accomplishments on a weekly basis, using stories and humor to introduce “the good news or bad news” of change, and by being “direct” in communicating top-down district directives for change. In three cases, the participants mentioned political strategizing as a means for moving a change agenda forward. Three examples were given: (1) “planting seeds in different people to get them to think” in the direction of the needed change, (2) mixing teachers in small groups to increase discussion of a variety of perspectives, and (3) anticipating what particular audiences expected to hear and selecting the language and style of presentation accordingly.

Once a change process was set into motion, the principals discussed the use of individual conversations to support teachers making a change. The one-to-one conversations helped the principals gauge the level of understanding and ease with which the teacher would make the change and indicated whether additional mentoring and coaching would be necessary. Occasionally, the principals needed to formulate formal plans for improvement to convince reticent teachers of the need for change or facing formal dismissal.

Michael Fullan (2001) posited that effective leaders understood the process of change as an on-going reculturing process and were more successful at leading others through change. In this study, three participants were able to identify three or more stages of change. Two identified two stages of the change process, and one indirectly alluded to
two stages of change. All participants identified resistance as the first predictable stage of change using the following labels—anger, denial, discomfort, grief, reluctance, or resistance. Four participants discussed a second stage moving toward acceptance of the change. It was a period characterized by “looking within” for direction and by eventually integrating the known with the unknown after careful analysis. One participant thought that repeating the same message of the change goals increased the clarity of the goals over time. Another participant talked of pausing “to get a grip” before devising a plan to make the change. Three participants identified a third stage of change—practice. This third stage was identified by two names—the “transforming” period and the “training” period. One principal identified reflection as part of this practice stage. Two participants named a fourth predictable stage of change—an evaluation period.

After a change process had been declared, how did these educational leaders support others through the process? There were varied responses to this question. Two participants reported establishing a climate of trust in which teachers could share their beliefs and opinions, including disagreements. Other means of support included being “there” for teachers “to rely on” and to “give them the information they need when they need it” through on-going professional development and individual consultations. In informal conversations, one principal “coaxed people” along “the steps” of change and provided “timely encouragement as soon as they start trying” the new practice. She also used different public means to recognize teachers for their efforts and accomplishments.

Another principal emphasized the importance of teaching the new practice until teachers “can do it in their sleep” and can “make connections” between points “A . . .
B... C” so that they can see how their work fits into a broader picture. One
participant found it important to listen carefully to all comments, accept them all without
judgment, and redirect discussions to the data at hand rather than to “the stories.”

Conversely, how did the participants deal with teachers who resisted change
efforts? Most responses to the question implied that though there was initial and
predictable resistance to change, few teachers resisted change to the point where they
were faced with a plan for improvement or a dismissal. Only two participants specifically
identified this last resort for teachers who did not meet their instructional goals. Instead,
all participants described communication strategies that helped them lead resisters
through change. Cecilia directly asked teachers for advice on how they might address a
particular situation. Isabel communicated belief and confidence to teachers who doubted
their abilities to succeed in a new practice. Lynn moved strategically about a room when
speaking to her staff so more people would “attend” to her. She followed group
discussions by engaging individuals in conversations to keep “chipping away” at
resistance. Malintzin emphasized the need for “timely encouragement as soon as they
start trying” the new practice. Sylvia consciously changed the tone of directives she
received from her superiors to avoid sounding “blunt and abrupt and rude” when
presenting them to her staff. She used “please” and “thank you” often in making her
requests. She made plans for moving people from one point to another. Tango spoke of
the importance of listening carefully in order to determine the need for support or direct
intervention in moving others toward change. In all, these principals appeared to agree
that the communication manner made a difference in bringing about change.
To promote school change, the participants used a variety of means to generate and share knowledge. Four of the six participants used professional development, most often facilitated by teachers, to generate and share knowledge to bring about school-wide change. One principal used site council meetings and annual retreats to set school program goals. Two principals identified two other means for passing along pertinent information to their staffs—weekly newsletters to handle “management things” and printed information from professional reading and district-wide meetings via e-mail. One principal reported “protecting” teachers’ planning and professional development time by keeping out external interruptions to the school day. Finally, one principal used her knowledge of curriculum and experience with teaching curriculum to “guide the individual” teacher through change.

The question “To what degree do you use self-reflection as part of the change process?” yielded briefer responses than did previous questions. Four participants reported some amount of time during which they engaged in self-reflection—from “Constantly!” to “70%” and “100%” to “not . . . enough.” Three participants commented on some aspect or advantage of self-reflection. Isabel thought it was important “to look at what you know and really look deep down inside.” Lynn said that without self-reflection “you can’t fine-tune and you can’t grow.” Sylvia stated that self-reflection helped one know “how you talk to each other . . . [and] how you decide what you feel is important, and what you’re willing to step out and try” and that it takes time to reflect. Three principals provided examples of how they engaged in self-reflection. Cecilia spoke to her husband, also an educator. Malintzin related a story of a conflict between herself and a
teacher witnessed by other teachers. She reflected on her behavior by asking teachers for feedback and “taking notes.” Tango spoke about using written reflections to note yearly progress in her role as an administrator and about meeting two or three times per year with another principal to discuss what they were learning in their roles as principals.

When asked to what degree they used dialogue to promote school change, most participants gave vague responses. Four participants stated that dialogue was important or that “nothing’s going to happen” without it. Sylvia thought she engaged in dialogue with her staff—“50%.” She offered an explanation for not spending more time on dialogue – too many external directives for change that she “worked really, really hard” to translate into “more human” terms before announcing them to her staff. She learned from an end-of-year written reflection from her staff that all wanted “more time to talk to each other.” Tango reported on weekly staff development sessions in which she and her staff engaged in dialogue related to three central questions–how to apply the new knowledge to classroom practice, how to evaluate the teachers’ new practice, and how to evaluate whether it made a difference in the students’ learning. Three principals provided examples of settings for dialogue. Cecilia described child study teams to develop individual education plans for special education students and school improvement discussions. Lynn referred to individual conversations. Malintzin described how change was initiated in her school through individuals who recorded their ideas on “a white board” in her office. Changes involving the whole school were brought “up to the staff . . . almost every other Monday” at staff meetings.
Given the number of change efforts and the number of personnel involved in these efforts at any one time in a school, how did these principals promote a sense of coherence and commitment to change? Four participants directly or indirectly identified communication avenues as a means for promoting coherence and commitment to a change effort. Tango reported four communication strategies: setting ground rules for staff interactions, setting agendas with time frames, training for all personnel to learn about the "systems . . . assumptions . . . and foundations" inherent in the "personal journey" of change, and reading literature related to their topics of study. Sylvia kept her staff informed as to "what's happening . . . [and] why" as she was informed by her superiors. She also clarified which items were open to negotiation, which were not, and why. They then worked to make the "non-negotiables" work in a way that made them "happy." Isabel described their staff practice of keeping each other appraised of progress in the implementation of new practices. They questioned continuously how to improve their efforts, and they shared their accomplishments along the way. Cecilia emphasized the need for a staff "to confront their mission statement . . . [and] their beliefs." Teachers "not committed to improving the school," should "go elsewhere." Further, she expected teachers to put aside philosophical differences about such matters as mandated achievement testing. Two participants did not describe how they promoted coherence and commitment directly. Lynn said promoting coherence and commitment was "very difficult" when not all staff members "[bought] into it." Malintzin responded that her grade-level lead teachers are more "highly encouraged" and "courageous" in proposing changes.
As these principals led their staffs through successful change efforts, they each found ways to celebrate their accomplishments. All participants publicly acknowledged successful change efforts. Four of the principals identified snacks or meals as a mainstay of celebrations. Two principals used the public address system to recognize their staff’s successes and wrote thank you notes regularly to praise teachers for specific observations they had made. Isabel gave public recognition to her staff at faculty meetings, parent group meetings, and at weekly school-wide assemblies. Cecilia distributed a weekly school newsletter detailing teachers’ accomplishments. Tango celebrated others through her daily welcoming, smiles, pats on the back, and striving to “be available” to others. From a simple smile to the most elaborate “party,” it was apparent that these principals recognized the value of making time to celebrate their successful change efforts.

To draw out further characteristics of change, the participants were asked to describe the phenomenon of change as a metaphor. All but one of the six participants described change with metaphors suggestive of movement. Cecilia described change as “climbing a hill,” which required “sacrifice” and “grieving” to arrive at “the climax” for the “benefit” of children. Isabel envisioned a picture of a multi-colored heart that implied a steady pulse of change to “[make improvements].” Lynn saw a tug-of-war between two forces, one not necessarily a person but things such as “a situation . . . material . . . or a language barrier.” Malintzin described change as “something revolving like the interlocking wheels in a clock.” She pointed out that “history” was inherent in the change process because change happened “in cycles.” Tango used the tango to describe change as a dance between two partners who alternately led and followed and who created
“embellishments” in response to each other’s cues. Sylvia described an image of white space bordered by a “wavy blue or yellow line” and then stated that this was “not necessarily a metaphor.” However, she stated that “long-lasting change” was “subtle” and not a result of “fear.” It was “that little thing that from this day forward you . . . do because it worked and it was the right thing to do.”

Defining the Overall Essence of Educational Leadership for School Change

The final interview was designed to elicit characteristics of educational leadership unique to this field through direct, reflective, and metaphorical descriptions. The participants were asked to reflect on educational leadership in light of current reform agendas, government directives, personal experience, and reflections on future leadership roles.

Educational leadership stands apart from other forms of leadership because it involved children and youth. One participant observed that “most” educators go into the profession to “make a difference” in the lives of children and youth who are “at stake” in public education. Educators know they “have to accept everybody” that enrolls in their schools along with their assorted “baggage . . . and experiences” and “take them to their optimum.” Children are not objects in a factory “cast from the same mold . . . . They are all individuals.” Collectively, these individuals become complex groups of “very different socioeconomic . . . , cultural . . . , [and] racial backgrounds.”

Participants also identified features of educational leadership shared with the business world - the quest for satisfactory customer service and such practices as “long-range planning . . . , decisions [based] on data . . . , professionalism, and . . . ethics.”
However, unlike the corporate world, public education leaders must be “able to deal with little budgets” in creative and resourceful manners.

Principals have been expected to bring about school changes in response to reform agendas (Murphy & Adams, 1998). How had reform agendas influenced or circumscribed the roles of these six educational leaders? Five of the six participants reported that the reform agendas definitely influenced or circumscribed their roles as educational leaders. Sylvia did not believe principals had “any authority whatsoever” though they might “think [they] do” because “someone is always telling [them] what [they] have to be working on.” Conversely, Lynn believed that principals did have latitude “to figure out what’s best for [their] school” even though she, too, reported reform agendas as “first and foremost” in her experience as an educational leader. Cecilia reported that federal, state, and district entities “demand accountability” from principals. However, she did not believe the current reform agendas were “child-centered” when those same governmental bodies that issued the directives did not provide the corresponding funds to improve student performance. Malintzin stated that reform agendas “direct” her and “directly impact” everything from enrollment procedures, to forms used, to the content and methods of instruction. Tango reported that reform agendas “rule [her] world” though she had found ways to continue to have a say in how external directives were applied in the school setting. Isabel alone seemed to take reform agendas in stride saying, “Isn’t that what we have all been striving for throughout?” Instead, she expressed her desire to see other social institutions take more active roles in looking “at the whole child, the whole system” so that no child is left behind.
All six participants testified to the role of federal, state, and local government in the schooling process as they described how reform agendas circumscribed their leadership roles. What advice, then, would they give to government leaders about what is critical for improving schools? Four of the six participants identified increased funding for education as one way for government leaders to improve schools. Three participants called for increased collaboration with “the people that [sic] we need to reach the answers that we need.” Isabel and Tango called for government leaders to find ways to bring social service institutions together to assure that children’s basic needs were met. Both specified the need for health care agencies to work with school systems. Isabel and Sylvia asked that educators be allowed greater freedom to determine how best to bring about school improvement. Sylvia and Tango would encourage government leaders to become more knowledgeable about education so that their policies would be more consistent with pedagogy. Sylvia would invite them into schools to observe and ask, “What’s working and why? What isn’t and why?” Tango encouraged retired educational leaders to become candidates for legislative positions. Malintzin would warn government leaders that the legislation restricting the implementation of bilingual education programs would “come back” in the form of another Lau v. Nichols (1974) civil rights case. In addition to the above advice for government leaders, Cecilia and Isabel each expressed a sentiment toward a government entity to which they must report—Cecilia felt “bullied” by the state “labeling” of schools, and Isabel would tell President Bush to stop “demoralizing the education system.”
The participants’ experiences in responding to federal, state, and local accountability and student achievement mandates revealed a tension in their roles as educational leaders. Although they must comply with the external directives, there was also an expectation that they develop a shared vision, create productive work cultures, and share leadership in their own school communities. Given this tension and their experiences, what might they tell future educational leaders?

The participants identified three fundamental keys for life as an educational leader, specifically as an elementary school principal—build relationships with all members of the school community, be knowledgeable, and know the reason for being an educational leader. To build collaborative relationships, they would spend less time doing paperwork and more time “building relationships.” To build relationships, they advised, be “visible . . . everywhere” and be “a good listener open to [receiving] anyone.” One principal stated her advice succinctly: “Love your faculty . . . respect them and love them and shield them” even as you must tell them what needs “to improve.” Have the “guts to risk telling a teacher that what they are doing is wrong.” Be “positive” and have “a good sense of humor.” Take care of “yourself physically and mentally” in order to maintain a “peaceful, calming ego” to avoid the “frustrations” that come with the demands of the job.

Beyond knowing one’s staff, it is also necessary to be knowledgeable. These principals advised reading professional literature. Know and understand learning theories, curriculum, and instruction. Ultimately, know why you chose to be an educational leader. Know the answers to these questions: “What is your passion? What’s your focus?” and
“Stay true” to whatever you believe “is important.” Finally, “be there for the children . . . be teaching at all times,” and provide “all the tools” necessary for teaching and learning.

The participants were then asked to reflect on how they believed their leadership would evolve in light of their past and current experiences as educational leaders. All participants saw themselves continuing to be educators in some form in their futures. Those principals closest to retirement envisioned themselves in new teaching roles—Isabel “educating” government leaders, Cecilia “molding” preservice teachers, and Lynn “tutoring” individual students. Isabel, who had just retired at the time of the interview, also wanted to serve as her school’s “madrina [godparent].” Lynn, whose retirement was “six, seven” years away when interviewed, saw herself “tutoring” and writing “a children’s book” after retiring. Participants who perhaps did not see retirement in the near future spoke of future roles within public schooling. Tango was ready to leave her school administration role to work with principals on a district-wide basis. She wanted to help them understand the “power that they . . . have” to be instructional leaders who can teach teachers how to “increase student learning.” Sylvia’s goal was to increase her “reflective practice” and be “number one” in “helping . . . teachers help the students succeed.” Malintzin was pursuing her doctorate and eventually hoped to work as a principal in another state.

To conclude the interviews related to the definitions and descriptions of educational leadership for school change, the participants were asked to provide a metaphorical description of educational leadership. The metaphors lacked a unifying theme. Instead they formed a collage constructed from six separate images. Cecilia
contributed the image of the pinball machine. One question led to another, and each question involved a response from a different stakeholder in education. Thus, Cecilia added, collaboration was essential in educational leadership. Tango also implied the collaborative nature of educational leadership as in a tango dance. Educational leadership was a tango “with other people” danced on the high wire of state decisions suspended over federal guidelines or what she called the San Andreas Fault. Isabel added the “iron hand in the velvet glove.” Her image represented what she believed educational leaders should be—“strong and firm” leaders who “know who [they] are . . . and what [they] are striving for.” Lynn placed an image of a “haggard”—looking woman “standing . . . in front of a group . . . with . . . hair standing straight up” and still striving “to look the part” of an educational leader. Malintzin envisioned an undefined animal character from a fable representing the “subtle and kind and compassionate . . . yet aggressive nature of educational leadership. Sylvia contributed a picture of an umbrella. The bowl of the open umbrella held school “changes” and “whatever” the educational leader “does to inspire that.” She spoke of the need to be a source of support and her desire to leave her school “better than [she] found it . . . or different . . . in a good way.”

In addition to exploring how these six Latina elementary school principals defined and enacted leadership for school change, this study also sought to learn whether these principals brought a “Latina perspective” to their leadership. Thus, throughout the three interviews based on the themes of leadership development, definitions of educational leadership and education, leadership for school change, and the meaning of educational leadership, the participants were asked questions to determine if variables of ethnicity
and culture interplayed in their roles as Latina educational leaders. Those major findings are summarized next.

Summary of the Results: Part II:

How Does the Variable of Ethnic Culture Interplay in the Latina Educational Leadership Role?

The topic of the first interview was “leadership” in the context of the participants’ personal leadership history. To draw out any Latina perspectives of educational leadership, the participants were asked the following questions:

1. Describe any barriers and opportunities you may have encountered in realizing your career goals.

2. Describe any conflict or ambivalence you may experience between home and work life as a Latina leader.

3. Describe your earliest memory of any cultural-difference awareness in your leadership development.

4. How have you responded to this cultural-difference awareness?

5. How has being Latina influenced your leadership roles?

6. Describe any situations in which being Latina has caused tension in your leadership.

7. Describe any situations in which being Latina has proved advantageous in your leadership.

8. Describe any leadership attributes and/or practices that you might define as being Latina.
9. Using a metaphor, define *Latina educational leader*.

Summative responses to each question follow.

*Educational Leadership Development as a Latina*

The participants were asked to describe barriers or opportunities they may have encountered in realizing career goals. In all cases, they described barriers at length and did not cite examples of opportunities. However, some participants did describe how they avoided obstacles to create their own opportunities. Their responses of obvious and "subtle" examples of barriers are summarized generally from the most obvious examples to the less so.

Foe Cecilia and Sylvia, just being a Hispanic female posed a barrier in pursuing advanced placement (AP) high school English classes and pursuing higher education. Cecilia’s counselor refused to allow her to enroll in an AP English class because she “was never going to go to school [college].” Sylvia had to take her guardians to school before she was allowed into an AP English class. The teacher had not approved the request because she was a “Hispanic female [who] had no business going to the university.” When Sylvia did become a university student, a male neighbor asked her, “Don’t you know Mexican brains aren’t as developed as Anglo brains?”

Being a Hispanic female also caused Cecilia and Sylvia to experience tension in leaving home to attend the university. Their parents expressed ambivalence in their support—they encouraged higher education but found it difficult to allow their unmarried daughters to leave home. Cecilia noted that during the “sexual revolution” of the early 70s, women who went to college were “there for pleasure . . . not . . . to learn.
so, why bother?” This tension of being both a woman and an ethnic minority caused Cecilia to feel that she “always had to prove [herself] 2 times, or 10 times.”

Isabel and Lynn identified hiring practices that appeared to show preference to Anglo females and/or males over Latinas as barriers along their career paths. Isabel, however, overcame obstacles by being “persistent and . . . well trained” throughout her career life. Lynn thought being “the mother . . . collegial, cooperating” type might have been the reason for early unsuccessful attempts to be hired as an administrator.

Cecilia discovered “subtle” forms of discrimination within the education arena. Principals who were “threatened by [her] abilities and . . . leadership” kept her “down” rather than encouraging her to share in their leadership. As a recipient of a national award for contributions to education, she perceived that others saw her award as a “token” given to a bilingual educator. Finally, she suspected her superintendent, a male Latino, of not supporting Latinas in their ascent to higher-level leadership positions.

Malintzin identified psychological barriers placed by Latinos in the education or career path of other Latinos. She attributed the practice of Latinos’ questioning another Latino’s abilities as “brainwashing.”

Tango described three “benchmarks” rather than barriers along her career path. The benchmarks represented times when she pondered the social-political implications of being a person of color. The first “benchmark” caused her to think about the propriety/impropriety of speaking Spanish in the school setting. A second incident caused her to weigh the merits of public demonstration in defense of civil rights. The third example expressed her admiration of an African American counselor who was an
advocate in her pursuit of higher education at a private university. Throughout her career, she maintained relationships with Chicano professionals who shared similar higher education experiences, affirmative action, and current success in spite of others’ “perceptions.”

In discussing barriers faced by the participants along their career paths, most cited incidents from middle school, high school, and college years. The next question focused on the connection between home and work life as Latina leaders, hence, in later years along their career paths: Describe any conflict or ambivalence you may have experienced between home and work life as a Latina leader.

Three of the six participants identified the need to spend more time with their families as a conflict they experienced between home and work life as a Latina leader. Cecilia was “conscious” of the “subservient” roles she had played over the course of her life as daughter, church member, wife, and mother. She had not accomplished “all [her] goals” because she believed it was necessary to “make sacrifices to keep a family . . . [and] a marriage together.” Isabel recalled her stay-at-home mother, and the “love and security” signaled by the aroma of homemade tortillas and arroz con leche [rice pudding] after walking home from school. She experienced “guilt” for not providing the same memories for her children. Nonetheless, she was grateful for extended family members who did provide her children with similar experiences. Tango always wanted to “spend more time” with family.

Sylvia and Malintzin experienced perhaps more ambivalence than a conflict between home and work. Sylvia felt that she could “spend more time” at work, but her
husband had conveyed the message: “But you have a family, and you have a responsibility.” Yet, when she proposed staying home with the children, he always said, “No, no, no. You’re very good at what you do.” Malintzin did not specify desiring more family time. Instead, she referred to the task of house cleaning. Because her husband was not going to clean “how [she wanted] it,” and because she was not going to “clean up after the men” like she did while growing up, she solved the issue by hiring a house cleaner. She stated that she wanted “to keep dedicating . . . a lot of hours to work.”

Lynn was the only participant who did not identify any conflict or ambivalence between her home and work life as a Latina leader. She reported that her husband had always been the “greatest supporter” of her work roles.

To continue to draw out any unique characteristics of Latina leadership, the participants were asked to identify any cultural-difference awareness they may have perceived throughout their leadership development and how they responded to the differences.

Isabel, Malintzin, and Tango related examples of cultural-difference awareness that could be categorized as the need to make education more culturally relevant to ethnic minority students. Isabel had observed university-level educators “who didn’t know anything about minorities” teaching other educators erroneous generalizations about ethnic minority groups. As a national children’s book reviewer, she read books that implied the “deprived” cultures of Hispanics and other minority peoples. Malintzin reported improved reading proficiency when she began using Chicano literature to teach reading to Latinos. Throughout her career, she promoted the acquisition
of Chicano and other ethnic minority literature collections in the school district. Tango hoped educators who believed “all children can learn” envisioned that in a group of 10 students, “6 of them are children of color” as well as the rising number of children who lived in poverty. She looked for the day when “conversations” about how to serve a diverse population would become “consistent” across her school district. Further, she wanted to dispel any notion that underperforming schools with high minority populations were not underperforming because they had a high percentage of “Chicanos and Chicanas” as leaders.

Cecilia identified a cultural difference in how she served food to make others “feel at home and welcomed” as well as “to get people to open themselves.” She thought that this practice, along with “listening” and “being personable,” were antidotes to “environments” that she described as “so cold and so closed to minorities and to others.”

Sylvia described moving away from a border town to a bigger city where Spanish was not the dominant language. She “felt weird” about not speaking in Spanish to those around her. In addition, she described a gender difference she had experienced as a school administrator. Whereas males could “beat on the table” to get what they wanted, she felt she must jump over “a 100 obstacles” to get the same request met. Lynn did not recollect being aware of cultural differences throughout her leadership development.

How did participants respond to cultural differences they may have perceived in their leadership development and practices? The six participants responded to cultural differences they perceived in their leadership development in a variety of ways. Isabel and Malintzin used their leadership roles to educate others about cultural differences.
Malintzin specified how to use the knowledge of cultural differences to create more relevant learning opportunities, as in the use of Chicano literature to teach reading. Cecilia had a clear sense that "being a woman and being Chicana" had something to do with her practice of "receiving everyone" who wanted to see her, especially children. This was her way to avoid creating a "cold environment" as a leader. Sylvia cited a response to a gender difference--she continued to "be polite" but did "bend the rules a tad" to get what she wanted for her school. Tango dealt with cultural differences in three ways. She and her college friends "vented" about times they had perceived others questioning their success as a result of "affirmative action." They "reaffirmed" each other by accepting others' perceptions as "their stories." Secondly, Tango had been "very active" in "professional associations where there was a majority of people of color" throughout her career. Finally, she had found a personal coach "more effective" in helping her discern whether her questions of "cultural identity" might be "stories [she] makes up" or whether they were real situations for which she could create "a plan of action." Lynn reported that she had not experienced cultural differences or "negatives," as she called them.

Once again, the participants were asked to reflect on the issue of cultural identity through a different question: How has being Latina influenced your leadership role? Each of the six participants identified one of two Latina influences in their leadership roles—a manner of connecting with all members of their school community as well as specific ways of connecting with other Latino constituents and being observant of inequities that they then took actions to correct. Tango described "real obvious things" that were "part
of being Latina”—that “you need to shake people’s hands. You need to make people feel welcome. You need to make people feel safe with you.” Sylvia identified speaking Spanish and “[understanding] the culture” as assets that “bond people” to her. Lynn stated simply that being Latina “made it easier for [her] because [she] understood [her school community], and they understood [her].”

Cecilia, Malintzin, and Isabel alluded to or directly identified their awareness of inequities that they took actions to correct along their career paths. Cecilia used the district’s “same words and . . . same policies” to win “magnet student status” for all students in her middle school. Why? “So that they have the same rights as everybody else not just because of the color of [their] skin . . . [but] because that is [a] God-given choice to choose what school you want.” Malintzin recalled her own school days and being aware of “equity missing in the schools” and deciding that “those things [weren’t] going to happen where she [went].” To that end, she had created Chicano and African American literature collections where there were none before her arrival at the particular work site. She also recruited Latina leaders to join a Hispanic professional organization. Isabel described how she had come to see herself as a “Chicana” and what that meant throughout her career—“to better . . . our people.” That included taking time “to educate” her Mexican American contemporaries who believed that Chicanos were “scum . . . the bottom of the barrel.”

Were there situations in which being Latina had caused tension in these participants’ leadership roles? Five of the six participants cited examples of tension, though no single theme emerged in comparing their responses. Cecilia believed that as a
Latina leader she continuously needed to “prove [herself]” particularly during interviews. She had to learn “to sell herself” in interviews, a contradiction of who she was as a Latina–one who did not “talk about [herself]” or “boast.” Further, she had struggled to overcome being “like a door mat” as a principal whose role dictated that she sometimes “get angry . . . discipline . . . [and] defend her school.” Isabel recalled the years she worked at the university where she felt “invisible.” At first, she thought it was because she had not yet acquired graduate degrees. Later, when a male Hispanic professor with a doctorate was denied tenure, she openly defended the professor and identified the refusal to grant him tenure as “prejudice.” Malintzin was “disappointed” when her Latino superintendent refused to recommend to the school board that a position for a director of Hispanic studies be created. He would not do it because he was a “Latino.” Secondly, when Malintzin supported a restructuring decision made by this same superintendent, members of her “own community” claimed she had “crossed over.” Sylvia had been placed in the uncomfortable position of having to “choose sides” between Anglos and Latinos when the number of Latinos significantly increased as a result of school boundary changes. Lynn reported that she did not experience tension as a Latina leader because she worked at a school where “the whole ambiente [environment]” was Latino. Tango did not report any tensions she experienced as a Latina leader.

The participants then described situations in which being Latina had proved advantageous in their leadership roles. All six participants acknowledged a sense of advantage in being Latina leaders. Sylvia and Tango identified their ability to communicate in English and Spanish with their communities as an advantage. Sylvia
specified that her ability to communicate in Spanish and knowledge of the culture "bonds people" to her "or the school." Isabel found it advantageous to be Latina whenever people were "sincere" in wanting to know "how . . . to better understand and . . . serve the Latino community." Lynn reported simply that being Latina provided the "in" to work with her Latino school community. Malintzin stated only that "many parents love [her] because they are all Latinos"—or at least the "70-something %" who were Latinos. Cecilia acknowledged that being Latina had been advantageous as a teacher, principal, and recipient of a national educator's award for her work with students and parents. However, she did not specify the advantage or advantages. Tango noted that having graduated from a prestigious private university and having a doctorate had proven more advantageous than being Latina. These accomplishments appeared to convey that she "at least [knew] her skills" and that she had "tried to prove what [she had] learned."

Toward the end of the questions related to their leadership experiences, the participants were asked to identify leadership attributes and/or practices that they thought might be more dominant among Latinas. The word respect was repeated six times among four participants as part of their descriptions of attributes or practices that appeared to be more dominant among Latina leaders. Cecilia spoke of "respect" for self and "where you came from" and instilling that "pride" in others. She also spoke of "commitment" and "loyalty" to her profession, students, parents, teachers, and the district. Lynn stated that Latinos seemed to accord more "respect" to the position of principal/teacher. She had "learned respect for elders and for . . . family." She spoke of having "respect for other people's philosophies and whatnot." Isabel noted that it was acceptable "to disagree" as a
school staff but that they still had to “have respect for each other.” Tango described “sitting down and eating tortillas and burritos” as “a sign of respect or sign of being welcomed.”

In addition to a practice of respect, the participants also identified service, sense of family, empathy, the use of personal narratives, and submissiveness as attributes of Latina leadership. Cecilia spoke of “motherhood” and “service” to “benefit others” as characteristic of her leadership style. Malintzin identified the “giving” nature of Latinos, often accompanied by offering food. Isabel described her school community as “la familia” and “como un pueblito”—like a family or a small town where “everybody is responsible for all the children” and where children are called “mi hijito/mi hijita,” my little son/little daughter. Tango defined “empathy” as “the idea that [Latinas] see people with strengths not deficits.” Sylvia thought “storytelling” was “Hispanic” but was not sure. Tango had observed that Latina leaders “tend to speak from passion [and] a lot from personal experiences . . . with a sense of urgency.” Lynn, however, considered herself “a little more submissive . . . [though] she eventually will engage” but first she “[waits and . . . . respects] other people’s philosophies and whatnot.”

To further isolate characteristics of Latina leadership, the participants were asked to describe Latina educational leader through metaphors. Of the six metaphorical descriptions of Latina educational leader, the most often spoken or implied words revolved around the meanings of “heart,” “service,” and “familia.” Isabel described a Latina educational leader as a “heart” because a “good educator” “[loves] people . . . [and] kids.” Sylvia spoke of needing a “stinking strong heart” and “spirituality” to “have
balance” as a Latina leader. She found the role harder as a Latina because she had “to work harder to prove [herself]” in what she considered “a man’s world” and one that was “not Hispanically inclined.” Cecilia found it “natural” to “always acknowledge everyone” and to keep her office doors open. She made it a practice to serve “food . . . to open people up,” and she valued speaking Spanish “to serve more people.” Isabel and Lynn spoke of family images. Isabel added the component of *la familia* to the heart metaphor describing a Latina educational leader. Lynn described the Latina leader as “the mother or the grandmother” with “a protective side” and a “soft side.”

The metaphors provided by Malintzin and Tango implied women in motion. Malintzin saw Latina educational leaders as a “steam engine” with people on board “going really fast.” Tango returned to her earlier use of the tango dance for educational leader and other terms. The Latina features of the dance were found in “the kicks and the more dramatic flairs” done “with confidence” with the intent “of supporting the partner” even as the movements were “her own.”

Malintzin also described the Latina educational leader as “the Malinche.” The Aztec Indian woman conveyed the “suffrage” [sic] and “conquest” that have been part of Latina women’s history as well as the “two worlds” through which Latinas move.

Following the Latina perspective of personal leadership development and definitions of educational leadership, the participants were asked to address their roles as educators and change facilitators from a Latina perspective.
Defining Educational Leadership for School Change-Latina Perspectives

To determine any Latina perspectives related to their notions of what it means to educate and how they enact leadership for school change, the participants were asked four questions:

1. How does being Latina influence your leadership role in educating children of all cultural groups?

2. How does being Latina influence your leadership role in staff development situations?

3. Are any of your communication styles or techniques reflective of ethnic cultural differences between you and your audience?

4. Are you perceived differently in the role of change facilitator than a person who is not a member of an ethnic minority group? How so?

Latina Perspectives on the Process of Educating

How did being Latina influence these participants in educating children of all cultural groups? All participants acknowledged that being Latina influenced their leadership role in educating children of all cultural groups. Their varied responses suggested two underlying themes—the first, of inclusion or “welcoming” all students, regardless of cultural differences; the second, a desire for all students to be academically successful. Cecilia described her personality as “not cold” and one that wanted “to win [students] over” to gain “their confidence.” A teacher described Isabel’s manner as one that made “everyone feel welcome.” Isabel conveyed that as a Latina, she saw all children as “gifts” and “treasures.” As such, she viewed herself as a comadre [co-mother]
with "the whole neighborhood." As a principal, she felt like a *madrina* [godmother] toward her teachers. She saw her role as one ready "to guide, to protect, and to make sure they come into a good environment." Malintzin did not want students of any cultural group to experience what she experienced as a child—one "whose culture was on the sidelines." Sylvia knew that her presence in a school that had once turned away Hispanic students now allowed Hispanic students "to approach [her speaking Spanish] . . . if they felt like it."

The second theme that emerged was the desire for all students to be academically successful. Cecilia said that being Latina pushed her not to "give up" on students and to help them have the "determination" to succeed. Lynn explained that "different cultures teach . . . children in different ways." Hence, she believed that "the best way to teach . . . children . . . [was] to have some background information [in order] to go forward." Tango noted that as a Latina, she had "a sense of responsibility . . . to make sure additional resources are provided . . . for all [students] to learn." As a Latina educational leader, she believed she was in a position, along with "other professionals of color," to be a "broker" or a "bridge" to help "school structures" address the diverse ethnic and socioeconomic groups represented by their students.

In addition to influencing the education of students, principals were also responsible for the professional development of their teaching and support staffs. How did being Latina influence these principals' leadership roles in staff development situations? Of the six participants, all but one identified Latina perspectives that influenced their leadership roles in professional development. Sylvia complied with the
superintendent’s call to have a “laser-like focus” on their professional development plans. To that end, her staff had focused on the topics of “data analysis, SEI (sheltered English instruction) training, math, . . . reading, writing . . . [and] science.” Being Latina “[didn’t] come into play” for her. The remaining five participants identified various Latina perspectives that influenced their leadership roles in professional development. Among their distinct perspectives, four participants included the notion of “respect” in their narratives.

Cecilia and Isabel both referred to food in describing Latina influences on professional development. Cecilia spoke in the literal sense; Isabel spoke of food in a figurative sense. Cecilia served “food” during professional development times to convey to her staff that “professionals are worth something to [her] and the school.” Those “professionals” included teacher assistants to whom she “gives the same respect and the same clout and status as [she] does to teachers.” Isabel believed that Latina leaders “put in a little spice” in “all the things they have to do in professional development.” She added salsa to professional development “para darle el sabor” [to give it flavor]. The “spice” and “salsa” of her presentations were the “anecdotes . . . the things children say, things teachers have said.” The anecdotes reflected her “use of everything and [valuing] everything . . . from the older people . . . [from uncles, aunts] . . . - el respeto [respect]” so as to “gain from each other.”

Lynn identified the Latina influence in her leadership of professional development as being “a mom . . . to support, . . . to nurture, . . . to cooperate.” Though she found herself wanting to let teachers be “captains of their own ships,” she seemed to have
concluded that they still looked to her as a “matriarch.” Having had “at least one or two” matriarchs in her life, she understood how her teachers wanted to accord her the kind of “respect” accorded to “[their] mothers and grandmothers.” Though “uncomfortable” with the role, she “[wound] up filling it.”

Being Latina “heavily” influenced the kind of books Malintzin chose to use for professional development. She reported that the books she had chosen had “a lot to do with respect for the child and the culture the child needs to be there.” Ultimately, she and her staff decided “to teach . . . children [to be empowered], to defend themselves, and to educate them about who they are.”

Tango seemed to discover the reasons that “drove her to get a doctorate” as she reflected on the question, “How does being Latina influence your leadership role in professional development?” She stated that she “had to prove herself” and that she wanted to “speak with a voice of authority” as a Latina. In general, she wanted “to communicate . . . [a] sense of analysis, . . . a sense of understanding, . . . a sense of a learning curve.” Specifically, she wanted to communicate to “Anglos,” “I am speaking from a sense of experience and knowledge.” To “Latinos,” she wanted them to “hear, ‘I can do this, too. You guys can do this, too.’”

Following the questions related to the Latina perspectives of educating children of all cultural groups as well as the education of the teaching and support staff, the participants were asked about the Latina perspective of being a change facilitator. Two questions addressed the Latina perspective of being a change facilitator: (1) Are any of your communication styles or techniques reflective of ethnic cultural differences between
you and your audience? and (2) Are you perceived differently in the role of change facilitator than a person who is not a member of an ethnic minority group? If so, how so?

*Latina Perspectives as Leaders of School Change*

Were there communication styles or techniques reflective of ethnic cultural differences among the participants? As Latina educational leaders, five of the six participants acknowledged some style or technique of communication that they attributed to cultural differences between themselves and particular audiences. Cecilia thought she brought her “culture” into the role of “manager and supervisor” when she applied “cut and dry” policies from an “Anglo culture” by treating “people with dignity.” Isabel varied the amount of “salsa”—the “anecdotes”—she “put into” her presentations depending on the audience. Malintzin said that she was “embraced by the community” comprised of African Americans, Anglos, and Mexican Americans. She did not specify whether she changed her style or technique of communication depending on the audience. Sylvia thought that, in general, “el hispano [the Hispanic] is very humble” in expressing himself or herself. As a bilingual Latina leader, Tango noted her ability to make “specific strategic managerial decisions” to communicate with her parent community in two languages rather than depending on translation. She also spoke of her need to “acknowledge others” as a “common courtesy.” Her example was in reference to the Latino parent community. Because Lynn dealt with a “Hispanic population most of the time,” be it teachers or parents, she did not “have to switch” communication styles. The only difference was in speaking in “in-depth” terms with teachers and in “generalities” with parent groups.
When asked whether they believed that others perceived them differently in the role of change facilitator than leaders who were not members of an ethnic minority group, five of six participants reported that they had been perceived differently as Latina change agents in some form at some time. Their narratives share two underlying themes—that of having to prove self and awareness of inequities in systems.

When Malintzin first became a principal, "two teachers told others that [she] got [the] job because she was a Latina" not because she had the academic degrees and professional experiences to take on the role. In her first three years as a principal, Cecilia had "to show and prove who [she was] and what [she could] do" as she interacted with colleagues in "study groups" where she showed them she had "her own mind . . . ideas . . . thinking, style." In this way, she was "able to influence a lot of people who had a lot of prejudices and perceived ideas about the school and about her." Isabel, who retired the month of this interview, believed that "at times," Latina leaders are "questioned more . . . as to what [their] motives are." She said, "They ask for more facts, more evidence, more research, and then they say the research is biased." Tango reported that she was perceived differently by virtue of her "visual" features, her "name," and because she "speaks Spanish and English." Further, at administrators' meetings, she was known for asking the question, "What does that mean for our Latino students?" As a "public spokesperson" for an administrators' professional organization, she "always double-guesses" herself. She wondered if she was "articulate" in communicating the concerns of Anglo and African American principals.
Lynn thought that men on her staff preferred that she be more "linear" in her approach to communicating change directives. She thought that because she and the female teachers saw themselves as "moms," they did not see her non-linear approach "as vacillating." Instead, "they see it as all the pieces being put together." Sylvia did not answer the question, at least not directly. She made an "observation" about hiring practices in her school district-"Many more Anglo females or males are moving up in the higher positions. She added that she did not know if what she observed was "by intent" or "simply [that] no Hispanics applied" for those positions.

*Latina Characteristics of Educational Leadership*

In the third and final interview, the participants were asked one last time to describe characteristics of leadership that may be more dominant among Latina educational leaders. The participants identified seven characteristics of leadership that may be more dominant among Latina educational leaders. Four of the six participants made some reference to attributes ascribed to the mother role. The remaining characteristics were having a sense of mission and passion and a tendency to embrace the values of collaboration, mentoring, respect, and equity.

Isabel described Latina educational leaders as having the qualities of mothers-"la madre hispana, la madre latina." She described the "nurturing" and "correcting" nature of this role. Cecilia thought that Latina leaders were "more caring," meaning that they were "child-centered" and "more affective" in their interactions with both children and adults. Malintzin included "caring" and "hugging" in her description of Latina leaders.
Lynn thought that her faculty’s expectation “to have food every time they meet” was “just a mother type of role.” Her faculty also looked to her for “praise” and “validation.”

Tango and Cecilia each expressed having a sense of mission as Latina educational leaders. For Tango, it was something she “[owed] . . . to the communities”—teaching others how to work with “children of poverty and children of color.” For Cecilia, it was about doing “something for . . . [la] raza [Latino race].”

Perhaps related to having a mission, Latina educational leaders tended to have a “passion” about something, as Sylvia stated. For her, it was figuring out a “vision” for making “a difference” and possessing “a certain ‘watch me’ attitude.” Cecilia spoke about her “love of language and commitment to bilingual education.” For Cecilia, passion seemed to be contained in her drive to “prove” herself and in her “hunger to do more.”

The values of collaboration, mentoring, respect, and equity were also shared among more than one participant’s description of Latina educational leaders. Lynn spoke about “collaboration” as a “core” of Latino culture. Malintzin “wondered” if being “from a matriarch society of some kind” led to the “shared leadership” style of Latina leaders. Perhaps the practice of collaboration led Latina leaders to “mentor” others. Isabel found it “good to meet with other [Latinas]” to “platicar . . . lo que esta pasando [to discuss what is happening].” Tango believed that it was “incumbent on [her] to make sure that [she] mentor others” about the “need to be sensitive, aware of, and learn about children of poverty and children of color.” Lynn identified “respect” as another “core” characteristic among Latina leaders. It was an attribute repeated by Malintzin as she described Latina
leaders' sensitivity to "equity situations... probably" as a result of "childhood" experiences when their "culture was ignored." For that reason, she believed in "respect for all kids."

The results presented above indicated that these six Latina elementary school principals defined educational leadership as the complex business of educating children and adults who represented a diversity of life histories, cultures, languages, learning abilities, and socioeconomic levels. All participants saw themselves as change agent-educators responding to ever-shifting reform agendas and external directives, primarily from government sources. Further, these participants brought a Latina perspective to their leadership approaches.

Chapter 5 reveals how these educational leadership stories compared with previous leadership stories and whether these stories contained new character and plot developments in response to the social milieu of the 21st century. A discussion of the results, their implications, and recommendations for future research follows.
CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

This chapter restates the two central research questions and reviews the method of inquiry used in this study. The results of the study are summarized in two parts in response to each of the central questions. A discussion of the relationship of this study to prior research and implications for practice follows the two-part summary of results. The Latina investigator’s personal reflections related to educational leadership is included as parallel text printed in italics in the discussion section. Recommendations for further research conclude the chapter.

Statement of the Problem

This study identified two problems. School principals are charged with leading the nation’s schools and initiating school changes in response to the day’s reform movements within the period’s zeitgeist. Though responsible for the education of youth and the professional development of their faculty, the theories and models of organization and leadership used to prepare principals have often come from fields outside of education such as business, industry, and government. Furthermore, they reflect the voices and perspectives of Western European males guided by a positivist research paradigm. Thus, this study asked female, Hispanic educational leaders to describe leadership for school change through personal narrative in response to two central questions: (1) How does the Latina elementary school principal define and enact leadership for school change? (2) How does the variable of ethnic culture interplay in the Latina educational leadership role?
Review of the Methodology

A qualitative research approach was used to seek answers to the questions regarding the essence of educational leadership for school change and Latina perspectives of leadership. Six Latina elementary school principals from a southwestern urban school district, nominated as successful change agents by assistant superintendents, took part in the study. Each was interviewed on three separate occasions within a one-month period. Three in-depth, phenomenological interviews (Seidman, 1998) were designed to draw out the participants’ subjective, intuitive, personal, symbolic, and metaphorical interpretations of the meaning of educational leadership (Chamberlin, 1974; Greene, 1994; Mitchell, 1990; Sussman, 1992).

The first interview served to place the participant’s leadership experience within the context of her life story. The second interview focused on leadership for change within the school community. In the final interview, the participants reflected on the meaning of their experiences as educational leaders. All interviews included questions designed to elucidate Latina perspectives of leadership.

Summary of the Results: Part I:

How Does the Latina Elementary School Principal Define and Enact Leadership for School Change?

The participants, five of Mexican origin and one of German/Panamanian origin, represented a variety of backgrounds in terms of birthplaces, birth order, and family size and income. Their educational histories had more in common. All participants identified at least one family member who inspired them to pursue postsecondary education. All
had acquired at least one master’s degree, two had earned doctoral degrees, and all had
specialized in bilingual education in their preparation to become teachers and
administrators.

The participants defined educational leadership as a collaborative effort to move
others forward toward some defined goal, generally improving student learning. All
defined the educational leader’s primary role as developing the human potential of
children and adults on a stage with ever-changing directors, props, and costumes. They
responded to directives from local, state, and federal sources in accordance with rules,
policies, and mandated curriculum standards and academic performance measures. To
make “choices-in-the-moment,” question asking, communication, and collaboration were
essential. They created open and trusting work environments.

The participants created collegial work environments by “walking the talk,”
behaving ethically, being risk-takers, “following the book” as needed, and balancing the
“subtle, kind, and compassionate yet aggressive nature” of their roles. They engendered
trust in their professional relationships through personal dispositions—“charisma;” being
“personable;” “modeling;” and being “caring, humanistic, compassionate.” Repeatedly,
they spoke of mentoring, nurturing, and guiding others from one level of change to the
next. When they felt “haggard,” they still strove to be “an open umbrella” over their
school communities-coverings of protection, inspiration, and support under continual
showers of change. In sum, the participants defined educational leadership as the art of
fostering positive relationships with children and adult learners to arrive at shared goals
within a state of flux.
Additionally, the participants identified three unique features of educational leadership. First, educators “have to accept everybody” who enrolls in their schools along with their assorted “baggage and experiences.” These individuals comprise the complex groups of “very different socio-economic, cultural, [and] racial backgrounds” they are to guide to “optimum potential.” Secondly, educational leaders are responsible for effecting school change. Reform agendas originating in federal legislation, state curriculum standards, and achievement test data strongly circumscribed their roles as educational leaders. Finally, educational leaders must “deal with little budgets” in creative and resourceful manners. This feature of educational leadership alluded to the participants’ day-to-day management of school business, a necessary though not focal aspect of their leadership.

How did the participants enact leadership to bring about school change? The participants introduced top-down, external directives for change by first complimenting teachers for previous accomplishments. They couched directives for change in stories and humor. They used political strategizing such as “planting seeds in different people to get them to think,” mixing teachers of different perspectives in small-group discussions, and selecting the language and style of communication depending on the audience as a means for moving a change agenda forward. They engaged teachers in discussions to understand the nature of the change and how to effect the change. Two principals led book discussions to set the stage for impending change.

Once the change was introduced, the participants used professional development as the primary means to lead their teachers in making instructional changes. They
engaged teachers in study and “substantive conversations” about pedagogical theory and instructional practices. They relied on their own teaching staffs, curriculum specialists, invited presenters, and outside learning opportunities as sources of professional development. Participants followed up professional development with individual conversations, mentoring, and coaching as needed to support teachers in the integration of change. Occasionally, participants had to formulate plans for improvement for teachers struggling with instructional changes. On very rare occasions, plans for improvement not heeded by teachers led to their dismissal.

Geijsel et al (1999) stated that those leaders who understand the nature of change are likely to be more successful in effecting change. All participants identified resistance as the first predictable stage of change. As a group, they identified three additional stages of change—the move toward acceptance, the “practice” and reflection phase, and an evaluation period.

Knowing the predictable initial resistance to change, the principals used a variety of communication strategies to set the stage for change. They provided time and a climate of trust for teachers to express their beliefs, opinions, disagreements, and recommendations related to the impending change. One principal underscored the need to listen attentively and nonjudgmentally to all comments without venturing away from the data at hand. They provided teachers with necessary information as needed through group professional development, individual consultations, informal conversations, “coaxing,” “timely encouragement,” and public recognition of their efforts.
Throughout the change integration process, the participants used a variety of means to generate and share knowledge of new practices and to promote coherence and commitment to change efforts. They continually provided printed matter relevant to the topic of change and weekly newsletters citing progress. They used professional development sessions, site-council meetings, and annual retreats to report the changes being made and to revise instructional goals. To promote a sense of coherence and commitment to change efforts, they set ground rules for staff interactions, posted agendas with time frames, provided training for all staff to learn about “the systems, assumptions, and foundations” inherent in the “personal journey” of change, and led the staff in discussing literature related to their topics of study. They clarified which change items were open to negotiation and why, advised teachers to put aside philosophical differences when change was mandated, reviewed school mission statements regularly, kept the staff appraised of progress, and praised their accomplishments.

Heckman (1996) asserted that dialogue was a key variable in successful change efforts. When asked specifically about the use of dialogue to promote school change, participants described faculty meeting and professional development discussions and informal conversations with individual teachers. All stated or implied that dialogue was important yet only one participant described a particular structure used to guide discussions related to change efforts. One participant said she spent little time in dialogue as a result of spending more time translating top-down directives for change into “more human” terms before announcing them to her staff.
The researcher intentionally did not define *dialogue* so as to discover the participants' notion of *dialogue* and its use in effecting change. The researcher had in mind Bohm's (as cited in Senge, 1990) definition of *dialogue*: "a free flow of meaning between people" (p. 240) designed to explore complex issues from multiple viewpoints to "reveal the incoherence in our thought" (p. 241). Three conditions are necessary for dialogue: (1) Participants “suspend” their assumptions, (2) there is a climate of trust among colleagues, and (3) a “facilitator holds the context of dialogue” (Bohm as cited in Senge, 1990, p. 243). This study revealed that the participants used the terms *dialogue*, *discussion*, and *conversation* interchangeably and likely did not consciously create the conditions for dialogue designed to effect change.

Like dialogue, the participants acknowledged that reflection was an important part of the change process. However, they interpreted the question only in terms of their individual principal roles. All participants reported that they reflected on their practice. Specifically, one talked to her husband, an educator, another used feedback from teachers, and one used written reflection as part of her annual professional evaluation. No one reported that they had encouraged or provided structured time and forums for their teaching staff to reflect on their practices as an ongoing part of the change process.

As participants led their staffs through successful change efforts, all celebrated their accomplishments. They gave public recognition to teachers at faculty meetings, parent group meetings, and school assemblies; through the public address system, school newsletters, and written thank you notes, as well as through daily “smiles” and “pats on the back.” Food was central to their celebrations.
The participants concluded their remarks about leading others through change with metaphorical descriptions of this process. Their images were suggestive of movement and opposing forces that bring about some transformation. They experienced change as “climbing a hill,” dancing a tango, or a “tug-of-war” game. Change was “something revolving like the interlocking wheels in a clock” with inherent “history” that came and went “in cycles.” It had a steady pulse as in heartbeats. Change required “sacrifice” and “grieving” to arrive at “the climax” for the “benefit” of children. “Long-lasting change [was] subtle” and not a result of “fear.” It was “that little thing that from this day forward” was done because “it worked and it was the right thing to do.”

The participants’ leadership in response to federal, state, and local mandates, and measures of student achievement revealed a tension in their roles as educational leaders—complying with external directives as they strove to develop shared vision, create productive work cultures, and share leadership in their school communities. In light of this reality, they offered neophyte educational leaders three recommendations: (1) Build collaborative relationships with all members of the school community, (2) be knowledgeable about learning theories, curriculum, and instruction, and (3) know why you chose to be an educational leader. Their stories revealed that they knew why they chose to be educational leaders. All had a “passion” or “focus” to which they had remained “true.” All expressed commitment to “being there for the children” and striving to provide “all the tools” they could gather for teaching and learning.

This study also sought to learn whether the group of Latina principals brought a “Latina perspective” to their leadership. Their Latina perspectives are summarized next.
Summary of the Results: Part II:

How Does the Variable of Ethnic Culture Interplay in the Latina Educational Leadership Role?

*Latina Perspectives of Personal Leadership History*

To learn how the participants' Latina heritage influenced their leadership development and roles, they were asked to describe barriers, tensions, opportunities, and advantages encountered in realizing education and career goals. They described their perceptions of cultural-differences in their leadership development and how they responded to those differences. To draw out additional leadership attributes and/or practices they attributed to Latina culture, they were asked to describe *Latina educational leader* through metaphors. Their responses revealed that Latina culture played a part in their leadership development and roles.

All participants reported barriers of one form or another related to their Latina heritage in realizing education and career goals. They were corrected for speaking Spanish in school. They were barred from high school advanced placement English classes because the teacher or counselor did not expect them to go to college. They struggled with the social-political implications of participating in minority civil rights causes and demonstrations of the 1970s. They faced their parents' reticence in leaving home to attend college. They encountered hiring practices that appeared to show preference for Anglo females over Latinas as well as psychological barriers created by Latino leaders who failed to support Latinas in their ascent to leadership positions or who questioned their abilities but not the abilities of Anglo females in the same role. One
participant experienced “subtle” discrimination when supervisors were “threatened by [her] abilities and leadership,” and when she received a national educator’s award and felt that others perceived it as a “token” for bilingual educators.

Except for the participant who had been raised in Panama as a member of that country’s majority group, all participants reported that being Latina leaders had caused tension in their lives. Three sources of tension were identified. They spoke of having to prove themselves. One participant felt she “always had to prove [herself] two times, or ten times” as a female and as a member of an ethnic minority group. She also found it difficult to “prove” herself during interviews. Having “to sell herself” was contrary to the Latina inculcation to not “talk about [herself or] boast.” Another participant felt “invisible” when she worked as a university instructor. She thought it was because she had not yet acquired graduate degrees, that is, proved her educational competence. Another participant believed that having graduated from a prestigious university and earning a doctoral degree conveyed that she “at least [knew] her skills” and that she had “tried to prove what [she had] learned.” One participant said she relied on a “stinking strong heart” and “spirituality” to “have balance” as a Latina leader because she had “to work harder to prove” herself in “a man’s world” that is not “Hispanically inclined.”

Participants experienced a second source of cultural tension when they supported non-Latino individuals or causes and were accused of “crossing over” by members of their own communities. For example, one participant found herself in the uncomfortable position of having to “choose sides” when the population of Latino students increased significantly, a result of school boundary changes. The new Hispanic community thought
their numbers alone should dictate her decision making in their favor. Lastly, all participants identified the tension they experienced between home and work life—the need to spend more time with their families, a gender rather than cultural difference.

Though none of the participants cited specific examples of opportunities they had encountered in realizing education and career goals, they did report the advantages of being able to communicate in Spanish and knowledge of the culture to “bond [with] people” and to provide the “in” to work with the Latino community. One participant reported that being “persistent and well trained” throughout her career had helped her overcome obstacles and create her own opportunities.

Participants were asked to describe cultural differences in leadership and how they responded to these differences. Two threads ran through their responses—being observant of inequities that they then took actions to correct and conscious efforts to connect with all members of their school community. They strove to make education more culturally relevant to ethnic minority students and served as “bridges” to help others understand cultural differences. This included helping their Mexican American contemporaries understand that Chicano/a was not synonymous with “scum,” as some believed. They called attention to minority stereotypes embedded in children’s literature, promoted the acquisition and use of literature related to the different ethnic groups represented in the schools as integral parts of curriculum and instruction, and fought central office administrators to correct inequities in application of district policies and regulations.
The second thread woven throughout their stories reflected cultural differences in practices of hospitality. “Part of being Latina” involved “real obvious things” like shaking hands “to make people feel welcome and safe with you.” One found it “natural” to “always acknowledge everyone” and keep her office door open. Speaking Spanish and understanding “the culture” were assets they used to “bond” with Latinos in their school communities. They thought Latina leaders served food more often than their non-Latino colleagues to make others “feel at home and welcomed” and “to get people to open themselves.” Two participants worked hard at “listening” and “being personable” so that the school climate would not be perceived as “cold and closed to minorities and to others.”

The participants identified six additional attributes and/or practices they considered more dominant among Latina leaders—respect, service, sense of family, empathy, the use of personal narratives, and submissiveness. Respect was used repeatedly in reference toward self and “where you came from,” “for elders and for family,” and for “other people’s philosophies and whatnot.” They believed that Latinos generally accorded more “respect” to the position of principal or teacher. One participant said that “sitting down and eating tortillas and burritos” was “a sign of respect” for those who welcomed them into their homes or communities. In speaking of respect, they generally referred to their “pride,” “commitment,” and “loyalty” to the profession, students, parents, teachers, and the school district.

They spoke of “motherhood” and “service” to “benefit others.” One participant described the Latina leader as “the mother or the grandmother” with “a protective side”
and "the soft side." Another likened her school to "la familia" or "un pueblito"—a family or a small town where "everybody is responsible for all the children." They believed Latina leaders tended to "see people with strengths—not with deficits" and that Latina leaders "speak from passion [and] a lot of personal experiences with a sense of urgency." Another participant thought "storytelling" was "Hispanic." One participant admitted being "a little more submissive" than non-Latinas though she eventually voiced her "philosophies."

Three metaphorical descriptions of Latina educational leader conveyed an additional image of Latina educational leaders—strong women in motion. The Aztec Malinche represented the historical "conquest" of women that they had transcended. She also symbolized the "two worlds" through which they moved. Their movement was depicted as "steam engines" with people on board "going really fast" or tango dancers doing "the kicks and the more dramatic flairs" with "confidence."

The next section summarizes how Latina perspectives influenced their roles as educators and change facilitators.

**Latina Perspectives of Educating and Enacting School Change**

Latina perspectives appeared to influence the participants' roles in educating children in two ways—they emphasized "welcoming" all students regardless of cultural differences and they expected all students to achieve academic success. One principal generalized that Latinas saw children as "gifts" and "treasures" and for that reason behaved as "comadres" (co-mothers) in "the whole neighborhood." Overall, they ensured that children did not experience having their "culture on the sidelines."
presence and Spanish-speaking ability of another principal had opened doors of communication to Hispanic students who prior to her arrival would have been sent to another school.

All participants expressed their desire to help students achieve academic success. One participant said that being Latina pushed her not to “give up” on students and to help them have “determination” to succeed. Another noted the importance of learning how different cultural groups teach their children in order to use instructional approaches more suited to the child’s learning modalities. All expressed a commitment to providing resources to cover the range of student needs and being “brokers” to help other educational leaders understand how diverse student populations might be better served.

Latina perspectives also influenced their leadership role in staff development situations. They accorded “the same respect” to all staff members regardless of rank. One participant described Latina influence in professional development as the extra “salsa” and “spice” she added to her presentations—“the things children say; things teachers have said.” Another participant used books that reinforced “respect for the child and the culture” to help teachers teach children “to defend themselves and to educate them about who they are.”

As Latina school leaders, they adapted communication styles in response to cultural differences between themselves and particular audiences. One participant used her “culture” in the role of “manager and supervisor” whenever she applied “cut and dry” policies from an “Anglo culture” by treating “people with dignity.” Depending on the audience, another participant determined whether to add the “salsa”—the anecdotes—to
formal presentations. Another participant noted her ability to "make specific strategic managerial decisions" to communicate with her parent community in two languages rather than depending on translation. One made in-depth presentations to teachers and general presentations to parents.

Asked if others perceived them differently in the role of change facilitator than leaders who were not ethnic group members, all but the German/Panamanian participant, reported being perceived differently. They related examples of being more mindful of inequities in systems and having to prove themselves, themes discussed earlier. One participant thought that Latina leaders were asked for "more facts, more evidence, more research" to justify their instructional decisions. One participant noted that her name, the fact that she spoke Spanish and English, and usually asked the question, "What does that mean for our Latino students?" among her administrative peers made her different. One principal thought her male teachers preferred that she be more "linear" in her communication style instead of "vacillating" around a point and another made an observation about hiring practices in the school district—"Many more Anglo females or males are moving up in the higher positions."

In sum, the participants defined educational leadership as the complex business of developing the learning potential of children and adults from diverse histories, cultures, languages, learning abilities, and socioeconomic levels. All enacted leadership for school change on a continuous basis in response to ever-shifting reform agendas and external directives. Their stories revealed various Latina perspectives of educational leadership. A discussion of the results follows.
Discussion of the Results

The inquiry approaches of critical race theory, phenomenology, and leader stories chosen for this study and their implications for research design are discussed first. Key findings are presented next in relationship to prior research in the fields of female leadership, Latina leadership, Latina educational leadership, and change. Each section is followed by implications for practice and the corresponding Latina researcher’s personal reflections as parallel text in italics.

The inclusion of the researcher’s story emulates the style of research reporting used by Gloria Ladson-Billings in *The Dreamkeepers—Successful Teachers of African American Children* (1994). The inclusion of the researcher’s story, explains Ladson-Billings, breaks “at least two scholarly conventions.” First, the “primacy of ‘objectivity’” is diminished. Secondly, this style of discussing the results “may be seen as methodologically ‘messy’.” Yet following the scholarly tradition in its strictest form is to “reject [one’s] necessary subjectivity” (p. xi). Like Ladson-Billings, “I chose to integrate my ‘scholarly’ tools with my knowledge of my culture and my personal experiences” (p. x). The precedent for the use of story “as an appropriate methodology for transmitting the richness and complexity of cultural and social phenomena” has already been established in the fields of “law, education, ethnic studies, and feminist studies” (p. x).

Relationship of the Study to Prior Research and Implications for Practice
Critical Race Theory, Phenomenology, and Leader Stories:

Theoretical Bases for the Study

Two leadership perspectives have shaped the traditional preparation and professional development of educational leaders. Western philosophies of platonic idealism and logical positivism attribute leadership to hereditary traits (Stogdill as cited in Mitchell, 1990). The positivistic view of leadership assumes that one can “become” a leader by studying human behaviors to determine those that most effectively influence others to accomplish specified tasks (Mitchell, 1990).

Critical race theorists (Delgado, 2000; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Matsuda et al., 1993) have found these two stories incomplete and problematic for two reasons. First, the dominant stories of leadership have been created and conveyed to educational leaders almost exclusively by Western European males and tradition. Critical race theorists have challenged this tradition by seeking to make explicit whose voice tells what story to whom and what the consequences are when members of outgroups are excluded from the creation and telling of the story.

Secondly, critical race theorists have viewed the two dominant leadership stories as an example of “either/or” thinking. Terms and concepts constructed in opposition to each other such as “leaders are born/leaders are made” run the risk of resulting in the subordination of one to the other in a hierarchical logocentrism (Greene as cited in Taylor, 1998). To counteract either/or views of social reality, critical race theory researchers gather data in the form of narrative, or story, from marginalized people. The
intent is to understand the concerns, priorities, and experiences of these individuals and to create a more just society that reflects the voices of all its members (Williams, 2000).

Phenomenology shares research approaches promoted by critical race theorists—recognition of multiple cultural views, interest in situated knowledge, embodied knowledge, and the notion of interpretation. Phenomenology, the study of human experience and how things, ideas, imagination or memories appear to us in and through our experiences, provides a means to illuminate the unique features and basic assumptions of educational leadership. In addition to what leaders do, phenomenology asks what leaders are—the subjective, intuitive, personal, and symbolical dimensions of leadership. The practitioners themselves elucidate what it means to be an educational leader in the context and process of education by pausing for a time to examine what they see, perceive, and understand as they enact leadership (Chamberlin, 1974; Mitchell, 1990; Sokolowski, 2000).

The critical race theory and phenomenological approaches are also consistent with the work of cognitive psychologists who study the complex processes and forms of communication such as stories, scenarios, dreams, and visions. Gardner (1995), who compared the life stories of 11 leaders, concluded that personality traits and skills alone cannot explain the particular direction set by a leader and the degree of success achieved with various audiences. He found that leaders who effected change were those who succeeded in conveying and enacting stories that captured their audiences' attention at a "particular historical moment, in terms of where they have been and where they would like to go" (p. 14). As with critical race theorists, Gardner presupposed "that some
individuals are in a position to convey those stories to others, that other individuals can identify with those stories, and that various individuals feel included or excluded once these stories have spread” (p. 22).

**Study’s Relationship to Critical Race Theory, Phenomenology and Leader Stories**

Critical race theory supported the selection of participants from an outgroup—female Latinas—and the use of personal narratives as the data source. Their collective leadership stories were elicited through in-depth phenomenological interviewing (Seidman, 1998). The open-ended interview questions encouraged the telling of stories within stories as well as stories seemingly unrelated to the interview questions. For example, four participants identified themselves as Chicanas and provided explanations for their choices. The term *Chicana* created an alternative category of cultural identity. *Chicana* seemed to answer the question, “What are you if you are of Mexican descent and cultural traditions but have grown up in America with mainstream traditions as well?” This finding illustrated a perspective of critical race theory—the ability to see beyond binary oppositions such as “black/white.” Two of the self-described Chicanas had chosen this label because they understood Chicanos to be people that actively seek to make contributions toward the improvement of the Latino population of this country. The explanation identified an underlying life and/or professional mission. Their opening stories related to the use of ethnic labels along with other variances in life histories revealed that this group of Latinas was not monolithic.
Implications for Practice and Personal Reflections

The use of in-depth phenomenological interviews elicited leader responses that revealed cultural perspectives and leadership behaviors that may not have been discovered through traditional methods of inquiry. For example, asking the participants to identify their ethnic heritage in a face-to-face encounter led to unsolicited stories and explanations for choosing the label Chicana. A check mark on a survey prepared for a quantitative study would not have revealed the significance of this ethnic label. The series of three interviews in three separate sessions provided extended time to relate stories. The fact that they were telling stories to another Latina they had known professionally appeared to have encouraged additional and more personal details. The process for eliciting stories and the findings from these stories supported the theoretical arguments for the use of critical race theory, phenomenology, and narrative inquiry approaches. The practice of educational leadership research can be broadened and enhanced by using interpretive tools of inquiry to learn from previously excluded groups.

Phenomenology, Gardner's (1995) cognitive view of leader stories, and critical race theory found me when I was struggling to construct a framework for this study. Phenomenology was a word I heard occasionally from a university researcher during the time I worked as a research assistant to promote indigenous school invention through reflective dialogue, inquiry, and critical pedagogy. Mitchell's book Re-Visioning Educational Leadership: A Phenomenological Approach (1990) introduced me to phenomenology as I initiated my literature search. Therein, I found the words for the ideas I had struggled to articulate as I tried to narrow the focus of my study. So many questions had percolated since the year I had shadowed two Latina elementary school principals to learn how they went about the business of school change with one foot tethered to school bureaucracies and the other foot exhorted to run free with indigenous school invention. As I observed them and took field notes from my detached position as a third party in their school, I began to think deeply about the complexity and intensity of leadership for school change, especially as led by Latinas. Phenomenology provided the means for examining those things that did not fit neatly under the categories of "traits" or "skills" of leadership-the "unseen things" of leadership.
Gardner's (1995) cognitive view of leadership resonated with my belief that there is more to leadership than traits and skills. His notion that leadership is about how leaders embody, convey, and tell stories to lead others through change seemed to be in step with the interpretive perspectives of phenomenology and critical race theory. All three schools of thought are open to examining story, symbols, metaphors, and intuition. Gardner's comparison of 11 leader stories described in Leading Minds (1995) made a case for collecting and comparing leader stories.

Critical race theory was introduced to me by one of my doctoral advisors, Dr. John Taylor. During my first of two dissertation proposal hearings, he re-directed my literature review in response to my second research question: How does the variable of ethnic culture interplay in the Latina educational leadership role? He pointed out that I had not made a strong enough case for this question of cultural influence on leadership and suggested that I read the work of critical race theorists beginning with Delgado (2000). He then shared a personal story from his own career as an African American educational leader approaching retirement. He related that throughout his career there were times when he left “meetings wishing he had taken an interpreter in with him to translate.” As he shared this, I experienced an epiphany. First, I immediately understood what he meant by needing “a translator” without his need to specify that it had to do with cultural dissonance. Secondly, I realized that I had relegated the question of Latina perspective to second-class citizenship—my heart-question peered out of the pages like a little girl peering into a room full of white grown-ups fearing to make her presence known. In that frozen moment, I understood something about myself: I was still timid, or afraid, even, of calling attention to my Mexican American self. Somehow, probably since my first day in grade school, I had understood it was better to be like “everyone else,” to keep quiet until I could learn to pronounce all those new English words correctly, and never, ever take burritos for school lunch! Critical race theory justified collecting personal narratives from Latina educational leaders.

My doctoral advisor, Dr. Kris Bosworth, encouraged me to write my parallel story in these pages. Though an anomaly in traditional dissertations, she had seen a way to include the researcher’s voice alongside the voices of research participants as Gloria Ladson-Billings did in her book Dreamkeepers – Successful Teachers of African American Children (1994). In adding my story, I was free to speak within the structures imposed by a dissertation. In doing so, my Latina voice was added to the leadership literature.

History and Perspective of Women Leaders

The study of leadership and organizational theory, the work of Western European males about males, has been generalized to the female population (American Association
of School Administrators, 1993; Burns, 1978; Smith, 1998). The issue of women in the workplace began to appear in the literature of the 1970s. The few publications addressing this topic "just counseled women on how best to ape what men were doing" (Helgeson, 1990, p. xxxiii). The literature of the 1980s focused on women's "handicaps"—the skills they lacked, what they needed to learn, and why they had to change. This time, however, women began to mobilize and speak out to establish the value of women's work to life and society. They redefined the family and restructured institutions to include such things as parental leave, flexible scheduling, and child care facilities at the work site (Friedan as cited in Smith, 1998). The literature of the early 1990s acknowledged the differences between men and women's life views and urged organizations to be reinvent themselves by taking into account characteristics more typically ascribed to women—being holistic and having concern for people, interpersonal skills, intuitive management, and creativity in problem solving (Feuer & Norris as cited in Helgeson, 1990; Sigford, 1995). The issues of race, ethnicity, and class in the study of leadership began to emerge in the literature of the late 1990s (Sigford, 1995).

Study's Relationship to History and Perspective of Women Leaders

This study did not ask about gender issues of leadership. Nonetheless, participants occasionally commented on gender differences in their roles as educational leaders or expressed ambivalence when describing Latina qualities of leadership. They wondered whether a tension resided in a gender difference or a cultural difference when referring to their roles as wives and mothers.
They described a difference between Latinas and Latinos in the workplace. Two participants believed that as Latinas began competing with Latinos for leadership positions, “Latinas [became] better leaders than Latinos.” They thought Latinas were more “nurturing” of other women in their ascension to positions of leadership. They expressed their desire “to help each other; to pull each other on in leadership roles,” and to counter the “old boys club.” They encouraged professional growth for women and occasionally substituted for teachers who suddenly needed to get home to care for a sick child.

Two participants reported a behavior difference related to gender. One believed she had not “gotten a principalship as quickly as a man” because she had not behaved as “aggressively” or as “direct” as a male. Another participant wondered if she could get more resources for her school by “beating on a table” rather than “asking nicely” and being “very polite.”

In spite of their expressed desire for female mentors, all participants named males who had mentored them through the years. This finding would likely be the same among women of any race born between 1943 and 1963, the birth years of the participants. There were simply fewer women leaders in the work force (Helgeson, 1990; Smith, 1998). Two participants received encouragement from their fathers’ expectations and lived examples. Notably, no participant cited her mother as a mentor nor did the participants report that their mothers discouraged them from pursuing postsecondary education and professional careers. Others received mentoring from principals and
assistant superintendents. Most reported that they sought female colleagues, usually
Latinas, for their ongoing professional growth and support.

*Implications for Practice and Personal Reflections*

The gender issues reported by the participants revealed that women in the workplace still struggle with issues of gender difference and expectations. The additional layer of ethnic cultural difference obfuscates such struggles of equity in the work force for ethnic minority women. The practice of leadership could be enhanced by an increase in female role models of all ethnic groups. Professional educational leader associations could sponsor seminars and conference sessions on the topics of gender differences versus cultural differences in the workplace. Educational leadership preparation programs could expand the number of courses and seminars related to the distinct issues of gender and culture differences.

*I recall thinking one day that if I had a “stay-at-home wife,” I, too, might be able to climb the career ladder like my boss, a Latino who quickly rose from teacher to program director to deputy superintendent to superintendent. The year he became deputy superintendent I resigned from the school district to become the parent of the first of our two adopted sons. Because we adopted a three-year-old, and later a five-year-old, from the foster care system, each with special needs, parenting required full-time or close to full-time care. It never occurred to me that my husband should be the one to leave his career behind.*

*At age 35, I had worked for 14 years in the education profession. I had been an elementary school teacher, curriculum specialist, director of bilingual education programs, and in my final year, I directed three departments—bilingual education programs, African American studies, and Native American studies. I was ready to begin a parenting life, though I had not envisioned leaving my career entirely. As I reflect on the past 15 years of parenting, I realize I am the only sibling in my family who was a stay-at-home mother on a part-time or full-time basis throughout those years. Perhaps I was influenced more than I thought by my mother’s example of full-time parenting and homemaking. Still, I had many more choices open to me than she did as a newly immigrated, non-English-speaking, sixth-grade educated woman at the time I was born, the first of six children.*
My resume reads like a travel diary describing stops along byways rather than predictable markers along a highway to a particular destination, and I have no state pension for retirement. Instead, I have two teenage sons who continue to educate me about the complexities of adoptive parenting, a new set of graduate credits, and a dissertation written in pieces between meal preparations, football and rugby games, piano lessons, and parent-teacher conferences. I no longer resent not having had the "stay-at-home-wife." Instead, I have known the privilege of continuous emotional and financial support from my husband, just as all the study participants reported. I came to appreciate his role and his ways of knowing as I grew in understanding of who we are as women skilled in Composing a Life (Bateson, 1990). I have come to appreciate the leadership necessary to run a household, navigate through school systems as an advocate for my special-needs sons, and serve on the boards of school parent organizations and a charter high school. As I disengaged from a "career path" and engaged in the work of parenting, doctoral studies, and community service, I came to know, cultivate, and value Women's Ways of Knowing (Belenky et al., 1986) through three lenses—as a female and as a member of both an ethnic group and mainstream American society.

Women's Ways of Leading

The first-person accounts of five non-corporate women leaders, shadowed and interviewed by Helgeson (1990), disclosed nine characteristics of managerial and leadership behaviors more characteristic of women. The women worked at a steady pace with breaks scheduled into their day and viewed their unscheduled tasks as opportunities to connect with others. They made time for family, reading, and outside interests. They made time for networking, preferring face-to-face meetings. They spent time tending to mail as "a way of keeping relationships in good repair" (p. 24) and scheduled time to share information. The women often paused to reflect on how their decisions affected the larger society. The women saw themselves as complex and multifaceted and saw the process of work and people as ends in themselves. They were not as focused on the completion of tasks and achievement of goals. Women introduced into the work environments their own experiences and expectations, including those of the domestic
domain: “organization, pacing, the balancing of conflicting claims, teaching, guiding, leading, monitoring, handling disturbances, imparting information” (p. 31).

Smith’s (1998) review of the literature revealed similar characteristics of women’s ways of leading. Women tended to be more nurturing, caring, sensitive, and empathetic in their relationships than men. They were found to be responsive and able to nurture and foster human potential in all people. Women leaders tended to have dispositions toward connectiveness, interdependence, and contextualized thinking.

Study’s Relationship to Women’s Ways of Leading

All participants shared the belief that leadership is about moving others forward toward some defined goal, generally some aspect of instruction that improves student learning. To accomplish this goal, all but one participant specified the need to mentor, nurture, or guide others from one level to another. They described characteristics of collaborative leadership—identifying people’s attributes and talents, inclusion of all stakeholders in decision making, being knowledgeable of curricula, recognizing in others where they are in terms of life and career stages, and creating open and trusting environments where people are free to question and to challenge one another’s ideas and practices.

In describing their leadership styles, participants described themselves as “personable,” “modeling,” “nurturing and partnering,” “caring, humanistic, compassionate,” and “collaborative and professional.” These dispositions reflect a relationship-oriented style of leadership—the need to maintain close working relationships with others. Only one participant described herself as having a task-oriented style of
leadership, that is, motivated by the need to accomplish assigned tasks. She described herself as being “fair” and “following the book.”

Embedded in their stories of leadership, the participants identified such practices as “receiving others,” focused listening, being a “madrina” (godmother) to teachers, mentoring, using a personal coach, reading pertinent leadership literature, and relying on spiritual or religious faith for meeting the demands of their work. In addition, their stories conveyed that they were skilled in communications strategies, organization, and knowledge of curriculum and instruction. Nonetheless, they primarily described how they nurtured and fostered human potential in children and adults and how they established and strove to maintain positive working relationships, as the review of the literature (Helgeson, 1990; Smith, 1998) had posited.

Implications for Practice and Personal Reflections

The increase in the number of women in graduate school leadership programs and in school administration has created increased opportunities for women to research, teach, and demonstrate new models of leadership that emphasize nurturing human potential, connectiveness, interdependence, and contextualized thinking. Those individuals and organizations that incorporate such skills succeeded in the diversified global society and economy (Helgeson, 1990). American schools already reflect a microcosm of that global society. Educational leadership and administration preparation programs that include curriculum and materials reflective of women’s ways of leading and school administrators who enact the newer holistic models of leadership and mentor others are those who will set new directions for the 21st century.
Throughout my years of graduate study in the field of educational administration and leadership, I recall one textbook with three pages dedicated to women's leadership. In my final year of doctoral coursework, a female professor offered a seminar course on issues in women's leadership. She was the only female professor I ever had in these graduate courses. I benefited from her knowledge and leadership in three ways. In her women's leadership class, we read and discussed women's ways of knowing in an alternative "classroom" setting—five women sharing dinner, conversation, and questions in a different restaurant every week that semester. Secondly, she had developed an innovative holistic model for constructing a leadership portfolio in lieu of a qualifying exam. Her model allowed us to demonstrate mastery of educational leadership theories and models in a non-traditional format. I was able to contextualize the theories and models of organization and leadership within my own life story and leadership development. The use of story in my portfolio made it sufficiently different, and my professor asked if I would accompany her to a professional conference to present my portfolio as one of two unique graduate student portfolios produced in response to her alternative assessment design. The third experience afforded to me through this female professor was the co-teaching of an "experimental" course on issues of power in leadership. Included in our course syllabus were the issues of power related to women and ethnic minority groups. Because the professor was Anglo, I was asked to prepare the presentation addressing minority issues. We shared the planning, delivery, and assessment of instruction.

Why do I recall these experiences as I reflect on women's ways of leading? Perhaps it was because a woman's style of teaching and leading corresponded better to my style of thinking, learning, and leading. Her manner was inclusive and collaborative. Her approach to the portfolio assessment and the way in which we designed the course was holistic. We actively sought out and integrated our students' needs and interests as we simultaneously designed, delivered, and changed the course as we went. Perhaps I experienced what Helgeson (1990) learned in her study of women leaders:

*We feel that women are more caring and intuitive, better at seeing the human side, quicker to cut through competitive distinctions of hierarchy and ranking, impatient with cumbersome protocols. Our belief in these notions is intuitive rather than articulated; we back it up with anecdotes instead of arguments. (p. 5)*

As I reflect on the stories related by my study participants, I can see that they, too, led in the way Helgeson described.

**Women Leaders in Education**

The literature surveying women and leadership generally addressed the issue of gender through studies of women in the corporate and small-business world. Female
educational leaders, specifically principals, were typically not the subjects of gender-issue leadership studies even as late as 1997 (Blackmore, 1989; Shum & Cheng, 1997). The available literature on women educators revealed the following characteristics.

Female educational leaders possessed a leadership style characterized by “mutual interdependence, interpersonal relationships, and community involvement [that] fosters collaborative and cooperative management skills” (Smith, 1998, pp. 51-52). They tended to lead from the center rather than from the top and were motivated by intrinsic rewards rather than controlling behaviors. They established authority by being interactive and placing more emphasis on people’s needs and feelings. They were prone to use compromise and teamwork to solve problems and make decisions. They broke with tradition more often because they were more concerned with a vision based on humanity rather than on latent theories (Sigford, 1995; Smith, 1998).

Women principals and male principals with a feminine sex-role orientation demonstrated submissive, friendly, empathetic, sensitive, and emotionally expressive behavior (Shum & Cheng, 1997). They created more closely knit and democratic organizations by involving teachers, parents, and the community in setting goals, making plans, making decisions, and building coalitions (Smith, 1998). Theirs was an “educative, non-hierarchical view of leadership consistent with the view of participation and dialogue as educative processes” (Blackmore, 1989, p. 27).

Previous studies (Andrew & Basom as cited in Sigford, 1995; Smith, 1998) found that female school principals were more involved in the instructional process of teachers and students at the school level than their male counterparts. They observed teachers
more closely, valued the productivity of their teachers, and were more likely to be of assistance to new teachers. They were more concerned with academic achievement and demonstrated greater concern for individual differences, developmental problems, and the social-emotional development of their students than did male principals. As a result, the climate of their schools was more conducive to higher academic achievement and higher-quality performance of teachers.

Women principals tended to maintain a higher level of interest in and knowledge of current educational trends. They were generally more aware of the methods, techniques, and problems faced by teachers because on average they had spent more years teaching than male administrators (Smith, 1998). They participated more often in professional growth activities because they viewed their roles as being master teachers or pedagogues (Sigford, 1995).

Overall, the studies of female business and industry leaders and those of educational leaders ascribed the same leadership attributes to both categories of women leaders. Differences may lie only in their roles as instructional leaders, a defining characteristic of educational leadership.

Study's Relationship to Research on Women Leaders in Education

All participants defined and enacted educational leadership in a manner consistent with prior research findings (Blackmore, 1989; Shum & Cheng, 1997; Sigford, 1995; Smith, 1998). Participants viewed leadership as a collaborative effort of moving others forward toward some defined goal, generally of improving student learning. They created open and trusting work environments in which their school communities could participate
in setting goals and making decisions. They did so by mentoring, nurturing, or guiding others from one level to the next. They saw themselves as instructional leaders who had become teachers, and now administrators, to “make a difference” in the lives of children, youth, and their teachers. To that end, they all guided and participated in ongoing professional development programs responding to federal, state, and district directives for improving student achievement. Their definitions, metaphors, and stories of leadership confirmed earlier findings—that female educational leaders possessed a leadership style “based on mutual interdependence, interpersonal relationships, and community involvement” (Smith, 1998, pp. 51-52) and that they had an “educative, non-hierarchical view of leadership” (Blackmore, 1989, p. 27).

Implications for Practice and Personal Reflections

School principals seeking greater parent and community involvement in their schools may need to practice holistic and participatory styles of leadership typically utilized by female leaders to make their schools more welcoming and inclusive of all segments of the population. The findings in this study suggest that school site councils comprised of administrators, teachers, and parent and community members promote democratic school governance. Principals who form partnerships with parent leaders can benefit from building a network of support. As one participant noted, when school district officials failed to respond to a plea for additional two-way radios for her school safety monitors, she appealed to her parent group. Their subsequent appeal to the school governing board led to the immediate purchase of the necessary equipment.
Study participants related examples of communication strategies for welcoming parents and promoting parent and community partnerships. They placed a high priority on acknowledging another’s presence through handshakes, smiles, exchanging stories, and occasionally sharing “burritos” in a parent’s home. They wrote weekly newsletters and called parent meetings as needed to report on school change progress. They adapted their presentations for parent audiences by making reports free of educational jargon and detail, choosing terms that would garner more support (dual-language instruction instead of bilingual education, for example), weaving in relevant anecdotes, and consciously preparing formats and materials to deliver information in two (or three) languages without relying on translation. Cafecito (coffee) and pan dulce (sweet bread) and other food were mainstays of gatherings to create a welcoming ambience.

School principals concerned with increasing academic achievement and the quality of teacher performance may emulate practices more frequently observed among female school principals—observing teachers more closely, providing more assistance to new teachers, affirming the productivity of their teachers, and paying close attention to the individual differences, developmental problems, and the social emotional development of students (Sigford, 1995; Smith, 1998). Study participants described similar practices. They described strong professional development programs. They took active roles in encouraging their own staff to provide training, inviting outside presenters, and engaging teachers in discussions of professional literature. Following group sessions, the participants provided on-going support to teachers as they attempted new practices. They were adept at gathering material resources for their schools, including literature.
reflective of diverse cultural groups. All expressed the importance of setting high expectations for student achievement regardless of race or socioeconomic level. They invited parent and community members into their schools to be co-teachers and tutors.

I have never been an elementary school principal. However, for one school year, I shadowed two elementary school principals as a research assistant and novice ethnographer. That year of observations, conversations, questions, and documentation of their work led me to this study. I wrote briefly about this experience in an essay for a graduate course “Leadership for Educational Change.” Reading it again, I found that my perspective regarding educational leadership for educational reform and the role of principal in effecting change had changed little since I wrote the essay in October of 1993. Excerpts from that essay follow.

Perspectives on Leadership and Management: Personal Reflections on the Role of Administrator in Educational Reform

“I never want to be a principal! They take it from both ends. If it’s not the teachers who are unhappy, it’s their supervisors who are unhappy with them.” Such was my observation of the role of principal as an elementary school teacher. Later, as a district curriculum specialist, the lens through which I viewed this position grew wider. I could now see the variety of leadership styles present across a school district. I soon learned who were esteemed principals from both the teachers’ and the top-level administrators’ perspectives. Consequently, I began to be curious about the characteristics that distinguished an effective school principal from an ineffective one. I was particularly interested in those principals who were involved in . . . educational reform. This small group of leaders was a testament to the possibility of more meaningful and relevant schooling. As my definition of leadership and management expanded through observation, the thought of becoming an administrator no longer seemed out of reach . . .

Working as a research associate in an elementary school provided a year-long opportunity to shadow a principal. My observation notes are replete with example after example of managerial tasks that fill a principal’s day. These are not the functions generally listed in the latest research article describing the effective school leader. In addition to these tasks, there were additional duties as a result of the school reform effort in which she was involved.

This principal who welcomed school reform was expected to encourage teachers to participate in shared decision making, find meaningful ways to involve parents in the school, and help community coalitions. All of these activities demanded high visibility, dialogue, and extended periods of time to
translate a vision into a reality. Nonetheless, the principal found herself struggling to meet both managerial and leadership expectations.

While I found it easy to itemize what principals do, I found it difficult to define the qualities of a principal leader, though I knew this principal was a "leader." In retrospect, I can see why I was drawn to her style of leadership—it was different from the two male principals who I had worked for in my first years of teaching . . . . Perhaps it had something to do with the fact that she was a . . . Hispanic woman like me . . . . She conveyed a sense of confidence and seemed to have a strong ethical code. She had been unwilling to settle for the status quo especially that which perpetuates educational inequities among children and youth. She practiced a participatory form of leadership . . . . This style of leadership promoted trust and the freedom to experiment among her faculty. In treating students, I saw that she engendered their trust as well. She was firm, yet gentle in correction. For many of the students, she seemed to be a source of nurturing not found at home. She took her charge as principal more as a calling than a job.

Nonetheless, for all her efforts to meet the human relations needs in her school, the principal found it impossible to keep up with the managerial demands. The tasks often represented the tug-of-war between doing what was right versus doing the right thing for a school in the midst of reinvention. In the end, the managerial tasks seemed to consume her and she resigned from her position mid-year.

I continue to ponder the issues of school leadership and management. I have since learned that there is no one definition of leadership . . . . I have learned that an effective leader needs to assess the organizational structure and be sensitive to its culture and climate. Unanswered questions remain about how to reconcile the oppositional demands of leadership and management, and how to prepare administrators who will become leaders of change.

Since the year I shadowed two Latina elementary school principals, I have had a lingering question: Is it reasonable to expect principals to be indigenous school reform leaders given the mandates imposed upon them from outside sources? This study leads me to believe it is not possible as long as school principals spend more time "translating top-down directives" into more palatable terms, as described by Sylvia, than time engaged in critical inquiry and dialogue as defined by Bohm (as cited in Senge, 1994) and Heckman (1996).
Latina Leadership

The study of Latina leadership “has been neglected and left out of the social sciences and feminist scholarship research” (Lopez, 2000, p. 218) due to lack of understanding on the part of social scientists of the contributions, leadership styles, diversity, and organized movements of Hispanic women. Feminist scholarship created new stereotypes of women’s roles rather than showing how historical and social structural differences result in different choices for women (McKenna & Ortiz, 1988). Existing research was exacerbated by the deficit orientation that left Latinas vulnerable to stereotypic notions easily accepted by others, including Latinas themselves (Lopez, 2000).

The literature cited in this study primarily reported obstacles Hispanic women face in their economic and professional development such as gender and ethnic discrimination, low levels of educational attainment, low earning levels, and traditional sex-role socialization. Consequently, the literature suggested institutional and organizational strategies such as educational and institutional reforms for increasing the representation of Latinos in the leadership pipeline (Hoy & Miskel, 1996; Lopez, 1991).

Latinas who did break new ground through leadership faced certain conflicts if they elected to work outside the home (Lopez, 2000). Latinas tended to take few risks and placed a high value on security. They had strong nurturing values and believed in a strong work ethic. Latina first-borns experienced ambivalence about pursuing a professional career and were reluctant to separate from family and relocate if the career required a move. Once involved in a career, Latinas experienced psychological conflict.
resulting from loyalties to two conflicting goals—success in the mainstream and attachment to Hispanic culture. Because cultural values suggested that power was unfeminine, Latinas tended to eliminate or avoid conflict rather than face it. Related to issues of power was the conflict of doing the right thing versus doing what was politically correct.

Lopez's (2000) review of studies of Latinas in the workplace revealed that to a large extent the women studied were first-borns who had also assumed a large amount of responsibility in the family and seldom delegated responsibilities. In supervisory positions, Latinas tended to maintain an "in charge" posture for fear that they might be perceived as weak. They were found to be overly formal and hesitant about promoting themselves, especially in job interviews or with powerful decision makers. When dealing with conflict, they tended to "freeze up" instead of taking charge. These tendencies were attributed to the fact that Latinas typically moved up the career ladder in isolation. Lastly, Latinas found it difficult to distinguish between gender-based or race-related discrimination given their female and ethnic minority status.

Study's Relationship to Latina Leadership

The biographical and leadership stories of the participants attest to prior research findings related to gender and/or ethnic discrimination (Hoy & Miskel, 1996; Lopez, 1991; Lopez, 2000). As women, they had experienced such expectations as living at home while going to college, "cleaning up after the men," being "the mom," being "very polite" or "submissive" or "subservient," and having to "be home at a certain time" even when they wanted "to keep dedicating a lot of hours to work." They had been corrected
for speaking Spanish at school and were barred from advanced placement English classes in high school because they “had no business going to the university” because it was presumed that “Mexican brains aren’t as developed as Anglo brains.” They encountered hiring practices that showed preference to Anglo women or men or were kept in their place by supervisors threatened by their leadership abilities. One participant believed she was “invisible” to her presumed colleagues in one setting. All believed they were perceived by some as “tokens,” “window dressings,” or recipients of affirmative action.

The participants overcame obstacles to achieve academic and professional success in their leadership development. However, as earlier studies (Lopez, 2000) indicated, their success in the marketplace became a source of conflict and ambivalence between their work and home lives. All identified the need to spend more time with their families but appeared to have reconciled their dual roles of mother and professional over time. They sometimes found it difficult to distinguish between gender-based and race-related discrimination given their female-ethnic-minority identities. This was especially evident when they were asked to describe any conflicts or ambivalence between their home and work lives. However, they were clear about race discrimination as they recalled their early leadership development and career experiences.

The participants’ stories were not consistent with three findings in previous research (Lopez, 2000). First, only half of the participants were firstborns. Secondly, they demonstrated risk-taking leadership behaviors throughout their educational and professional lives. Lastly, they delegated responsibilities to others.
That not all participants were firstborns may have been a function of a common factor shared by all participants—each related a story of their families’ high regard for education—even for their daughters in an era when that was not a typical expectation for most women. Some reported their siblings’ and neighbors’ influence in pursuing higher education.

This group of Latinas demonstrated risk-taking behaviors common to leaders not content with the status quo, especially that which perpetuates inequities. They defied those who thought them incapable of high school advanced placement classes and college degrees. Some persuaded their parents to let them move away to attend college. In doing so, one set the precedent for younger siblings to attend college. One participant secretly rented an apartment until she found the courage to tell her adoptive parents what she had done. When they were barred from positions they applied for, they persisted in moving up the career ladder with or without mentors. Because they knew how it was to ascend the educational and career ladder without mentorship, they were compelled to become mentors. All questioned superiors about instructional programs and district policies in their own particular styles—some quite directly, others more subtly. Two participants risked dissolving their marriages as they took on demanding leadership roles. The participants’ stories revealed that becoming a leader meant being able to overcome beliefs of lower self-worth imposed upon them by others, stepping outside of gender-based traditions, and trusting their own judgment. They challenged personal and cultural expectations. In doing so, they became role models for younger Latinas.
Unlike previous studies, this group of Latinas seemed skilled at delegating responsibilities to others. To be in the work place, they first had to turn childcare over to others. One assuaged her guilt about this by leaving her children with extended family members. Some found it necessary to hire housekeepers. All participants created democratic work environments using shared leadership behaviors. They encouraged teachers to take on leadership roles in professional development and school governance. They were insistent that staff realize the goals they set together—from increasing reading and math scores to keeping the school building clean and safe. In delegating responsibilities to others, these principals conveyed their respect and confidence in others’ abilities to carry out their respective jobs.

Consistent with Lopez’s (2000) research, some of the participants indicated discomfort with promoting themselves. One had to “psych” herself “up like a boxer” to “sell herself” in interview situations because she had been taught not to “boast.” She had to consciously change her use of the word “we” to “I” when discussing her accomplishments during interviews. Another participant believed she was “very shy” and chose not to make her ideas known at administration meetings but did not mind if someone else introduced the ideas for her. She also pointed out that Latinos were “humilde” (humble) and said “please” and “thank you” often—evidence of Lopez’s (2000) finding that Latinas tend to be overly formal as well as unassuming. One principal may have unconsciously behaved in this manner when she spoke about herself in the third person in response to a question related to her leadership.
Lopez's (2000) studies showed that Latinas tended to "freeze up" when dealing with conflict. This finding was not entirely confirmed by this study's participants. One participant reported that when she had to discipline students or teachers or defend her school it "took everything out of [her]" because it was not part of her character. Another participant "took that little pill," in the figurative sense, before having to speak to an underperforming teacher. One admitted that her first reaction toward difficult teachers was to ignore them. Another principal used humor and said "please" and "thank you" often to soften "bad news" she had to deliver. Such reactions to conflict were said to be a result of Latinas' tendency to move up the career ladder in isolation (Lopez, 2000). This finding appeared to be true of these participants.

True to earlier studies (Lopez, 2000), these Latina leaders moved up the career ladder in isolation, buoyed up mostly by their fathers and husbands and occasionally by other educators along their education and career paths. None of the participants reported having a specific plan, time line, or formal mentoring program for moving up the career ladder. Only one participant had the experience of being purposefully mentored by a principal who saw the potential for her to become a principal. Another participant had used a personal coach for professional growth. Instead, they accepted positions that others encouraged them to accept and went to work to "make a difference."

This study revealed three nuances of Latina leadership not emphasized in earlier studies (Hoy & Miskel, 1996; Lopez, 1991; Lopez, 2000). Five of the six participants stated or implied the need to "prove themselves" along their schooling and professional paths. They had to prove themselves to English teachers, college professors, supervisors,
teaching staffs, and sometimes to their students’ parents. Consciously or subconsciously, these Latinas appeared determined to prove that they had achieved their educational and professional achievements through their own efforts. They proved it by enrolling in college when others thought them incapable, earning graduate degrees, updating and upgrading their knowledge and skills through professional development, seeking mentors and personal coaches, and taking on leadership roles in professional associations.

The participants’ stories revealed a second nuance of Latina leadership—they appeared to be motivated and moved by cultural sensitivities borne of cultural differences and inequities they had personally experienced or perceived throughout their lives. They responded to schooling inequities “from passion [and] a lot of personal experiences with a sense of urgency.” Their stories were replete with examples of the actions they took to correct inequities rooted in racial or ethnic differences or misunderstandings. They called attention to stereotypes embedded in literature, used Chicano literature to help struggling readers, built collections of multicultural literature in their schools, and led teachers in discussion of books like *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire, 1970, 1993). They found ways to continue providing bilingual education programs in spite of legislation aimed at severely limiting dual language instruction. They used the district’s own policies and regulations to fight for equal application of those policies to all students, and posed the question “What does that mean for our Latino students?” in reference to curricular and instructional changes.

This urgency to correct inequities appeared to motivate these Latina leaders to act as “bridges” or “brokers”—to build connections between and among all people they
served, the third nuance of Latina leadership missing from earlier studies (Lopez, 1991; Lopez, 2000). They placed a high premium on acknowledging another’s presence beginning with a handshake “to make [them] feel welcome and safe” and using English and Spanish strategically to communicate and “bond” with their constituents. They emphasized welcoming all students and ensuring that their culture not be “on the sidelines.” They expressed “a sense of responsibility” and “determination” to see that all students succeeded academically. To that end, they strove to provide developmentally appropriate and culturally relevant instruction. They valued the funds of knowledge brought by children and adults into their school communities. They welcomed them as co-teachers and tutors and incorporated their stories in their formal presentations. All were willing to explain cultural differences to others whenever they saw a need or were asked by “sincere inquirers.”

The participants’ tendency to be “brokers” may have been rooted in six attributes and/or practices they identified as Latina influences on leadership—respect, service, sense of family, empathy, the use of personal narratives, and submissiveness. They repeatedly spoke of respect toward elders, members of the school community, and “other people’s philosophies.” All manifested dispositions toward service to “benefit others,” especially “la raza” (their race) and other marginalized groups. The sense of “familia” was evident in their metaphors and descriptions of life as an educational leader—a school described as “familia” or “pueblito” (little town), calling their students “mi hijito/mi hijita” (my little son/my little daughter), and seeing themselves as mothers, godmothers, or matriarchs. They communicated empathy in speaking of respeto and familia and in
describing the importance of acknowledging others through a handshake, greeting, inclusion in previously closed activities, or an open door inviting one in for a cup of coffee and *pan dulce* (sweet bread). The participants’ use of personal narratives was visible as they freely related stories in response to interview questions as well as stories seemingly unrelated to the question at hand. Three participants specifically identified storytelling as a characteristic of Latina culture. Though they identified submissiveness as an attribute of Latinas, it seemed to be an attribute they had learned to subdue or subjugate as they dealt with obstacles of gender, race, education, and socioeconomics in their leadership development and practice.

The participants’ descriptions of Latina educational leadership revealed a perspective of strength and confidence rather than deficit in contrast to previous studies (Hoy & Miskel, 1996; Lopez, 1991; Lopez, 2000) of Latina leadership. Their metaphors describing *Latina educational leader* added intensity of color and movement with purpose to their earlier metaphorical renditions of educational leaders. Latina educational leaders work hard to prove themselves in “a man’s world that is not Hispanically inclined.” A Latina educational leader is “the mother or the grandmother” with the “protective side” and the “soft side.” She has a heart that is “always acknowledging everyone.” She moves as a tango dancer adding “the kicks and the more dramatic flairs” with “confidence.” At other times, she is a “steam engine going really fast.” She is *la Malinche* who has known and transcended “conquest” and who now acts as a “translator” as she moves through two worlds.
Implications for Practice and Personal Reflections

Earlier studies (Hoy & Miskel, 1996) on Latino leadership called for increasing education opportunities for all Latinos, especially those of lower socio-economic classes and the newly immigrated. There is a need to promote postsecondary education for Latinas with concerted efforts made during the high school years. Latinas from a variety of professions who understand the role of a madrina (spiritual godmother) could serve as mentors for high-school-age Latinas. These madrinas would address such areas as academic success, leadership development, career options, conflict resolution, and interviewing techniques. Perhaps more importantly, madrinas would be in a capacity to show young Latinas how to move with grace and confidence through multiple cultural worlds. Small groups of no more than six may be more conducive for developing closer madrina-ahijada (godmother-goddaughter) relationships. This same process would be of benefit to Latinas in university undergraduate and graduate programs.

Latina educational leaders whose work setting lacks a formal mentoring program are encouraged to create their own mentoring system and/or hire personal career coaches. They can also take the lead in creating mentoring systems for their school districts.

Educational leadership training programs and in-service professional development may benefit from the inclusion of courses, seminars, and study groups related to cultural issues of leadership. Three questions can guide such forums: What are the structures responsible for exclusion, repression, and inequality in organizations and societies of ethnic and racial minority members? What are the notable leadership characteristics of a
particular ethnic group? How might any leader incorporate these attributes and behaviors for greater effectiveness in leading diverse populations?

As I interviewed each of the study participants, I felt as though I was muzzled, particularly as they spoke about the Latina perspectives of leadership. I wanted to interject, “Yes! I know what that feels like! I remember having that same sort of experience! I thought I was the only one who felt like that.” As I recalled their stories and the places where my stories intersected with theirs, I recalled certain “benchmarks”-as Tango used the term-that shaped my Latina leadership perspectives.

I am the eldest of six who grew up in a family of limited means. My mother was born in Mexico; my father was born in the United States of Mexican parents. I did not speak English when I started first grade. My first-grade teacher advised my father to speak English only to me. From that day forward, I probably began to hear English only from my father. Later on, I had to make a conscious effort to speak in Spanish when both were present. In second grade, Sister Regina Marie slapped my arm during my lunch period for speaking Spanish. I remember the moment vividly and thinking that she had no right to tell me what language to speak during my recess time. Perhaps that was the day I decided that no one would ever take my cradle language away and that I would also study it formally-and did-all four years in high school and every semester during undergraduate studies. Though my parents never finished high school, they expected us to succeed in school. Like Cecilia and Isabel’s parents, they taught us that education was the key for rising above our present conditions. They encouraged each of us to pursue post-secondary education at a university or a vocational school.

Junior year in high school American History class brought new insights as to who I was in American society. Sr. Clare Dunn, an activist nun who later became a state legislator, woke me up to the issues of civil rights in this country. It was the first time I had stopped to consider my place as an ethnic minority and female. That was the year I made two decisions-I reclaimed my given birth name of “Ana” rather than “Anna.” My first-grade teacher said I had to write my name in English, and as a result of this, I acquired the English pronunciation of my name. Today I ask to be called by its Spanish pronunciation even though my siblings still call me by the English pronunciation—remnants of those grade-school years. The second decision I made was to forego the typing class in high school. Why? So that no one would ever place me on a secretary career track, the typical path followed by most of my Mexican American peers and women in general. As a result of these experiences, I became more observant of how to pronounce others’ names correctly and made a decision that I would go to college and “prove” that I could do more than “take dictation.”

As with each of the study participants, I, too, acquired bilingual education certification as part of my teaching preparation and post-graduate studies. It was an opportunity to use my native tongue and culture as assets in the school setting. More
importantly, it was an opportunity to treat the English-language learner in the manner I wished I had been treated. Unfortunately, the passage of Proposition 203 in Arizona once again made it legal to silence speakers of minority languages in public schools.

In my second year as an elementary school teacher, the male Anglo principal from Tennessee said to me one day, “You’re not a typical Mexican.” And what was that, I wondered? Though I do not recall what exactly provoked that comment, my guess is that I had made my mark as one who did not accept without question autocratic decisions or sexual innuendos made by this principal. My evaluation reflected this at the end of my second year of teaching—he wrote that I needed to improve my interpersonal relationships toward him, likely! In my second year of teaching (1978), he described me as “militant” for joining fellow teachers on strike. Perhaps he thought he had hired a meek 21-year-old teacher! The day I left his school for a new teaching position, his parting words to me were, “Well, Anna, I put in a few good words for you when asked for a recommendation. But it probably didn’t matter. They probably needed you to fill their minority quota.” This was not the only time I heard such a comment. My unspoken response was, “Fine. If someone wants to hire me to be in compliance with minority quotas, I’ll use that entrance to promote my agenda—I’ll do my best in my position, but I’ll also take it upon myself to seek equity wherever I see it lacking, to raise questions others wouldn’t dare to ask, and to speak for the disenfranchised.”

As the study participants spoke of barriers along their career paths because of their Latina origins, I recalled two barriers encountered as I initiated graduate studies. The Anglo male head of the educational administration department tried to convince me to pursue a master’s degree in reading or elementary education. Eventually, he allowed me to enroll in the administration program. Shortly thereafter two women of color told me they had received the same treatment. Rumor had it that this department head did not encourage women, particularly minority women, to apply to this program. Secondly, when I enrolled in this master’s degree program, I could have received a fellowship offered to Latino teachers with bilingual education endorsements pursuing administrative studies. I chose not to go through this fellowship program to avoid stigmas related to affirmative action. I suppose this was part of “proving myself” as many of the study participants described—wanting to do this on my own so no one could accuse me of receiving special favors because of my minority status.

I have regularly experienced a need to prove myself in every position I have ever held especially during the years I was a bilingual education classroom teacher and administrator. Bilingual education is counter-cultural. In these positions, I was driven to excel in lesson planning and delivery and in helping schools develop sound bilingual education programs. I kept meticulous student data records—all to “prove” that these programs were not harmful. As I completed the writing of this dissertation, I realized that acquiring a doctoral degree was also about “proving” myself like Tango—“See, I can do this, too.”
In matters of cultural dissonance or conflicts between work and home as a Latina leader, I have had to make choices that kept me alternating between being at home and being at work so that I could be more than a part-time parent. Like Cecilia, I have struggled with such things as having to “sell myself” in interviews, or like Sylvia struggled with speaking up at meetings. As the eldest child in my family, I am guilty of taking on too much responsibility and not delegating enough, as studies of Latina leaders have shown.

Lopez (2000) reported that Latina cultural values suggest that power is unfeminine and that it is more important to do the right thing rather than the politically correct thing. Like Cecilia and Sylvia, I was uncomfortable with anything alluding to “power.” In fact, I interpreted “power” to mean “political,” that is, to be power seeking. Then I read Machiavelli’s The Prince (1988, 1994) and Bolman and Deal’s Reframing Organizations (1991). I recoiled at Machiavelli’s ideas. Bolman and Deal showed me a more holistic way of viewing the political frame of organizations. I then understood that no personal or professional life is free from the dynamics of “power” and “the political.” Someone I perceived as very politically astute once explained it to me this way, “Anna, being political is all about being very observant and informed so that you can make the best decisions possible with the information you have.” I could handle that. The participants seemed to have grasped this same realization early in their careers. They appeared to be resourceful in gathering information, asking questions, reading between the lines, and using loopholes in regulations to do what they had to do to do “the right thing” for their students and teachers. Seen in this light, power and politics no longer seemed unfeminine or ethically questionable.

As the participants identified attributes they believed to be more dominant among Latinas, I smiled inwardly. They named attributes I had learned at home—treat every person with respect as though they were members of your own extended family. Always, always acknowledge each person’s presence with a handshake, a hug, a smile, or a word, with an offering of a drink or food, and the interchange of stories. (Oh, the look on my mother’s face if I didn’t!) Look out for each other. Share. When I worked in the bilingual education field and in school communities of large Hispanic populations, these kinds of behaviors were the norm. I thought they existed in every work setting. When I took on my first teaching position at the university, I experienced culture shock. It felt “cold and closed,” as Cecilia had described certain school climates she had known. I observed little frivolous interchange among the worker bees. So I learned to be a worker bee as well. Hearing similar stories from the participants assured me that I had not imagined the cultural dissonance, after all. Through their stories and comparisons with mine, I came to understand that every time we become aware of cultural dissonance for what it is, we become better translators, or cultural “brokers” and “bridges.” This seems to be what Malintzin meant when she described the Latina educational leader as the modern-day Malinche who moves through two worlds translating.
Research related specifically to the leadership of Latina school principals was found in three unpublished dissertations (Byrd, 1999; Omelas, 1991; and Smith, 1998). These studies confirmed the absence of research from the viewpoint of women themselves, that minorities and women were underrepresented in school administration positions, and that Anglo women were more successful than African-American and Hispanic women in breaking down barriers impeding their ascension to the top. Latina school administrators were generally found to be directing special education programs or schools with large minority populations, usually with large concentrations of economically disadvantaged students. They were typically charged with improving conditions such as low standardized test scores, student apathy, deteriorating building facilities, and poor morale among mostly non-Hispanic personnel. Male and female Hispanic administrators tended to remain in lower hierarchical positions as a result of the status conferred to minority schools and programs.

Latina administrators were generally younger, with limited managerial experiences, and lacked mentorship and inside information on how the system worked (Omelas, 1991). Most Latina administrators began their careers as bilingual education teachers, then became bilingual education resource teachers, followed consecutively by positions as district administrator, assistant principal, principal, district administrator, and superintendent (Byrd, 1999). Latina school administrators aspired to higher goals than did Anglo women and had changed their perceptions about the cultural role of women,
their views about the organization, and their realizations about how they obtained and held their administrative positions (Ornelas, 1991).

Characteristics of Latina school administrators were typically culled from studies of mixed groups—either with Latinos or with members of other ethnic minority group leaders. Minority leaders tended to be more sensitive and understanding of the problems of minorities and possessed a repertoire of culturally appropriate behaviors among various populations. Such leaders demonstrated independence, decisiveness, and intensity about their work. Latina leaders typically practiced collaboration, teamwork, and shared decision-making, as did most female leaders of any ethnic origin (Byrd, 1999; Ornelas, 1991).

Study’s Relationship to Latina School Leaders

As reflected in earlier studies (Byrd, 1999; Ornelas, 1991; and Smith, 1998), all participants were principals of schools with high Latino populations (see Table 2) and large concentrations of economically disadvantaged students. Most of their schools had been targeted as ones needing to improve academic performance by the state department of education. All had begun their teaching careers as bilingual education teachers, and some had held positions as curriculum specialists or resource teachers before becoming principals. None had had managerial experience before becoming principals. All had gradually changed their views about the organization and their cultural roles as Latinas as they took on their various professional roles. Participants mirrored earlier studies describing characteristics of minority and female leaders. They demonstrated sensitivity and understanding of diverse populations and could move fluidly among different groups.
They exhibited independence and intensity about their work—one called it “a sense of urgency and passion.” All practiced collaborative, human-relations-oriented leadership.

Implications for Practice and Personal Reflections

There was a lapel button produced by Hampton-Brown Books for Bilingual Education of an unknown year, but likely from the early 1980s, that states, “Quien sabe dos lenguas vale por dos” one who knows two tongues is worth two. Perhaps this is the way school governing boards, district personnel departments, and school site councils ought to think about their present and future Latino bilingual-bicultural employees. Hiring and promoting bilingual-bicultural educational leaders for strategic positions and school sites makes economic sense in the budget-strapped education world and is politically wise given the expected surge in the Latino population throughout the United States during the 21st century (Therrien & Ramirez, 2001). Latina and Latino educational leaders of the new millennium who understand the role of cultural “brokers” and who are capable of moving fluidly among diverse groups as demonstrated by this study’s participants and previous study participants (Byrd, 1999; Ornelas, 1991) may be the necessary ingredient for creating collaborative learning communities where all groups can learn from each other. The same is necessary in university programs of educational administration and leadership.

In all my years of graduate study of educational administration, organizational theory, and leadership, the variable of ethnic or racial culture was never addressed. None of us ever raised questions about this in my classes. Perhaps there was a certain unspoken fear of racial stereotyping or the belief that if one does not speak of “color issues,” then they do not exist. Yet, in the field, I perceived differences among African American, Anglo, Latino, and Native American leaders with whom I interacted but I could not always pinpoint those differences. Often, I assumed that the differences were simply idiosyncratic. As I asked my study participants to define what they perceived as
Latina characteristics influencing their leadership style, many prefaced their descriptions with statements like, "Well, I'm not sure. It's just the way I am." However, as I compared their responses, certain attributes surfaced repeatedly. It was exciting to discover that my hunches were confirmed!

The Nature of Change and Educational Leadership for Change

A review of the literature on the nature of change revealed that planned change moves through predictable stages: awareness, initiation, implementation, evaluation or trial, and routinization or adoption (Havelock as cited in Bridges, 1990; Moroz & Waugh, 1999). The change agent has the greatest responsibility for initiating and promoting change as he or she serves as mediator between the sources of innovation and the users. Throughout a change process, there are six questions one might ask: Where do I stand? What's in it for me? What are the guidelines? What am I going to do about it? How do I share this with others? How can we best celebrate and go on (Bents & Blank, 1997)? Ultimately, how individuals respond to the disturbance of the status quo or what may be perceived as chaos determines the degree to which an innovation is adopted (Sullivan, 1998).

Leaders who understand the predictable movements of change may be in a better position to steer others through the course of change (Geijsel et al., 1999). Further, the knowledge “of the change facilitator about the new products and the ability of that facilitator to persuade and to help others use the product” (Bridges, 1990, pp. 40-41) determines the success of implementation of the innovation. Hence, the degree of successful change implementation is largely due to the actions and leadership style of the leader (Bridges, 1990; Fullan, 2001; Gardner, 1995; Geijsel et al., 1999; Heckman, 1996; Leithwood, 1994; Murphy & Adams, 1998).
The effective leader is one who can move others through complex change by exercising five components of effective leadership (Fullan, 2001). They understand the process of change as an on-going re-culturing process and are motivated by making a positive difference in the lives of their contemporaries and society as a whole. These leaders are adept at forming relationships with diverse people and groups by fostering purposeful interactions and problem solving. They are proactive in generating and sharing knowledge inside and outside the organization, and they seek coherence even as they live with the tensions inherent in ambiguity and creativity wrought by change. Overall, effective leaders were found to possess energy, enthusiasm, hopefulness, and commitment.

Prior research related to school change revealed two additional conditions for bringing about change—the inclusion of reflection and dialogue on a regular basis among those involved in the change process (Heckman, 1996). Dialogue and reflection are necessary for making explicit the assumptions and beliefs about schooling practices in order to dispel fears of change and to create new realities.

Study's Relationship to the Nature of Change and Educational Leadership for Change

Assistant superintendents nominated all participants for participation in this study because they were perceived to be successful change agents and they appeared to prove their superiors right. Their responses indicated that they understood the nature of change. They identified resistance as the first stage of change, not the first stage identified by Havelock (as cited in Bridges, 1990). They identified subsequent stages of change (acceptance, integration or practice, and evaluation periods) and described how they
facilitated change processes at each stage. The participants typically initiated change in response to external directives and were so accustomed to the role of mediator between the outside change sources and their teachers that they described their leadership as one "ruled" by external mandates.

Overall, the Latina elementary school principals in this study successfully exercised the five components of effective leadership cited by Fullan (2001). They accepted the on-going re-culturing process of change and were highly motivated to make positive contributions to student and teacher lives. Their motivation appeared rooted in their personal experiences of discrimination along their educational and career paths as ethnic females. Not wanting others to experience similar discrimination, they were adept at fostering positive relations and democratic problem solving. They were proactive in generating and sharing knowledge for the purpose of instructional improvement and sought ways to keep their staffs united and moving toward their school goals. All described in detail two successful innovations they had facilitated that demonstrated their energy, enthusiasm, hopefulness, and commitment-qualities possessed by effective change leaders (Fullan, 2001). However, none consciously used the processes of dialogue and reflection as defined by Bohm (as cited in Senge, 1990) and Heckman (1996) as part of their strategies for moving others through complex change.

Implications for Practice and Personal Reflections

The processes of dialogue and reflection to effect school change are components that could be incorporated by educational leaders to effect change. Doing so requires a commitment to certain conditions. The teacher workweek must be structured to permit
regularly scheduled dialogue time as opposed to professional development time or faculty meeting time. The dialogue sessions occur in a climate of trust and are led by a facilitator. Colleagues suspend or bracket their assumptions as they examine their beliefs and ideas about schooling (Bohm as cited in Senge, 1990). Under these conditions, dialogue is “intense [and] self-revealing” (Heckman, 1996, p. 4). It requires “courage to question and override the anxiety that arises as one questions what has seemed so normal” (Heckman, 1996, p. 12) in existing school practices.

I have never been an elementary school principal. However, during the three years I worked as a research assistant and ethnographer in a school reinvention project, I became actively involved in helping teachers make changes through inquiry, critical dialogue, and reflection. My role was to serve as a “third party” to stand by and raise questions that might help teachers explore and reveal their beliefs related to learning and teaching. These were from seemingly simple things like, “Why must children walk in a straight line from classroom to playground in separate boy and girl lines?” to “What do you believe about teaching literacy in the child’s primary language?” or “Do you believe that phonics is the way to literacy, or whole language approaches, some combination of both, or some other way?” Questions of literacy development were the questions that elicited the most debates, arguments, and eventually, true critical dialogue. When it got to this level, it was evident that the teacher was now exploring deeper belief systems and was willing to scrutinize them publicly. Those teachers who reached this level were the ones who made lasting and significant changes in the way they worked with children. Two teachers who partnered up to work collaboratively with their combined classes found that the changes they made in how they approached literacy instruction, indeed, the entire curriculum, saw a significant increase in student reading and writing performance within the first three months of school.

This work was the most intense work I have ever done within school walls. It changed the way I dealt with my own life by teaching me to ask two questions about any aspect of my life, “If I believe this, does my behavior or action correspond to that belief? If not, then what is my real underlying belief?” It convinced me that change of any importance and magnitude must first deal with an examination of tightly held beliefs and values.
Recommendations for Further Research

This study was limited to six Latina elementary school principals. Clearly, a wider pool of participants responding to questions of Latina leadership perspectives would be useful. Such a study could be of a longitudinal nature to learn additional variables of leadership development and changes in cultural perspectives over time within certain systems.

Responses to questions of Latina leadership perspectives often enfolded references to issues of gender difference and expectations. The additional layer of ethnic cultural difference obfuscates gender difference versus cultural difference for ethnic minority women. Questions to explore might include the following: Do women still consciously or unconsciously feel a need to emulate their male colleagues and mentors? Do women of color consciously or unconsciously feel a need to emulate their Anglo colleagues and mentors? Do male leaders who work alongside female leaders take note of how women lead to learn other ways of leading? Do male and female leaders who work alongside men and women of color take note of cultural differences in leadership style to learn additional ways of leading? How do ethnic minority women differentiate gender difference from cultural difference?

The leadership literature needs to be augmented by additional studies examining Latina leadership models of success. A theme that surfaced within responses to a number of questions was the participants’ need to “prove” themselves as students and as professional women. This is a theme that could be explored further among different ages of Latina educational leaders. Would that theme be found among younger, more
assimilated Latinas? Is this a remnant of societal influences on Latinas older than 45 years of age? Do Latino leaders experience the same need to prove themselves?

This study revealed participants' inclination toward being cultural "brokers." To what degree do other Latina leaders find themselves being cultural "brokers?" Finally, these Latinas found themselves being passionate about righting inequities in the education system. To what degree do other Latina educational leaders do the same? Do Latino leaders feel compelled to do the same?
APPENDIX A

LETTER TO ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENTS

FOR THE PURPOSE OF NOMINATING

PARTICIPANTS FOR THE STUDY
February 28, 2003

Dear [Name]:

I have received approval to conduct a qualitative research study for completion of my doctoral dissertation in the area of educational leadership. The central question is “How do Latina educational leaders describe and enact educational leadership for school change?” A total of six participants will be needed to conduct this study.

Participants in the study need to meet the following criteria:

- Be Hispanic females, that is, persons who identify their ethnic origin from descendants of Spanish-speaking countries such as Cuba, Mexico, Puerto Rico, and other countries including those in Central and South America.
- Be elementary school principals.
- Have a minimum of three years experience as a site administrator.
- Have been/are successful in enacting school change.

The methods of data collection will primarily involve three 90-minute interviews and one workday observation of the participants. The interviews will be conducted away from the school site. The workday observation will, of course, be conducted at the school site. The [school district] Department of Accountability and Research has approved this study.

Your help is needed in nominating principals whom you believe fit these criteria. Please make your nominations on the attached form and direct them to me at the above home address, e-mail address, or fax number. Please submit by March 12, 2003. Thank you for your assistance.

Respectfully,

Anna Y. Loebe
Educational Leadership Doctoral Candidate
College of Education, University of Arizona
APPENDIX B

NOMINATION FORM FOR STUDY PARTICIPANTS
PARTICIPANTS NOMINATION FORM
Educational Leadership Doctoral Research Study

The following persons...

- are Hispanic females, that is, persons who identify their ethnic origin from descendants of Spanish-speaking countries such as Cuba, Mexico, Puerto Rico, and other countries including those in Central and South America;
- are elementary school principals;
- have a minimum of three years experience as a site administrator; and
- have been/are successful * in enacting school change.

<table>
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<th>Principal Name</th>
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* Please define what you mean by “enacting successful school change.”

Your name: ________________________________

Please send to: Anna Loebe
Address
City, State, Zip Code

Or e-mail to: ____________________________

Or fax to: _____________________________

Thank you for responding by March 12, 2003.
APPENDIX C

LETTER OF INVITATION TO NOMINATED PARTICIPANTS
April 22, 2003

Name
_________________________ Elementary School
Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear ____________________:

I have received approval to conduct a qualitative research study for completion of my doctoral dissertation in the area of educational leadership. The central question is “How do Latina educational leaders describe and enact educational leadership for school change?”

Participants in the study need to meet the following criteria:
- Be Hispanic females, that is, persons who identify their ethnic origin from descendants of Spanish-speaking countries such as Cuba, Mexico, Puerto Rico, and other countries including those in Central and South America.
- Be elementary school principals.
- Have a minimum of three years experience as a site administrator.
- Have been/are successful in enacting school change.

Data will be collected through three separate interviews, each lasting approximately 90 minutes. My preference is to conduct the interviews away from the school site. If it is necessary to conduct them at the school site, I request that they be scheduled after official work hours. The [school district] Department of Accountability and Research has approved this study.

Your regional superintendent has nominated you as someone who might be interested in participating in this study. An abstract of the study is attached for your review. I will be contacting you by phone to respond to any questions you may have and to ascertain if you wish to participate in the study.

I look forward to speaking to you and hope that you will consider joining me in this opportunity to contribute to the sparse literature describing Latina leadership.

Respectfully,

Anna Y. Loebe
Educational Leadership Doctoral Candidate
College of Education, University of Arizona
APPENDIX D

LETTER OF CONFIRMATION OF PARTICIPATION AND SCHEDULE OF INTERVIEWS
May 27, 2003

Participant Name

elementary School

Address

City, State, Zip Code

Dear:

Thank you for choosing to participate in my doctoral research study that seeks to answer the question: *How do Latina educational leaders define and enact educational leadership for school change?*

Please complete the attached forms prior to our first interview: (1) Subject’s Consent Form, and (2) Participant and School Demographic Information.

According to our telephone conversation, we have set the following dates, times, and sites for two interviews, with the possibility that a third interview may be needed. If a separate third interview is needed, we will schedule that interview at the conclusion of the second interview.

**Interview 1:** *Leadership Development History*

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**Interview 2:** *Defining Educational Leadership for School Change, and possibly,*

**Interview 3:** *The Meaning of Educational Leadership and Concluding Remarks*

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Please allow up to 90 minutes of uninterrupted time for each session.

As soon as the audiotapes are transcribed, a paper copy and diskette of the transcription will be mailed to you for your review. At that time, you may choose to elaborate any of your statements or make revisions.

Should you have any questions, please contact me via e-mail or telephone. Thank you again for joining me in this study.

Respectfully,

Anna Y. Loebe
APPENDIX E

PARTICIPANT AND SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FORM
Qualitative Study

*How do Latina educational leaders define and enact educational leadership for school change?*

**PARTICIPANT & SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

Name: __________________________ Date: ____________

Please choose a first name (pseudonym) to be used in this study: __________________

Your answers to the following questions will help in the analysis of this study's data.

1. Please indicate which choice best describes your ethnic origin:
   - ___ Cuban
   - ___ Mexican
   - ___ Puerto Rican
   - ___ Central American: __________________________ (country)
   - ___ South American: __________________________ (country)
   - ___ Other: __________________________ (country)

2. How do you identify yourself? Feel free to choose more than one.
   - ___ American
   - ___ Cuban American
   - ___ Hispanic
   - ___ Puerto Rican
   - ___ Latina
   - ___ Puerto Rican American
   - ___ Chicana
   - ___ Mexican American
   - ___ Other: __________________________

3. How many years have you been a school principal? ______ years

4. Check the highest degree level you currently hold:
   - ___ Bachelor's Degree + educational administration certification
   - ___ Master's Degree
   - ___ Educational Specialist Degree
   - ___ Doctorate Degree

5. List other education and career experiences you have had.

6. What is the total number of students at your school? ______ students

7. What is the racial/ethnic student composition of your school population? List in percentages.
   - ___ African American
   - ___ Native American
   - ___ Asian American
   - ___ White/Caucasian
   - ___ Hispanic American
   - ___ Other: __________________________
APPENDIX F

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Note that questions seeking the Latina perspective are printed in *italics*.

Interview I: Leadership Development History (90 minutes)

1. Describe your educational history that led to your present position as an elementary school principal.
2. The topic of this first interview is *leadership* in the context of your personal history. What is your definition of leadership?
3. Describe your career path to your present position. Did you set specific goals for achieving your career goals?
4. *As a Latina, describe any barriers and opportunities you may have encountered in realizing your career goals.*
5. Before delving into questions of leadership development, I will ask questions of a biographical nature.
   a. What is or are your ethnic origin or origins?
   b. How do you identify yourself when asked to describe yourself ethnically?
   c. Where were you born?
   d. Are you first-, second-, or later generation American?
   e. Where do you fall in birth order if you have siblings?
   f. How would you describe the socio-economic level of the family in which you grew up?
6. Describe your earliest memory of seeing yourself as a leader. This could mean in your pre-school days!
7. Discuss your role as leader in your home growing up...in elementary school...high school...college...work settings at any age...in play situations...other.
8. Were you conscious of being a leader?
9. How did you know you were a leader?
10. Who has been a significant person in your leadership development?
11. Who has not affirmed you in leadership roles? Why do you believe this is/was so?
12. How do or might others describe your present school principal leadership style?
13. *Describe any conflict or ambivalence you may experience between home and work life as a Latina leader.*
14. *Describe your earliest memory of any cultural-difference awareness in your leadership development.*
15. *How have you responded to this cultural-difference awareness?*
16. *How has being Latina influenced your leadership roles?*
17. *Describe any situations in which being Latina has caused tension in your leadership.*
18. *Describe any situations in which being Latina has proved advantageous in your leadership.*
19. *Describe leadership attributes and/or practices that you might define as being “Latina.”*
20. Tell me about one critical incident as a school principal that best exemplifies your leadership in action.
21. Using an analogy, or metaphor, define educational leader.
22. Using a metaphor, define Latina educational leader.

Interview II: Defining Educational Leadership for School Change (90 minutes)

1. The topic for this second interview is leadership in the context of education and the principal’s charge to bring about school change. Please begin by describing your school.
2. In education, we are about the business of developing human potential. Describe your beliefs about human nature and the ability to learn.
3. What does it mean “to educate?”
4. Describe the process of leading others in the process of educating children. How did you come to formulate these meanings of the education process?
5. To what extent do others in your school share these beliefs? How do you work with those who struggle to educate?
6. How does being Latina influence your leadership role in educating children of all cultural groups?
7. How does being Latina influence your leadership role in staff development situations?
8. Using a metaphor, define education.

9. The topic for the second part of this interview is school change. Who decides what needs changing in your school?
10. What do you say and do to persuade others of necessary change?
11. Describe any different techniques or styles of communication you may use to address different audiences about proposed change.
12. Are any of these styles or techniques reflective of cultural differences between you and your audience?
13. Are you perceived differently in the role of change facilitator than a person who is not a member of an ethnic minority group? How so?
14. Describe what you have come to know as the predictable stages of any change process.
15. How do you support others through the change process?
16. How do you counter your own or others’ resistance to change?
17. What procedures do you use to generate and share knowledge with and among your staff to bring about change?
18. To what degree might you use self-reflection as part of the change process?
19. To what degree might you use dialogue around particular issues to bring about change?
20. How do you promote a sense of coherence and commitment to a change effort?
21. How do you celebrate successful change efforts with your staff?
22. How did you respond – and continue to deal with – the October 2002 publication of the state’s assessment of your school’s performance?
23. Tell me about a change effort that best describes your leadership to effect school change.
24. Using a metaphor, define change.

Interview III: The Meaning of Educational Leadership (90 minutes)

1. Describe characteristics of educational leadership that you believe are unique to this field.
2. How do present-day reform agendas influence or circumscribe your role as an educational leader?
3. Given the present role of government in the schooling process, what advice would you give to government leaders about what is necessary for improving schools?
4. If you were mentoring an administrative intern, how would you prepare that person for life as an educational leader?
5. The voice of Latina educational leaders is scarce in the research literature. Describe characteristics of leadership that may be more dominant among Latina educational leaders.
6. Given your reflections throughout the last two interviews, how will your leadership evolve? Where do you see yourself going in the future?
7. Describe educational leadership through the use of a metaphor.
8. Please share any closing remarks you wish to make.
APPENDIX G

LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS: REQUEST TO REVIEW TRANSCRIPTS
October 2, 2003

Principal’s Name
Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear ________:

Thank you again for meeting with me this past June to share your personal stories of leadership and Latina perspectives. Your expansiveness of sharing, the depth of commitment to your profession, and the passion with which you have executed your leadership touched me once again as I reviewed your transcripts.

Enclosed please find a diskette of your transcribed interviews. A professional transcriber transcribed your interviews. I then edited the transcripts for clarifying incorrect information, to add missing words, and to transcribe the Spanish-language portions. I invite you now to review the transcription with these questions in mind: Is there need for clarification? Elaboration? Correction? Please do not edit for grammatical corrections. The way you told your story is what is crucial.

Should you wish to make any changes, please send me copies of the pages with changes marked in ink or using boldface print by October 17. Postage stamps are attached for your convenience.

I deeply appreciate your participation in my doctoral study and your willingness to share your experiences. If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact me. I will let you know when we can celebrate the completion of this work.

Respectfully,

Anna Y. Loebe
Educational Leadership
Doctoral Candidate
REFERENCES


National Association of Elementary School Principals.


Sigford, J. (1995). *Self determinants of success by the women who are head principals of high schools in Minnesota.* University of Minnesota.


