

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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The investigative study of female teacher leadership at the high school was undertaken to reveal women's leadership roles as they exist and to examine the potential for increasing women's voices in the educational world. The study further desired to identify support systems that could be enhanced to promote and sustain female teacher leadership development. The five ethnographic dialogues showed the prelude for leadership development rested solidly on female pedagogy, on the woman finding her voice and its possibilities in her community.

All of the female leaders interviewed had professional engagements that brought them to arenas outside the classroom and their disciplines. Leadership for these female teachers meant actively taking responsibility for improvement or change that necessitated a step beyond the threshold of the familiar classroom. It meant challenging and helping students and colleagues grow and perhaps change through caring and empowerment activities. It meant knowing the community so that leadership risks were minimized. Leadership presented a composite of positive personal and professional growth opportunities. Opportunities challenged female leaders to engage their voices in professional movement and continue their commitment to their community.

Female teacher leadership was strongly affected by powers above, administrators, and by attitudes from within the school setting. It was the makeup of the community though, that contributed to the timing of her development or leadership possibilities. The five women's experiences described reoccurring themes instrumental in female teacher leadership to be (a) mastery teaching skills (b) powerful teaching values and goals, (c) effective communication abilities, (d) diverse opportunities for participation, and (e) collegiality. Interviews revealed these women were searching for continuing challenges and growth.

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Secondary Female Teacher Leadership

by

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Donna Lee Johnson, Author

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Secondary Female Teacher Leadership

INTRODUCTION

This thesis addresses the question of how female teacher leadership can be developed, increased, and supported at the secondary level? School reform rhetoric suggests that collaborative efforts within the educational community need to be realized to bring about substantial change in the present system. Part of school organization restructuring is broadening the decision making base, inclusive of female teachers. The present system overwhelmingly gives male administrators the primary leadership positions and power over ultimate decisions. Participation in formatting a system would provide for increased female teacher leadership and give teachers the opportunity to share their knowledge and voice. Increased utilization of secondary female teacher resources would significantly improve teacher participation, and strengthen commitment to educational change in the 21st Century. If reform efforts are to include female teachers as leaders, then it is important to identify potential female teacher leaders. Consideration should be given to developing teacher leadership skills so there is a substantial base to draw upon.

The study was initially undertaken to reveal literature on *proactive* (Covey, 1990) behaviors of teachers who share a vision for 21st Century schools. Proactive teacher leaders are those teachers who step forward to promote, build, and enhance the educational system beyond their classrooms. Undergirding the research was the issue of the manner in which gender affects teacher leadership and its development.

This study was specifically aimed at female teacher leadership within the secondary school. It examined female teacher leaders who led, yet continued to teach in the

classroom. Some previous studies on female teacher leadership focused on teachers at the elementary level. This study tried to uncover and document the unique experiences of secondary female teacher leaders. It concludes that the female teacher leader has a role in school reform; her talents and expertise should not be ignored. It also showed that female teacher leaders are ready and willing to lead.

The interview results delineated the development, as well as the challenge, of female teacher leadership within the high school environment. Five female teacher leaders defined their leadership roles, skills, the conditions necessary for development, and opportunities in which to participate at the secondary level. The study illustrates female gender voice as an integral dimension of each participant's leadership experience.

The paper suggests that the building and support of female teacher leadership lies within the framework of community and collegiality. It also suggests that female teacher leaders need to take more responsibility for creating a setting where other female teachers can develop their potential for leadership. Additionally, administrators must consider whether their secondary setting is characterized by attitudes that are respectful and that value all teachers. Administrators are in the position to provide opportunities for female teacher leaders to effectively participate in school reform.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Schools are complex structures with social and cultural dynamics, as well as power and control systems of organization. Schools have been the target for educational change, but their complex structures are slow in implementing improvement. The significant dynamics that must change within school networks and organization are opportunities for discourse and leadership. Empowerment of teachers and development of strong collegiality networks are major components in successful school reform (Lieberman, 1990). Networks blend personal and professional, social and work-related activities, to establish a climate of support for teachers where discourse can take place. Networks expand the pool of teachers who can provide leadership. Teachers need to be involved in the leadership activities of decision making that takes place in schools, yet many schools are hierarchical systems where many teachers are not afforded leadership roles (Lieberman, 1990).

Inherent in the school reform movement is the question of power. The traditional school hierarchy puts teachers in low power positions making it difficult for them to be credible forces of change, except in their classroom (Troen, 1992). When teachers do affect life outside the classroom they confront their principals and peers, so they must wrestle with issues of hierarchy. Administrative hierarchy is unique at the secondary school level. Lieberman and Miller (1984) suggest the female educator is faced with increased leadership participation hurdles working within the high school setting as compared to the elementary setting. The female educator must negotiate the bureaucratic management and leadership model characterized as male driven (Hoffman, 1994). The

female educator represents half of the teaching force at the secondary level with enormous untapped resources to apply to the problems facing education.

Leadership roles at the secondary level may be different than those at the elementary level along with the support systems that develop involvement. Accepted leadership mapping at the secondary level may be gendered because of leadership theory and patterns developed from male dominant samples. Secondly, American secondary schools are almost entirely headed by male principals, which presents a social dynamic in the development and distribution of leadership and power. Lee, Smith, and Cioci (1993) found the gender of the principal was of critical importance in school leadership development as well as the gender of the teacher. Their research examined perceptions of leadership within schools particularly along gender lines and the roles played by leadership perception in teachers' assessment of their own power within the school. Results from their study showed the tendency to match gender within the school: 60% of those working in schools headed by females were women while only 43% of those working under male principals were female. Female teachers were particularly favorable to working with female principals. Female teachers cited principal's encouragement to experiment and use innovative ideas as well as strong communication of goals and expectations as favorable characteristics. The study showed female teachers especially empowered when working for female rather than male principals in regard to self-efficacy, locus of control, and staff influence over policy. Lee et al. reported that few females were afforded opportunities to work with female administrators since only 10% of secondary principals were women. This is in sharp contrast with the elementary level setting which predominantly reflects a female principal structure affording empowered leadership roles for female teachers

(Lieberman & Miller, 1984). The question that needs to be addressed is how to empower and support female teacher leadership roles at the secondary level given the difference in structure and system.

Recent movements toward transformational leadership structure in school administration may help to facilitate female teacher leadership at the secondary level. Leithwood (1992) likened the concept as persons engaged with one another in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality. Leithwood further discussed transformational administrative structure projects as “having three goals: 1) helping staff members develop and maintain a collaborative professional school culture, 2) fostering teacher development, and 3) helping staff members solve problems together” (p.11). Goals inherent in transformational administrative structures involve new working relationships with superintendents and principals, and new relationships between teachers and their colleagues to develop increased teacher leadership. Transformational administrative structures involve the active participation of teachers and administrators to take advantage of collegial knowledge and skills, tapping talent already within the educational structure including the female educator. Gill (1995) envisioned flattening the hierarchical structure to include teachers, more specifically female teachers, in order to connect administrators and teachers in mutually productive ways. Transformational structures increase opportunities for female leadership development.

Feminist Pedagogy

The goals of feminist pedagogy are congruent with transformational leadership. Both recognize the central concepts of community, empowerment, and leadership (Shrewsbury, 1993). Blackmore and Kenway (1993) suggested that individuals can develop leadership skills, but that leadership is a group activity. Shrewsbury proposed that women's self is delineated through connections with relationships as a web of existence and that group activity is the systems model for development of the three key concepts: community, empowerment, and leadership. Shrewsbury further suggested group activity as a way women can support one another to build communities where their visions can be created. Most female teachers feel they work within educational environments and structures that often close rather than open the psychic and physical space necessary for critical dialogue (Miller, 1990). Creating dialogue for the female teacher means developing community with colleagues to see, develop, reassure, and encourage each other. Miller found that women working in teams on issues of mutual interest created the kind of culture needed to support other female teachers so they could recognize their expertise. Support groups provide a vehicle for isolated teachers to share their best ideas, be listened to, and be validated as to the struggles in their private or public worlds (Wasley, 1991). Collaborative educational activities are crucial in promoting women's voices.

Leadership Defined

Promotion of teacher leadership requires a conceptualization of what teacher leadership means (Wasley, 1991). Wasley stated: “Most teachers have never had any serious conversations about leadership or what they might do to build stronger leadership among their colleagues. The lack of leadership perceptions provides a powerful example of teacher isolation in schools and the lack of teacher participation in the larger discussion about their role in improving schools” (p.145). Wasley found teachers tended to characterize leadership in terms of their own work, which Wasley proposed was not a broad enough view for the overall improvement of education. Teachers must move beyond the doors of their classrooms to exert influence outside their ordinary experiences (Troen, 1992).

Teacher leadership has been defined in numerous ways. Miller (1990) defined it as the ability of a teacher to engage colleagues in experimentation and examination of more powerful instructional practices to increase student learning. It may include teachers working with teachers, focusing their time and energy on the investigation of challenging instructional strategies, or merely as taking the responsibility for creating a working climate where others can be encouraged. Shrewsbury (1993) simply stated it as “our ability and willingness to act on beliefs” (p.13). Shrewsbury defined a female leader as “someone who knows how to control her life, and who has a vision of possibilities for other’s lives apart from her own, for her community, and who works to make that vision visible to others. She shares it without trampling on other persons, but engages them, enabling them to work for that vision as well” (p.14). This definition blends with the general egalitarianism belief of teachers and fits the transformational leadership style well.

Characteristics

Lieberman (1989) defined teachers who demonstrated leadership as lead teachers, with the following characteristics:

- They are well known for their presence and their performance for they leave their mark on education.
- They are mastery craftsmen known to be highly informed, creative, and skillful: producing good results.
- They are often described by terms noting their activities: organize, participate, lead, advise, assist, evaluate, facilitate, respond, envision, act, display, coach, and mentor. These activities suggest that leadership is an active exercise, whether directed at students, colleagues, or community.
- Teacher leaders are willing and able to recognize and act on opportunities, but not at too great a distance from the classroom.

Miller (1990) proposed that teacher leaders were able to exert influence on other teachers because they continued to teach in the classroom as compared to a resource person or someone that performed an administrative role. The creation of lead teacher roles was often a process that affected the credibility of a leader. A teacher appointed to a position often received troublesome responses from colleagues affecting the teacher leader's ability to work with others and to influence the nature of the work. Lieberman (1989) agreed that teachers placed in positions bearing the titles and resources of leadership displayed caution toward their colleagues. Wasley (1991) found that teacher leaders felt their work in the classroom enhanced their ability to work with their

colleagues. They were able to share information, to influence others in matters related to curriculum and instruction, and to be teaching advocates. Troen (1992) reported that lead teachers wanted to move forward, to be involved in school decision making, and to influence school policy and practice.

Teacher Efficacy

The most powerful characteristic of teacher leaders is their sense of efficacy (Lee, Dedrick, & Smith, 1990). This is their perceived expectation of succeeding at a task or obtaining a valued outcome through personal effort. A sense of control over one's environment contributes to the perception of efficacy. The work of Lee et al. (1990) confirmed that teachers' efficacy was strongly influenced by the way their school workplace was organized. Differences in authority structures reflected the nature of communication and the consensus of organizational goals. Their study reported that the amount of communication teachers had with one another and with the principal contributed positively to several teacher outcomes. These outcomes were overall level of teacher satisfaction, performance, and organizational efficacy. Furthermore, teachers that had access to an open organizational culture were better able to establish goals about their performance. Teachers with high efficacy were perceived and noted as teacher leaders by the principal. McLaughlin, Wallin, and Marsh (1990) reported that teachers' attitudes about their own professional competence appeared to have a major influence on how effective they were with students, colleagues, and administrators. They recommended an emphasis on democratic and participatory organization of schools for effectively developing teacher leadership. Such an organizational style would allow for staff input

into decision making and would encourage side-by-side leadership, collaboration, and collegiality.

Promoting Conditions

One of the keys to development of female leadership is honing in on teachers' values. Lieberman (1990) identified teachers as "gold collar workers interested in a style of life which values opportunities for personal growth and development, job variety and opportunities to engage in creative and meaningful interactions with other adults" (p.157). Teacher leadership usually came from seasoned teachers who after several years of teaching in the classroom wanted to explore new arenas and take more responsibility for their professional growth (Lieberman, 1990). High efficacy leaders tended to embark on projects that allowed them to develop a sense of ownership through teacher decision making (Miller, 1990). Miller used group structures in which teachers discussed project strategies and goals, allowing for peer encouragement. Collegial group support uses a public process allowing for internalization of leadership behavior (Brinthaupt & Lipka, 1994). When given opportunity and support, the female teacher acquires increased professional skill.

Miller (1991) stated that interaction with students was central to most lead teachers. At the secondary level, teachers' interactions with students were fragmented by the rhythm of classes moving throughout the day (Lieberman & Miller, 1984). Teacher-student interactions were mediated through the subject matter taught (Lieberman, 1990). The rewards of teacher-student interactions were personal and energizing. Lieberman (1990) noted the significant amount of teacher isolation and loneliness that came from the

lack of meaningful interactions with adults, especially colleagues. Lieberman added that teacher isolation and loneliness did not stem from classroom interaction with students.

Lieberman (1990) painted a realistic picture of the classroom teacher in professionally sanctioned isolation. Within the classroom, the teacher accepts the rule of privacy: keeping difficult situations to self. Acceptance of this cultural rule means that teachers seal off their rooms and go at it alone. Lieberman contrasted the culture of teachers to that of other professional fields, including doctors and lawyers whose work is collaborative. But in teaching, teachers are generally not invited across the threshold of other classrooms. The rule of privacy is carried even further to conversations with colleagues; discussions about instruction and difficulties in the classroom are considered inappropriate. This is one of the greatest hurdles of lead teachers and in a broader scope, a significant challenge for promoting educational reform. Those teachers able to acquire peer support and interaction, tap the potential of collegiality and develop a clear sense of their teaching (Sergiovanni, 1994). In essence, they develop strong self-efficacy.

Lieberman (1990) proposed that the prospect of teacher leadership within a school setting could be gauged by whether teachers were willing to make the act of teaching public enough to support leadership efforts from colleagues. Additionally, one would need to question how much latitude teachers would give colleagues who were recognized as mastery teachers (Lieberman, 1990). Would there be acceptance for initiative to influence improvement? Incentives for teachers to work collaboratively rather than independently must be created (Cohen, McLaughlin, & Talbert, 1993). Initial classroom observations by colleagues could open up forums for teachers to dialogue about one another's work. Wasley (1991) proposed that the critical factor in serious

improvement of instructional practices was in sharing of actual practices among peers. Other conditions that might strengthen teacher leadership were structuring opportunities for expanded responsibilities and access to professional groups.

Development of female teacher leadership has been documented through meaningful reference groups. These groups have been shown to be a vehicle for teachers to share their goals, their ideas, to be listened to, and validated by those familiar with the complexities of teaching (Wasley, 1991). Miller (1990) described a group of teachers who used autobiographical and self-reflective methods to examine their teaching while researching a project. They emotionally and verbally supported each other as they pursued their goals. Journal writing was the significant action or behavior that enabled each teacher to focus on an inner voice. Group members responded to individual writings by questioning interpretations, contradictions, social structures, power relations, and expectations that ultimately uncovered the possibilities for female leadership. These female teachers increased their professional skills with group support and opportunities.

METHODS

The qualitative research strategy of retrospective interviewing was used as a broad base approach in studying female teacher leadership. Data collected from the interviews gave an understanding of the multi-dimensional character and development of female leadership roles as well as their support systems within the high school organization. It allowed women to tell their story of successes and strains in their own words and from their own insightful perspective. The interviewing method provided a framework that helped to unfold each subject's leadership development.

This study was conducted by a female teacher with twenty years experience at the secondary level. It was focused within Central Oregon, specifically looking at public high schools in Crook, Deschutes and Jefferson counties. School size and level further narrowed participating schools. Two schools were removed from the list because they were middle/high school combinations and had smaller student populations. Teachers selected for interviews were from five schools with student populations ranging from 900 to 1500 and staffs of approximately 30 to 80 teachers. To begin the process of identifying female teacher leaders, tri-county coordinators were contacted for participant references. Coordinators were given the following criteria to use in identifying female teacher leaders: (a) must spend part of the time as a classroom teacher, (b) demonstrate mastery skills in teaching, and (c) have stepped outside the classroom to initiate projects for the development of school, colleagues, or students. Once an initial leadership list was generated for schools, teacher colleagues within buildings were contacted to cross-reference identified leaders. Two women were noted at each school with one being initially contacted and the second used as a backup. The coordinator identified only one

female teacher leader for one school. She was interviewed, but was eliminated from the study because her leadership support outside the classroom was mainly a union orientation and she had narrow projections within the school setting. Additionally, she doubted whether she could be defined as a teacher leader. Although her interview was not used in the study, it did shed light on components that were lacking within her school to support teacher leadership.

The study consisted of five interviews. Letters were sent to teachers describing the project and informing them they had been identified as leaders. The letter stated the purpose of the study was to reveal women's leadership roles, their dimensions at the secondary level, and support systems that could be enhanced to promote female teacher leadership development. The letter was followed by a phone interview to further clarify the purpose of the study, determine the subject's leadership eligibility for the study, and establish a rapport with the subject. The identified teachers were then asked to participate in an in-depth interview. All of the first named teachers agreed to participate and scheduled interviews during the spring of 1997.

The interview consisted of open-ended questions with a semi-structured format. Data collection was facilitated with a tape recorder, and the tapes were later transcribed verbatim. All information collected during the interview was treated as data. Teacher leadership development, secondary school organization, and female development theory guided the transcription coding and analysis. Data revealed that the central components necessary for female teacher leadership development were interwoven with female pedagogy. Data supporting the central components and female pedagogy is incorporated in the paper's findings and summary.

INTRODUCING THE INDIVIDUAL VOICES

This section endeavors to present the individual voices of the five women who openly shared their leadership experiences with the hope that others may benefit. The voices that contributed to the investigation of female leadership roles at the secondary level were strikingly different. They were highly personal, each reflecting experiences that were an intricate part of her life. There was no typical female leader that could be singled out. Nor would it be fair to strip the unique voices heard to that of commonality. No two women were alike because their individual and personal voices were set within a backdrop of a living community that was constantly changing.

Each woman wove a leadership pattern that was highly stylized by her personality with unique strengths or dimensions. It was these strengths that characterized each leader's work within her setting. All five women were at different stages in their leadership role. Pollyanna (all participants have been given pseudonyms by the author) was establishing herself, and was involved in limited leadership. Nikki was in mid career with enormous untapped capabilities. Farther along the experience scale was Nancy who had peak leadership roles. At the time of the interview, she was healing and regrouping from an unpleasant experience. Stella was consistently performing numerous roles in a district filled with opportunity. Her participation at the district, county and state level gave her an additional edge. Phyllis had taught and led for the longest period of time. She was ready to retire. Her interview revealed a woman who had reflected on her experiences and clearly understood female teacher leadership development. These five women afforded a broad view of the multi-dimensional aspects of female teacher leadership at the secondary level.

Each account distinguishes the dimension of a female voice, and acknowledges and values her teaching, which was a labor of love.

Pollyanna

Pollyanna was beginning her leadership career. Celebrating forty years, she was the youngest teacher leader interviewed. The rural community where she taught was proud of its high school, its students and staff members. Her teaching experiences were only in this one school where she had successfully laid a foundation to step into a teacher leadership role. Her first seven years of teaching were filled with extracurricular participation such as coaching. She summarized her performance by saying, "I think that I became a respected coach." As a single woman she had looked to participate in athletic openings since she really was into sports. This opportunity had provided her increased self-esteem and interaction with other staff apart from academics. When she was 30, she met her husband and started a family. At that point she said, "I wasn't too active because I didn't have the time to go anywhere." It was during this time that her involvement in school activities was temporarily pushed aside for family. At 40 she had time to catch her breath and look around. Her statements reflected a stepped-up involvement and a concern for the direction of education and her school. She said, "Once I did have time, I tried to reach out at the district level or the state level just to find out what was going on. I said, 'OK, I'm isolated here in my department. I'm going to die or I'm going to have to build and get away from the old image of my department.' So that's where I kind of started."

Pollyanna was under an administrator for 15 years who encouraged teacher leadership. It was under his organizational style of leadership that she developed strong

collegial ties. She described him as “a man that was really with it. He would let the teachers make the decisions, and he would back the teacher’s decision.” His democratic leadership provided plenty of professional growth opportunities that promoted teachers’ feelings of empowerment. The collegiality and sense of community that flourished under him remained even though he had moved on. The school’s collegiality was closely guarded under the new administrator. Pollyanna said, “So it was, we got used to that, thinking that would be the way it would always be. We hired a new one, and he was told ‘we are looking for somebody who will really shake these teachers up. They are getting away with too much.’ So it’s almost like the rest of us teachers are banding together to fight against what is going on . . . it has almost worked against him.” Because of their strong collegiality, the teachers continued to work together. She described this activity:

We started going to Total Quality Learning. For three years now we have sent teachers to that. Then several of us teachers have continued to meet. For a while we would meet and share. I tried this, and it is really working well with the students.

Another place where her colleagues met to support one another was at lunch. She said it was a place for humor and morale building. “We do things like, somebody will bring a pot of soup once a week. We try to share stuff to just get our morale up. We try because everything else is so chaotic.” She showed commitment to her community by her comment, “I really like the people I work with so that is why I stay here.” Pollyanna was realizing she had become a master teacher. She said:

I would say that was one turning point, going to Total Quality Learning. I felt like I was one of the leaders because I was trying new techniques. I was doing better. Students were more motivated, and I was having fun teaching again. It was not just lecture. All of a sudden the kids were going out and doing research and comparing and

analyzing. They were producing more thought, higher level thinking was going on. I didn't know how to bring that out in the students before. I know that I knew that there had to be more. That just can't help but make you feel more confident.

Pollyanna's confidence not only came from her knowing that she was successful in the classroom, but also from maturity that had developed over the years.

Pollyanna had come to identify herself as a leader. She talked about this personal process:

So, to me, I am slowly learning to be a leader. Taking the time to get to know the student. Standing up for things that need to be changed. Things that are more important to me now are always to be honest: to do the right things. Character traits are more important to develop in you and the students. Before, I would maybe let the men speak because I thought for some reason that they were probably more knowledgeable, or that they were more respected, or that maybe I wouldn't get listened to. Part of it is just maturity. It's partly defined as you age. As you age you get more confident.

At another point she described more of her specific behavior changes:

I guess I'm the cheerleader type from way back. So when everybody else is going, "Oh I hate this," I'll say "This isn't helping." Somebody's got to do something to get us out of this, to get us moving in the right direction. I guess I'll do it if I have to. If there is a problem, I am one of the first ones to seek the problem out and at least try to correct it. Sometimes you get rejected, but that is what makes me a leader. I won't let it. I won't stew too long. I'll go and tackle the problem. If I get rejected too, I'll walk away. I think that's what makes me a leader in the last two years more than before. I didn't want to change. I would rather have had someone else lead than me.

Pollyanna had clearly developed a realization of her character, competence, and confidence to work with her peers in a stewardship capacity. As a consequence of her 17

years of becoming, she became-- a leader displaying integrity, courage, and a willingness to take responsibility for the improvement of her community.

Nikki

A sense of caring, listening, and helping others was the dominant theme moving through Nikki's description of her life's work. These reference points were used throughout the 40-year-old's articulate conversation. She reported “. . . seeing, watching, and observing what was happening to others around her.” Encouraging others to act, to share while reflectively listening seemed to depict much of her supportive behavior for students and teachers. She held fast to the belief that everyone should be “respectful to all human beings and accept each other's shortcomings.” These attitudes and behaviors scored her classroom work with students and colleagues. She was content and comfortable with her entire 20 years at this one school.

As a team player, Nikki interacted daily with the same four different groups while in the building. Her routine began with a 6:15 arrival and going to the main office with her bagel. She described “this quiet, down time” as her “daily fix of communication with people. I'm just finding out how everyone is and what's going on.” The greeting procedure and checking in included collection of daily announcements and memos stuffed into individual teacher boxes. Then after 20 minutes she returned to the gym area which was where she taught. When the warning bell sounds, she exclaimed, “. . . boom, I'm in it.” The classroom became a controlled and segmented environment. Her statement, “I'm in it,” represented her bind to the gym for, as a teacher, she could not leave students unsupervised. In this profession, going to the bathroom presented a

problem. Most of the day, her exclusive focus became interaction with students in her physical education classes. There was a critical interplay between department teachers who flexibly shared the gym facility and covered each other's responsibilities. Nikki noted: "Three of the four teachers, one man and two women, act like family. We talk, get mad, get glad, and have a lot of humor. We hug a lot around here because sometimes it is the only way to answer. There is no other way out. We're real close with each other."

Bells segmented the rhythm of gym activities. The daily morning routine was always broken with eating lunch in the faculty lounge. It was the last and possibly the most supportive interaction of her day. Nikki said, "The lunch group had a name for themselves and on occasion mixed outside of school." Representing one side of the school building, the mixed group's conversations were described by Nikki as, "... fun talking about everything, from what you're teaching that day, to mouthing off about a cohort if you're having a bad day." It was a place to air feelings and share common concerns. As with her department cohort, this group knew that what they would say would stay there. Here teachers were kidded into better moods because, as she said, "There's no point in getting upset about something." Routed by the lunch bell, she passed back to her afternoon class activities. The fixed routine of every period involved roll taking, picking up from yesterday's activities, introducing the activity for the day, and winding down. She commented that "If you're not flexible, it's not the job for you. You have to come up with 10 different things in a period that you hadn't planned on. You have to be quick on your feet." Her attention was focused on student activities rather than on the mundane.

Several intermittent interactions that influenced Nikki's personal and professional leadership roles were with the principal. She had seen five men in the lead bureaucratic position. She reported that “. . . some were weak, but good listeners. Other men were heavy-handed, with poor listening skills that only tolerated teachers.” Under this type of administrator, she said, “If you're not included in the plan, you don't have a lot of interest in what the plan is.” As head of the school's ladder of authority, the principal had the power to enhance and support, make, or break a teacher. One principal saw his role as a manager of the school operation as opposed to manager of instruction, therefore his style. Nikki's reaction to him was expressed in her statement, “When you've been here through many administrators, you bail out and develop a structure to make it OK.”

The lunch group was an intimate supportive structure for Nikki that offered a reprieve from hardships during lean years of leadership. She talked about secure teachers having "their cage rattled," and about self-doubt. She felt the administrative attitude was, “you don't know what you are doing,” a negative implication of the administrator over the teacher.

One of her principals she credited for giving her all kinds of opportunities to do things that created a turning point in her leadership efficacy. During his administration she established a district drug and alcohol program and was asked to take a dean or counseling position. Her reply to the administrator who had identified her strengths was, “You have got to be kidding! At this point I think that 50% of my students like who I am. When you're in the Dean of Students' role, no one likes who you are because you're in this role of disciplinarian for all misbehavior. And, when I do get to act with the kids in class?”

Nikki's remarks reflected her love and concern for students. She took on leadership projects that directly impacted students. She was willing to put in endless time commitments for the small price of acknowledgment from her principal. Nikki's teaching absorbed her life; it was her life's work. At times it entailed a followship role while in other situations she would definitely step forward to lead. If she observed the situation as one where "they're asking my opinion, valuing my opinion, listening to me, sharing with me, then this feels good," she would step forward to lead.

Stella

Stella's story was of 28 years of commitment to quality education that focused on improvements for students and faculty. School issues ultimately drove her energy, but there was more to her story than just dedication and commitment. This was a woman who decided to devote her life to her profession, looking at it as her family. A significant body of literature documents a woman's selflessness in the home as a wife and mother. It refers to the cultural roles and responsibilities placed on and accepted by women in the cohort group born in the 1940s and 1950s. Stella definitely performed the roles and responsibilities of a mother, only in the school setting. Although married, she had no family of her own through procreation. Her motherhood was given selflessly as a lead teacher. She stayed within the classroom to nurture kids. She communicated effectively with all members of the family: students, staff and administration. Stella listened and valued each of their voices. She performed the roles of caring, nurturing, organizing, managing, scheduling, and instigating; she willingly acted within her building to promote the well-being of individuals.

Stella was the leader in her *home*, the school she had taught in for 14 years. She said:

My main love is math and that's why I like to teach. I have no desire, absolutely no desire, to be an administrator. That would take me out of the classroom and that is not what I want to do. I don't want to move out. I don't want to be doing community work all the time, mainly because I feel I am more valuable in the classroom. There are not that many math teachers that know what they are doing in this area.

So instead of becoming an administrator, Stella took on various leadership roles within her school and district. She told of one such role:

I have been a RRT which is a Reform Resource Teacher for four or five years. Our job is to be an intermediary between the staff at the school and the administration and the curriculum specialists. We go to meetings twice a month at the district office. There are representatives from every school in the district. Our job is to make presentations to the staff about a particular issue and ask about what they want done. Then we make a district decision with the input from the staff. I'm not sure how I got elected. Part of the thing is that because I don't have children, that I have more time than other people that do. I am interested in improving our school and willing and able to go to these meetings.

She headed another committee where she described her duties:

We have a site council and I am chairman of it. I think that teachers accept me as much as they would accept anybody. I have some criticism. Sometimes they feel I don't do enough training of them and part of it is because I don't have enough input on the other end to offer that. I need to know before I can teach them. They don't quite understand that I am not given as much information that I ought to be. It seems like the wheels of progress are grinding awfully slow, and that frustrates me a lot, because I think our people need to know a lot more about reform movement than what they do.

The roles Stella took were ones of educating, informing, training, mentoring, and creating a vision for the possibilities of other teachers. She guided the direction of her school

organization, just as a mother would guide her family. She had the ability to get teachers to examine and engage in experimentation with more powerful instructional practices which ultimately increased student learning.

As an effective communicator and a creditable colleague, Stella performed yet another role in her school. She was a liaison between her peers and administrators, because she exerted influence with the principal. She told of an example where she performed this role:

We were having some problems with this staff at the beginning of the year. The staff felt like they weren't listened to. I never did feel that way, because they were always listening to me. Some of the people, especially the people that were real new, or people with an introverted personality, often times felt that. So we finally got together a group of four of us to form a liaison between administration and the faculty, to open the lines of communication. Hopefully, more of them felt good and we got more of a family atmosphere than we used to have. They knew that I wasn't going to give them any false information, that I wasn't going to gloss over things that would hurt their feelings. There were some things that might have hurt their feelings. That is why we were picked, because we weren't afraid to say we really think you should look at this. The people are not comfortable with you doing thus and so. They seemed to be receptive to that. We tried to get teachers to talk directly. It hasn't improved 100%, but it is better now. I'm pleased about that.

Stella was a person who performed many leadership roles, served on committees, and just generally got things done. She saw opportunities for growing personally and professionally, and stepped forward to be involved. She said, "If I had children or family at home, I would be reluctant to do it." Because school was Stella's family, she gave it her all.

Nancy

Nancy had been the epitome of teacher leadership at her high school, but something went askew. Her profile was similar to other profiles in the literature pertaining to female teacher leadership. She was a well-seasoned classroom teacher who demonstrated mastery skills. Her statements reflected a commitment to students, and in the broader arena of preparing students for the 21st Century. She had a clear vision of viable changes that would promote teacher and student development and the capabilities to achieve them. This was all coupled with devoted energy. Because she was attuned to her high school, district and state projects, administration sought her articulate counsel, direction, and stewardship. So why did this bitterness befall her?

Nancy openly answered questions, inner-directing the conversation. Her thoughtful wording and inflections were probably characteristic of her teaching voice emphasizing points. She was confident she was a successful classroom teacher, though she had been emotionally wounded by colleagues. Her interactions within the school strongly suggested a personal withdrawal from faculty members. During the interview, she related her calculated actions taken to safeguard her well-being. She had more than once scrutinized her experiences, trying to understand her situation. She created a sanctuary of her classroom so she could continue to do the work she loved. Because she was a true leader, her social withdrawal from the broader school setting became a personal casualty. Was this the result of stepping out and leading, or did other factors contribute to her dilemma?

Nancy had taught 22 years. Her first job was in a large, mill-town high school. Her recollections were positive accounts of female collegiality in a school where women

represented only a quarter of the staff. She felt the female staff valued her leadership and support of them. She said, "When I left, it was just a fantastic celebration that they had for me. I felt that most of the 25 women were very supportive of me and appreciated what I did very much." Yet, her tone mirrored disappointment as she reflected on the end of the year checkout before she moved away from the area. She noted, "... not one of them [male teachers] said 'goodbye,' 'don't let the door hit you on the way out,' or 'good luck!'" One male teacher had actually questioned her role as activity director. Nancy continued, "I believed that students could be leaders and students needed to be leaders, and that students could do valuable things for the school. He didn't believe in the same things I believed in." Though encounters like this hurt, she continued as a leader at her new Central Oregon high school.

Nancy had grown up being defined as a leader. She repeated several times about how her dad always said, "I want my girls to grow up being leaders. I want my girls to be leaders. I want you to speak up." As she said, "I have always seen myself that way. It was about doing what you should do in life. I was naïve enough to think that people would understand that about me." As her district moved to site-based management she became chairperson of her school's site council. She felt it was the most important thing that had happened to her in terms of school leadership. She chaired for three years, doing a lot for school reform like performance tasks and taught many teacher groups. During that time as Chair, relationships with her staff increasingly deteriorated. She said, "The teachers didn't accept me as a leader. Some people did of course." Nancy shared having horrible things said, like being called "Queenie" and "comments about the principal and me." Again she said, "I'm really a person who does things because I think it is best for

teachers and best for kids. That is not the general feeling of teachers.” Colleagues she tried to help offended her. She had felt similar pain from students’ parents whose verbal comments lacked an awareness of her total commitment to pupil learning. She said these piercing words went deep, “. . . because, until that point, I had spent the majority of my life wanting people to understand me, and wanting people to know that I am doing that for the right reasons.” Eventually, she was aware that she had lost her objectivity. Her words were, “I lost myself and everything in trying to do the right thing.” Although this experience caused her to withdraw into her classroom, it didn't dampen her personal vision. Pondering, she said: “I guess I am trying to decide if it is better to be a leader by just leading by example, like instead of taking a leadership role. I think that in certain schools, certain schools will embrace teachers. But, what I would like to be is a consultant. I know that I have things that I could teach other teachers.” The retreat into the classroom she saw as the only way to survive in the building. She claimed she could isolate herself “. . . quite a bit and not worry about a lot of the other people.” Self-described as a people person, she commented, “I pretty much have come back to this little room and I try to stay in this little room.”

Nancy’s use of “little” to describe her classroom really described a mental profile, for the classroom was enormous. Recently built, its modern dimensions were more like those of an auditorium: high ceilings, spacious curved walls. It was three times the size of a normal classroom with unending wall space, most of which was filled with student work. She had team taught 60 students last year with a close friend, and was able to remain in the room again this year. The classroom provided protection from the outside. In this

sanctuary she had autonomy. Settled back into her chair, she said, “This is very comfortable. I like it here.”

Nancy’s classroom gave the appearance of projects and activity, obviously inspired by a master teacher. Her words were, “I try to stress that we have to act upon something that we learn. That, if we learn something, we just don’t read it. We act upon what we learn.” Her ultimate goal was to increase student problem solving skills. As she talked, she defined a leader as “someone who has the ability to model success and to show kids how to be successful.” She was able to be a role model and inspire kids from the descriptions of projects that students had undertaken. These were large projects that affected others outside the classroom, like an anti-discrimination day, and the “best assembly ever.” It was here, in her work in the classroom, that she expressed the most pleasure. “I love teaching. I love coming up with creative ideas. It’s my favorite part. And I love to think about how I can present it to interest kids and which way I can appeal to kids. I love that part.” She was driven--a perfectionist with high standards, trying her best, and changing lessons year after year. Nancy justified this by saying:

But I have to do that for me. . . . I keep on thinking that I’m going to find it. I’m going to find what it is. I hang onto my idealism because every September I think that I am going to get it right this year. I’m going to come up with something that is going to motivate them. . . . I always have enough wonderful kids that I get good feedback. That is what is keeping me going and I’m tired.

The effort that she put into teaching bordered on self-destruction: “I think that I could teach a lot longer if I had a life outside of school, but I also know that is my choice.” On an average day she slept four hours, continuing this routine of checking homework into the weekends. She delineated it: “I work Friday night, all day Saturday and Saturday

night. I work all day Sunday and Sunday night.” She labeled her behavior as “stupid.” She added, “I don't know how to do it different.” Nancy gave her reason as, “I really want to teach the kids how to write.” She didn't know if she was actually a realist, but described herself as a “cynical idealist.” She used to be more idealistic about things and thought she was still teaching because of her attitude change: “I'm cynical about some things, but I'm still hopeful and idealistic about my job.”

Phyllis

My interview with Phyllis will remain with me. I continually recall her words, wanting to remember, as she had, her 20 years of teaching experience. At 57 she was considering the end of her teaching career, but hesitated saying, “I'm not sure I can stop. I honestly don't know what I'll do when I quit. I'm pondering in all my spare moments because it is such an intricate part of my life.” Her conversation was generalized into understandings about her professional world. Because I had contacted her earlier, describing my interest in female teacher leadership, she had spent time organizing her thoughts, and was eager to share her perceptions. Her discourse was a woman's dialogue of smooth and methodical reflections. She said:

That we have to make our mark professionally, whatever the job is. I believe that anyone whose mind works, and has some dedication, and a real desire and culture, has to make their mark. My theory is that it has to do with age. It corresponds with one's age. Maybe it starts somewhere like age 22 when one graduated from college and then begins to wane until the late 40s or 50s when life begins to change. If one has been a spouse and a parent, and you are moving to another phase of life, and you are moving to grandparenting, you can take a bit of a deep breath. You are not only interested in making one mark in the job arena.

And so, I think that is somewhat of a guiding light to your interactions with the faculty. It's what you feel you have to do and want to do within the cultural setting. So, I believe that dictates the committees that you contribute to and not only wanting to make it work, but as a human being you have done something that has some importance and validity. You have a real desire to contribute to the culture and make it workable and change some things that perhaps you think could be done and perhaps in wiser ways. And you have the energy that goes with that.

Yes, Phyllis was wise with age. She could analyze and conceptualize her experiences and observations by colleagues. She continued centering next on a documented theme in women's literature: the need to be appreciated for their work.

Phyllis said:

Just on a very personal human level, I think that we all want and need a sense of appreciation--that we are appreciated, that we have contributed, that we are respected and admired for that contribution. I think that is an urge from within the human being.

Phyllis' perceptions hit the bull's eye. Studies such as DeVault's (1990) have shown that women have a strong need for appreciation. It was evident she had been appreciated as she commented:

I certainly do think I receive that from my colleagues, from my administrators for the most part: for the larger part actually. I certainly have from my students and from most of their parents. And then it is very difficult to comment on whether I have received that from my larger culture, which is my town, my state, and my country. I am not microscopic, but I am very realistic about my range and those whom I have touched. To some degree I am very satisfied with that.

She went on to say this validated her age theory for she might not have said that 10 years ago, still being in an earlier phase of life.

Phyllis' work as a junior and senior high school teacher, a community college instructor, and department chair had afforded her a broad perception of leadership. As she described leadership development, I had to wonder if she had defined a personal journey.

In textbook form, she articulated:

I think that first of all you have to really achieve and excel within your own discipline, within your own department. I think you have to be acknowledged as someone who is a hard worker. That builds up. That kind of feedback comes back to people. That you are someone that cares about what you do. You do what you are supposed to do and you work hard. You try to inspire the kids and you spend the time. You don't just talk the talk. You walk the walk. You do it. Then, I think there are opportunities to speak. When you have the opportunity to speak, you speak up in faculty meetings. What you want to say in faculty meetings has to be delivered with a particular compassionate tone. That you understand the task, not just your own, but the overall task of teachers.

As Phyllis spoke, I was in awe of her discernment. She continued by giving an example of her leadership, saying, "Sometimes I have spoken to that, really trying to give some perspective to some of our concerns. I certainly have done that."

This trait of stepping forward to speak out was a common characteristic of teacher leaders. Phyllis felt that a teacher who spoke in a genuine and compassionate way was recognized as someone who cares. It made sense, for the things she talked about created integrity with colleagues that, in turn, developed trust. She pursued her thoughts saying:

Then there is participating and having particular ears. Having the principal be someone who does hear what you say and wants to hear what you say and asks for your counsel. I think participating on site councils and being one of those people who are willing to take some of the gut work. Being on some of the committees that are time consuming and painful in the sense that you participate in the struggle and try to represent teachers at every opportunity. I think that those kinds of people emerge. It's

a combination of caring about the kids, caring about the teachers, and the teachers know that. When your colleagues know that, they listen to you.

Phyllis had described the foundation of her own teacher leadership, but she hadn't quite finished her analysis. She ended by saying, "Yes, I think the word is trust. Learning who the people are whom you can trust when you want to vent, when you are frustrated and that they will honor that. Those are of course friends, not just colleagues."

Phyllis had developed a solid leadership foundation. She had walked the walk and, therefore, could insightfully articulate the sacred task of a teacher leader.

LEADERSHIP COMPONENTS

Mastery Teacher Traits

Teachers at the secondary level have a specialized area of expertise, which initially defined the organizational realm in which they worked. Secondary teacher enclaves are developed by subject and/or department. It is within such an enclave that the female teacher leader was first considered as a mastery teacher; within the classroom, she had clearly established an effective personalized strategy for her daily work and developed a repertoire of skills. She was a hard worker involved with curriculum and instructional innovation. Her style included an expert cognitive base in her subject area, molded together with affective skills of motivating, arousing interest, and engaging students. Teacher leaders were motivated to touch students' lives, for they knew they could not teach subject matter they believed in until they did (Lieberman & Miller, 1984). In realizing this, the teacher recognized that relationships must be forged to mediate the subject. Therefore, she was both a mastery knowledge transmitter and a skilled relationship builder.

Teacher leaders were recognized within a system as the ones with endless energy. They were continually energized by the immediate rewards they found as teachers. They received valued feedback in the classroom and from positive relationships with students. They defined these intrinsic rewards as personal success. They found great personal satisfaction in knowing they were becoming great teachers, *becoming*, signifying their continued engagement in the learning process. Nancy described this activity in her statement:

Every September I think that I am going to get it right this year. I'm going to come up with something that is going to motivate them. So, I monitor and adjust what I'm doing. You keep putting in and trying your best and changing lessons year after year, but I have to do that for me, too. I couldn't do the same thing all the time. I keep on thinking that I'm going to find it. I'm going to find what it is. I love coming up with creative ideas. It's my favorite part. And I love to think about how I can present it to interest kids and which way I can appeal to kids.

For Nancy, teaching became an art form that meant continual recasting to meet new needs and visions.

Mastery teachers were able to draw on liberated energy, freed because they had worked at it long enough that their repertoire of classroom skills enabled them to easily draw on effective strategies. This enabled them to divert energy to projects outside the classroom--to the broader school arena. Nancy described one of her projects:

Because my kids were so talented and involved, I took on the project of an anti-discrimination day. The kids planned and executed the most wonderful assembly I have ever seen at Name High School. They did it all themselves. We had many activities. We had a speaker come in. We had T-shirts. I guess I think that being a teacher leader means helping your kids be leaders, too.

The ease in which Nancy performed increased her power in the classroom, and also within the overall school setting.

A mastery teacher was recognized first within her department as one who had control within her area of practice and was clearly in charge. Her status as a mastery teacher spreads throughout the high school over time. Once she established her status as a mastery teacher, Phyllis was able to reflect on the developmental process of female teacher leadership:

I think that first of all you have to really achieve and excel within your own discipline, within your own department. I think you have to be acknowledged as someone who is a hard worker. That builds up. That kind of feedback comes back to people--that you are someone who cares about what you do. You do what you are supposed to do, and you work hard. You try to inspire the kids and you spend the time. You don't just talk the talk. You walk the walk. You do it. Then I think there are opportunities to speak up. Then participating, being on some of the committees that are time consuming and painful, in the sense that you participate in the struggle and try to represent teachers at every opportunity. It's a combination of caring about kids, caring about teachers and the teachers know that. When your colleagues know that, they listen to you.

As a female teacher developed the personal image as a mastery teacher, self-efficacy was acquired—she knew that students were being helped to grow and succeed. She was able to obtain a valued goal through her personal skills and effort. Nikki's statements showed her realization of being a mastery teacher. “I never felt threatened in an observation [by an administrator] because I felt comfortable with my kids. I feel comfortable with my material. I know what I am doing.”

The female teacher leader soon recognized, that within her collegial group she “knew” as well as anyone else. She no longer was in the precarious position of many teachers who imitate and use didactic approaches, unsure about what is right. As one leader put it, “You just feel real good about knowing that what you are saying and doing is right.” This feeling of “knowing” made female teachers confident and more willing to “step in” to speak when opportunities arose, as Phyllis recognized. While developing self-efficacy, the female teacher leader communicated to others her inner sense of power through her professional voice.

Those who perceive a teacher's professional voice are information brokers and decision-makers within the school or district. Usually the principal is the sifter and sorter

of teacher skills. Lead teachers often tied their self-efficacy with that of administrators, specifically the principal. Principals gave extrinsic information to the lead teacher. They increased her self-efficacy through evaluation, or increased her authority through some aspect of organization, such as an appointment as chairperson of the site council, technical coordinator, or leading a specific project. A principal's recognition of a female teacher's capabilities gave her access to information that influenced her continuing development and growth. Nikki noted one specific principal as the one who influenced her most to take on leadership roles. She said:

That administrator gave me all kinds of opportunities to do things. If I didn't take them it was my fault. I was never stifled. He really encouraged everyone to come up with new ideas to lead, go out on the limb, to take a chance, to share something new with the staff. That was an exciting time for me when I did the most in terms of leadership, because I was encouraged and listened to, and I felt valued.

This administrator was a pacesetter for his school, inspiring teachers to contribute. Other lead teachers saw the principal's acknowledgment of mastery teaching skills by his verbal comments to them or others. The following comments indicated Nancy's sense of self-efficacy: "I get good feedback when observed. The vice principal said good things. I have teachers who come up to me who have said to me that the principal said you were a really good teacher. I had a man come up the other day and ask if he could observe me, because he heard that I did da, da, da." Teachers' confidence and perceived success were increased by the principal's perceptions of their skill and capabilities.

Female teacher leadership was developed over time as the female teacher established herself in the school setting. All female teacher leaders interviewed had taught a minimum of 15 years--time needed to establish themselves as mastery teachers and

develop a sense of self-efficacy, the two cornerstones for leadership. Time within the profession allowed for experimentation, studying, enhancement of practices, and participation in activities outside the classroom. The female teacher leader used time to establish herself as an exemplary figure. Most significantly though, time allowed the female teacher to connect with the predominantly male school culture. Shrewsbury (1993) stated that a woman must have a sense of the community where she works to construct a system of influence. Female teachers developed an identity within their school setting through connection.

As the female teacher built connections and relationships within her building and/or district, she made decisions about what her influence in the school community might be.

Phyllis stated that:

You are not interested in making only one mark in the job arena, so I think that is somewhat of a guiding light to your interactions with the faculty. What you feel you have to do and want to do within the cultural setting. I believe that dictates the committees that you contribute to. Not only wanting to make it work, but as a human being you have done something that has some importance and validity. You have a real desire to contribute to the culture and make it workable, and change some things that perhaps you think could be done and perhaps in wiser ways. And you have the energy that goes into that.

These statements reflected a female teacher leader's sense of identity and direction in a school setting in which she was well known. When a female teacher was confident of her connections or community, she used her voice to share and to influence others beyond the classroom. By this time she was usually in her 40s, with family responsibilities lessening. She had the time to challenge the process with which she had become familiar.

Development of female teacher leadership was framed by a woman's identity, control in her life, and direction. Pollyanna characterized her development:

Before I would maybe let the men speak, because I thought for some reason that they were probably more knowledgeable, or that they were more respected, or that maybe I wouldn't be listened to. Part of it is just maturity. I know that I have just as important things to say, and I'm not some hick that doesn't know. It's partly confined to your age: as you age you get more confident.

Every woman interviewed identified this part of her development using the term *maturity*.

One last characteristic that emerged from interviews with successful teacher leaders was their willingness to step up to opportunity and to speak out. Shrewsbury (1993) defined leadership as the embodiment of our ability and our willingness to act on our beliefs. Teacher leaders frequently expressed their willingness to speak or lead as opportunities arose. The words of one female teacher leader were: "I'm not afraid to say what I want to have happen, or want to have changed. They knew that I wasn't going to give them any false information--that I wasn't going to gloss over things that would hurt their feelings."

Often teachers saw the need for leadership, but felt they did not know enough about the subject to step forward and lead. They would wait for someone to take the lead and, if nobody did, they would, knowing the problem needed solving. Nikki gave an example of this:

The only time I step forward in situations where I'm not real comfortable is when I'm real frustrated and I can't stand it anymore. If no one is really taking the leadership role, that drives me crazy, or if someone that's taken it and is getting absolutely nothing done, that drives me crazy. Then I would step up and say, "I don't know if I can do any better than anybody else, but let's try" and I'll offer suggestions at that point.

All the women interviewed saw themselves as problem solvers, who knew the need for action, could communicate, solve conflicts and develop plans to enable others to act. Their leadership behavior reflected their goals and values held close to their heart.

Values and Goals

Female lead teachers retained the basic values and goals of teachers, but developed a broader vision that was not solely focused on the classroom. These female teacher leaders stepped beyond the threshold of their classroom to develop a broader view of the educational system, yet continued to be primarily motivated through their contact with students. They insisted that part of their day be spent in the classroom, teaching. Stella said:

My main love is math and that is why I like to teach. I have no desire, absolutely no desire, to be an administrator. That would take me out of the classroom and that is not what I want to do. I feel I am more valuable in the classroom. I like teaching kids. They understand why I want them to learn. Once you get a kid turned onto learning there is no better high than that!

She knew she made a difference in sharing a discipline she loved--and she thrived on the teaching rewards.

Teacher leaders continued to value the intrinsic rewards and academic differences they made with students, but were additionally interested in improving teaching strategies and curriculum for students. Stella continued, "I am working for quality: the improvement for students and improvement for faculty." Stella was a teacher who had two prep periods to allow her time to serve on a district committee as a liaison between the central office and her building. She also chaired a school site-based council, and coordinated her

school's technology. As a professional she was a member of a Central Oregon Math Enthusiast Group and served as a state math leader. Female teacher leaders participated on committees, served as coordinators or resource people, or developed curriculum, but at a high personal cost. Their primary motivation for increased involvement was the belief that they became better teachers, and that their students or colleagues benefitted. They were willing and able to make commitments to a variety of projects that developed curriculum, brought in school reform, developed technology and opened discussions on educational issues. Nikki described one such project she undertook:

My assistant principal and principal came to me and asked me to do the Link Program. We traveled to Hood River to look at their program. When I got to Hood River and figured out what it was supposed to accomplish, I just bought in hook, line, and sinker, because it would be so valuable for the kids. It is a gigantic activity in the Fall where freshmen come in to learn the structure of the school and what it is all about. There are self-esteem activities: kids get to know one or two upperclassmen and meet some of their teachers. The teachers said it was the smoothest transition they had ever seen.

This project showed Nikki's commitment to students: to develop a curriculum that allowed the successful transition of freshmen into the high school setting. Consequently, her effort to establish a freshmen orientation had notable positive repercussions for the entire school.

Lieberman (1990) labeled teachers as gold-collar workers in contrast with white-collar workers, who live to work, and blue-collar workers who work for a living. Gold-collar workers value a lifestyle of opportunities for personal growth and development. The female teacher leaders interviewed embodied this lifestyle value. Because they took on leadership roles, they were continuously engaged in opportunities for personal growth

and development. Their leadership roles also afforded them job variety and significant interaction with adults. The female teacher leaders did not emphasize salary in connection with their work, but repeatedly emphasized the importance of being acknowledged for the work they had accomplished. One teacher even described how she went about getting this acknowledgment from her administrator. When her project was over, she said:

I proposed to my administrator that I get comp day hours because I felt that I needed to be compensated. He said that he couldn't give me all the days I deserved. I said that I was not asking for all. He said, "what would you be happy with?" I said, "I want you to decide." So I ended up with four comp days, but actually what I wanted was one, so he noticed that I had done the work. It was kind of my way of making him say, "Thank you."

Only about half the teacher leaders were acknowledged for their work by their principals. Female teacher leaders mentioned other important sources for recognition as vice-principals, colleagues, and family. Studies support behaviors like Nikki's; females willingly take on a tremendous workload, at considerable self-sacrifice, wanting only the reward of acknowledgment and/or appreciation (DeVault, 1990).

Other female teacher leaders echoed the same desire for acknowledgment. Stella shared with pride: "Probably my mom and dad, who live in Bend, hear more about what I do. You know, if my mom says anything, that she is Stella's mother, they will go into this dissertation with some of my accomplishments. She'll come back and tell me. It pleases me, too. It does. I don't think that is the only thing that I live for because it is not. It is a help that keeps you going."

Phyllis's reflection summed it up, ". . . on a very personal human level, I think that we all want and need a sense of appreciation. That we are appreciated, that we have contributed, that we are respected and admired for that contribution."

Every opportunity should be seized to give appreciation to female teachers, because it fuels their energy to continue in leadership roles. These values and goals are an intricate piece in forging and understanding female leadership, for it is a way to nurture and support women as teacher leaders.

The Three C's: Collegiality, Community, and Culture

Narrowly defined, collegiality is a term describing the collective interactions among teachers in their professional setting (Sergiovanni, 1994). A school's culture and community are broader terms, which include collegial exchanges of information, whether formal or informal, about group expectations, norms, rules and sanctions. A teacher's community includes her collegial involvement and an awareness and meaning of her culture. The three C's were critically examined and familiar to the female teacher by the time she established herself as a leader. It was through belonging to community that she found meaning to her life's work and strengthened her direction.

Collegiality at the secondary level initially develops within the teacher's area of specialization where the female teacher's professional identity is closely linked with subject. However, an area of specialization that has a high degree of collegiality in all schools is athletics. Athletics is a prime example of a strong collegiality developed through mutual interest, obligations, and involvement. All female teacher leaders identified the athletic group as exhibiting male dominance within their buildings. The female teacher leaders were aware of the highly valued, male dominated, athletic faction

within their school culture. Alternating lunch schedules and building design that compartmentalized teachers further segregated the staff, breaking down collegiality.

Divisions created strong subgroups of teachers within every teacher's building.

Nikki described the divisions at her staff meetings:

I did most of my observations at faculty meetings. It's sad in lots of ways because we walk in that library and there are people that I haven't seen in six weeks just because of the way the building is set up. Unless you go out and work at finding people to interact with it doesn't happen. At faculty meetings people tend to sit with their department. I think really that they have the feeling that they have gone so long without seeing people other than those in their department that it's not ok.

Divisions or groups within the high school building isolated teachers from other professionals. It deprived them of the sense of collective consciousness found in a strong school community. Ideally, groups and subgroups in a community overlay each other, and are congruent because of shared norms and a sense of common purpose.

Powerful collegiality had a strong sense of group where teachers felt safe, sensed trust, nurtured and supported each other. When female teacher leaders had these basic needs met, they were able to more easily move toward self-development opportunities. Only one of the female teacher leaders perceived her school as having powerful collegiality. The other female teacher leaders ranked collegiality within their schools from very weak to adequate. Two schools had collegial groups that shared a common goal: they nurtured and supported each other against an oppositional force, an administrator. Within these schools there was a low level of trust for the administration, and the teachers perceived the administrators as disrespectful, especially to female teachers. Male and female teachers at both schools huddled during lunch for mutual survival. The lunch

groups described in those two schools were considered artificial substitutes for the larger school community and promoted teacher comradery. There was an enormous amount of jousting within the groups which allowed venting. Nikki portrayed her lunch group as follows:

I usually go to the faculty lounge. It's a very unattractive place. I encouraged people to go down there because I've got to get out of here (classroom). I started dragging people down there with me and pretty soon we had quite a large group. As time grew we had a pretty mixed group. We had so much fun. We talk about everything from what you're teaching that day to mouthing off about a cohort if you're having a bad day, but we know that what we say will stay there. We usually kid them into a better mood. There is no point in getting upset about something. If it is administration, we do have serious conversations about that. Everyone feels the same kinds of pressures. Just to air our feelings. It's nice to bounce it off everyone. This year the group that I eat with has become a little bit smaller and has talked about professional issues or our administration or even a kid. I really think that if people didn't have time to do that there would be major blowups in this building. You know that you can only take it for so long without feeling that you're not being beat. It is a support group and very seldom is anyone gone. Basically it has been the same group of people because of this side of the building going to lunch together.

Teachers who found themselves in the two defensive lunch groups were sometimes just trying to hold it together. Inclusion in these groups provided insulation from administrators. The lunch groups served as sources for developing a "we" feeling, but such defensive huddles caused a narrow focus on problems. The female teachers involved in these groups had difficulty recognizing their opportunities, and were reluctant to take on responsibility.

Female teacher leadership depended on close ties with, and support of, colleagues. In buildings where there were higher levels of collegial exchange, the female teacher leader

was better able to initiate instructional improvements. Peer response to female teacher leadership was not always positive. A female teacher might have built the foundation for leadership by walking the walk and being ready to step out, but she had to find acceptance for her leadership among her colleagues. In one building, peer non-acceptance of a designated female teacher leader upset egalitarian notions and caused jealousy, competition, and lack of support. This female teacher leader, Nancy, attempted to influence school improvement by chairing a powerful school committee. Teachers allowed her no latitude even though they clearly recognized her as a master teacher. Her special title and position invited rumors. Nancy shared their devastating effect:

I do not think that teachers in this building are very supportive of each other at all. I think that is where this building falls apart. I personally have pretty much come back to this classroom and I try to stay in this little room. What really made me recognize that was my work on site council where I realized how much animosity and hatred there is on this staff for people. I did it to protect myself from being called "Queenie" and from having people say horrible things about me. The teachers didn't accept me as a leader. Some did of course. I really am a person who does things because I think it is best for teachers and best for kids. It's a feeling when I would make presentations in front of the staff, just the negative feeling. It's not so much with the women, but more with the men. Frankly, I think that men still have problems with capable women. I think if you are a capable woman, you pose a great deal of threat to people.

Nancy's retreat to her classroom afforded her protection to heal her wounds. Her withdrawal, however, was a loss of accord with her colleagues. Nancy's experience as a leader in this particular position demonstrated an important prerequisite for female teacher leadership: collegial acceptance.

Nancy identified a lack of male staff acceptance of her as a leader. Nancy's perception of the male teacher's attitude toward female teacher leaders was supported by Lee et al (1993). Women seemed to go through a rigorous rite of passage, whereas men were afforded immediate engagement in leadership opportunities. Lee et al (1993) stated that the secondary school's male culture expects men to display leadership behaviors in their advancement to administrative positions.

Female teacher leaders walked a fine line between administration and their peers. Unlike Nancy, the other female teacher leaders interviewed, perceived it was prudent to stay closely aligned with peers. To Nancy, colleagues appeared threatened and mistrusting of her motives as site council chair; they interpreted her leadership as an administrative ploy for power. Her peers did not understand that Nancy's motive to step forward and lead actually stemmed from her "care" for teachers and kids. Nancy was groomed and encouraged at a young age to be a leader: "I grew up in a house where my dad said everyday, 'I want my girls to grow up being leaders. I want you to speak up. I want you to be leaders.' So I have always seen myself that way."

So chairing the site council was for Nancy "about doing what you should do in life." Teachers were cautious and continually assessed their community. Looking back Nancy said, "but I did not have that objectivity at the time, because I was so in the middle of trying to help that I lost myself and everything in trying to do the right thing." Collegiality, community, and culture are living systems within a school building. Each living system is unique, reflecting the interactions, values, goals, and norms of the teachers and administrators. It is a complex organization, particularly at the secondary level.

Every female teacher leader had a unique, highly personal experience within the context of her school.

Opportunity for Leadership

Once the female teacher gained the confidence and knowledge that comes with becoming a mastery teacher and felt comfortable in her teaching community, she looked around for opportunities where she could participate and lead. Female teachers who were recognized as leaders within the high school setting were open to new possibilities, ready to go and seize the moment to step forward. Some teachers with leadership potential could not effectively develop because the school lacked critical conditions. One female teacher interviewed was a mastery teacher and knew her community well, but was presented with no opportunities to lead. She took the role as mentor of new teachers in her department, but her position was neither sanctioned nor recognized by the administration. Some schools had abundant opportunities that allowed female teachers to participate as initiators, as primary decision-makers, or assume positions that valued their professional knowledge. Vast differences existed between schools regarding the variety of leadership roles in which female teachers might participate.

Fundamental to leadership opportunity was the female teacher's chance to develop basic competencies. More than half the female teacher leaders were able to develop initial leadership skills through department chairmanships. Some schools had eliminated the position of department head, thereby eliminating an important opportunity for female teachers to acquire basic leadership competence. A staff meeting was a common place where female teachers could be heard, encouraged, and supported. It was a place where

female teacher leaders tested their voices; a place where they listened and learned from others of their cloth. It was a universal forum for the development of leadership skills. Phyllis described her staff meeting experiences saying, “I think there are opportunities to speak. You speak at faculty meetings. I know that many times when I have been at faculty meetings, I’ve felt very passionately, trying to speak for teachers.”

Faculty meetings organized to recognize the needs of teachers included opportunities for staff to share problems, as well as identify and work toward common goals. A developing female teacher leader finds these meetings a place to define her relationships with colleagues outside her own department. Female teacher leaders gathered and exchanged strategic information about their school community at staff meetings. Some staff meetings were described as short, direct, and efficient, allowing little teacher participation. Nikki illustrated the faculty meeting observations that discouraged her from speaking out. “I watched people get their feelings hurt and so people don’t want to put their emotions on the line and be shot down. Or he will turn it into a joke and that’s not fun either.” *He* was a reference to the principal who set the tone in leading the staff meetings.

In one interview, the teacher disclosed that the school had no regularly scheduled staff meetings. In this case, the principal chose not to bring the faculty together. It was an effective means to disunite the staff. There was little collegiality or mention of community. Teachers were isolated by small departments and additionally separated by working in two buildings. Female teacher leadership was non-existent within this school though there were mastery teachers and women willing to step forward. The principal’s tone and power effectively eliminated female teacher leadership.

Staff meetings served as indicators of female teacher leadership potential. All female teacher leaders interviews included comments about staff meetings. They offered specific comments on principal leadership and teacher participation. All female teacher leaders had worked under three to five building administrators. They laughed, echoing the familiar phrase, “we’ll be here long after he is gone” that defined their sentiment of outlasting administrators. The majority of female teachers had been firmly rooted in one school building for many years. But, within the same school, a series of principals had moved up the ladder, or out. This would explain the fluctuating of school culture in which teachers are the stabilizing force. Teachers gave accounts of weathering stormy leadership under an administrator. Nikki described one administrator who was “heavy-handed” and “out to shake teachers up.” Pollyanna and Stella gave accounts of gender attitudes such as: “He didn’t like women, so he would make little comments to women, trying to put you down,” and, “Women are not really listened to; they are tolerated, but not encouraged,” and “The ones before that were more like I am boss and you are down here. Part of it was that he was just a male chauvinist pig.”

When female teachers perceived administrators as threatening or disrespectful, they withdrew into the safety of their classrooms or collegial groups, but kept a line of communication open. They always recognized the principal’s superior position, respected his role, and knew the need for access to his office. One teacher actually made the principal her relationship building project. Pollyanna said:

I just started taking time to talk to him, find out a little bit about his personal life and what he had done that weekend. Over time I started treating him as a person. Little by little he starting treating me as a person, by showing courtesy instead of being miffed because of something he had said last week. That still goes on in our building. So then I will

say, “yep, it must be time to start visiting him again”
because he is starting to forget and get sarcastic again.

All female teachers communicated self-confidence by their ability to go into the principal’s office to discuss a problem or need, whether or not they approved of his leadership.

Female teacher leaders knew that the principal was someone that must be reckoned with as head of the school hierarchy. They knew they needed to be in communication with him, for much leadership opportunity was orchestrated from his office. He was the one who often appointed committee heads, representatives or coordinators, and placed teachers. The principal’s leadership style was critical; it reflected how much authority he wanted to delegate. Some female teacher leadership opportunities were wide open because of the principal’s participatory style, in contrast to styles that were autocratic.

Nancy shared her opportunity under her principal:

Our principal before bought into site-based decision making and so, for a year or two, we actually had staff leading staff meetings. Our principal didn’t even lead them. So we had a lot of staff involvement. I was site council chairperson for three years. I did a lot for school reform. I did a lot for performance tasks. I taught a lot of teachers’ groups. It was the most important thing that happened to me in terms of leadership.

Often the principal is the broker between the central office and teachers. Some female teachers enjoyed a high level of participation under one principal, but found it disrupted by the superintendent. Pollyanna talked about her experience:

We went through about four superintendents. The last three years we have had the same one. He didn’t like our principal because he was too pro teacher and he treated us really well. He (principal) would ask for our opinion and would fight for us. We hired a new one (principal) and he was told “We are looking for somebody who will really shake these teachers up.”

Clearly, the superintendent was the policy maker at the central office level with the principal's role as broker. Female teacher leaders had no interaction with the superintendent. One central office curriculum director was mentioned as a person who supported teachers.

The principal was the gatekeeper for leadership opportunities and resources. Access to resources was important to female teacher leaders. Female teacher leaders often participated in developing curriculum or led workshops for colleagues. A principal can verbally acknowledge female teacher leaders for their work, or use his/her power to grant comp time or monetary reimbursements. The principal allocated time and money for teachers who wished to explore professional opportunities at the State level, or to attend meetings or conferences. Female teacher leaders were well aware of the hierarchical power structure that allowed them availability to opportunity or resources.

Communication

The theme that impacted all areas of teacher leadership was communication. It was a basic everyday action in the classroom that teachers took for granted. It was a highly developed skill of female teacher leaders who influenced others. Individuals proficient in communication were able to organize and clearly project thoughts and ideas. Effective communication skills were honed within the classroom and further sharpened as the female teacher leader embraced opportunity.

All female teacher leaders saw communication as an individual act, as well as a group exchange. Strong positive communication enabled female teacher leaders to share their insightful knowledge with others. These female teacher leaders described several

kinds of communication. Two-way interaction was the most valued, because it involved not only transmitting information, but also receiving it. One female teacher leader said: “Well, any time someone is not a good listener my antenna always goes up. I get this feeling that they have these thoughts going around in their head while they are listening to you and trying to get their own thoughts out. So they are really not listening to you or hearing what you are saying.” This described an important component of communication, receiving or listening. Female teacher leaders have “particular ears,” Phyllis said. She described her communication with her principal as with “someone who does hear what you say, and wants to hear what you say, and asks for your counsel.”

One-sided communications had little significance to teachers compared to those where the receiver was an active listener or participant. There were accounts of administrators running faculty meetings efficiently without any teacher interchange. These meetings were for the benefit of administrators, not the teachers--teachers had no input. Interviewees also described numerous memos sent from the main office that substituted for face-to-face communication.

There were examples of communication structures in which female teacher leaders served as facilitators. These were the lunch groups where colleagues openly dialogued about their frustration with the administration’s one-way communication. The female teacher leaders in these situations recognized the need to build some kind of structure that would reassure and encourage peers in their building. The lunch groups developed morale and comradery in buildings where teachers were not listened to, or valued by their administrators.

Female teacher leaders made an active commitment to communicate with their administrators whatever their relationship: friendly, cordial, or hostile. If teacher and principal interaction was strained, then the teacher communicated in a businesslike manner with a direct information exchange. These exchanges had no personal disclosure because the principal was not trusted. If the principal had established an open line of communication with staff, teachers shared feelings, gave suggestions, and problem solved issues, because he valued their thoughts and opinions. Keeping open a line of communication with their administrators enabled several female teacher leaders to serve as liaisons for fractured staff/principal issues. Stella's "particular ears" allowed her to be sensitive to the views of her peers and serve them. Stella described this leadership role:

We were having some problems...the staff felt like they weren't listened to. So a group of four of us formed a liaison between our administration and the faculty, to open the line of communication. That is why we were picked because we weren't afraid to say, "we really think you should look at this." There were changes made on the administrator's part. We tried to get the teachers to talk directly. It hasn't improved 100%, but it is better now. I'm pleased with that.

As a teacher leader, Stella exerted influence and demonstrated credibility with the administration as well as her peers. Stella's description reflects basic leadership characteristics: honesty, integrity, courage to stand up for others, and composure under pressure.

The crux of female teacher leadership was the ability to help colleagues examine their practices and to support new goals. The strong interpersonal relationships that female teacher leaders had established with their colleagues functioned as a dynamic link. Leaders used influential communication skills to get colleagues to engage in

experimentation, and to examine more powerful instructional practices. Often the female teacher leader planned meaningful activities to include colleagues within her community. Female teacher leaders augmented communication through mentoring and modeling. Female leaders communicated these behaviors from titled positions, or in unofficial roles.

Since female teacher leaders were highly informed, they were able to manage activities and guide the direction of change. They took responsibility for creating a working climate where their peers would be encouraged. They were interdependent: they listened to and valued their colleagues. Female teacher leaders understood the context within which they worked: collegiality, community, and culture.

It would be an oversight to not mention the female teacher leader's personal voice. Each female teacher leader spoke in a distinct style that conveyed an expression of her unique character. Phyllis described *voice* as being an instrument in female leadership. Helgensen (1990) wrote of a woman's voice as "a means of presenting herself and what she knows about the world and for eliciting a response" (p. 228). Once a female teacher was recognized and approved as a leader, she used her voice to model and persuade. The female teacher led with a voice that expressed tones of caring and empowerment (Helgensen). Skilled female teacher leaders used subtle, yet purposeful, intonation when communicating. Female teacher leaders used voice as a primary means to nurture connection with their community.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Leadership at the secondary level has been challenging for female teachers. A female teacher needed to be comfortable with herself, confident in her professional abilities, and knowledgeable about her community in order to be a teacher leader. Developing confidence on a personal and professional level occurred after she entered into her 40s and after she completed at least a decade of teaching. The female teacher leader became more engaged in leading activities as her family responsibilities lessened. She was able to draw upon her increased energy to expand her leadership activities and focus. Teaching was a life's work for these female professionals. The interviews revealed that these female teachers searched for challenges and continuing growth experiences. They steadily aimed to improve secondary education and their professional competence. A leadership role presented a composite of positive personal and professional growth opportunities. It challenged a female teacher leader to assert herself. The lack of certain factors within her building, such as collegiality and positive communication with administrators, significantly hindered the leadership process.

The major components instrumental in leadership development were fluid and constantly changing. The components that steadily wove through each female teacher leader's experiences were: mastery teacher traits, strong teacher values and goals, opportunities for growth, and effective communication skills. The three C's encompassed collegiality, community, and culture. This was a significant area for female teacher leader development. It was within the three C's that the female teacher leader developed a working identity and first used her leading voice. All five leadership components were

seen as interconnected, interdependent, and as essential supports for developing female teacher leadership.

The female teachers leaders who stepped forward to lead in their high schools were looking for challenges that moved them laterally. They expressed no interest in administrative roles, and were rather adamant about staying connected with classroom teaching. Female teacher leaders taught at least half day in the classroom. This was where they derived their motivation and rewards, their highs and satisfactions, as well as relationships that kept them going. Students remained vitally central in each female teacher's work, yet her focus was broader and not totally contained in the classroom.

Female teacher leaders had professional engagements that took them into arenas outside the classroom and away from their disciplines. Leadership for these female teachers meant actively taking responsibility for improvement or change. It meant stepping outside their classrooms. It meant knowing the community, so that leadership risks were minimized. It meant challenging and helping students and colleagues to grow and to change. Female teacher leaders accomplished this through caring and empowerment.

Female teacher leaders took responsibility for initiating and leading activities that directly impacted students, teachers, curriculum, and instructional improvements. Female teacher leaders were most accustomed to the less complicated leadership roles that involved students. These roles usually stemmed from a classroom activity and moved out into the student body at large. Other leadership activities cited were ones that dealt with student issues, such as drug abuse or transitions. In these roles, the female teacher leader took responsibility for creating a school or district program that enlisted teachers to work collaboratively or in teams. A common beginning position for female teacher leadership was serving as department chair. Female teacher leaders organized workshops, led

discussions on school reform, gleaned new ideas, and initiated innovations. They served in resource capacities that directly provided peers with services such as technology links. Female teacher leaders additionally served in liaison positions between district administrators and teachers, between building administrators and teachers, and within their own community of teachers. In these roles they assisted as facilitators or mediators in matters critical to school improvement. Often the female teacher leader was placed in a tenuous position, where she had to maneuver between camps of power and allegiance. If the female teacher leader aligned too closely to administration, she lost her collegial trust, and therefore her effectiveness as a teacher leader.

The climate of the school community was of eminent importance to the female teacher leaders. All had experienced years when the right components were totally in place and their leadership bloomed. They had also endured parched years under dictatorial administrators, when communication amongst staff and administration was nil, and the school lacked participatory opportunities. A fertile leadership environment included a democratic administration with integrity. An informal power structure was inclusive of collaborative teacher roles that offered leadership opportunities. Additionally important to the female teacher leader were collegial attitudes that accepted and supported both male and female peers in leadership roles.

Female teacher leaders felt they went through a rite of passage; they had to prove themselves worthy of leadership. Female teacher leaders wrestled with the fact that male teachers and administrators often lacked acceptance of female leaders. While under administrators who demonstrated such attitudes, interviewees reported verbal gender putdowns, of feeling overlooked and less valued than their male counterparts. However, their overriding, consoling thought during difficult times was that they would be there long after the administrator was gone.

Female teacher leaders continued to lead, even with barriers, in smaller pockets of their community. Opportunities for leadership narrowed when they became defensive. Female teacher leaders mastered the facilitation of small lunch groups, creating an environment that sustained collegiality. The groups were comprised of both men and women staff members who felt cut off from power-driven administrators who generally held teachers in low regard. Within these groups teachers shared experiences and felt trusted. The lunch groups were characterized by amiable jousting that elevated morale and defused tension.

Throughout their careers female teacher leaders endured hardships of isolation. During precipitous times, female teacher leaders retreated to their classrooms where the climate was safe and under their control.

The voice of the female teacher leader was distinctive in the high school structure. The female teacher leader was confident in who she was, and her voice projected that characteristic. In the process of maturing, the female teacher became confident in her strengths and realized she had something important to offer her profession. Female teacher leader's unassuming comments showed self-efficacy.

The female teacher leader's mastery of communication skills exemplified her personal and professional level of development. It was through the female teacher leader's communicative voice that she demonstrated her leadership traits. With her voice, the skilled female teacher leader led by passionately representing teachers. Her dialogue was characterized by personal integrity, along with a deep desire to improve and make a difference in her school. Her voice was a powerful instrument that reached administrators and was used to challenge, change, organize, and therefore directly effect the school culture.

The mark and presence of each female teacher leader was well identified within her high school. Her leadership was evident in her willingness to step forward, make a commitment, and take responsibility for actions that brought improvement or change to her school. For the most part, these female teacher leaders felt acknowledged for their work and were well satisfied by a rewarding career.

CONCLUSIONS

Augmenting female teachers' leadership roles at the secondary level would gain increased female teacher participation and representation in the school system. It would further expand and increase human resources and strengthen teacher commitment necessary for school improvement. The most powerful components for widening the potential for the female voice in education stem from conditions within the school community. It is within the context of community that the female teacher leader develops her competence and identity, and manifests her voice. The potential to advance and enhance leadership possibilities for female teachers at the secondary school level lies within the collegiality and culture of community.

For professional women, teaching is a lifelong process constructed of interactions within their school setting. Interplay with students, colleagues, and administrators is critical in moving female teachers to delineate self. Continuous interaction and high level exchanges between administrators and teachers, as well as among teachers, build trust in a school community. Trust builds a strong sense of group. Female teachers especially need groups with typified interactions that serve to bond and bind them together in meaningful relationships. Stable groups encourage teachers to share, to reflect on practice, and to explore ways to improve. Being *connected* develops the female self as one who knows, giving her confidence to use her voice. Quality interactions are key to female leadership development and are seen as essential elements present in dynamic school communities. The question then is, who is responsible for creating healthy school communities? Is it the school board's responsibility, the administrator's responsibility, both the teacher and administrator's, or could it be a singular initiative sustained by female teacher leaders?

Responsibilities of Administrators

School environments take time to transform from within. The secondary school is a complex system that has protected beliefs, behaviors, and practices within its culture. This complex structure challenges those involved with effecting change. Schools evolve slowly because they are affected by constant change, often in administration. Building administrators, in particular principals, have the most powerful influence and the greatest capacity to establish nurturing and productive group interactions in their buildings. The principal needs to share common desires with teaching staff to build community in the school. An effective administrator can establish open dialogues by actions that demonstrate integrity and respect for both male and female teachers. One way an administrator could do this is to develop relationships and listen to staff. This might involve considerable time and effort, though it could take time away from necessary administrative duties. On the other hand, the principal could build teacher support and commitment that would be rewarding. As the school pacesetter, the principal is able to set policy and make decisions that can encourage and support collegiality. For instance, one decision that could promote female teacher development would be to create an environment where teachers come together to dialogue, and to reflect on educational practices. It would be best if such a time was scheduled within the regular school day. The principal could designate a pleasant space with a resource library where teachers could gather to dialogue and study.

Community is best when the principal is a team player, seeing his/her position as one that supports teachers and values teachers' participation in the school decision-making process. Here the principal can sanction teacher involvement in the decision-making

process and specifically encourage the female voice. The male administrator must be attentive to the female voice which is innate to female administrators.

The principal walks a narrow line similar to female teacher leaders. In addition to being the ultimate decision maker within the school, the principal performs yet another role: a broker for policies that originate in the central office. The principal is aligned more strongly with the superintendent than with teachers.

The prevailing attitude at the district office effects high school teachers by the superintendent's strategic selection of a principal and the resulting communication. What a superintendent thinks and believes is most strategic because of the power and influence exerted from that position. The superintendent could be a dynamic change agent. The superintendent's office has the power to reframe administration and rethink educational practices (Sergiovanni, 1994). That office could make decisions to hire principals who value female teacher leaders. The superintendent could influence an administrative team supportive of goals that lead to building of community within district schools. The superintendent would need to believe in the benefits derived from developing strong school communities with "we" orientations. The superintendent who believes in female teacher leadership could promote policies that stimulate teacher growth, risk taking, and change vital to school reform efforts.

Administrators could author policies and allocate resources to strengthen the collaborative process. As an example, the principal could create a half-time, rotating teacher resource position. Both female and male teachers could apply to a committee for the two-year, non-renewable position. Such an opening would demonstrate support and move teachers and administrators into better communication. Building administrators

could significantly ease their load by the gain in female teacher leader participation, thus moving projects forward with increased involvement. Cooperation creates a broader base of support and eases management

The best efforts for building community would come from collaborative teamwork consisting of administrator, teachers, and students. Teachers are the most permanent team players who sustain community at some level through revolving administrators and students. Teachers experience numerous principals and superintendents throughout their careers.

Responsibilities of Female Teacher Leaders

Female teacher leaders need to step forward to build community through their own actions. They need to take responsibility for creating a rich environment where they can develop. Only those willing and able to take a risk will muster the courage to engage colleagues. Community could be built through peer reflection, dialogues and debates, the sharing of ideas, and the communication of desires. It is within the development of community that expanded numbers of female teacher leaders could find, develop, and initiate voices to lead. The female teacher leader's personal and professional voice could fashion the secondary school into a more nurturing environment. In such an environment, female teacher leaders could champion ideas, because the community enables them to see themselves as experts who have a knowledge base, personal experience, and an opinion about what works best in schools.

Female teacher leaders need to initiate strengthening the sense of group within their buildings. It is imperative to help female teachers understand the significance of

professional communities in developing their potential. Heightening female teacher's awareness to collegial commitment should be a female teacher leadership goal. A female teacher leader's initiative to develop this goal could threaten existing power structures. Entrepreneurial female teacher leaders could encounter administrative and teacher resistance if they were seen as extending defined teacher boundaries. Yet, this is what really needs to happen. The purpose behind building community should be clearly defined as the development of relationships to promote teacher growth.

The best means for developing the female teacher's leadership voice is through community. Brinthaupt and Lipka (1994) proposed that the major process of self-concept change occurred through internalization of behaviors. A female teacher can construct a view of herself as a leader and find positive feedback for this conceptualization in her peer group. Groups support internal construction. Brinthaupt and Lipka further suggested that self is publicly constructed and exists in relation to others. Public events have a great impact on female leadership development. A female teacher's public is her community of colleagues. Female teacher leaders have a heightened commitment to their colleagues, but *all* female teachers should support each other. They should work together to build relationships with attitudes of acceptance. Female teachers who participate in a supportive collegial setting process their experiences as positive, and therefore can define themselves as developing leaders. There is substantial potential to advance female leadership development in such public settings.

Something else that could influence the internalization process for a female teacher is the comparison of herself with others. When female teachers do something that might lead them to question themselves, they often look to the behavior of others to learn the

dimensions of what they did. A female teacher's leadership skills could be refined by a mentor. The business community grooms or mentors employees intended for leadership roles. Mentorships allow an individual to acquiesce leadership skills through interaction with an identified leader. A teacher mentor could provide encouragement, acknowledgment, and recognition to sustain the female teacher leader during her development. Leadership develops leadership. A female teacher leader is able to model and encourage leadership in other female teachers and students, especially female students in her own classroom.

The substance of female teacher leadership lies in community, for both development and opportunity. It rests soundly on the female teacher leader's willingness to step forward to share her voice--to be heard in the crucial dialogue that is moving schools into the next century. Female teacher leaders can make the secondary school setting a more inclusive environment for both teachers and students with their leadership presence. They are a substantial, overlooked resource that could be of significant benefit to administrators.

The study of female teacher leadership would be further enhanced by a broad quantitative research project revealing statistical data about secondary school female teacher leaders and their communities.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Cover Letter

Dear Mrs./Miss. _____,

I am writing this letter to invite you to participate in a research project concerned with teacher leadership at the high school level. In particular, I am concerned with how women lead in a secondary setting and would like to understand the multidimensional character of leadership development. My library research has only revealed the voices of lead women in the elementary and middle school settings, as well as those in administrative roles. This research will allow teachers that lead at the high school level to tell their experiences and perspectives.

Participation in this project would mean a commitment to be interviewed on two occasions, approximately 2 hours in length. I hope that you will be able to help by sharing your personal and professional teaching experiences. I will be contacting you by phone to ask for an appointment to discuss the study and proceed with the interview process in May.

I realize that this is a busy time of year and am willing to creatively work around your schedule. I am anxious to meet you and hear your story.

Sincerely,

Donna Johnson
O.S.U. Graduate Student
School of Education

Appendix B

Interview Question Guide

1. Would you construct a brief sketch of your professional work to give me a sense of your teaching background? Where have you taught and the number of years? Do you have a masters degree?
2. Would you tell me a little about the organizational structure of your school and district?
3. Would you talk about how communication is facilitated and the interaction networks in your building?
4. How do you fit into that structure?
5. How would you define teacher leaders?
6. Do you see yourself as a teacher leader? Why or why not?
7. What key words would describe you as an educator? As a leader?
8. Would you describe specific instances that have been key to your professional development?
9. What are some important projects that you have initiated, supported, or led as a teacher leader?
10. Can you identify anything in particular that has sustained or promoted you as a teacher leader?
11. What constraints do you feel have affected you as a teacher leader? How could this be changed?
12. Would you be willing to share some of the difficult decisions or situations that you have encountered as a leader?

13. Do you have any thoughts about what our schools are going to be like in the future?