ABSTRACT

The qualitative research that forms the central focus of this dissertation is an instrumental case study of an elementary school in Netanya, Israel which successfully sustained a nationally acclaimed school reform process through a transition of principals. The study explores several linked questions: What is the impact on a sustained process of successful school reform when the principal’s office undergoes a change in leadership? To what extent is that impact based on the new principal’s personality and leadership style? To what extent is that impact based on the school culture? And to what extent does the impact reflect the nature of the transitional period itself?

The results show that the most significant factors in this school’s change were a model of staff development oriented towards leadership, attention to the transitional period itself, and a continuity in the school culture and pedagogical practice that was based on a vision shared by the old principal, the new principal, the staff and the students.
Dedicated to my beloved, late father Nathan Fried

who encouraged me to go back to school and apply for my PhD, and supported me

spiritually and financially all the way.

To my late superintendent Yaffa Kleim

who taught me that the sky is the limit!
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .................................................................................................................. ii

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ........................................................................................... iv

VITA ............................................................................................................................ vi

List of Tables .......................................................................................................... xiv

List of Figures ......................................................................................................... xv

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION ........................................................................ 1
On Being a School Principal in Israel................................................................. 2
Aspects of Educational Leadership ................................................................. 4
The Purposes of this Dissertation .................................................................. 6
The Background of the Problem ................................................................... 7
Statement of Purpose ...................................................................................... 9
Research Questions ......................................................................................... 10
Relevant Literature ......................................................................................... 11
Theories of Leadership .................................................................................... 12
School Administration .................................................................................... 12
Standards ........................................................................................................... 12
School Culture .................................................................................................. 13
The Influence of Interpersonal Relations on the Transition Process .......... 15
Pedagogical Practice ......................................................................................... 16
Prior to the Transition (the Initial Reform), 1989-1998 ........................................ 112
The Former Principal .................................................................................................. 112
School Culture ............................................................................................................. 124
The Pedagogical Approach .......................................................................................... 130
Table 3: Achievement Data Based on Children's Scores in School ......................... 144
The Transitional Period c.1996 - c.2000................................................................. 145
The Official Decision .................................................................................................... 145
Announcing the Transition ......................................................................................... 146
The Designated Successor ............................................................................................ 147
The Actual Transition ................................................................................................. 148
Letting Go .................................................................................................................... 148
The Fight for Succession .............................................................................................. 153
After the Official Transition ....................................................................................... 155
Staff Response ............................................................................................................. 156
Significant Features of the Transition ........................................................................ 157
Post Transition (2000-present) .................................................................................. 158
School Culture ............................................................................................................. 158
The Principal's Influence ............................................................................................ 160
Pedagogical Practices ................................................................................................. 163
Leadership Style and Role ......................................................................................... 169
Critical Incidents ......................................................................................................... 172
List of Tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table 1</td>
<td>Sample of analysis of notebook messages</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2</td>
<td>School Data From the Beginning and End of the Initial reform period</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3</td>
<td>Achievement Data Based on Children's Scores in School</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4</td>
<td>Achievement Data Based on Children's Scores in School</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5</td>
<td>The Poem</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Figures

Figure 1. Reconceptualizing style, role, influence and power using the Competing Value model. ................................................................. 54
Figure 2. The same model, with leadership style added: ........................................ 55
Figure 3. A diagram of reciprocal relationships between leadership facets .......... 74
Figure 4. Competing Values Maps for the Principals of YH................................. 211
CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

The Educational System

The educational system is one of modern civilization’s most complex projects. Philosophers and psychologists, from Socrates of Ancient Greece, to Piaget and Dewey in more modern times (as documented in Rotry, 1998), have offered principles to inform and guide educators. Nonetheless, the system is afflicted with chronic problems. Whereas the physical sciences have successfully enlarged our knowledge of the material world, and the social sciences have improved our knowledge of the social world, the science of education has been unable to accumulate a base of knowledge sufficient to prevent educational failures. In other words, graduate studies in education, even culminating in certification as a school principal, are not a guarantee of individual success for a school leader.

This disparity between abstract knowledge and practical success will become even more critical as we move into an increasingly complex and turbulent future. The difficulties schools will face in this era include dealing with more students as the dropout level decreases, adjusting to the fact that the teacher will no longer be the main source of knowledge, meeting the expectation of implementing immediate changes in response to social and political issues, and overcoming the lack of consensus regarding school curricula.
On Being a School Principal in Israel

In Israel, a school principal holds one of the highest individual administrative positions in the field of education. There are no school boards in Israel, therefore the role of an Israeli principal encompasses far more than its American counterpart. In addition, to accommodate Israel’s dynamic political and educational agenda, many schools have adopted self-based management systems. In such systems the school principal has pedagogical autonomy, economic decision-making power, and many other responsibilities that were previously under the authority of the local municipality and the Ministry of Education. The school principal is also the chair of all committees of the school, and determines who will participate in any of these committees.

Thus, the Israeli school principal is not only the overseer of daily operations, but is also the architect of the school entity itself. The principal must imagine and articulate the overarching goals of the school, formulate the principles of educational policy, and create its pedagogic culture through the clear communication of values, vision, and expectations. She alone determines to which extent her staff will participate in decision-making regarding these issues. As a result, she enjoys near-total authority within her own building.

In regards to national policy, the Israeli Ministry of Education has guidelines for curricula, recommended textbooks, teachers’ rights, and student discipline. It also
annually publishes a set of general goals, from which each school principal is expected to focuses his own agenda. At the end of the day, however, each school is a single entity, which defines and prioritizes its own curriculum and policies. It is true that the legal responsibilities of a school principal encompass over seventy-two codified areas, including instruction, construction, pedagogy, security, and staff development, as well as many others. These responsibilities, however, do little to damage a principal’s autonomy, as there are no penalties for ignoring the codes.

With all this in mind, it is not surprising that my early experience as a school principal was filled with significant doubts and unanswered questions. At the age of 29, I found myself in charge of a school with 450 students aged six to fourteen, and a full staff of seasoned professional teachers. At that time, I felt as if I were the captain of a ship. I had passengers, and I had a well-trained crew of sailors, but it was I alone who was ultimately responsible for the ship’s navigation. Increasing the stress upon me was the fact that I was the fourth principal in as many years for this particular school.

Significantly, although I had my master’s degree in education, I did not have any formal training as a school principal per se. This was because there is no institutionalized certification for the position of school principal in Israel. My experiences are not unique. Nearly every Israeli school principal has the same expansive authority, the same weighty responsibilities, and the same lack of formal training.
Aspects of Educational Leadership

Senge (1996) supports the idea that a principal (in addition to displaying personal leadership) should function as the head of a team:

We are coming to believe that leaders are those people who "walk ahead", people who are genuinely committed to deep change in themselves and in their organizations. They lead through developing new skills, capabilities, and understandings. And they come from many places within the organization. (p. 45)

I agree with Senge that leaders exist within many facets of the organization, but I am less inclined to subscribe to his concept of walking ahead. Rather, I believe that leaders should empower their workers. Though principals at their own level walk ahead of their staff, the teachers must also see the terrain and establish strategic directions at their own level and not rely on the principal for these guidelines. For example, all teachers (in accordance with the overall goals of the school), should write their own work plans for the school year, including goals, teaching plans, expected outcomes and expected costs. Nonetheless, the crux of the leadership issue remains the long list of responsibilities incumbent upon the individual leader.

Another aspect of leadership can be found in Kegan's (1994) work, which suggests that management ability is related to cognitive performance: “The
management literature demands not mere skills but a qualitative order of mental complexity” (p.152). Kegan describes five orders of consciousness that explain the cognitive, interpersonal and intrapersonal lines of development, and how they influence our personal performance. The implication is that leaders who have the ability to function on many levels of mental complexity will be highly regarded, but also that a high degree of mental ability is not enough.

In a similar way, Leithwood, Jantzi, and Steinbach (2000) discuss the diversity of leadership styles and roles:
Contemporary leadership models vary in who is assumed to exercise influence, from only those formal administrative roles (managerial and moral leadership), through typically, but not necessarily, those in formal leadership roles (instructional, transformational and contingent leadership), to the group potentially including all those with a stake in the organization (participative leadership). (p. 17)

Robert E. Quinn’s model enlarges upon the concept of leadership style (without significant theoretical innovation in interpreting these styles). He discusses the realm of managerial leadership, which covers the role of the leader in the organization according to organizational flexibility, control, and internal and external focus. In this way, his advanced change theory strengthens Camron and Quinn’s assumption (1999, p. xi) that principals “should find ways to match their personal
style and capabilities with the demands of the organization’s future environment.” In other words, in leadership transitions the organization itself must be taken into consideration and the appropriate person should be suited to the proper position.

To conclude, styles, abilities and roles, are all components of the discourse of the educational leadership conception. Inbar (2000) states that the discourse of educational leadership combines with a normative conception of needed leadership behavior to analyze and explore the leadership style or styles which are “right” for education …. but the most important [concept] is fitting the right leadership perception to the educational process. (Translated from the Hebrew, p. 104)

The Purposes of this Dissertation

This present research does not attempt to define leadership, to analyze the cognitive order, or to categorize leadership styles. Rather, it focuses on theories that specifically address how leadership transitions impact organizations, and what happens to an organization when such leadership transitions occur.

The issue of transitions in leadership in the American educational setting is receiving more and more attention as a significant factor in organizational performance and student achievement. The issue of transition becomes even more critical in the Israeli system, which places a higher value on, and gives vaster responsibilities to, the autonomous principal.
Brock and Grady (1995) discuss the significance of such transitions, stating that: “leadership succession in a school creates a change that affects the entire school community” (p. xi). Leadership transitions are very common in schools and other administrative positions, but the process itself has not been adequately researched. This research will investigate the transitional process in relation to school culture, leadership influence and pedagogical practices.

The Background of the Problem

Educational change is a modern reality. It is initiated by, but not limited to, an effort to “save” failing schools, improve educational achievement, and introduce new approaches to educational theory. Fullan (1999) presents the purpose of educational change as a “contribution to social development and democracy. A strong public school system… is the key to social, political and economic renewal in society” (p. 3).

The need for the changes to be sustained is implicit in the complexity of the change process itself. In order to adapt to the ongoing turbulence of change “the dynamics of the successful organization are therefore those of irregular cycles and discontinuous trends, falling within qualitative patterns, fuzzy but recognizable categories taking the form of archetypes and templates” (p. 4).
These qualitative patterns reflect the clear and basic assumption of an organizational culture that continuously follows the educational perception but flexibly adapts to new situations.

A lovely metaphor of these constant changes is presented by Wasely (1992), in her article "When Leaders Leave":

Schools undergoing such transitions are not unlike the garden around my house. Seven years ago, the owner landscaped the place. He wanted a no-maintenance garden with beauty bark, perennials, and shrubs. Three years later he moved, just as the garden was beginning to develop. The next owners, avid gardeners, wanted a Victorian garden with flowers galore. They ripped out shrubs, got rid of the beauty bark, and planted more flowers. They stayed two years, and then I moved in. I wanted a no-maintenance, shrub-and-flower garden. Over the past two years, I’ve planted some of the same shrubs as the first owner had, brought in a little beauty bark, dispensed with some of the flowers the second owner put in, and planted a few more perennials. Had we been able to coordinate the garden design (which, of course, we could not) the whole thing would be lushly full by now. (p. 65)

This metaphor demonstrates how leadership transition may affect a school, especially one undergoing a change process. A change process includes both attitudinal and behavioral changes. “Only the integration of attitudinal change and
behavioral change will lead to a significant change” (Inbar, 2000, p. 140). The message here is clear: In order to maintain the change, qualitative patterns should be ingrained in the organizational culture, pedagogical practices and leadership. Yet such qualitative patterns, i.e. those patterns faithful to the school's basic assumptions, are complicated – and often compromised – by the occurrence of leadership transitions within the change process. In these cases, how does the organization deal with such transitions? Further, and more importantly, how does a transition in leadership influence the overall quality of a sustained change process?

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study is to explore how a leadership transition influences a sustained change process. The principal’s role in a successful change process might be very significant. Therefore, the transition of a leader in a midst of a change process is very likely to influence the process and/or the substance of a change. To explore the complexities of this process, I will examine a school that underwent a successful leadership transition during a change process and analyze the particulars of these phenomena. (“Successful” in this case refers to a change process continued in a strong and powerful manner both before and after the new principal took over the leadership role.)

As previously stated, the leader is the one that articulates the school vision, especially in Israeli culture. The leader's vision will dictate the nature of school
culture in myriad and far-reaching ways, including shared values, norms, rituals and more. Following Hoy’s summary of Firestone and Wilson’s work, the reflection of the school culture will be analyzed “by studying its content, the expressions of culture, and primary communication patterns” (Hoy & Miskel, 1996, p.137).

The principal’s contribution to the overall school pedagogy is examined here as defined by Sinetar (1998), who writes about the significance of mentoring. This would appear to be the exact place where an educational leader can and should exert his or her influence on pedagogical performance. (The importance of principal mentoring and its contribution to the school’s culture and pedagogies are further explored in Sinetar’s research.)

Understanding the full complexity of the transition includes examining the school leadership using different approaches, and styles. To aid in this, the research will include a look at the management process from the point of view of organizational theory; specifically it will explore which of the following variables will change: internal environment, external environment, and human resources.

Research Questions

This research explores the process of leadership transition and its influence on a sustained change process. The fundamental and subsidiary research questions are 1. How does a leadership transition influence a sustained change process in a particular school?
2. How is it that certain components of change are implemented in such a way that they become basic assumptions of the organization, remaining stable even in the midst of a leadership transition?

3. In the specific school under study, what was the relationship between leadership transition, school culture and pedagogical change?

a. What was the leadership type and role before and after the transition?

b. What was the contribution of this leadership role to the overall change process?

c. What organizational strategies were used to cope with transition and change, and what was the overall effect of these strategies on pedagogical practice?

To respond to these questions, this study will look at the transition as a process, and in its relation to the culture, the leadership and the pedagogical practices.

Relevant Literature

As the core of this research is the integration of leadership, school culture and pedagogical processes, therefore the literature will be analyzed from all three perspectives. An effort will be made to interweave the literature when relevant. Other major focuses of the literature review will be organizational culture and change,
transition-as-a-process and the relationship between leadership transitions and pedagogical practices.

*Theories of Leadership*

There are many diverse and interesting theories of leadership. In general, we can identify a few primary conceptual streams. Some of these support the idea that there are universal characteristics that can be taught to individuals who are being groomed for leadership. Others claim that leadership is content-related and that there are therefore no universally effective characteristics. With these two points of view in mind, one can identify various theories exploring leadership styles and representing different concepts of leadership, as well as different organizational theories focusing on the leadership role.

*School Administration*

In addition, specific historical trends in school administration cannot be disregarded. Murphy (1993) states that there were seven eras in the last century that significantly influenced school administration, beginning with the ideological era at the beginning of the century and extending to the Dialectic era in the late 80's.

*Standards*

Educational administration has attracted a lot of attention in the last decade. In 1996, the Interstate School Leader Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) established a
document that set new standards for school principals (Appendix 1). This document includes a multitude of requirements for school leaders and discusses many topics including goal setting, thorough change, management, creation of school culture, ensuring success and many more. Throughout, the document implies that school leadership is instrumental in successful change.

School Culture

Edgar Schein (1997) of MIT researched organizational culture at many sites. He discusses organizational culture from a content-related perspective. In general, he refers to three levels of organizational culture. The first level represents the visibility of the culture to the observer (the artifacts level), the second is the organization’s espoused values and the third deals with the organizational culture’s basic underlying assumptions. Schein claims that organizational culture and leadership are two sides of a coin, suggesting that “Organizational cultures are created in part by leaders, and one of the most decisive functions of leadership is the creation, the management, and sometimes even the destruction of culture” (p. 5). A full understanding of school culture must be in place if one is to understand the influence of leadership transition. The culture is, in a way, a seismographic report of events in a school’s life (since it is the most encompassing facet of the school):

The most useful way to think about culture is to view it as the accumulated shared learning of a given group, covering behavioral, emotional and
cognitive elements of the group members’ total psychological functioning. For shared learning to occur, there must be a history of shared experience, which in turn implies some stability of membership in the group. (Schein, 1997, p.10)

This stability Schein refers to is one of the main subjects the present research will explore. How is it that certain components of change are implemented in such a way that they become basic assumptions of the organization, remaining stable even in the midst of a leadership transition?

Following Schein, and the overall concept of school principal standards, Quinn (1991) suggests that culture has several common characteristics, but warns against strict adherence to a single paradigm:

Culture at the organizational level, like information processing at the individual level, tends to take on moral overtones, while cultures tend to vary dramatically; they share the common characteristic of providing integration of effort in one direction while often sealing off the possibility of moving in another direction. (Quinn, 1998, p. 66-67).

The need to identify and implement the organizational core values, while at the same time enabling both flexibility and stability, is reflected in Quinn’s model (which is used in this research).
When a sustained change is created in “one direction” does the culture move in the same direction? Or can a change reflect the openness within a turbulent world (as suggested by Fullan, 1999)? Situating themselves somewhere between these two approaches, Sergiovanni and Corbally (1984) emphasize the importance of balanced practices. Although they refer to leadership from a tactical and strategic point of view, their message is similar to that of the other theorists: there should always be balance.

The relationship between the culture and the leadership is also presented by the integrative capital of the school, which “includes traditions, values, leadership, and shared experience about what works for students” (Hill and Celio, 1998, p. 39). Leadership as it is reflected in the school culture is a subject that will be explored in depth in the literature review chapter.

The Influence of Interpersonal Relations on the Transition Process

A leadership transition will affect a school on many levels. These will include the educational level (particularly the pedagogical practices), the organizational level, (management and culture), and the individual level, (personal and pedagogical adjustments). Each of these levels has different implications for transitions in leadership. In order to successfully deal with transitions, “you need to determine precisely what changes in their existing behavior and attitudes people will have to make” (Bridges, 1991, p. 14). Bridges suggests that peoples' attitudes are significant
in any change process, and underscores the importance of understanding such attitudes in order to handle the process on the individual level as described by Goleman (1995): “The art of influence entails handling emotions effectively in other people” (p.164). A good understanding of the individual level will most likely form the core of a leader’s influence, especially regarding pedagogical practices and school norms. Within the school structure the school principal fills the role (to varying extents) of a mentor: “…the mentor’s spirit is the heart’s posture pervading every healthy relationship in every family, classroom, organization, and town” (Sinetar, 1998, p.1).

**Pedagogical Practice**

The pedagogical practices are the ultimate outcome of a change process. While the culture reflects the school vision and mission, the pedagogical practices turn vision into curriculum and teaching.

The pedagogical practices, previous as well as current, that will be identified and presented throughout the study, include (but are not limited to) teaching methods, pedagogical materials, and evaluation methods. How does the school create the “right” conditions for the educational change to take place in a successful manner? “Successful reforms in one place are partly a function of good ideas, and largely a function of the conditions under which the ideas flourished”. (Fullan, 1999, p. 64).
Since pedagogical practices reflect the school vision and goals, the entire process becomes a domino effect; as one is influenced or changed, the other is affected. This effect does not always occur, however, as difficulties often arise in making the transition from ideas outlined on paper to practices implemented in an actual school setting.

Methodological Considerations

The theoretical aspect of the research began in May 2001. The on-site school research took place from September 2001 to March 2003 and included visits to the school. The initial visits consisted of interviews, data collecting, and observations. Data analysis took place between September 2001 and March 2003, and began immediately after the interviews were completed. The analysis included coding, pattern searches, assertions, and the laying of groundwork for broader descriptions of the case. Data analyses also comprised member checks with the principals involved in the process in order to validate the basic assumptions of the researcher.

Significance of the Study

Most change studies in education deal with change processes and leadership. The actual transition of leadership during the change process, and its influence on the overall school culture, however, is under-explored. Wasely (1992) notes “three important points about leadership transitions. First, frequent turnover must be
expected. Second, time is an important factor in reform, and leadership transitions often interfere with project timetables. Third, leadership changes, whether expected or not, can disrupt projects drastically” (p. 67). This study will address this deficit, exerting influence on both the theoretical and pragmatic elements of leadership transition. As such, I expect that this study will have an impact on those who are involved in all aspects of leadership transition, including leadership preparation and education, search committees, and more.

Research significance

The advantage of observing the school focused on in this study is the effectiveness of its change process, which has remained stable for almost a decade. In order to clarify the importance of the transition process in the midst of a change process it is important to define both terms. Bridges (1993) defines both change and transition: “change is situational: the new site… the new team roles, the new policy. Transition is the psychological process people go through to come to terms with the new situation. Change is external, transition is internal” (p. 3). My basic assumption in this research is that many change processes do not take the transition itself fully into consideration, not only from the logistics perspective, but also in regard to psychological aspects. I believe that a successful transitional process is the foundation of a successful, stable change. As a result, many educational changes are unstable due to a lack of attention to the transition process. This research further
advances educational knowledge, by exploring how the leadership transition influences the overall change process. In this case, I define the transition period as beginning at the time one school principal resigns and as ending approximately two years after the new principal begins his or her tenure.

Significance for Practitioners

This study will identify and trace the influence of the leadership transition in the midst of a change process. The research will also provide educational administrators with a model for successful sustained change implementation, and may provide additional indicators for transition-and-change-implementation for overall school improvement. The empirical results of the research may help formulate guidelines with regard to the hiring and transitional mentoring of principals. Moreover, the data collected here may also inform educators regarding the administration, implementation, stabilization, and sustainability of school change.

Limitations

1. The research will take place in Israel in Hebrew, and thus may be limited by the barrier of translating from one language to another and the use of untranslatable cultural idioms.

2. The educational frameworks in Israel and in the United States are different. These differences might limit the American reader in their
understanding of the process with regards to school culture, pedagogical approach and so on.

3. Case studies do not have a set standard to indicate if the research is properly conducted. As such, they have a tendency to be highly subject to the researcher’s individual impressions. In addition, the researcher must be certain that the material is not too lengthy or ponderous, so as to ensure that the reader will make optimum use of the new information offered by the research.

4. Case studies possess many ambiguous ethical issues, since the relationship between the researcher and the participants develops while the research takes place. The ethical codes can only be determined ahead of time to a partial extent, and are therefore subject to supplements in the course of the research.

5. As Schien (1997) said: “value domains dealing with the less controllable elements of the environment or with aesthetic or moral matters may not be testable at all” (p. 20). In other words, as important as school values are, the testability of them as a facet of the research is limited.

6. The research was done over a limited period of time. Although the background documentation spans over nearly a decade, the on-site interviews and data analyses refer to a specific time period.
7. Finally, the study is limited by my own experience as a principal in two transition processes. From examining methodological directions, I am aware that my personal understanding of situations or my assumptions of what is clear or unclear to the readers might influence what I observe and write.

Disclaimer of Political Influence
This research is not financed by any external agency, and is therefore free of political influence.

Definitions:
The words below are defined here in a basic manner. Further theoretical definitions will be described and discussed in the literature review chapter.

Educational Change: A change made in one or more of the following areas related to schooling: school norms, pedagogical materials, teaching strategies, curriculum design, and philosophical approach.

Transition: Transition is the state wherein one kind of behavior and attitude changes into another within the school, as explained by Bridges (1991, 1993).

Leadership Transition: The actual transition period, during which one school principal takes over the position of another (in this case, approximately two years).

School Culture: School culture encompasses all the norms, symbols, acts and events that affect educational behavior within a given school.
Influence of Leadership: Any outcomes of school life (including ceremonies, pedagogical and/or internal relationships, and external relationships) that can be directly ascribed to the influence of the school principal.

School practices: School design, class design, learning materials, text books, teachers' strategies, staff meetings and any other documentation that relates to how and why things are done in a certain way.
CHAPTER 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The process of change can be divided into three stages: the existing situation, the new situation, and the transition between them. In this work I will focus on the transitional phase of change with regards to leadership, i.e. the leadership transition. When an organization undergoes such a transition, change becomes characteristic of the organization as a whole. Therefore, this research will explore several linked questions: What is the impact on a sustained process of school reform when the principal’s office undergoes a change in leadership? To what extent is that impact based on the new principal’s personality and leadership style? To what extent is that impact based on the school culture? And to what extent does the impact reflect the nature of the transitional period itself?

The central facet of this research was a case study at an Israeli school, chosen because it successfully sustained an ongoing school reform process through a recent transition in leadership. In order to gain background for this case study, I researched the following concepts and issues in the literature: school reform, leader influence, leadership style and roles, leadership succession and school culture.
Gaps in the literature

Significantly, my review of the literature uncovered very few studies in the specific area of the transitional phase of a change in leadership. The literature that does exist is more commonly centered on executive transitions in public organizations, rather than in the educational setting. In the field of education, there has been some limited research on superintendent transitions and teachers’ perceptions of succession. However, it tends to focus on the process of searching for new leadership, the organizational effects of leadership succession, and the different reasons for leadership transition (such as retirement and board dissatisfaction), rather than on the transitional phase itself.

In addition to the dearth of case studies, there is also a striking gap in the literature when it comes to the theorization of leadership-transition. All the literature on organizational change is based on the ability of an individual and or a group to facilitate a change process, but nowhere is the transitional phase of a change in leadership specifically addressed. In looking at the relationship between the old and the new leaders, and the ways in which the transition from old to new leadership influences the change process of an organization, we thus reveal a lacuna: The questions of “How does an organization adjusts to new leadership?” and “Whether and under what circumstances are leaders forced to design change (as opposed to simply adjusting to the existing change process)?” are consistently elided. The answer to these questions might appear self-evident (the leader would simply
maintain or revise the process according to the needs of the organization) but such an answer fails to address the political and pedagogical positioning that typically occurs in an organization undergoing a change process.

Part of the reason for this gap in the literature may relate to the fact that transitional periods of the type discussed here are less common in the United States than in Israel. Although clearly the phenomena of leadership transition exists in the United States (and is even more frequent and pronounced than in Israel, where principals have permanent posts after eight years) it is rarely characterized by the kind of overlap of leadership that one finds in Israel. This is true both in the business and educational sectors.

The purpose of having a leadership overlap is to support retention of an organization’s professional excellence and institutional memory. Nevertheless, the only evidence I located for this as an organizational policy in the United States was within a Federal Act pertaining to transitions within the United States Government. The rarity of such a policy is highlighted by the fact that when (recently) the executive director of General Electric trained a successor for a year, it was considered a unique and newsworthy case.

With this in mind, it is important to note that this research takes place within a given cultural context. What may be considered obvious in Israel may not be so elsewhere. In the United States, where people are used to short-term executive positions, little time and attention is devoted to the transitional phase itself. I believe
this to be a strategic error. Logically, a leadership overlap prevents the time and cost involved in starting over “from scratch.” In Israel, overlap in leadership represents the standard approach.

For example, in the Israeli army there is a mandated period of at least a month of overlap for any transition in positions. In the private, the public and (especially) the educational sector, the situation is the same. The time of overlap may vary, anywhere from two weeks to two months depending on the circumstances. However, the overlap period itself is considered so crucial that, if a leader is fired, he is still expected to lead the transition into the new leadership. The baseline assumption is that the leadership transition period has a major impact on the organization, and as such must be handled with care in order to create the smoothest and most efficient possible process.

In Summary

The lack of attention paid in the literature to the overlapping period in leadership transitions represents an omission of critical importance (and highlights the role that this current research could play in advancing the literature). Despite that gap, however, the below literature review provides a necessary and important foundation for the concepts and ideas explored in this dissertation.
School Reform

In order to understand the influence of transitions in leadership on school reform, it is important to define the word *reform* itself. For the purposes of this review, reform will be defined as *the outcome of a sustained school-change process*. In other words, a school that has undergone reform is one that has undergone a change-process for an extended period of time, and significantly altered its organizational culture and pedagogy.

Sources of School Reform

Organizational change usually happens either as an attempt to improve an institution, or as part of an overall political and social shift. Schools, in particular, are in a constant process of change. These changes are initiated by many factors, which can include educational prerogative, social and political influence, and the desire for economic progress (Uline, 2001). Pedagogical trends, from new reading theories to new methods of management, also affect the system. Since pedagogical practices reflect the school vision and goals, the entire process becomes a domino effect; as one is influenced or changed, the other is affected as well.
Obstacles to Organizational Change

From personal experience as a school principal, I believe there are two major obstacles in any such change process. The first is the difficulty of the implementation of change itself, and the second is maintaining the reform.

As Evans (1996) says, “Perhaps no American institution has been reformed more often, with less apparent effect, than the school” (p. xi). For years failed changes have been blamed on (supposedly) intransigent employees who were assumed to have resisted innovation. The most current research shows, however, that such assumptions are mistaken. Far from being bastions of resistance, it is more common that school employees change easily and continuously; and it is paradoxically this very pattern of constant adjustment to new innovations that may impede substantial long-term change.

In addition, Fullan (2000) defines two more reasons why it is difficult to implement change:

One, we have not yet appreciated the organic, evolutionary nature of the process of human and organizational change… two, as we begin to appreciate these processes, we realize, that there can be no cookbooks or silver bullets. Each situation is complex and to a certain degree unique. (p. 14)

In other words, the complexity of the change process is largely caused by the dynamic nature of our life. As described by Fullan (1993), “Contending with the
forces of change is a never-ending process of finding creative ways to struggle with inherently contentious factors” (p.33). These difficulties explain the rarity of a leadership-transition that preserves the continuity of a school reform.

The Impact of Stability

The presence of stable elements is also necessary for a successful reform process. Stability is a crucial factor not only during a process of change, but also in any educational situation. Because education is a prolonged event, the existence of stabilizing factors over time is highly significant. Referring to Senge’s shift of mind that accompanies change, Fullan suggests the importance of constant conservative elements within the framework of change:

Senge (1990) reminds us that the Greek work metanoia means ‘a fundamental shift of mind’. This is what we need about the concept of educational change itself. Without such a shift of mind the insurmountable basic problem is the juxtaposition of a continuous change theme with a continuous conservative system” (Fullan, 1993, p. 3).

George (1996) concurs, identifying the following as necessities for turning plans for change into real life successes: “strong leadership, quality core curriculum, school autonomy, district support, and parents and community involvement” (p.92).
Other Factors Affecting Transformation

The literature on organizational change identifies a variety of factors that contribute to or detract from successful transformation within an organization. Following Kotter (1996) and Rainey (1997), we identify these factors as including:

a) powerful coalition building
b) vision
c) communication of the vision
d) empowerment of the others to act on the vision
e) creation of short-time wins
f) consolidation of improvements
g) plans for further change, and
h) institutionalization of the new approach.

Institutionalizing Change Processes

Assuming that a successful change process is in place, however, how do we protect and sustain it? Miles explains that implanting changes in school is not adequate. Improvement can only be accomplished if the change is maintained and institutionalized. In order for the change to be effective it must be integrated into the life of the school.
Even successful implantation of a change in schooling is not enough. School improvement requires that such implementation be sustained over time; this, in turn, requires that the change be institutionalized. Institutionalization means that the change is ‘built in’ to the life of the school” (Miles, 1983 p. 18)

The Significance of the Leader

Now that we have a better understanding of school reform, our next step is to examine the importance of the leader to the school, and to the school reform process.

Innovation begins with content, the actual program for change, but their success depends heavily on the readiness of people, the organizational capacity of schools, and, crucially, the kind of leadership that is exerted. (Evans, 1996, p. xiv, emphasis added)

Organizational change offers a range of approaches. These approaches are incomplete, however, without an analysis of the thought processes and behaviors of the leaders and individuals expected to implement the suggested strategies. Unfortunately, this aspect of change remains under-explored, even with the increasing attention given to the human dimensions of organizational transition. As Evans (1996) states, “Most see change largely as a rational redesign of the school’s
goals, roles, and rules. They treat it as a product and, concentrating on its structural frame, overlook its human dimensions” (p. xii).

Any school undergoing change will already be experiencing great turbulence. Usually, reform is initiated by a crisis situation following a political or social call for higher achievement, a local decision of a community or a state, or a focused reflection on the needs of a particular school. The most common symptoms of such a crisis situation in a school are low academic achievement, high staff turnover, and a school culture of overall unstability. The diminishment/and or amelioration of these (and other) symptoms is largely determined and influenced by the school leader.

The Nature of Leadership

“Leadership is the process of persuasion or example by which an individual (or leadership team) induces a group to pursue objectives held by the leader or shared by the leader and his or her followers”. (Gardner, cited in Fullan, 2000 p.3). A review of the various leadership models suggests several components or characteristics that appear, within the context of current knowledge, to be correct. Further exploration is necessary; however, to place these components within a larger leadership scheme, especially in light of Fullan (2000) who states that in order to exercise leadership today, leaders must institutionalize their leadership.
The Influence of the Principal

In many ways the school principal is the most important and influential individual in any school…It is his leadership that sets the tone of the school, the climate for learning, the level of professionalism and morale of teachers and the degree of concern for what students may or may not become…one can almost always point to the principal’s leadership as the key to success.

(Sergiovanni, 1995, p. 83).

It is not surprising that in many sources in the literature including (but not limited to) Sergiovanni (1995), Schein (1997), Fullan (1993; 1999), James and O’Toole (1996), and Darling-Hammond (2003), the principal appears as a key influence in schools. Owing to the nature of her or his daily work with students, teachers, parents, and other agencies, the principal significantly impacts both the individuals and the communities that comprise the school culture, pedagogy, and management. The principal directs and helps to determine the internal environment on the one hand and the external relationship between the school and outside agencies on the other hand. Similarly, the principal is the external face of the school as an entity. As such, the role of the principal is multifaceted and complex.

In a study conducted by Hipp (1996) teacher efficacy was tested as an outcome of principal leadership behavior. She found that “modeling behavior,
inspiring group purpose and providing contingent rewards —were significantly related to general teaching efficacy” (p.1). In a later study she explored how principals’ leadership behaviors influenced teachers’ sense of efficacy. The study identified 10 leadership behaviors: models behavior, believes in teacher capacity, inspires group purpose, promotes teacher empowerment and shared decision making, recognizes teacher efforts, provides personal and professional support, manages student behavior, promotes a sense of community, fosters teamwork and collaboration; and encourages innovation and continual growth. In summary, the study showed that principals’ direct behaviors, as well as indirect symbolic forms of instructional leadership, influence teachers’ work and its outcomes. (Hipp, 1997, p. 1)

Hallinger, Bickman and Davis (1996) examined the nature and extent of the school principal’s role in affecting student learning. They “found no direct effects from the principal’s instructional leadership but did find an indirect influence on overall school effectiveness through actions that shape the school’s learning environment” (p.527).

In a paper presented by Larsen and Malen (1997), their findings showed that the following had both direct and indirect influences on teachers’ curricular and instructional decisions: (1) The clarity of the principal’s goals and his or her capacity to communicate and connect them to action; (2) the principal’s awareness of
resources; (3) the principal’s motivation to deploy resources; (4) the principal’s skill at employing and combining strategies; and (5) whether the setting was conducive to principal influence.

The role of the principal in promoting achievement was further researched by Hines and Johnston in 1996. Four basic factors influenced success in their setting: “learning environment, methods, planning and perpetuation, and evaluation” (p. 6).

West (2001), in a multiple case study, found that: “principals influenced the use of appropriate practices…[and] a direct relationship existed between principal behaviors and the use of developmentally appropriate practices in the classroom” (p.3).

**Principal Influence During a School Reform Process**

The influence of the principal is especially crucial during a school reform process, as indicated below:

According to data from the National Center of Educational Statistics, principals perceive that their influence on school wide issues has increased slightly from 75% in 1987-88 to 85% in 1993-4. (Shan, 1998, p. 35).

Leaders influence their schools. There is a general influence regardless of a particular leadership style, although clearly each style will emit a distinct influence. This influence can be seen in teachers, students, pedagogical practices, achievements and more. When influential leaders leave, for whatever reason, it is not uncommon
for all change efforts in progress to slip into a state of suspended animation (Wasley, 1992, p. 64)

Edward A. Wynn (1988) identifies principals’ values as roots of school change. His research screens the complex areas a principal uses during a change process:

“this paper describes the change strategies a principal used to stabilize an unstable school environment, including but not limited to employee dissonance, labor unrest, staff turnover, ideological confrontations about the direction of ‘professional’ development, and racial disharmony.” (p.68)

Useem, Christman, Gold and Simon (1996), looking at factors affecting school reform, found that “among the most important, with potential to make or break the project, were: support from the principal, [and] turnover of the principal…” (p.1).

In terms of the influence of a principal, one can say that there is a flow of circumstances that will predict outcomes. Likert, cited in Sergiovanni (1995), suggests a model that describes "how management systems influence mediating and school effectiveness variables” (p. 270). Likert’s model focuses on the process and its indicators for the end goals. Using three sets of variables, it presents the enormous number of factors that leadership can influence: Initiating variables – goal, plan; mediating variables – accountability, performance; and reciprocal, school effecting variables: growth, behavior, satisfaction.
Dinham, Cairney, Craigie and Wilson noted the influence of leadership in a series of studies conducted in Australia: “These studies revealed the significant role played by senior school executives, particularly the principal, in the development of communication methods in schools and their influence on school culture and climate” (1993, p. 38).

This influence is reflected both professionally and personally. Leaders in sustained school improvement “demonstrated [the] savvy and persistence [to] put to use an array of personal characteristics (humor, passion, empathy, creativity, common sense, and patience” (Nadeau & Leighton, 1996, p.1)

A Historical Review of Leadership

The role and definition of leadership has varied over the years, in accordance with changing organizational theories, as documented in the pertinent literature on organizational leadership (Hoy & Miskel 1996; Rainey, 1997; Yukl, 1998, summarized below).

Frederic Taylor claimed the leader should approach leadership scientifically. In his Rational Goal model he prioritized efficiency, productivity, linear processes and goals orientation. Max Weber, on the other hand, described the leader as a charismatic, spiritual figure. In his model, the organization is based upon division of labor followed by rules, traditions, measurements, and documentation.
In the late 1920’s, Chester Bernard offered a social organizational approach that placed greater emphasis on teamwork. As such, equality, openness, participation, commitment, cohesion, morale, and consensus building are key elements in leadership. This model differs from the later *Open-Systems* model offered by Henry Mintzberg. Mintzberg’s approach is more contingency-oriented, and geared toward adaptable organizations. The creation of a competitive, ambiguous environment and promotion of responsiveness to external, creative problem solving are the hallmarks of his theory on managing change and innovation.

Blake & Mouton expect the leader to choose a style designed to fit both production and people. James Macgregor Burns claims that leaders lift followers into their better selves and Peter Block suggests that leaders exist to empower others.

In the 1970’s, the approaches became more transformational, with Peter Senge’s “learning organizations,” Margaret Wheatley’s “emergent natural simplicity,” and Stephen Covey’s “personal development creativity.”

The latest approaches emphasize quality, consistency, value-orientation, learning and change. They tend to be based on holistic, integrated models. The underlying organizational theories consider that the administrative role of the leader is to be the facilitator of the executive committee. Leadership thus consists in defining the way in which the organization will proceed, or of enabling certain specific types of collaboration.
Leadership Styles

Leithwood and Duke (1999) gathered studies in their work “A Century’s Quest to Understand School Leadership.” Their review explored educational administration and focused on scholarly empirical studies. They suggest that six major categories of leadership dominate contemporary writing about school leadership. The crucial importance of the leader, as explored above, makes it worth our while to further examine the nature of leadership through this review of different leadership styles.

Instructional Leadership

Instructional leadership “focuses on the behaviors of teachers as they engage in activities directly affecting the growth of students” (Leithwood and Duke, 1999, p.47). Instructional leadership is deeply rooted in traditional, seemingly regressive thinking. These theories stem from the idea that leadership is defined through the activities and accomplishments of instructors alone. The leader is a formal authority, and there is little emphasis placed on the results of shared responsibility. Instructional leaders follow traditional leadership roles, and will thus be expected to be knowledge experts and to serve as centers of institutional power. Such leaders tell the teachers how and what to teach. Their role is to be the directors of their schools; usually they will make unilateral decisions based on their positions and experiences. In the past the instructional leader was the source of knowledge. Today, the instructional leader
might also be the source of direction and instruction. While they are not, by
definition, the main instructors, they will nevertheless determine which external
instructors are needed in the school. They most likely demonstrate the characteristics
of disseminators and monitors.

When a transition takes place, one of the first items to evaluate is the style of
the previous leader, particularly in juxtaposition with that of the new leader. With
this in mind, the transition from instructional leadership to any other leadership style
might be difficult. This is due to the fact that the teachers do not own the process at
all. They are accustomed to getting instructions and acting upon them. They are not
part of setting school policy, norms, or pedagogical context, they are simply ordered
to implement them.

Conversely, the transition from one instructional leader to another is perhaps
the easiest. In such a situation, the teachers are already accustomed to compliance. If
a change is taking place in a school where the leader is instructional, the vision and
the initiation of the change will most likely come from the leader. This kind of a
change is also the most likely to dissipate after the leader is gone, since no one else in
the school has ownership of it. In this case, the new leader will have to redesign the
school. That will require learning about the history, values, traditions and
assumptions of the old school; defining a strategy to strengthen the aspects of the
culture that exist; and formulating a methodology for the eventual revision of the
culture.
Transformational Leadership

In transformational leadership the focus “is on the commitments and capacities of organizational members” (Leithwood and Duke, 1999, p.48). Transformational leadership offers a highly visionary and idealistic conception of the educational field. The transformational leader, as described by Leithwood (1999), operates in seven major areas: school vision, school goals, intellectual stimulation, individualized support, best practices / important organizational values, high performance expectations, school culture, and participatory decision making.

Although its central premise of commitment and capacity is important, this style of leadership leaves many pragmatic questions unanswered. The stress on commitment leads to certain questions: Are teachers committed? What would make them committed? Do they have the motivation to actualize their potential, or do they choose this profession for reasons of comfort and lifestyle? The assumption of this model is that if the vision, goals and values are in place, the staff, ultimately, will follow it. The role of the transformational leader is similar to that of an entrepreneur, to inspire higher levels of commitment and capacity among members of the organization. His or her role will most likely be to shape school vision and goals, oversee staff development, and establish a participative decision making structure.

We would expect that a transition from one transformational leader to another would ensure the maintenance of school reform if the new leader is also participative
and shares a similar pedagogical vision. In this leadership style, the influence of the leader is dependent on the commitment of the staff to the process of change and the relationship between the staff and the leader. As mentioned above, it is important that the change is institutionalized. In this kind of a transition, the school culture might be maintained through the initial stages of the change and even improve or shift the growth of the school in accordance with the vision of the new leader. On the other hand, if the new leader is concerned only with the visible changes that he or she created personally, than such leadership might halt or interfere with a preexisting process.

*Moral Leadership*

“[T]he focus of moral leadership is on the values and ethics of the leaders” (Leithwood and Duke, 1999, p.50). Moral leadership is based on values and ethics. Undoubtedly, these are fundamental for every leadership style. Moral leadership, however, goes further by also stressing a normative political/democratic concept of leadership.

There are two basic difficulties in moral leadership. The first is that it makes an institution dependent upon the individual leader’s ability to distinguish between right and wrong. (In other words, what is the source of the primary institutional values; are they derived from religion? Educational theories? Communal needs?)
Second, since every situation will contain a variety of values, conflict is inevitable. How can such an organization solve conflicts of values?

The expectation of the modern world is that leaders need to develop the capacity to utilize contradictory perspectives on both personal and professional levels. Due to the complexity of organizational change, as well as the complexity of the leadership role within such a context, one cannot be locked into strictly defined notions of right and wrong. Wise leaders develop not only the ability to understand people different than themselves, but also to emphasize and identify with them.

The “Moral Principal” will use his or her system of moral values to guide organizational decision-making. In this leadership style the role is directly affected by the situation. The primary indicator is always the moral value, which sometimes requires the leader to be a moral instructor as well as an integrator. In this way, the transition from or to a moral leader is similar to that to or from an instructional leader. Although moral leaders are more visionary than instructional leaders, the rigidity of their styles will sometimes create the same kinds of difficulties. One can expect difficulties for a moral leader in the adaptation of his leadership style to other forms, unless the previous change concurs exactly with his existing beliefs. Otherwise, the school is forced to restructure the entire change process in ways that may or may not relate to the former process.

For a transition in leadership for school under a moral leader, must we look for a leader with a similar educational approach? In Israel, these questions generally
occur in relationship to democratic or open schools, where particular values are at the core of the school’s very existence. In the United States, there are similar issues with regards to the Montessori Educational system.

**Participative Leadership**

“[P]articipative leadership stresses the decision making processes of the group” (Leithwood and Duke, 1999, p.51). The participative leadership model is the most relevant to the field of education as it exists today. By prioritizing the decision-making process as central to school policy itself, this model encourages an ever-evolving commitment to the institution and enhances the overall development of the school team. In this manner, participative leadership becomes a natural by-product of a productive administrative process. Participative leadership is particularly well-aligned to the contemporary educational climate because it involves the whole school community in an immediate and practical manner, thus motivating integration, interaction, and teamwork. The best-known model of participative leadership is SBM—Site Based Management. Site Based Management attempts to increase accountability on behalf of the administration, teachers, and parents within the organization.

A participative leader is one who takes care of interpersonal communication. Such a leader often assumes the role of school facilitator. In this model, the principal
is an integral part of the school community. He is both a manager and navigator, sharing a overarching vision as well as promoting particular pedagogical practices.

In a school with a participative principal, grass-roots methods are the best means for ensuring the continuity of a change process. The new participative leader begins by learning about the history and the culture of the school, and continues by engaging the staff in decision-making. Because of the democratic nature of this style of leadership, the staff members within a participative school are thus enabled to shift their own capacities. All this relies, however, on three assumptions: that the change process is sustained over time; that it is owned by the community; and that the school leader is the most adept at continuing and/or improving the process.

In addition, there is a potential problem with participative leadership (as noted by Slater, 1994, and as cited in Leithwood and Duke, 1999) because democracies value freedom, they are opposed to traditional sources of authority and encourage fresh examination and scrutiny of almost everything. But for reasons related to lack of time, energy, or capacity, this examination does not often happen and there is a tendency for majority opinion to prevail and for the meaningfulness of community values eventually to be eroded.

(p.51)

The characteristics of participative leadership most closely resemble those of contingent leadership and therefore transitions between these two kinds of leaders are
generally easier. The participative ownership of the entire school community of the change process also eases the transition, since the momentum gained by shared values and investment is considerable.

Managerial Leadership

Managerial leadership “focuses on the functions, tasks, or behaviors of the leader” (Leithwood and Duke, 1999, p.52). The managerial leader has a position of power. His role is more administrative than educational. (This is especially relevant in Israel, when there is no separation between the administrative roles and the pedagogical role.)

Managerial leadership is suggestive of an older notion of leadership, one that characterizes the leader as an omniscient manager; and assumes that if the leader is performing well, so is the organization. Some may still look to management as the primary indicator of organizational success; but others see leadership performing a more complimentary role. And, while authority is certainly an important component of leadership, the hierarchical nature of this model calls its ultimate effectiveness into question.

Schlechty, (1984), in particular, finds authoritarian leaders to be weak. The most decisive advantage of authoritarianism – the management and minimization of bureaucracy—is too often outweighed by the negative image of the leader and the resultant poor relations within the school community. That having been said, it is
important to remember that every leadership style emphasizes managerial skills as central to the work, and many diverse theoretical approaches classify managerial skills as a primary component of leadership.

Although a school with this kind of a leader may evidence high performance, it is vulnerable to the effects of transition. Once a leadership transition takes place, a rupture in any ongoing change process may occur, because the teachers are not owners of the process. Such a rupture jeopardizes or even destroys the ongoing change. Since managerial leadership is based more on management components than on visionary aspects, it might adapt, or hold the potential to be adapted, by another leader after a transition. The managerial principal will use the power of his or her position to implement policies and procedures.

*Contingent Leadership*

In contingent leadership, “the focus of [the] approach is on how leaders respond to the unique organizational circumstances of problems that they face” (Leithwood and Duke, 1999, p. 54). Contingent leadership is based on the assumption that different situations require different responses, and that the leaders involved have the ability to select and demonstrate the appropriate response. Contingent leadership respects and responds to each member of the community as an individual, and yet retains some semblance of administrative structure and boundaries. The role of a
leader in this scenario will be to provide direction, to be a negotiator, to be a knowledge source or to assume any other role contingent to the situation.

It would seem that the transition to a contingent leadership model should be easy as the leader is expected to readily adjust to any new situation. Yet in some situations the staff may not be ready, trained or mature enough to deal with contingent leadership. Sometimes they need the set variables of a more structured leadership style in order to guide their expectations, and their performances of positions within the organization. Additionally the contingent leader, although effective in informal discussions, may have difficulty relating the change process to the more formal portions of the school culture.

It is difficult, but important to make clear and cogent distinctions between contingent and fully participative leadership models. As delineated by Yukl (1998), “participative leadership involves the use of decision procedures that allow other people some influence over the leader’s decision… participative leadership can be regarded as a type of behavior that is distinct from task-oriented behavior and relationship-oriented behavior” (p.123). In contrast, contingency leadership’s focus is the assimilation of the organization into an overall institutional environment.

Contingent leadership appears to be productive, yet it is limited in significant ways. By matching the behavior of the leader to the overall organizational context, the contingency model leaves two essential questions unanswered: “Does the leadership model and its conceptualization ultimately refer to the larger educational
mission and values?” and “how much does the prioritization of the leader dismiss or

disenfranchise other participants in the system?”

Summary of Styles

When considering the various leadership styles described by Leithwood and Duke, some appear archaic or outmoded, while others remain compelling and highly significant. However, it is important to note that elements of each leadership style are typically present (to varying degrees) in the practice of all school principals who operate in real life situations.

The Impact of Leadership Style

Bulach, Malone and Castleman studied the impact of the principal’s leadership style on the school climate and student achievement in 1994. “Comparisons between school climate and leadership style revealed a statistically significant difference between leadership style and the involvement subscale of the school climate instruments” (p. 334).

Verona and Young examined a different correlation in the high-school setting in 2001, “The main result of the study is that transformational leadership of principals significantly affects HSPT (high school proficiency test) passing rates in reading, mathematics, writing, and all sections combined” (p. 1).

On the other hand, in Keedy and Finch’s 1994 examination of teacher-principal empowerment, teacher and principal interviews indicated teacher
empowerment and collegiality occurred as the principal enforced his vision of instructional improvement through teacher expertise and influence.

The Relationship Between Style and Role

There is a fair amount of overlap between leadership style and leadership role. In practice, leadership style determines the role of the principal and his or her assumption of different characteristics. The leader is thus, and at different times, a leader, a liaison, a resources allocate, a negotiator, a figurehead, a monitor, a disseminator, a disturbance handler, and an entrepreneur (Yukl, 1998). The leadership role will also influence the decision-making process, communication level, authority and bureaucracy, pedagogy, overall school culture, the amount of emphasis placed on individual organizational members, and internal and external relations. The assumption of the diverse roles attached to these areas varies according to overall leadership style and sources of institutional influence.

In Conclusion

The school principal, in any leadership style, ideally carries a sense of purpose, operational ideas, performance goals, and technical and educational skills. These ideals, as reflected in the leadership behavior, role, and management strategy, can determine the success of the change process, even in the arena of group behaviors such as loyalty, social interaction, competition and attitudes, school climate,
performance goals, mutual support, conflict solving, levels of comprehensive, growth and satisfaction. Based on all of these factors, school reform success will be effective or ineffective.

However, it is important to not lose sight of the fact that the bottom line in any school is the children’s education. As Diana Ravich (2000) notes, “School must be flexible enough to try new instructional methods and organizational patterns, and intelligent enough to gauge their success over time in accomplishing their primary mission: educating children” (p.453, emphasis added). With this in mind, style is only one aspect of leadership.

**A Closer Look at Leadership: The Competing Value Model**

In order to conceptualize and better understand the principal’s influence on the school and the school reform process, I have elected to utilize Quinn’s *Competing Value Model* as a theoretical tool. This model is based on the four major models in organizational theory (as referred to earlier):

a) The *Human Relations* model – which stresses criteria such as cohesion and morale along with human resource development.

b) The *Open Systems* model – which stresses criteria such as flexibility and readiness as well as growth, resource acquisition, and external support.

c) The *Rational Goal* model – which includes planning and goal setting as well as productivity and efficiency.
d) The *Internal Process* model – which stresses information management and communication, along with stability and control.

(Quinn, 1991; p. 47)

This model defines the “master manager” as someone “who can transcend technique and engage the world in more effective ways” (Quinn, 1991, p. 13). Quinn refers to this as a “dynamic phenomenon” analogous to what Fullan (1999) calls the “endless process”. In this view, organizational change is not a discrete phenomenon, but rather, something continuous.

According to Quinn, leaders are expected to perform on different levels, of which he identifies four in every organization. His model stresses importance of being able to flow between the levels, to understand competing expectations and to resolve dichotomies within the organization.

I found this to be the most detailed model as it relates the organizational flow directly to the leadership style. It recognizes that there can be no “one” paradigmatic approach. In other words, there is no “one right way” to handle organizational change. Each approach, whether it is TQM (total quality management), reengineering, strategic planning, or value management, incorporates components of the others at some level. In a way, this model includes the different roles expected or inherited by a school principal. It thus represents a schema by which the leadership style and role are interconnected with the organizational structure, culture and content.
It is important to note the difference from the business world, where the leader is expected to adjust his leadership style to the organizational vision. In education, it is the leader’s own educational perception and vision that influence the organization.

Figures 1 and 2, below, are based on Quinn’s 1990 model. They demonstrate how the leader’s role, influence and power interrelate in the different theories that have been reviewed thus far.

The competing values framework…makes perceptual biases clear, …values explicit, and it provides a dynamic focus. Finally, the elements of the framework are consistent with existing theoretical categories, and it allows us to move from a traditional, schismogenic, either/or approach to a both/and approach, thus making it possible for us to see management behavior in genuinely new ways. (Quinn, 1991, p. 85)
Human relations model

Leadership role: mentor, group facilitator
Leadership influence: mutual dependence
Leadership power: relational

Open systems model

Leadership role: innovator, broker
Leadership influence: anticipation of a better future
Leadership power: reward

Responsive open style - trust and faith

Cooperative team oriented style – modeling and personal attraction.

Leadership role: monitor, coordinator
Leadership influence: information access
Leadership power: expert

Dynamic competitive style use of assertiveness and conflict

Principal A

Principal B

Leadership role: producer, director
Leadership influence: accomplishment
Leadership power: legitimate

Internal process model

Formal style, use of structure, authority.

Rational goal model

Figure 1. Reconceptualizing style, role, influence and power using the Competing Value model.
Human relations model - “The team”
Leadership role: mentor, group facilitator
Leadership influence: mutual dependence
Leadership power: relational
Leadership style: participative, transformational.

Responsive open style trust and faith

Open systems model - “The adhocracy”
Leadership role: innovator, broker
Leadership influence: anticipation of a better future.
Leadership power: reward
Leadership style: transformational,

Dynamic competitive style use of assertiveness and conflict

Cooperative team oriented style – modeling and personal attraction.
Leadership role: monitor, coordinator
Leadership influence: information access
Leadership power: expert

Principal a

Principal b

Internal process model “The hierarchy”

Formal style, use of structure, authority.

Rational goal model “The firm”

Leadership role: producer, director
Leadership influence: accomplishment
Leadership power: legitimate
Leadership style: instructional,

Figure 2. The same model, with leadership style added:
According to the model, each leader operates in a dominant quadrate, but at the same time incorporates components of the others as well. As a demonstration, two example principals are shown. Principal “A” is more in line with the Open Systems model, whereas Principal “B” is more closely associated the Rational Goal model.

The competing value model is used here as a tool to demonstrate the relationship in a transition between leaders possessing different styles and the resulting influence on organizational change at three other levels: the leadership role, the leader’s influence, and the source of power. The model quite clearly shows that a change from one quadrate to another is a change that spans all levels.

This model is adapted from organizational theory, but is very useful within an educational context. Schools (like other public organizations) deal with external and internal forces, as well as with differing levels of control and flexibility. If the principal utilizes the proper tools for organizational change, the transition will be cleaner for all the participants.

Leadership Transitions

That brings us to the central question of this research: What is the impact of a transition in leadership on a school, particularly one in the midst of a reform process?
The Nature of Transition

Transition is a complex process encompassing both individual and organizational features. Bridges (1991) describes it as five-stage process of “letting go of something… natural zone…. old is gone and the new doesn’t feel comfortable yet…. ending natural zone…. new beginning” (p. 5-6).

The Impact of Succession and Transitions in Leadership

Fox and Lippitt conducted a study on innovation and sharing of teaching practices: “Procedures for Stimulating Adoption and Adoption of Selected Teaching Practices” (1967). They found that one of the main “[d]ifficulties that mitigated against the most effective involvement of the state organization included rapid turnover in leadership” (p. 2).

Although this research is from 35 years ago, it shows that history does indeed repeat itself. Leadership turnover is a consistently significant factor in pedagogical stability. Hargreaves, and Fink (2000), 33 years later, reviewed two schools' failure to sustain their innovative character, and found that: “both schools experienced problems with leadership succession” (p.30).

Travis P. Kirkland developed a grounded theory of community college presidential succession in 1991. His theory is based on an analysis of case study data gathered at four locally governed public community colleges and from a review of leader succession studies. A few of the findings are related to this research. The first
one suggests that “CEO successions in public community colleges are followed within two years by changes in the administrative structure and in the membership of the college’s administrative council” (p. 21). A change in leadership leads to the creation of other forces of change. Kirkland’s study emphasizes the enormous importance of continuity in creating successful change.

(I found this relevant to my own case study, which was conducted three years following a school leadership transition. The assumption in my research is that, due to the organizational continuity in many elements, the school in question was able to minimize the turbulence of this particular change process.)

The second finding of Kirkland’s research was that “governing boards will often seek and select successors who they think epitomize the institution and can represent it well to interested constituencies” (p. 21). This raises a question: Is it beneficial to search for a successor within the institution itself? In other words, when in the midst of a change process, is there an advantage to selecting people from those who are already involved in the organization (and thus familiar with the process)?

In a related piece of research, studying principal succession and teacher leadership in school restructuring, Davidson and Taylor (1999) find that “a strong match between the principal and the school’s culture is of utmost importance” (p.4). In other words, it is important that the successor principal be familiar and identify with the school culture. Despite this, however, Davidson and Taylor also found that
“governing boards select successors who are different from their predecessors” (p. 22) mainly in order to compensate perceived leadership deficits.

In another research study dealing with presidential succession Levin (1996) states: “I find in this present investigation that community college presidents are perceived to have considerable influence upon organizational functioning and are viewed as primary agents of organizational change” (p.6). Later, he adds that “studies of higher education presidents point in a similar direction and suggest that the period of presidential transition and the early phases of a new presidency are times when there is considerable potential for organizational change”.

A different perspective on the same phenomenon is provided by Miskel and Cosgrove (1985, as cited by Hart in 1991) in their review of leadership succession in schools. They note that succession is a ‘disruptive event’ [that] changes the line of communication, relationships of power, effects decision making, and generally disturbs the equilibrium on normal activities.

…

During the succession period, relationships are formed and negotiated, expectations between parties are confirmed or disconfirmed, conflicts may be confronted and resolved, and new leaders are accommodated or not in their work role and the new environment. (p. 452)
Meyer (1979) describes a certain pattern of leadership-transition in public organizations. Observing such groups we see that leaders who are politically appointed will in turn appoint their own staff. This inevitably creates a fundamental change in the organization. The incoming staff will, in such a situation, most likely follow the ideas of the incoming leader, and not those of the prior existing organizational structure. This dynamic creates an automatic transition stage. Whether a leader’s departure is long anticipated, or announced as he or she walks out the door, for those who remain, the results can be disruptive: loss of focus, momentum and, even, commitment. In all cases, such losses can threaten the group’s short-term successes (Briggs, 2000, p. 8).

Wasley’s 1992 book *When Leaders Leave* focuses on managing leadership transitions effectively. She describes the reason why effective transitions are so important: “organization stability can be deeply affected when leadership changes ….it can interfere with project timetables and can drastically disrupt progress” (p. 64). Furthermore, she suggests that a leadership transition can impede a change process already underway: “frequently, good efforts at change are dismantled and a new plan constructed, only to be taken apart when the next leadership transition occurs” (Wasley, 1992, p. 64).

The main reason for the lack of attention to the leadership transition process is the common but erroneous assumption that everybody understands the process.
Although such transitions happen very frequently (in some schools as often as every two years) the true impact goes unreported.

On the personal level, leadership includes the relationship between the school leader and the teachers. In a time of transition, one network of relations ends, and a new one begins. Inevitably, some connections will be lost. These may include status in the organization, pedagogical and professional responsibilities, power, prestige, and bias.

On the organizational level the transition will affect, to some degree, the school culture, climate, and pedagogical practices. These interwoven links are dependant upon one another. Thus, a variation in pedagogical practice will create a change in climate and in culture (and vice versa).

The reaction to a transition might include overreaction, ignorance, estrangement, grief, or relief. To effectively understand and deal with these varying responses, all of the components of the situation need be taken into consideration. For example, teachers might be asked to change safe and known teaching habits according to the new leadership vision.

“The evidence of successful change initiatives in public organizations suggests the importance of how the members of an organization manage and implement change” (Rainey, 1997, p.337). In other words, if a school is in the midst of a change process, and there is a transition in leadership, the influence on the members of the organization will influence the organizational change as well.
Insights from Organizational Theory

The paradigms of Organization Theory offer a lot of insight into transitions in leadership, with relevant areas of study including the practices of training, learning, gaining trust, understanding control, agreeing on basic rules, learning about the group, creating group identity, understanding diversity and dealing with conflict. As London (1988) explains, an essential factor for an organization seeking to establish a successful course is its leader’s flexibility, sense of identity, and capacity for discernment.

The Process of Planning Transitions

Guskin (1996) stresses the importance of planning a transition, rather than just letting it happen, suggesting that governing boards should plan a brief leadership transition period beginning with the previous president’s announcements of intention to leave, allow the institution to acknowledge its loss, and set the stage for healthy, productive new relationships. (p. 12)

Leadership transitions offer a good opportunity for an organization to follow the planning stages of organizational change, including:

a) diagnosing the current situation,

b) planning the process,

c) identifying the people involved,

d) identifying variables that need to be considered, and
e) planning reinforcement and acceptance.

Additional Theoretical Frameworks

There is a clear need to develop additional theoretical frameworks to help us understand the determinants of successful leadership transitions. Such frameworks might include the following considerations:

a) What are leadership transitions?

b) How do they differ in educational, political, and public institutions?

c) What is the influence of leadership transitions on change implementation?

d) What is the right way to approach transitions in terms of process?

e) What is the right way to approach transitions in terms of leadership styles?

f) How does each of the above facilitate leadership influence?

g) Are we creating values or reinforcing them?

h) What is the impact of the leadership change on individuals within the organization?

i) What are the organizational effects of the leadership change?

In Conclusion

Principal transitions are clearly significant factors in school reform. Furthermore, the leader's style, the leader's role and the leader’s management
strategies have a determining impact on the overall transitional atmosphere. The
overwhelming conclusion that can be drawn from all of these examples is that
research concerning leadership transition is of great practical significance.

_School Culture_

Fullan claims “Successful reforms in one place are partly a function of good
ideas, and largely a function of the conditions under which the ideas flourished”
(1993, p. 64). Ogawa concurs when he says “The findings of previous research
suggest that how managerial succession is interpreted might be affected by
organizational norms, conditions surrounding the succession, and characteristics of
the succession process” (Ogawa, 1991 p. 33). These quotes suggest that our
examination of school reform and leadership transitions will be incomplete without
an understanding of another major variable in the progression of a school reform
process, the school culture.

_School Culture in Relation to Change_

The school culture is one of the most important dimensions needed in order to
understand any process that takes place in school. The school culture is a precursor to
school change, since school culture reflects “behavioral and programmatic
regularities” (Sarason, 1996, p. ix).

Sarason, (1996) goes on to relate the “attachments” that people have to their
organization and workplace. “There are no better ways to comprehend the culture of
the school than either by looking at how it responds to pressures for change or how it responds to someone who is trying to be helpful to people with it” (p. xiii).

Schein (1997 also links school culture directly to change: “As a stabilizing force in human systems, culture is one of the most difficult aspects to manage in a climate of perpetual change” (Schein, p. xiv).

**Defining School Culture**

Unfortunately, the educational field lacks a clear and consistent definition of school culture, and the term is often used synonymously with other concepts, including climate, ethos, and saga (Deal, 1990). School culture and its parent concept organizational culture are complex terms that are viewed by different scholars as encompassing many components, including but not limited to: mission and vision, norms, internal and external relationships, values communication and evaluation approaches (Quinn, 1991; Sarason, 1996; Schein, 1997; Sergiovanni & Corbally, 1984; and others).

Deal and Peterson (1990) note that the definition of culture includes "deep patterns of values, beliefs, and traditions that have been formed over the course of [the school's] history" (p. 7). Heckman (1993) reminds us that school culture lies in "the commonly held beliefs of teachers, students, and principals" (p. 265). School culture can also be defined as historically transmitted patterns of meaning that include...
the norms, values, beliefs, ceremonies, rituals, traditions, and myths understood (in varying degrees) by members of the school community (Stolp & Smith, 1994)

One of the first scholars to define culture was Clifford Geertz (1973). For Geertz, culture represents a "historically transmitted pattern of meaning" (p. 12). Those patterns of meaning are expressed both explicitly, through symbols, and implicitly, in our taken-for-granted beliefs. This theory was later adapted by Schein (1997) in relationship to organizational culture, using slightly different wording such as “artifacts” and “basic assumptions.”

The working definition for school culture in this research is taken from Schein:

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

Such a definition goes beyond the business of creating an efficient learning environment. It focuses in on the core values necessary to teach and influence young children. “Leaders, especially, have become more aware of the critical role an understanding of culture plays in their efforts to stimulate learning and change and
how intricately intertwined their own behavior is with culture creation and management” (Schein, 1997, p. xi).

This research also follows Schein in isolating a few relevant characteristics to describe and analyze school culture from the long list mentioned by various researchers. As Schein (1997) has suggested:

“Cultural analysis illuminates sub cultural dynamics within organizations” (p. xii) This choice is not a reflection of which components are ultimately included or discarded within the larger definition of school culture, but rather is a more focused way of isolating those characteristics that are relevant to leadership influence on overall school culture.

This search for focus is further supported by Holiday (2000) who says that there are “[b]ehaviors of a principal [that] directly influence a school’s culture” (p.1). One key purpose of the current research is to define the specific relevant leadership characteristics that create that sort of impact.

_Three Levels of School Culture_

In his book, Schein (1997) refers to three levels of culture. The first is the level of _artifacts_, also referred to by Geertz (1973) as _symbols_, which represent the physical environment, language, technology, artistic creations and style of a society. Transposed into the school environment, these become the environmental design,
seating arrangements in the class, the size of the rooms of staff members, the
language used between students, teachers, and the school principal, the schedule and
the way it is planned, the length of time between classes, the level of technology used
and many more facets visible even as one first enters the school. It is important to
understand the meaning of the artifacts level for the group in order to avoid
misjudging (for example) the class setting: frontal, individual, groups or mixed
seating. Each one might have an ideological rationale. Is there a pedagogical
approach dictating the seating in class? Is it a social approach? Does it represent the
teacher’s style? It is very important for the researchers to ask clarifying questions
about artifacts.

The second level is the espoused values, “[n]orms, and rules that provide the
day-to-day operating principles by which the members of the group guide their
behavior” (Schein, 1997, p. 18). These values are the ones that are explicitly declared
as the mission of the school, and that are prescribed for implementation by some or
all group members, but which have not yet undergone the cognitive transformation
that creates the shared values and assumptions of the school. Nonetheless, espoused
values will define how to act in given situations, at least as far as ethics, moral and
rules are concerned.

Argyris & Schon (cited in Schein 1997) claim that espoused values help
people predict how they will react in various circumstances, but acknowledge that
these forecasts may or may not match what they will actually do in real-life situations where the values should be operating.

An excellent example to support this claim is the varying perception of how to teach reading. In Israel, each school chooses the textbooks used to teach reading according to its ideology. One school will use “whole language” and another may use a phonetic system. The way teachers respond to this school-wide value in the classroom, however, varies widely.

The third level is the hardest to define, but also the most important. This is the level of basic assumptions. These assumptions direct behaviors in the school in a way that is taken for granted, and supported by the group’s cognitive patterns. The people of the organization align with such assumptions automatically, assuming that “there is no other way”. One of the important objectives of this current research is to discover what basic assumptions of the school culture are so permanent that they will not be affected by a leadership transition.

Referring back to the reading example, a teacher might start every morning with reading a book to the class. Depending on the school, this behavior might be normative and rarely contested, even when other elements of the classroom routine are altered.
Culture and Pedagogies

There is an inner connection between school culture and pedagogy. Researchers have compiled some very impressive evidence about school culture and its affect on pedagogy. Strong and consistent school cultures correlate strongly with increased student achievement, success and motivation, as well as with teacher productivity and satisfaction.

Fyans, and Maehr (1990) looked at the effects of five dimensions of school culture: academic challenges, comparative achievement and recognition for achievement, school community, and the perception of the school's goals. They found support for the proposition that students are more motivated to learn in schools with strong cultures. School culture also correlates with teachers' attitudes toward their work. In a study that profiled effective and ineffective organizational cultures, Cheng (1993) found that stronger school cultures had better motivated teachers. In an environment with strong organizational ideology, shared participation, charismatic leadership, and intimacy, teachers experienced higher job satisfaction and increased productivity.

The Relationship Between the Leader and the School Culture

Clearly there is an important relationship between the leader and the school culture. Schein (1997) even goes so far as to say “Culture creation, culture evolution, and culture management are what ultimately define leadership” (p. xv).
Overall, there are two main approaches used to describe this relationship between leadership and culture. In organizations where the culture is stable, the leader is expected to learn it and develop it further into new visions. In places where there is a crisis or an unsatisfying culture, the culture needs to be redesigned and the leaders are expected to create a new culture, and to define its credo.

In research conducted in 1999, James Griffith, examined the relation of school leadership changes to school configuration: climate, structure and student population characteristics. His conclusion was that "schools having changes in principals had greater use, more new and minority students, slightly lower scores on criterion-referenced tests, and less discipline” (p. 290). This research confirms the basic assumption of this research, namely that school leadership transition affects a wide variety of components from culture to students’ performance.

Hurst (1995), O’Toole (1996) and Quinn (1991) all also claim that leaders can use their influence in order to improve school culture. Dinham, Cairney, Craigie and Wilson relate this influence to communication in their 1995 statement that “data from nine western Sydney schools reveal the significant role of senior school executives, particularly the principal, in developing communication methods in schools and their influence on school culture and climate" (p. 40, emphasis added).

Deal and Peterson (1999) go further in claiming that leadership is at the heart of school culture. The relationship between the culture and the leader is similarly described by Schein (1997), who says “group growth and culture-formation are
inextricably intertwined, and both are the result of leadership activities and shared experiences” (p. 53). In other words, every process starts from a leadership act.

This current research follows that line of thought, and is based on the assumption that the microcosm of school life presented by the school principal is a direct reflection of leadership behavior.

**Overall Differences in School Culture Between Israel and the United States.**

On a philosophical level, school culture in the United States tends to be distinctively different than school culture in Israel. For example, a student in Israel will call his teacher by his/her first name. In the United States he will call this teacher “Mr.” or “Mrs.”. The same is true of the school principal. In one culture, a teacher’s coming into conflict with or entering a debate against the school leader might be forbidden, in another it would be viewed as a sign of professionalism.

The school culture explored in this research is that of the Israeli educational system. In Israel, communication is very open, and often informal. This was demonstrated in research conducted on 450 Israeli elementary schools: “Principals acted mainly through an informal, less-directive orientation of influence both in ordinary times and in times of change. Principals leaned toward participatory influence approaches” (Somech, Drach-Zahavy, 2001, p. 38).
In these schools, teachers were able to approach the school principal at any time, allowed to doubt the educational philosophy and encouraged be an integral part of determining that philosophy in the first place.

Rosenblatt and Somech’s 1998 research study examined ninety-four Israeli elementary school principals’ work behavior and came to the conclusion that: “They [Israeli principals] differed from conventional job descriptions in demonstrating internally oriented social (but not political) inclinations, using a personal approach to students, and being high in initiative and low in planning” (p.506).

In Summary

In order to understand the influence of leadership transitions we must first understand school culture. “To understand a group’s culture, one must attempt to get at its shared basic assumptions and one must understand the learning process by which such basic assumptions come to be” (Schein, 1997, 26). How do things shift from artifacts to action? Ho do things shift from actions to basic assumptions? Is there a difference if a new principal comes from within the organization? Can a basic assumption be changed when leadership transitions occur?

Learning and analyzing the school culture will help us understand the school as it presents itself during the change process, as well as to identify those components necessary for the sustained success of the school reform. Thus, it is important to understand the school culture in order to relate it to the influence of leadership and
vice versa. What matters in the process is not only how the people behave, but also how they feel regarding the new situation. What behaviors we observe in people are not always a reflection of culture at a deep level; they may be incidental behaviors not stemming from basic assumptions.

Figure 3. A diagram of reciprocal relationships between leadership facets

Conclusion

The above review of the existing literature serves to establish the nature of school reform, the significance of the leader to a school, the impact of a leadership
transition on a school, and the importance of the school culture, both as related to the
leader, and independently, when looking at school reform. However, there is still a
gap in the specific area of the impact of the process of leadership transition on an
ongoing school-reform process. It is in relationship to that gap that this current
research is situated.
CHAPTER 3 - RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The qualitative research that forms the central focus of this dissertation is an instrumental case study of how the transitional phase of a change in leadership influences a sustained school reform process. The theoretical basis of this research is a constructivist paradigm of inquiry under a relativist ontology, with particular regards to the specific constructed reality of the school as related to the larger realities of Israel. The research was conducted using a hermeneutical methodology based in dialectical observation and the analysis of documentation; to produce results situated within a transactional epistemology; subjective in their relationship to the transitional process itself.

Qualitative research

American philosopher Alfred North Whitehead once said: “We think in generalities, but we live in detail” (In Bridges, 1980, p. 7). Following that line of thought, it is the unique details of an individual’s character that make him or her interesting. The same can be said of an educational institution. In all my years of experience as a school principal, I have never seen two students who learned the same way, two teachers who taught the same way, two principals who administrated their schools in the same way, or two schools that operated in an identical fashion.
This makes sense given the fact that in education, unlike in the business world, the product of our work invariably involves people: children, parents, teachers and professionals. The resources, the process and the outcome of the educational system all have a unique human dimension—a dimension that can be lost or obscured by the statistical methodologies of quantitative research.

Qualitative research, conversely, by focusing intently on the individual, organizational, and social aspects of a system, mirrors the distinctly human character of the educational system itself. It has the power to reach dimensions that quantitative research cannot. It may be used in accompaniment with quantitative research, or as a wholly alternate research methodology. It was selected, therefore, as the chief modality of this study, based on the advantages it offers both in looking at phenomenological processes and in exploring the interpersonal relationships that comprise it.

(Quantitative methods were occasionally utilized, however, to augment the process of analyses, as when counting how many times the teachers made remarks regarding personal relationship with the principals, or how many times they related anecdotes about their personal professional growth.)
Case Studies

The case study method was chosen for this research because of the intricate complexity of this particular institution and situation.

Case study is defined by interest in individual cases, not by the methods of inquiry used…. A case study draws attention to the question of what specially can be learned from the single case…A case study is both a process of inquiry about the case and the product of that inquiry. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 434-435)

The value of a case study lies in the breadth and the depth of its data, which is collected over an extended period of time. Having data of that quality provides the following advantages:

1. It includes observations under a range of conditions, thus allowing the researcher to seek out “best practices”.
2. As emphasized by Sabar (1999), it allows the collection of information about personal style and unique characteristics for each individual among the research subjects.
3. As Sanders (1981) writes, “Case studies help us to understand processes of events, projects, and programs and to discover context characteristics that will shed light on an issue or object” (p.44).
4. The perceptions of the research subjects are included in the reported data; thus the school voice is represented as clearly as possible.

Kinds of Case Studies

Different case studies are characterized by different methodological approaches. These characterizations were described by Stake (1995, and later by Denzin & Lincoln in 2000) as intrinsic, instrumental, and collective. Other researchers have defined, named, and understood the approaches differently, as in the case of Merriam, whose 1998 publication describes case studies as descriptive, interpretive or evaluative. In this dissertation, however, the categorization will follow Stake.

Although there are similarities between these different categories, the differences are significant. The intrinsic case study observes a single subject because of its unique (and uniquely interesting) aspects; the collective case study focuses on several subjects, (because of their shared qualities); and in the instrumental study (as Sabar writes in her 2001 book) “the case is not explored as a target in itself, but as a means of gaining further understanding of particular subjects” (translated from Hebrew, p. 269).

This particular case study is best described as instrumental, because it is used not only a means of understanding this particular transitional occasion, but also as an opportunity to gain further insight into the process of leadership
transitions at a more general level. The overall goal is to add to the state of educational knowledge by addressing a research question largely ignored by current theoretical work.

Data Collection/Construction

The data collection process for this study is based in *Grounded Theory*, which allows the researcher to build her perceptions while gathering information (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Sabar, 1999; and others).

Throughout the research process, grounded theorists develop analytic interpretations of their data, to focus further data collection, which they use in turn to inform and refine their developing theoretical analyses. (p.509)

…

A constructivist grounded theory recognizes that the viewer creates the data and ensuing analysis through interaction with the viewed... The “discovered” reality arises from the interactive process and its temporal cultural and structural context. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 524)

The constructivist approach to grounded theory is based on the assumption that firsthand knowledge of the empirical world is located in the participants’ actual experiences, multiple social realities, and the mutual creation of knowledge between the participants and the researcher. Grounded
theory attempts to create as accurate a representation as possible by giving voice to participants. In such an approach the researcher is not viewed as the expert. For example, the researcher may present as part of her findings the ways in which the participant’s view of reality differed from her own.

Grounded theory provides us with strategies that connect the school culture to the theoretical framework in order to influence and shape the research process as well as integrate practices. The theoretical sampling looks for precise information to fill holes and gaps in emerging theories, identify conceptual boundaries, and pinpoint the fit and relevance of sample people, scenes, events, and documents. While coding the data, it shapes the emergent codes and links themes and patterns. The process is continuous, as additional field notes offer new perspectives on the data, and generate leads towards the collection of more data.

Summary of Research Parameters

*This Research Considers All of the Following:*

1. The school’s history (as summarized in a historic review).
2. The perceptions, experience, skills and values of the people who are involved in the transition.
3. The schools test scores, both before and after the transition.
The Subjects of This Study Include (but are not limited to)

1. The previous principal.
2. The new principal.
3. Teachers who worked in the school before the transition and left.
4. Teachers who worked in the school before, during and after the transition.
5. Teachers new to the school at the time of the transition.

External Stakeholders Noted in the Study Include

1. Municipality representatives.

The Timeline Is

September 2001 to August 2003: Data Collection Phase - including in-depth interviews and day-long observational visits.

September 2001 through September 2003: Data Analysis Phase - including coding, pattern searches and assertions; as well as groundwork for broader case descriptions. This phase also includes “member checks” with the principals and two of the leading teachers involved in the study, in order to validate basic assumptions made by the researcher.
The Research Questions Are

1. How does leadership transition influence a sustained change process in a particular school?

2. How is it that certain components of change are implemented in such a way that they become basic assumptions of the organization, remaining stable even in the midst of a leadership transition?

3. Specifically in the school under study, what was the relationship between leadership transition, school culture and pedagogical change?
   - What were the leadership type and role before and after the transition?
   - What was the contribution of this leadership role to the overall change process?
   - What organizational strategies were used to cope with transition and change, and what was the overall effect of these strategies on pedagogical practice.

Site Selection

The first step in conducting a case study is to choose a site/sample to survey. But how should this process take place? Merriam (1998) argues that the fundamental concept in site selection is “interest”: “A unique sample is based on
unique, atypical, perhaps rare attributes or occurrences of the phenomenon of interest” (p.62).

In contrast, Patton (1990) argues that the central criterion is information: “The logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth” (p. 169).

The site-selection methodology followed by this study, however, follows after Lecompton and Preissle and Tesch (1993), who take a case-by-case approach, suggesting that the researcher “create a list of essential attributes” which suit the research. The researcher then may “proceed to find or locate a unit matching the list” (p.70).

For this study, the relevant criteria were that all of the following be true for three distinct periods of time (prior to, during, and following a transition in leadership):

1. The school must possess a successfully sustained school reform process.
2. The school must possess nationally recognized best practices.
3. The leadership must be available for close examination.

The first and second criteria were personally important to me, because (as Ravitch, 2000, has noted), too many scholars focus on failed school processes. I wanted my research, in contrast, to be based on the approach of learning from best
practices. However, the third criterion was the essential one for successful research. Fortunately, the site that I located met all three of my criteria.

The chosen school was an elementary school in Netanya, Israel, that was considered “failing” until 1989. In that year a new principal came to the school and led a process of school reform (as described in the next chapter). This change process was highly successful and has continued to transform the school for over a decade, even after a transition in leadership. In this way, the school met my first criterion.

The study explores the transition process between two principals within a school. Their engagement in the study was therefore critical to me as a researcher for pragmatic, methodological and philosophical reasons. At this site both the current and the retired principal were enthusiastic about the research, and willing to participate fully in it. This meant that my second criterion, essential for the triangulation and the validation of the data, was also met.

Finally, the school in this study had been nationally recognized several times, both before and after the transition, as when it won the national award of education in 1996 under the predecessor principal, and was recognized as one of the best 100 schools in Israel in 2002 under the successor principal, eight years later, (thus fulfilling my third criterion).
Access and Permissions

The next step was to contact both the new and the retired principal. The research questions (having already been designed) were presented to the principals for their perusal. Upon my arrival at the school, the current principal joined me in presenting a description of the nature of the case, my planned activities, and the anticipated time frame for the study to the participating staff. I asked both principals for their input, and in this way included them in the process of writing the proposal. This was done to ensure that my interpretation of previous documents was correct.

The unique success of the school reform process at this particular school made for an appealing inquiry, and both principals agreed that the research should focus on the transition. The teachers were also presented with the research questions and invited to engage in the process, through individual interviews following a teacher’s conference meeting.

Research permissions were also obtained from the Israeli Ministry of Education and Human Subjects at the university.

Methods

“The search for an in-depth understanding of phenomena in education demands a research methodology that enables openness.” (Translated from the original Hebrew, Sabar, 1999, p. 28)
Historical Review

Since I began my research after the transition was already complete, it was important to find a methodology able to investigate the site prior to the transition. In this, I followed Stake (1995) who noted: “Quite often, documents serve as substitutes for records of activity that the researcher could not observe directly” (p.68). This research therefore included a thorough examination of pre-transition documents pertaining to the following:

a. staff meetings
b. curricula
c. empirical data
d. other aspects of school administration

The subsequent document analysis, for patterns and trends, was highly significant, as these source materials articulate various staff members’ perceptions of the ongoing change process and detail which changes were understood by the school staff to be integral to the leadership transition. The documents also provide images and themes which can illustrate a larger picture of the school.

A few examples can also be drawn from the teachers’ communication notebook:
Table 1

Sample of analysis of notebook messages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A head teacher</td>
<td>A reminder for a ceremony.</td>
<td>All staff involved in ceremony planning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A quote from the president’s speech for the children.</td>
<td>Clear pedagogical content in every ceremony.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dress code for the ceremony.</td>
<td>Artifacts as well as basic assumptions are part of every activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teachers’ union (flyer)</td>
<td>Information for principals about teachers rights.</td>
<td>There is full clarity between principal and staff, any information is fully transferred to the staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School principal</td>
<td>A thank you note, as well as a description of a school student that participated in a local contest.</td>
<td>Immediate feedback for every activity, published to all.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A newspaper article about another school</td>
<td>A description of the punishment given to another school due to behavior problems.</td>
<td>The principal encourages learning from another’s experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>punishment, presented by the principal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A teacher</td>
<td>Info about books and other school supplies, including regulations and dates.</td>
<td>Each school teacher has some other responsibility in addition to subject matter. Communication methods are very clear and smooth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal (note to teacher and fifth grade</td>
<td>Feedback to class visit, regarding the content, organization, and quality.</td>
<td>Ongoing dialog with teachers as well as students, for good as well as for bad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>class)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A visitor to the school</td>
<td>A note to the teacher, expressing her feeling during the visit.</td>
<td>Immediate feedback by principal, teachers and visitors to local activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>A request for a report:</td>
<td>Part of an ongoing professional dialog between the principal and the teachers about the autonomy of the staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parent/teacher conference.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Class party – place, subject, parents involvement.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Final year report, what did I learned about my self this year.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter-teacher correspondence</td>
<td>“What are the causes for difficulties in cooperation between a few teachers?”</td>
<td>Teachers are conducting dialogs between themselves about difficulties. There is an ongoing effort to deal with issues instead of hiding them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A teacher</td>
<td>Regulation and reminders for the end of the year.</td>
<td>Very clear school regulations, responsibilities of all school staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>A report about a debate in class : for and against boys with earrings.</td>
<td>Students take part in designing the school culture.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The first period of time, beginning in 1989 when the retired principal arrived at the school, is analyzed mainly on the basis of this documentation. This material exists in the form of archival records, which have been kept for the past nine years, and to which I was granted complete access. Analysis of past documents also provides the following information for the pre-transitional period: empirical data, identification of key figures, and school reform events, including changes in methodological approaches, such as:

1. The shifting answers to the questions of “Which textbooks to use?” and “Should all the children in the class use the same textbook, or can textbooks be applied to the student’s learning style?”

2. Curricular revisions.

3. Policies on the teaching of inter-disciplinary skills.

4. Policies on the usage of active learning centers (such as a travel agency to teach math, geography, language arts and more).

5. Staff changes.

6. Other significant events in the history of the school.

**Interviews**

“Qualitative researchers take pride in discovering and portraying the multiple views of the case. The interview is the main road to multiple realities.” (Stake, 1995 p. 64)
The First Principal Interviews

The initial interviews of this research were conducted with both the present and the former principals. They were open-ended discussions that lasted an unspecified amount of time. The principals were asked to tell about their experiences in the school in relation to the change process. There were leading questions in the end of the interviews asking about the staff, for example: how did the staff relate to the changes you led or how were they involved? These initial interviews were intended to provide a broad outline of the school culture and pedagogical approach as understood by both principals.

The Final Principal Interviews

The final principal interviews took place near the end of the research and lasted approximately forty minutes. Again, both principals were interviewed. These interviews were semi-structured, based on the analyzed data from the first interviews. They focused more specifically on the patterns around which the data was to be structured.

Additional Principal Interviews

Additional interviews with one or both principals were conducted as needed, for member-check purposes and/or clarification. There were more than 20
conversations with the principals during the analysis process, some of which were in
person, and some over the phone. In total, both principals were interviewed together
four or five times, and separately, over ten times each.

The Superintendent Interview

The school superintendent was interviewed once in relation to the transition
process. This particular superintendent had assumed the position one-year prior to the
transition at the school; the change process had already begun prior to her arrival.
Unfortunately the former superintendent had passed away.

The Teacher Interviews

The research includes interviews with fifteen (15) teachers: five who had been
in the school prior to the transition; five teachers who were in the school before,
during and after the transition; and five teachers who came to the school after the
process had already begun.

Twelve of the interviews were recorded and transcribed into writing while
three of them were conducted in an informal conversation setting, as the teachers did
not agreed to be recorded.
Other Interviews

The research also sought the perspective of parents through interviews with members of the Parent-Teacher Organization. The views of the municipality representatives were reflected through an interview with the Director of Elementary Schools and another interview with the Deputy Mayor (who also serves as the municipality Educational Director). These interviews were open-ended, but were followed up with direct questions in relation to the subject’s own involvement in the transition process.

Observations

"Observations work the researcher towards greater understanding of the case” (Stake, 1995 p, 60).

Observation produces insight into internal and external environments, levels of commitment, communication skills, culture, and other topics that arise in the course of research. In planning the observations I also took into account issues that emerged over the course of the research. There were a large number of observations conducted in the field. As the data accumulated, I determined the best places to conduct observations, as well as the frequency needed.
At Teachers’ Meetings

My observations at teachers meetings primarily looked at the level of the teachers’ involvement in determining the meeting’s subject, their involvement in the conversation, and their attendance participation level.

In Classes

During classes, my attention was focused on class seating, pedagogical materials, diverse approaches, and the linkage between the school philosophy and the actual content in the class.

Pedagogical Meetings and Workshops

I also observed at pedagogical meetings and at workshops led either by the school principal or by external instructors. Here my focus was to ascertain the details of the staff experience: the relationship between teachers and the principal, the relationship between teachers, the relationship between students and teachers, and the relationship between students and the principal.

Storytelling

Storytelling entails a wide range of available socio-cultural and organizational behaviors. As a cultural representation and as a sociological text, storytelling emerges from many traditions, particularly oral history and folklore, and is receiving
an ever-more disciplined approach as part of the line of work called narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 1999; Ellis & Bochner, 1996; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

Transitional events, in particular, tend to be well-represented in a school’s fund of stories, as noted by Stronach and MacLure in 1997: “One of the implications of this is that changes of direction need to be told, both as discontinuities (something new/different happened here) and as a cumulative event (this led from here to there)” (p.117).

In this case, since the transition took place in the recent past, much residual knowledge about it persisted in the teachers' and principals' oral culture. In some of the interviews I asked the interviewees to tell me the story that most affected them in the school. In response some of them chose to share a personal story, while some shared a pedagogical experience. The stories they told capture the turnover of staff, changes in the school culture and pedagogical practices, and constitute a large portion of the institutional memory.

Since one of the major impacts of the school change was an increased focus on story-writing, the documents so produced became another valuable source of information about school culture. Children as well as teachers wrote and told stories about themselves, the school and their learning. (The school is utilizing the children’s written stories as a bibliography for further learning.)
**Critical Incident**

Critical incident theory is a method of analyzing the significant characteristics of an organization or of a process by focusing on a selected group of events of particular importance within the life of the organization. As described by Jonassen, Tessmer and Hannum (1999), "the critical incident method of analysis is designed to collect 'real world' data" (p. 181). Critical incident theory offers many advantages to research. It can provide rich and detailed information about significant behaviors and it provides a way to structure and prioritize data. From a historical perspective, it may provide a profile of the fundamental character of the organization.

In the standard usage of critical incident methodology, the incidents are chosen first, and the underlying commonalities are isolated. However, for this study the methodology was used a bit little differently. Statements of significant incidents were identified through teacher and principal interviews. If a certain behavior or event was predicted or described in the interviews and substantiated by related documents, then they were defined as critical incidents in the life of the school.

**Data Analysis**

Tesch, 1990 suggests that there is no one “right way” to analyze data in qualitative research, as there is an eclectic range of methods available. Each researcher must therefore choose (or pioneer) an approach suitable to the subject under study.
As detailed above, the data used in this survey was collected from documents, interviews and stories. I chose to then analyze it from a theoretical standpoint in order to illuminate three elements: the school culture, the principal's influence, and the overall pedagogical perspective.

The Process

Upon first being collected, the information from the field was labeled with simple descriptors such as: school culture, basic assumption, principal influence, pedagogical approach, and so forth. Next, these were further sorted, and the descriptors were reduced and interpreted in correspondence with the research process into final categories of school culture, the influence of interpersonal relations on the transition process, and pedagogical practices. As a final step, the categorized data was then formatted into a basic narrative structure.

Specific Areas of Focus

Schein (1997) suggests that while exploring the culture of the school the analysis should relate to the nature of reality, truth, time, space and human nature. The reason is that such fundamental considerations highlight the differences between cultures. This principle was very valuable in the analysis process in order to distinguish between the two school cultures (pre- and post-transition).
Another key part of this same process was *boundary setting*: It was vital that the research be able to distinguish between the separate phases of the school’s transformation. Therefore it was essential to first determine the school’s ordinary routines, habitats, contexts, and other significant factors. Next, after conducting the interviews and observations and analyzing documentation, a differentiation was made between transitional phenomena and other similar manifestations. The focus was placed on behaviors which strongly appeared during the transition period; thus enabling the all-important distinction between phenomena which represented continuity of the school reform process versus those caused by the transition in leadership.

Other Considerations

*Trustworthiness*

“Trustworthiness was defined as that quality of an investigation (and its findings) that made it note-worthy to audiences” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 165). The criteria of trustworthiness in qualitative research are:

*Credibility*

"The researcher's credibility is mainly the relationship between the field and the researcher's reports" (Translated from Hebrew, Sabar, 1999, p.31). In other words, credibility is internal validity achieved by prolonged engagement and by the triangulation of texts. In this case credibility was pursued in two ways:
1. Comparisons between researcher data and the school declaration of goals, the school curriculum and class activities

2. Member checks and participant reviews of select findings (as they emerged) conducted with both principals and two leading teachers that were highly involved in the school for more than ten years.

Objectivity

The objectivity in qualitative research is based on the professionalism and experience of the researcher. The most crucial facet of this is the ability to see reality through the eyes of those researched. In this study the researcher consulted the principals many times in order to ensure objectivity of findings.

Prolonged Engagement

Prolonged engagement refers to a sustained period of research. In this case, the research was conducted over the course of two years, during which time the researcher visited the school, experienced some of its environment, and met with many individuals involved in the process. In addition to this direct engagement, the research further encompassed a document analysis covering a span of almost ten (10) years.
Triangulation

To reduce the likelihood of misinterpretation, researchers employ various procedures, two of the most common being redundancy of data gathering and procedural challenges to explanations (Denzin & Lincoln and Goetz & LeCompte). In qualitative casework, these procedures generally are called triangulation. In general, triangulation has been considered a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning and to verify the repeatability of an observation or interpretation. Triangulation is also used to clarify meaning by identifying different ways the phenomenon is perceived (Flick and Silverman cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). "The central point of the procedure is to examine a single social phenomenon from more than one vantage point" (Schwandt, 1997, p.163).

Triangulation was achieved in this study in two ways. The first was through comparing the following contrasting sources: interviews, observations, documents and stories. The second was by member checks, a process in which the results and conclusions of a study are checked for agreement with perceptions of the subjects of the study. These were performed with selected teachers as well as with the principals.

Transferability

Transferability is external validity. Although research of this type is aimed more at “understanding”, and less at “generalization”, it is probable that data
extracted from this study will be helpful for other schools that anticipate a leadership transition.

Ethics

In the process of conducting this study, I attempted to build the ethical codes of the research in concert with the school principals. I firmly believe that ethical considerations should accompany every stage of research including data analysis. As Denzin and Lincoln (2000) said: “Case studies often deal with matters of public interest but for which there is neither public nor scholarly right to know” (p. 447). Therefore, an ethical research project will value and scrupulously protect the privacy of the research participants. In this project I made every attempt to obtain, respect, and maintain both the confidentiality of the information and the informed consent of the participants.
Introduction - Conditions in Israel

Since this research took place in another country and culture, any understanding of the relevant data must be founded on a basic comprehension of the conditions existing in that setting. The necessity of such an introduction is heightened by the events of the past decade, during which Israel has functioned under wartime conditions and unusual circumstances (i.e. the Iraqi attack on Israel in 1991). The difficulties of this situation have had a grave influence on the school curriculum. For example, it was once customary for Israeli schools to visit the sites taught about in geography, history, and Bible studies, yet now (owing to frequent terror alerts directed at the schools) 70% of these field trips have been eliminated or replaced with journeys into more enclosed spaces such as museums.

To summarize, the educational agenda has been forced to respond to political crises and non-academic concerns. Many decisions are being driven by issues of security, rather than by pedagogical standards. Furthermore, the wartime conditions have also led to a general economic decline. This not only affects Israeli schools directly (in terms of lessening their funding), it also leads to the endangerment of parent-funded extracurricular and enrichment activities.
Site Overview

The site of the research is a school in Netanya, a mid-sized city in Israel. The population of Netanya is about 180,000 people, 30% of which are new immigrants who immigrated within the last ten years. There are no rental properties in Netanya, since in Israel people generally own their apartments rather than rent. For this reason, population demographics tend to be more stable than in the United States.

Registration to schools in Netanya proceeds according to geographic areas. Each school has an assigned neighborhood, usually within a 1.5 miles radius of the school, (to avoid busing). After graduating elementary school, all the students from a given elementary school go to the same middle school.

The school itself is fifty years old (founded in 1952), and is still located in its original building. It has no air-conditioning and is surrounded by an apartment complex. It is a public school, located in the center of the city and includes students from a variety of populations. These include native-born Israelis from poor and middle class socioeconomic neighborhoods as well as new immigrants.

In the last few years the number of students in each class has been decreasing due to the aging of the neighborhood. No significant change in student numbers has been attributed to changes in pedagogical practices.
Table 2: School Data From the Beginning and End of the Initial Reform period

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1989</th>
<th>1998</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of students</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular classrooms</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special education classrooms</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographic profile</td>
<td>low to middle class, 30% new immigrants</td>
<td>low to middle class, 25% new immigrants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade levels</td>
<td>first to eighth</td>
<td>first to sixth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(NOTE: seventh and eight grades were eliminated in 1996)
### Number of Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Teachers</th>
<th>Number of therapist-teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>plus 4 therapist-teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(music/art)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Number of Teacher Aides

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Teacher Aides</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Teacher Credentialing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Most teachers have a teaching certificate</th>
<th>One third have teaching certificates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Most teachers have a teaching certificate</td>
<td>One third have teaching certificates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>None have a bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>One third have bachelor’s degrees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Eight are pursuing bachelor’s degrees</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Interviews

The main source of data came from personal interviews, which were conducted with three major groups of people. The first group consisted of three local officials: the School Superintendent, the municipality Chief Executive Director of Education, and the Director’s deputy. The second group consisted of members of the
school’s educational staff: the former and the current principal, five teachers who
taught before or during the initial school reform effort (but not after the transition),
five teachers who taught both before and after the leadership transition, and an
additional three who joined the staff subsequent to the transition. The final group of
auxiliary interviews was held with two parents of children attending the school and
with the school's janitor.

Some of the most valuable sources of data were the initial interviews
conducted with teachers who worked in the school over a span of time that extended
from before 1989 (when the former principal joined the staff) to after 1998 (when the
transition to the current principal took place). The only prompt given during these
interviews was “tell me about the school before and after the transition.” From those
discussions stories emerged.

While analyzing the initial interviews, I realized that a few themes were
repeated at a high frequency. These included (among others) the former principal’s
teaching skills, the teachers’ own personal learning, and the idea of writing as a
pedagogy. These main themes were listed and later used to frame the writing of this
dissertation. Since the interviews were open-ended, the themes that emerged were
those that the teachers themselves thought were most significant and important.

A month later, when the main themes had become clearer, some of the
interviewees were asked to participate in a second interview. This second set of
interviews was aimed at exploring and validating implicit and explicit perspectives
about the school reform process, as now understood by the researcher. During these interviews specific leading questions were asked for the purpose of member-checks of stories from the first interviews. Examples of such questions include “Who decided about [a change of a field trip location]?” or “What was the decision-making process regarding [a pedagogical change]?”

Observations

A second major source of data came from observations of all of the following: Several teachers' conferences, including a third grade study meeting with the previous principal, a full board meeting with the current principal, and an event planning meeting; classrooms in session, in order to validate teachers' interviews regarding pedagogical materials, class sitting, time planning and other aspects; and school ceremonies, such as a language arts project presentation.

Documents

The third major source of data was school documents, which fell into three major categories: Those that remained the same throughout the studied time period, such as a guidebook of how to welcome a new teacher in school; those that were variations on an unchanging theme, such as flyers announcing holiday events; and those that contained unique expressions of particular time periods or events, such as teachers’ notebooks or student work.
Documents from the first category needed additional interpretation to see if they were being used differently before and after the transition. For example, the principal interviews made it clear that the predecessor principal supplemented the guide with queries eliciting the educational perception of the new teacher, whereas the successor’s approach focused on explaining great the school was. In this case, though the document itself remained unchanging, it still offered insight into difference between the principals who used it.

The documents from the second category were sorted according to their content. Since these flyers were numerous (being printed on a daily basis), largely informational, and stylistically invariant, a representative flyer of each type was chosen for analysis.

The third category was the most valuable source of documentary information. It included the teacher's notebooks, teaching plans, poems, and correspondence, student work, letters from parents, documentation of curriculums, instructional teaching guides, instructions from the Ministry of Education, minutes from meetings, and even more unusual documents, such as an study examining the way in which architectural design reflects educational practice

The plethora of data was a mixed blessing, as it forced tough choices about which of the many documents should be emphasized in the study. The documents that were finally chosen were those that reflected the themes most frequently mentioned by the staff members in their interviews, or during the periods of observation. It was
further determined that the most significant documents for this work were those that revealed specific facets of the differences and similarities from one phase of the transition process to another (for example, descriptions of teachers' positions before and after the transition). In addition to these, other documents were chosen because they related specifically to focuses of the study, such as culture, pedagogy, and internal relationships in the school.

*Teacher’s Communication Notebooks*

Out of this process, the teachers’ communication notebooks emerged as a crucial source of information. These were binders placed in the teachers’ conference room, and all of the school news, announcements and other relevant information were placed in them, including instructional teaching directives, remarks about activities, feedback for teachers, updates and calls for cooperation. The notebooks also contained correspondence between the teachers and the principal, many dating as far back as ten years. One of the most interesting things to follow in analysis was the development of the teachers as reflected in these notebooks throughout the years. As time passed, they took more and more of an active role in adding pedagogical insights, opinions, and suggestions, thus reflecting the development of self-confidence among the staff.
Data Analysis

It took a while for the data analysis process to yield usable information. At the beginning, the open-ended search for tacit knowledge yielded a seemingly unlimited pool of information. It took several months of combined data collection and analysis before the themes of the study began to emerge more clearly.

As mentioned before, the decision was made to not define the themes before analyzing the data, in order to remain open to any unexpected and unpredicted themes that might emerge as a result of the research process. Thus, the coding was vague until most of the interviews were completed. Since the initial interviews were unstructured, there were many differing issues discussed by different participants. However, in order to be faithful to the basic structure of the research, all the themes were sorted into the three overarching categories of culture, principal influences and pedagogical practices.

Often, both formal and informal discussions with the two principals yielded comments that made the information more lucid. For example, in one of our meetings the current principal said “Write that the previous principal made the process breakthrough, and now I have to pick the flowers, and water them on time”.

With this one sentence, she summarized the way she envisioned herself as the successor to someone she admired. She identified with the change process that took place in the school, and was proud to be a part of it. However, she saw her role as
providing day-to-day support for a preexisting vision, rather than as the originator of a new vision.

Prior to the Transition (the Initial Reform), 1989-1998

The Former Principal

First Encounters

Eti (her name has been changed to protect the confidentiality of the research) served as principal of the “Y.H.” school from 1989-1998. In order to take the position, she moved from the southern part of Israel to the central region, an area she was unfamiliar with. When she applied to take over a school in the city of Netanya, she was conversant with neither the local educational system, nor the particular neighborhood where the school was located.

On her initial tour of the school (prior to submitting her application) she was shocked by the condition of one of the buildings. She had never seen anything like it in an educational setting. It looked like a run-down, dirty, neglected old warehouse. The appearance of the building caused her to ask the superintendent whether the building was shut down.

“It wasn’t a provocative question,” she told me. “I was sure that children did not learn there -- in light of the way it looked.”

__________________________

1 All quotes are translated from the original Hebrew.
Nonetheless she persisted in applying for the position of principal of the school (YH), which was the only school in the region that had such an opening at that time. There were 13 applicants for the position. Of these, Eti was favored by the teachers’ union, the superintendent, and the Ministry of Education. This was largely a result of her excellent work in curriculum development (a record of which had been published at roughly the same time, and presented to the regional superintendent and local superintendents).

The only real opposition to her appointment came from the head of the Municipality Educational Office, who insisted on all local principals residing within the city. Eti committed to move to Netanya within a one-year period of time, but rescinded this promise after learning that the majority of principals did not, in fact, reside in the city.

Assuming Leadership

Despite the municipality’s preference for a native of Netanya, Eti was the eventual choice to run the school. She had an M.A. in behavioral science, and a teaching certificate from the College of Education. Before taking the position in Netanya, she had been a school principal in a southern city of Beer Sheva.

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2 In Israel there is no school board. The principal is chosen by a committee which includes two representatives from the Ministry of Education, two representatives from the local municipality, and two representatives from the teachers union. Each organization has one vote.
Her overlap with the previous principal lasted approximately thirty minutes. He showed her the school, introduced some of the paperwork, made the comment “everything is documented” and left. (As noted in Chapter One, a much more substantial period of training is customary in Israel, and Eti does not know why it was omitted in this case.) It is at this point, after the departure of the previous principal, that the initial reform period begins.

Getting to Know the Staff

In one of their first meetings, the superintendent asked Eti if she would need instructional guides or other pedagogical supports in the first year. Eti replied “In the first year – no way! I need to spend the first year working only with the people, to get to know them, to learn their capacities. In the second year, we will see [if we need such materials]. Right now, I can’t say.”

Eti had a very clear understanding of what she wanted to do, right from the start. She came from a very successful school and was quite experienced. Since she wasn’t familiar with the staff, she took the time to learn about them. At the same time, she began to implement some of her own ideas.

In the beginning, she was described by many of the teachers as having a “tough” leadership style, thereby making the initial encounters difficult.

“The principal’s leadership style was hard to accept,” said one of the teachers in her interview with me.
As late at 1992, the reform process was still in its early stages. Eti, who felt confident in her educational approach, was rigid with the teachers. Her expectations for the learning process with the staff were very high. She knew where she wanted to direct the change process, but she did not always share this with the teachers. She was not yet sure of their level of understanding and their ownership of the process. At the same time, however, she had already begun her transformation of the teachers’ role by approaching them as “class managers”.

As one teacher noted: “It was clear to me that I was the manager of the class.” This meant pride and status for the teacher. The approach allowed the teacher to conduct self-based management of her own class schedule—to decide what did or did not need to be changed. The flexibility of this approach encouraged the development of responsibility, accountability and commitment. The teachers' obligations were to the outcome, and the navigation was conducted according to their personal management choices.

As part of guiding the teachers towards increased responsibility, Eti invested considerable time in staff development. Throughout the reform process, she served the lead teacher. She often invited the teachers, individually, or in small groups, to join her in an afternoon of mutual learning. Her pedagogical expertise was made available to the teachers to the extent they were willing to take advantage of the opportunity.
The skills that she introduced to the teachers began with the ability to identify the scheme and structure of a given text, and included gathering personal knowledge that would be relevant to the reading. Eventually, a workshop was prepared for the students. Through this process, the teachers learned about the principal’s pedagogical capabilities and how to use and appreciate them.

Blasé (2000), in her research, describes characteristics of principals that enhance the classroom instruction of teachers, and what influences these characteristics have: “[E]ffective-leadership themes: talking with teachers to promote reflection and promoting professional growth” (p. 140). Clearly, Eti’s approach was in line with that research.

The teaching of teachers included informal events as well. For instance, Eti made use of the cultural program (a dinner, a field trip or a lecture) customarily funded once yearly for the teachers by their national union. When the teachers in Eti’s school had such an event (or similar, locally organized events) it was her expectation that the event would convey primary value, demonstrate high quality and be relevant to all faculty and other members of the school.

Eti also led an advanced study course for the teachers. On the average, the study time totaled at least 112 hours a year, and one year it was double that number. Although this represented a large additional time commitment from the teachers, it proved to be a popular opportunity.
As an example of the cognitive commitment on the part of the faculty, one of the teachers commented: “I explained to my husband and my children that in order to professionally develop myself I needed to study --these are my personal needs.” Clearly, this teacher saw professional development as something she undertook for herself, and not because the school or the principal required it.

Eti used many different educational techniques in the teachers’ study course, with the obvious expectation that the teachers would later use the same techniques in their own classrooms. For example, changes in the traditional seating arrangements were pioneered in the study course. The teachers were expected to sit in their workshops with another group every time, while the other groups worked individually.

Significantly, the teachers were required to experience every pedagogical activity before sharing it with their students. One of the main features used by the principal to change the school’s espoused values (defined by Schein, 1997, as “strategies, goals, philosophies,” p. 17), was the reciprocal dialog. The reciprocal dialog was used both on the verbal and the non-verbal level. While remaining within the boundaries of appropriate time management, the principal communicated with the teachers on a frequent basis. The goal was congruity of expectations and the development of positive self-esteem among the teachers.

From the beginning Eti shared her impressions with the staff, including her early assessment of them as unmotivated and in possession of a mediocre level of
professionalism. However, she also shared the fact that this impression had changed almost immediately, when she realized that “there was a big gap between what they presented as their skills and their actual ability.”

Eti also shared her vision regarding the students and her unique perception of them. As one of the teachers noted, “when I came to her to complain about a student, I never knew if she was going to back me up or accept the student’s version.”

Another teacher also expressed some initial frustration: “I had a very hard time accepting the Principal’s leadership style” she said. “I felt like she cared about the students much more than she tried to understand the teachers… Later on I learned to understand.”

A process of dialog was developed on all levels. This included dialog between the teachers and the students, among the teachers themselves, and among the students themselves. The principals’ office was also open for dialog to both teachers and students.

Another very common method of communication in the school was by letter writing. This method was very distinctively characteristic of the school, and was mentioned by all interviewees without exceptions. The students wrote letters to the principal and she made sure to answer all of them. From time to time she sent letters to the teachers regarding their performance and their successes; or to express thanks.

The most common way that letters were transmitted was through the teachers lounge notebook. In this notebook Eti communicated all daily announcements to the
teachers. In her very direct way she transmitted to the teachers her vision and expectations with regard to achievements, learning materials and other responsibilities. Some of the teachers referred to those letters as their “spring board” for personal development.

Each teacher was also expected to study. In addition to the once-a-week school course led by the Principal, the teachers also participated in a supplementary weekly course at the local educational center. Professional self-development had become a new norm. Furthermore, many teachers, who had only a teaching certificate, were motivated to go back to college to attain their bachelor's degree. The teachers' improved education was a major component in the success of the reform process. Within seven years from the beginning of Eti’s tenure, all teachers had received, at a minimum, their bachelor's degree.

While keeping very clear professional employer-employee lines, the principal knew how to be present and to listen to the other voices in the teacher’s life. She always had the time to hear about their family, their children, to send a birthday card, or to offer emotional support in the event of difficulty.

"I loved to come to her office,” said a teacher. “The door was always open for us. I loved to come in the afternoon, to tell her about myself, and at the same time to

\[\text{\footnotesize \textsuperscript{3} In Israel there exist professional instruction centers where each teacher can take courses in the afternoons, in a variety of subjects. Every course is 56 yearly hours, and each additional 112 hours after graduation entitle the teacher to a 1.2% salary increase, up to a maximum of 24.75\%.}\]
learn so much.” And “Eti made a change in me as a person… she changed me as a mom, as a wife, she taught me how to look at things from different aspects, end even how to look at myself differently… she used to push me to the edge, and taught me how to plunge and not to fail.”

The principal encouraged home hospitality. She hosted meetings in her own house, as well as in the homes of other teachers, an act that enhanced staff development as well as team pride. However, she was also a person who knew how to find the strength in each individual, as shown in the following representative quote from one of the teacher interviews:

“Slowly but surely she discovered my personal strength… she was an expert in empowering people.”

_Eti’s Approach to Reform_

As evident from the national awards, the teachers' interviews and students' products, Eti had a very clear and moral pedagogical approach. She was also very confident with her level of knowledge. In conjunction with the staff, she led and implemented educational reform for almost nine years. The changes she brought were visional, educational, and behavioral. She empowered the staff with primary responsibilities including the revamping of the schedule. She allowed teams of teachers to watch each other work, and encouraged them to work personally and in groups with faculty members to discuss and underscore the need for change. As a
result, teachers became more committed and familiar with the methodological and pedagogical aspects of the process with each passing year.

The main goal of the reform process, as expressed by Eti, was one of “full commitment to the student.” The student should look forward to coming to the school, he should be approached and educated at his own level, and the learning process should be interesting. Most importantly, the student should know that he himself is the most important focus of the school. This attitude marked a clear change in the perception of the role of the student in the school culture.

Leadership Style and Role

As the literature (described in Chapter Two) indicates, one of the tools that helps us understand the phenomenon of leadership is an analysis of the role, the source of power, and the dominant leadership style of the leader. For this study, the leadership type and role of each of the principals was defined according to the findings of the research, and validated by a member check with the principals themselves and with their deputies (vice-principals).

Eti’s leadership style was based mainly on the human relations model. Her first step was to become familiar with the staff, while simultaneously performing out of a high level of personal knowledge. Her main role was to mentor and facilitate. This was a characteristic mentioned by most interviewees:
“She wouldn’t give us answers, but she would ask directing questions that would lead us to find the answers on our own.”

She kept searching the teacher’s sources of knowledge to see how they could suit the school's needs. She was very target oriented. Her source of power came from her intense relationships within the school community. These relationships were not only on the professional level, but also on the personal level, as was mentioned by many of the teachers. She always remembered to ask about a sick child, a husband who came back from army reserve duty or an elderly parent.

In this way she created parallel, but complimentary, roles for herself in her relations with her staff. One was that of a very demanding, uncompromising professional, involved in an ongoing process of self and group development. The other, more personal role was that of a very loving, supportive, and caring friend. In her leadership of the school reform process, both sides were of her professional persona were on ample display: her many mentoring abilities, and her tendency to be very strict with her subordinates. She knew exactly what she expected, but preferred to ask questions than give answers.

The second most dominant quadrant of Eti’s leadership style (following Quinn’s quadrants) was the one corresponding to the internal process model. Her pedagogical expertise included not only knowledge, but also “knowledge of how to approach knowledge”. Many people have a substantial base of knowledge, but she had the rare ability to make the most out of what she knew. She very carefully
coordinated the educational approach that she wanted to implement throughout the change process, while simultaneously monitoring and guiding the learning process for the teachers.

As one teacher explained, “If I was in charge of an activity, I had to explain how it related to the school vision, how it was relevant in the field, and how it was connected to the student’s previous knowledge.”

In addition, Eti had a wide range of areas of expertise, extending beyond her primary identity as a gifted administrator. These included her strong instructional skills, her well-established reputation an educational reformer, and her clear possession of moral authority. Through her diverse background, she was able to fill the role of expert for a wide range of cultural, pedagogical, and personal issues experienced by the teachers.

Eti’s third most dominant quadrant was that of the open systems model. She used reward as a daily tool to empower the teachers. She wrote a note for every little activity she saw; she expressed her remarks in letters and shared each good example with everyone. Many teachers saved all her letters.

She established an ongoing professional dialog as part of the school language. In one of her interviews she reminisced “there were days I had to write 50-60 letters, answering all the notes I received from teachers and students, but I believed it was important for our mutual growth.”
At the start, she originated many initiatives, in order to serve her overall ideology. Over the years, however, more and more initiatives originated with staff members, as they gradually took ownership of the change process.

Her last, and perhaps weakest quadrant was that of the rational goal model. The sources of her power were not derived from her position of authority. Rather, her personality was so dominant that she never needed to appeal to legitimacy.

*School Culture*

**Before the Reform**

At the time when Eti first arrived, the most immediate feature of the school culture at the artifacts level (as defined by Schein 1997 and discussed in Chapter Two), was the school's physical condition, which was very poor. The building was warm and noisy (even to this day, there are no air-conditioners), and the overall feeling was that of a mad house. In addition, the yard, the old buildings, and the restrooms were never clean. The restrooms were particularly terrible, so much so that Eti hesitated even to describe them in her interview.

Eti quite openly expressed to me her feelings regarding the physical condition of the school and her association between its deterioration and the character of the staff under her predecessor: “The school was dirty and destroyed not only because of the principal, but also because there were people there that did not respect themselves.”
Eti began her position in August 1989. Her first act as a school principal was to meet with the teachers one at a time and learn about the staff. Even though there were people on the staff she did not care for, she needed to figure out how to work with them all. In Israel, all school teachers are employees of the Ministry of Education. As the incoming principal, Eti was required to take the staff as they were. She had no ability to fire or hire, unless the superintendent approved such changes (which would generally takes a very long time due to bureaucracy and the strength of the teachers union).

In her meetings, Eti interviewed the teachers about themselves and about the school. One of the questions she asked all teachers was to tell her about two things they liked in the school, or of which they were proud. She wanted to get an impression of what aspects of the school were owned by the teachers.

Interestingly enough, not a single characteristic about the school itself emerged as something all, or even most of the teachers could agree about liking. The only thing they agreed on was how wonderful the previous principal was, how good he was, how he was like a father, and how much people could have asked him for help with anything. These positive feelings about the ex-principal failed, however, to translate to the school itself.

Part of this stemmed, perhaps, from the fact that the teachers’ conception of the school was largely concerned with artifacts, “the visible organizational structures
and processes” (Schein 1997, p.17). They alluded to no values, referred to the school as a “working place”, and did not own any mutual vision.

This approach was reflected in school ceremonies as well. Ceremonies prior to the Eti’s tenure were held according to the Ministry of Education's recommendations, mainly on holidays and memorials. They were run exclusively by the principal, and did not serve as part of the educational curriculum.

The school budget was also handled by the school principal, and, as of the starting point of the initial reform, contained a balance of 70,000 New Israeli Shekels (which was a lot of money in 1989). This shows that lack of resources was not the reason no major processes or reforms were taking place.

In an effort to address the underlying values of the school, Eti began by reevaluating school norms. These were not made clear in her initial interviews with staff, but they rapidly became apparent through teacher behavior. For example, teachers were accustomed to arriving at the school at the time that classes started (approximately 8:00 am) and not a minute before. None of the teachers stayed after school ended, regardless of pedagogical need or other reasons.

As the teachers explained in their interviews with me, that was the status quo at the time, and they all basically enjoyed it that way. In truth, they knew no other way to approach their jobs than to give the minimum. This mediocre situation had a highly negative impact on registration to the school, however, as students left in large numbers. Even though, legally, each child was supposed to be assigned to a given
school by the registration zone of their residence, many parents were motivated
enough to circumvent the regulations. Some would draw up false rental contracts for
residences in another zone. Others would move in actuality.

Changing Things for the Better

_Overall physical environment._ Clearly, mutual values, clear norms and an
aesthetic environment all needed to be created or reformed. Respect for the child and
a sense of organizational responsibility were two of the new values to be introduced,
but these values needed to be reflected at the physical level. Therefore the principal’s
first goal was to literally clean the school. She hired someone for 6,000 New Israeli
Shekels (worth approximately $1,500 at that time) and he cleaned enough of the dirt
so that people could enter the building.

At first Eti worked every day until 11 pm. During this time she was
exclusively occupied with cleaning and organizational tasks. At that time, teachers
were hardly involved. Based on the previous condition of the school, it was clear they
were not very concerned about the physical situation.

In the following years the restrooms were renovated, the school was painted
once or twice a year, and many efforts were made to ensure a nice clean environment
despite the age of the building. One major change related to student relief was the
installation of an acoustic ceiling. This cut down on noise, and helped the
uncomfortably warm building to seem a little cooler.
The principal’s office. The principal’s office was originally located in a separate building away from the “noise” and the children, which, in itself presents another example of the educational attitude prior to the reforms. When Eti took over, her office was moved into the main building. She did this because she considered it important to be able to see and to greet the students as they entered the school, and to be available for any staff member with relevant questions.

Classroom design. Special attention was given to classroom design. Each class was to have a computer (this is extremely unusual in Israel) and a library. The main wall was to be decorated with a central design that had to reflect what was happening in the class. The students should know exactly why this was the design of their classroom and what it was supposed to express. Other features of the wall included a section for the Writer of the Month, the Painter of the Month and so forth.

School ceremonies. In contrast to the previous principal, Eti made school ceremonies an integral part of the educational process, and used them as vehicles of reform. They were all supposed to reflect pedagogical activities in an alternative way. For example, every ceremony included readings of parts of children’s written works. Ceremonies were also used to integrate the parents into daily school life, along with the teachers and the students.

Another major change was that Eti delegated responsibility for the planning and administration of the ceremonies to the teachers. She also used this as a means of introducing her new fiscal approach, which was to purchase anything that would
benefit the students. Therefore, as part of their charge to produce the best possible ceremonies, the teachers were allowed to ask for any accessories they needed. Almost immediately, the teachers became more engaged.

Parents. One of the biggest challenges Eti faced in her early days was changing parent perceptions of the school. Her first real encounter with parents came in the earliest days of her tenure, prior to the end of summer vacation. She had just begun to do some of the much-needed work of painting and cleaning, when she was approached by representatives of the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO⁴), there to complain about the horrible condition of the school. Eti, immersed in the cleaning (and in a state that she described as “pungent”) replied by telling the parents

Aren’t you ashamed? Your children were here in the mud, garbage and the dirt, and I didn’t see that any of you closed the school. Now that you see that the school is being painted, and cleaned, you come with claims? Where have you been until now?

The parents were shocked. They didn’t expect this kind of an answer from a new principal. A parent told me in informal conversation that they “didn’t know how to approach her assertiveness.” Eventually, however, this straightforward attitude led to a very successful relationship between the principal and the parents.

⁴ PTOs in Israel are volunteer based committees, mainly involved in social and political acts. They have the right to influence up to 25% of curriculum content, a privilege that usually is not practiced.
Throughout her tenure Eti perceived parents as partners in the school reform process. They were exposed to the new pedagogical approaches. They helped their children collect sources and data for their projects. They were informed about book purchases and textbook changes according to the new methods, and they learned how to approach homework and to understand the variety of things that counted as homework.

At the beginning there was a lot of suspicion about this new relationship.

“We were accustomed to baking cakes, and planning parties, and out of nowhere the principal began to demand that we learn about school pedagogical process, and why looking for a picture would be considered appropriate homework.”

Eti, however, was determined to lead the parents in the same manner as the teachers. In the beginning, she explained her actions to them, and how they were based on pedagogical assumptions. Later, she expected them to take ownership of activities like book fairs and field trips.

The Pedagogical Approach

Before the Reform

Goals. There was no document that clearly indicated the goals of the school prior to the Eti’s arrival. Apparently the school had been following the core program of the Ministry of Education with no adjustments or modifications, despite the local community’s lengthy list of special needs.
Books and curriculum. Some of the teachers were not even aware of the national curriculum; they simply taught the subject matter according to the textbooks they were supplied with. All the teaching was done with similar textbooks regardless of the varying individual abilities, skills and learning styles of the students. No additional books were provided for enrichment, or for disabled readers, either on the individual or class level.

Classroom layout. All classes were taught in a standard lecture arrangement utilizing frontal setting. Each pair of students shared a table, with one table directly behind another. There was no group work at all. When asked about the class design, the teachers could not recall any special class design, nor did design in any way relate to the pedagogical direction of the class. This information is very significant in a country like Israel, which dedicates a lot of attention to the student’s learning environment.

Teachers’ educational visions. In interviews about the situation at the school before Eti’s tenure, teachers revealed that they had not been disturbed with their lack of involvement, ownership and lack of personal commitment. They had been content to assign all responsibility for student achievement to the principal, or to the students themselves, with none left over to relate to teacher knowledge and performance.

“None of the teachers,” said Eti “tried to impress me with their educational vision.”
From this and other similar statements it can be seen that the teachers were very phlegmatic about the school. When an individual comes to a new organization it is common for the current staff to claim knowledge of institutional mores, or even to be protective of internal knowledge. Such was not the case here. There was a level of compliance with the current situation, and little apparent motivation to move beyond it. The teachers were comfortable with what they had, noted Eti, “except for two teachers who tried to impress me with their knowledge,” a situation that she found very odd.

Even worse, teachers tried to explain how little difference their participation made to the life of the school: “If I had to describe this group of teachers as a whole I would say it was a group with no self-esteem.” Certainly, if they did have self-esteem, it was very low. Eti was amazed by this, and found it “simply impossible to describe.”

In their interview with me, the teachers who had been at the school during that period described the situation as each of them being involved in their own individual projects. There was no sense of being part of a team.

Schedules. Another odd finding regarding the school before the initial reform was the teacher’s schedule. A teacher’s position in Israel includes a work week of 30 hours (for a childless teacher) or 24 hours (for a teacher with children). It is a full-time permanent position for anyone who has received tenure (which is automatic for
anyone who has taught at least three years). But the surprise was that many teachers were actually working over the maximum.

Another odd fact about the schedule was that it was shaped by teachers’ personal preferences, rather than by educational factors. For example, as Eti told me, “one of the teachers taught science 18 hours a week in three classes. This was not because it was a school that specialized in science, but because that was what the teacher liked to teach.”

Making Improvements

*Overall school goals.* One of the first things that Eti did was to define four main goals in the declaration of the school’s vision:

1. To enrich the staff with personal pedagogical and general knowledge, especially, *but not exclusively*, in coordination with the needs of the school. (*Staff development.*)

2. To create a learning environment for the students that would make them feel that the school is a pleasant place, an important place, and a place that contributes to their personal and intellectual development.

3. To upgrade the curriculum every year building on previous knowledge in language arts, world affairs and other subject areas.

4. To emphasize values, responsibility, initiative and partnership within the entire school community.
Specific pedagogical goals. The simultaneous pedagogical reform took place on four levels:

1. **The Teachers’ Academy.** The teachers participated in workshops, learned about the reform process, asked questions, visited each other's classes to observe, and watched the principal's demonstrations in class.

2. **The Teachers’ Practice.** The teachers were asked to document class plans, and to bring these to workshops --thus sharing in each other’s challenges and successes. The teachers also held their own personal and group activities in order to continuously reevaluate their development.

3. **The Teacher’s Education.** In Israel one can acquire a teacher's certificate after three years of study, and without a bachelor's degree, which requires four years of study. However, part of the reform process was to move all teachers towards acquiring their bachelor's degree.

4. **The Students’ Practice.** In all classrooms students were required to start writing daily as a practicing skill. In this way, they learned to express themselves through writing, in all subject matters.
Early days of reform. The change as described above was planned, led, and articulated by the Principal. It started as soon as the first teachers’ conference days (a set of three days prior to the start of school) arrived in August 1989. The principal, aware of her own hectic pace of work, had decided to start on what she termed a “slow phase.” What for her was “very slow” seemed to the teachers like the opposite. They described to me a “shocked” state of mind during those first days of meetings.

The principal realized that the teachers were not in the “partners” phase yet. Therefore, she decided not to share her plans regarding the school with them. It was too early. She “didn’t want to scare them.” Instead, she chose an educational workshop as the forum. Starting with a demonstration was her way of setting expectations while simultaneously using examples to clarify her educational perspective. It was a technique Eti would use often throughout the years.

The text she chose was the Declaration of the State of Israel. It was an unusual text, and characterized by a high level of literacy. The purpose was to expose the teachers to a text that they probably did not want to read and to let them experience a “frustration level” of reading. For many of the teachers this would be a replication of the experience that some students underwent on a daily basis. The method was learning by example. The teachers had to experience in order to know and understand how their students felt, and in so doing, learn how to teach.

That teachers’ conference was not only a reading lesson, it was also their first taste of the reform process. As Eti noted, “I’m sure that whoever was there will
never forget this workshop,” and many of the participants did, in fact, mention it in their own interviews.

As the school year started the teachers’ schedule was changed. The principal divided the hours and began interacting with the staff. The teachers were happy when she started to reduce their number of hours. They were not interested in working so many hours. Their schedule was also adapted to the school’s educational needs.

The first material change in the first year was to put a class library in every classroom. As Eti stated, “the only change I decided to do in the first year was to buy many books, so that each class would have a library; a very trivial act, but a prerequisite to the upcoming pedagogical change.”

Eti’s leading guidelines emphasized the fact that children are diverse and that teachers are expected to understand this, and act accordingly. She instructed the teachers not only to look for the diversity, but also to find the individual place to start with each one of the students. They were to do this by checking what his or her prior knowledge was, and proceeding from there.

She used the same approach with the teachers. First she found out at what skill level they were already. Then she instructed them regarding what courses to attend, recommended specific lectures, and created a supportive environment for personal development.

Personal stories. As part of Eti’s push towards individualization, every student was to be motivated through using his or her own personal story as a
foundation for future knowledge. This remained a key teaching method throughout the reform. When you tell a story you can find out what you would like to learn more about. In other words, given the choice, students will choose to learn about what is relevant to them personally.

The teachers described this process as “outstandingly interesting.” It was so different, not only for the students, but for them as well. The children were very cooperative as it was all about them, and the teachers discovered a great tool to learn about the children’s life, abilities, points of interest, difficulties, worries, and much more.

As was noted earlier, learning by example was a method Eti favored. To introduce the personal curriculum in the very first workshop, she asked the teachers to read a paragraph that they related to personally. In addition they were asked to share a personal story with the others. While looking for a paragraph they learned how to look at a scheme, find information that was relevant to them, and connect it to their personal stories. The objective was to bring the students (who, in this case, were the teachers) closer to one another. Although no “icebreaker” game was used, the students worked together. They began to know each other from amazing angles.

As for the students, their personal stories were used to build an individual educational plan for them. Quite unlike the identically named IEPs of American Education, these could best be described as a pedagogical perception, that a story could be the basis of a personal curriculum.
When as a researcher I exposed my puzzlement the teachers said: “Can one teacher prepare an individual learning plan for 40\textsuperscript{5} students, using 40 different personal stories?... She taught us how to do it. We learned from her, and with her, everything is according to the students’ needs.”

*Material changes.* The principal mandated certain immediate changes in the school in order to supply the educational environment needed to enable the reform process. These included:

1. A class library accompanied by in-class morning reading. Each class would have a reading period in the early morning, and everyday there would be a group of children who would sit and read during class time.

   “While it was clear to me,” said Eti, “that the teachers didn’t know what to do during this period of time, I knew that they would eventually figure it out.” At this stage they did not have to know.

   According to Eti, when children read they practice two very important skills: The first one is choice, and the second is responsibility. One of the innovations of the reading period at YH was that authority was to be delegated to the children. During that time, the teacher was not to direct the children, or to tell them what to do. They were to be given the possibility of choice.

   At first the teachers found this disconcerting, but they soon got used to the idea that there would be 15-20 minutes of class time every day that they would not

\textsuperscript{5} The official number of students in a class in Israel is 40.
control. Soon, morning reading had progressed to the level of a “basic assumption” of the school. Daily newspapers were supplied to the classes and the children would start the day with a newspaper reading, which would later serve as a bibliography resource for writing a composition of their choice. *Reading, reading and more reading* was the watchword of the reform effort, from the daily newspaper to the class group-reading, to the teacher reading a story over lunch, and more.

2. Seating arrangements – the teachers were asked to seat the children in groups. “I didn’t say to teach in groups,” said Eti. “Just that one needs to know how to teach in the group setting.”

However, the change, as Eti noted, “looked innocent, but wasn’t innocent,” and the seating arrangement had a tacit goal, which she went on to explain: When children sit in a group, even if they learn in a frontal manner, the discipline of frontal teaching is missing, and there isn’t the disconnection offered by frontal seating. When they sit in a group, children tend to consult with each other about what they are doing and how to do it. [They do this] whether or not the teacher allows it.

The second thing is that the children also speak about other stuff. *How was the weekend, how was the soccer game? How was that?* These kinds of [conversations] can be very upsetting for teachers who think that the children are wasting time.
I’m a great believer of “wasted time”, or “empty time”, which is a very important time for growth. It is valuable to discover each other. One of the most important things about learning is interaction among the learners. The seating arrangement triggered choice, self-responsibility, socialization and educational interaction. Sitting in groups transferred the responsibility of self-discipline to the students themselves.

As described by the teachers, “the seating groups could have been homogenic, or heterogenic, the same children, or different groups, everything according to the children’s needs.”

Along with the shift in the children’s seating came a change in the teachers’ positioning during the class. Now instead of standing at the front they would generally sit with groups of students. They were no longer the sole information resource for the students. In the same way, the blackboard shifted from being the common focal point of the entire class to being the property of certain groups at certain times. There was a dramatic increase in the dependence on the following: the child’s information, materials he or she brought in as resources, materials the teacher brought for him, and mutual research.

3. Homework as a reflection of change – the homework had changed as the pedagogy did. The majority of it focused on writing, but (as bemused parents learned) any number of home-based activities could now be considered homework, from resource collection to the baking of a cake.
4. Textbooks as reflection of change – before the change process all the students in the class had the same textbooks. After the change the class had a variety of (for example) math books, with no more than six of any given title.

*Overall reform.* The entire pedagogical change process was based on Eti’s own instructional guidance. She had a clear educational vision. During her series of teacher’s workshops, she mandated a number of “unexplained changes.” During the workshops she modeled the essence of these changes. Teachers were allowed to resist, express their frustration and fail, but they were *not* allowed to return to their old teaching methods.

*Outside experts.* Despite her centrality in the reform, Eti did not rely exclusively on herself. In the second year, she recruited a professional literacy supervisor who came to do workshops with the teachers, demonstrate to them in class, and watch their work. The methods introduced by such outside experts were to be maintained by the teachers, even following the expert’s departure.

*Student involvement.* The main focus of the reform was always the students; their emotional, social, educational and behavioral well-being in the school. As a result, the students were highly involved in the change process. One of many ways Eti found to include them was to have them play the role of *young teachers.* This took place in several different ways. In one format the students had a science center in the hallway, in which they participated in different learning activities, and chose what and when to learn.
In addition, they had hours in which they could choose what and with whom to study, regardless of subject matter or age. Thus, it might happen that a third-grade student would learn with a sixth-grade student about a subject matter they both liked. Students were also part of pedagogical meetings, ceremonial planning, communal charity activities, and more.

An interesting part of the reform was the fostering of a reciprocal relationship between the teachers themselves. In addition to learning together in groups, the teachers were encouraged to visit each other's classrooms, and to watch, learn, give feedback and criticize. To support this initiative, the master schedule was altered to make peer observations easy to arrange. The atmosphere was constructive, making it a positive experience for the teachers. As one of the teachers said, “we used to visit other classes, learn about other teacher's ideas, and enrich our personal strategies. It was a great contribution to our personal growth.”

Later on visitors were invited to observe the change process, and were asked to convey professional feedback. Over the course of the reform, the principal invited many visitors to watch the process, i.e. other principals, professionals, students and superintendents. These visitors would come and watch classroom lessons, give feedback and learn from the activities. The lessons were planned in advance by the teachers and directed and supervised by the principal.
Surprisingly, the teachers did not see the visits as a burden. As one of the teachers said, “I had many visitors in my class, and lots of feedback from the visitors as well as the principal, and both gave me a lot of strength and power to learn more.”

On the personal level, the principal made sure that for every success was followed by positive feedback --a letter, a personal remark or an announcement. This supported the development of self-esteem and group pride.

Over the course of the reform, there was a major shift in the method of determining school policies. As described in the normative model for participative decision making (Hoy & Miskel, 1996, p.296), the policies determined in 1989 were made by the principal in a unilateral way. The teachers were relevant to the reform, but they had no expertise. As the years went on, the mode of decision making shifted towards a group advisory format, and culminated in a fully participatory system utilizing majority rule.

Results of the Initial Reform

The success of the initial educational reform was shown by several different methods of measurement and evaluation.

Pedagogical achievement data. The below chart quantifies the dramatic decrease in failure on school achievement tests from 1989, when the initial school reform process began, until 1998, when the studied leadership transition occurred.
Table 3: Achievement Data Based on Children's Scores in School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Percentage of failure among the children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language arts</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Israel, schools do not administer national exams every year. Since 2001 they have been administrating them every other year. Prior to 2001 schools had the option to participate in such exams. In this case, the superintendent asked Eti to take the exams when she came to the school in 1989, two years later (1991), and then again six years later (1998).

*Student books.* Another way to evaluate the school was with the help of a set of books written by students, reflecting their personal process of self-development and their acquisition of language arts learning skills. All students were required to write a book each year they were in the school.

The achievements and outcomes shown in their written books were measured according to the following criteria:

1. How is the content related to the child's world? What is the link between the subject matter and the child's points of interest?
2. Is the content related to the type of writing? For example, an entry about a trip abroad would receive a higher score if written in the style of a diary or a letter.

3. Is there any continuity and flow of ideas between different paragraphs? Young children have a tendency to be unfocused in their writing. Therefore, the links between the paragraphs are an important indicator of the student’s abilities.

4. Is the language appropriate for the content? For example, an entry about Bible stories would receive higher points when written using biblical language,

5. Is there a connection between all of the above?

Judged by these criteria, the books showed significant improvements over the course of the school reform process.


*The Official Decision*

In the summer of 1998 Eti made official her decision to retire. School principals in Israel receive tenure after 8 years in service, and they are allowed to retire after the age of 55 or after 25 years of seniority. On one hand, Eti felt that she had given as much as she could. The school had won the national award of education, pedagogical achievements were improving, and the school was running very
peacefully. On the other hand, she wanted to make sure that her leaving would not impede the important alterations she had set in motion. She wanted to be involved in choosing her successor, and had very strong feelings about the importance of choosing a successor from within the organization.

*Announcing the Transition*

The transition was shared differently with different people in the organization. The principal had shared her desire to retire about two years in advance with the school’s superintendent. Around the same time, she designated one of the teachers in school to be her successor by sharing and teaching her major parts of her position. During one of the mayor’s visits to the school two years prior to her retirement, she said to him: “She [Debbie] is going to be the next principal of *YH*.”

One of the first to learn about Eti’s retirement was her deputy. About a year earlier the deputy had asked Eti to file a retirement application, and Eti replied: “you can’t retire, since I’m going to, and therefore you will have to stay.”

Maintaining confidentiality, the deputy postponed her own retirement. Eti made an official announcement to the superintendent on November 1997, about 7 months before actual retirement.

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6 When a principal requests retirement, the superintendent has to approve it, and then it needs to be approved by the Ministry of Education's regional superintendent.
Debbie (not her real name) was Eti’s hand picked choice for a successor. Debbie was a teacher at YH for 11 years prior to Eti’s departure. Debbie arrived at the school in 1988, a year prior to the arrival of her predecessor. She was a leading teacher for seventh and eighth grades until 1995 when Israel switched to a middle school system. After the changes in the elementary schools, she taught sixth grade, and was in charge of language arts. She was described by her colleagues as an “active teacher,” although she was never a dominant figure in the teacher’s lounge. By the time of the transition, Debbie had become a significant individual in leading the school reform process, although both she and Eti shared stories about Debbie’s initial resistance to the change process. As Debbie said, “In the beginning I didn’t agree with any step [Eti] took, but once I understood the ideology, I couldn’t stop learning.”

Debbie was “groomed” by her predecessor to receive the position. Eti began planning for her departure well in advance of the actual date, and designated Debbie as her successor by preparing her, directing her, teaching her, giving her additional responsibilities, and sharing with key people her belief in Debbie’s capabilities.

In 1996 Debbie participated in a two-year course on school principalship. That was her first formal academic training for the position, although she held a bachelor’s degree in education. Her overlap with the departing principal lasted a  

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7 There is no principal certificate in Israel. A two-year course is expected, but it is not yet a prerequisite.
fairly long time. It started —although not officially —a year or two prior to Eti’s retirement, with the delegation of academic responsibilities to Debbie, as well as the sharing of administrative decisions with her. In the final few months prior to the actual transition, Eti briefed Debbie about every possible detail of the principalship.

The Actual Transition

The actual transition took place from April to August of 1998. After nine years at YH, Eti had decided to retire. That was one year after the school won the national award of education, and she felt that everything at the school was in good shape. In contrast to the her perceptions of the staff when she first arrived, she was now able to describe them in the following terms:

It was an initiative staff, they knew how to work in modern ways, and handled the individual students, from weak to brilliant, very well. The staff was committed to taking responsibility, to setting goals and to achieving them, and they knew how to work as a team.

Letting Go

As the actual transition began, the staff, the principal and the students all had to undergo a period of letting go. As her retirement neared, Eti began work on a new type of process —a process of farewell, which would encompass the local municipality, the Ministry of Education, teachers, parents and students. It was to take
place on a grand scale, and ranged from the writing of goodbye letters to secretaries in all the partner organizations to significant summary discussions with those who would determine the future of the school.

The most important of these discussions were with the Municipality and Ministry of Education representatives who later would have a vote in choosing her successor. These discussions focused on and reflected the process the school had undergone in the last few years, and stressed the importance of its continuity; in order to preserve its culture, and continue the teachers’ personal development.

Following the model of so many of Eti’s reforms, the process of parting from the staff was introduced through a workshop about departure. Each one of the teachers was asked to write about three subjects: What did she learn from the school? What had she learned from the principal? And how had her learning in the school affected her personally?

Equipped with their personal responses, the principal asked the teachers to gather in groups of four, and to determine the four or five issues that were common to their lists. Once the work was done, she instructed them to inform the new principal that those were the themes that were significant to them.

The teachers shared with me their expression of this workshop, how it reflected their learning process during Eti’s tenure, and how empowered they felt at that point. They had gained professional ideologies in which they believed. As one of
the teachers said: “Nowadays, when I choose a text book for the class, I know why, and I know how it is going to foster the development of literacy”.

A second workshop was conducted on staff responsibility and beliefs, and how to present them to the new principal. The focusing question was “What is the role of a professional staff and what is its influence on the accountability and responsibility of the reform process?” The main purpose of this workshop was to determine the significance of the reform effort to the teachers themselves. From this point on, the teachers were to take ownership of the transition process. As one of them told me, “I knew exactly what I was going to keep in order to maintain this success, and I knew what I was going to add.”

One of the things that emerged from the process was that there were things to gain as well as things to lose in the transition process. For instance, even though they would miss her guidance, some of the teachers were looking forward to developing their own “personal voice” outside the shadow of Eti’s influential ideologies.

In summary, the workshop emphasized the extent to which the staff had ownership of the school beliefs. When the new principal took over, it would not be like the previous transition, where the staff had been unable to identify school values, and where the new vision had been entirely imposed from the outside. From Eti’s point of view, it was a chance to plant one last seed before leaving the school: Don’t let go of what you own.
The final workshop dealt with telling the students. The transition was to be the occasion of the students learning a new type of writing, a good-bye letter. The lesson was to include *how to write a letter, what such a letter should and shouldn’t include,* and *what do I want to say.* During the workshop, Eti showed the teachers how to express the meaning and the emotion of spoken language in written form. In this way, even the goodbyes between Eti and the school would have a pedagogical purpose.

The letter-writing activity was followed by a farewell party with each class. This allowed the students to share their feelings, to summarize their personal relationships with the principal, and to open themselves to new opportunities. The last event was a special ceremony held at the end of the year, where the new principal was announced to the school.

It is fairly clear from all angles that people admired Eti. Her departure was the occasion of many activities held, many songs sung, and many letters sent; and although there was some sense of sorrow, people nonetheless respected her decision. The school’s own custom of creating dialog through writing was put to full use by those who wanted to express their feelings.

The English teacher wrote to her: “Eti, I will miss your constant love, your support, your guiding help, your interesting courses, your letters and notes, your ever watchful eye, your gossip. In short, I will miss YOU!”

One of her former students wrote
I was sad to hear that you are leaving, Eti. It was sad for me to know that hundreds or maybe thousands of students will not benefit like I did. They will not benefit from a good teacher – a teacher for life! … I loved you, I love you now, I will always love you.

Other students wrote about the values they took with them: “[the importance of] morals, kindness, and knowledge”. One young student approached her with the question “who is going to be Eti next year”?

One of the most interesting documents came from the PTO chairman’s wife. She described the difficulties that they experienced throughout the last nine years, and the complicated nature of the relationship between the PTO chair and the demanding principal. Finally, she wrote “I understood that if you can’t fight them, join them.” After all of that, she had ended up joining the PTO, supporting not only her husband, but also the school. To me she said, in an interview four years after her son graduated, “when we were in the school I appreciated [Eti’s] leadership, but now I truly know how exceptional she was.”

Debbie, who became the new principal, wrote a seven-page letter --a letter about love, fear, humor, family and togetherness. Her unconditional loyalty to Eti was clear. The letter served also as a subtle message to the teachers, assuring the continuity of the current school culture, and reducing the staff's fear of the unknown.
One of the letters from parents reads “knowing you, we knew that you wouldn’t have retired unless you knew that the school is strong and stable enough to continue your pedagogical approach, in the very same way you planted it.”

The Fight for Succession

As mentioned earlier, the appointment of a school principal in Israel is decided by a committee made of representatives from three organizations: the local municipality, the teachers’ union and the Ministry of Education. Thus, there are many political aspects to the issue of school succession, although it is technically not a political position.

In practical terms, this meant that Debbie’s inheritance of Eti’s position was not guaranteed, even with Eti’s support. Although Debbie did eventually receive the position in the summer of 1998, her appointment was preceded by a tough battle in the committee. Among the several other candidates for her position were many people with more experience, including principals from other schools and principals returning from sabbaticals.

The municipality representatives and the teachers’ union representatives were in favor of Debbie, largely in the belief that she was the best person to continue the

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8 In Israel every teacher/principal is entitled a full sabbatical year after every six years. These rights are reserved and the teacher/principal is entitled to return to his/her position, or have first priority at similar positions in other openings.
school reform process begun by Eti. They knew Debbie’s personal record in the school, and expected it to lead to a smooth transition which, in turn, would maintain the school’s success for future development and continuity, based on existing professionalism and commitment among the staff.

As the mayor’s deputy said “we had to fight to make people understand how important it is to continue the [reform] process in this school”.

The Ministry of Education, however, had other candidates that they thought were better for the position. The superintendent, in particular, preferred a successor from outside the school environment She felt that there was a risk “of more of the same” if someone from the faculty replaced the acting Principal. She supported the current reform (although being new to the position, she had little experience with it) but was looking for additional developments in the future, of the type that could be instigated by fresh leadership. When I interviewed her, she admitted to having been “worried that someone from within the school wouldn’t be able to step forward and make fresh progress, since she would likely continue in the paradigm she is familiar with.”

The municipality, conversely, supported Debbie’s candidacy. Her knowledge and experience of Eti’s reforms was very important to them. Eventually the municipality and the teachers’ union prevailed, and Debbie was selected (with the superintendent subsequently coming to agreement with their choice).
Debbie approached her new position and formulated her educational vision with a very high level of loyalty to the ongoing reform process. Eti had possessed a wealth of knowledge, and Debbie’s first goal became maintaining Eti’s changes. Later, when she began putting her own stamp on the school, her alterations tended to be modifications or improvements of preexisting initiatives.

“Although I followed Eti’s vision, I added my way to that vision” she said.

Even as of the time of the research, several years removed from the transition, Debbie could not identify any area of the school that she felt needed a major overhaul.

On the other hand, Debbie had to deal with a different set of challenges than those faced by Eti. Her familiarity with the staff was an advantage on the one hand and a disadvantage on the other. Everybody knew her and knew what to expect, yet she still had to change her position within the staff from a peer to a superior, a process that took time. The teachers persisted in treating her as “one of us”, sometimes going so far as to ignore her new authority.

“The first year was the hardest, as they had to relate to me from a new point of view.”

During the first few months of Debbie’s tenure, Eti’s influence continued to be palpably present. Eti was invited to all special school activities, and Debbie consulted her often about ways to best stabilize the transition, as well as in reference
to other decisions. She remembered learning from her throughout the years as a teacher, and felt comfortable enough to ask for advice. For a while, the academics continued as: “though the previous principal were here somewhere.” Although there was a new principal, the dominant approach was still how Eti would have done it, as evidenced by the retaining of Eti’s book of instructions for a new teacher arriving at the school.

Staff Response

Debbie was described as “very friendly” by her staff. They felt comfortable talking to her; and appreciated her high level of aesthetics, her innovative ideas, her willingness to work many hours a day, and the fact that she was committed to continuance of the same educational philosophy. Most of the staff accepted her promotion as natural. “I didn’t know whom it was going to be, but I hoped it would be someone from our staff.”

Debbie was never a prominent member of the staff, but was recognized for her personal knowledge and teaching abilities. The smooth transition to her tenure received major resistance from one teacher only, who left the school after a year, saying: “I couldn’t stand her personality.” An additional teacher had complaints about her new work schedule, and ended up splitting her time between YH and another school. But most of the other teachers were happy.
By the end of the first year of transition, the staff was able to express feelings of surprise and relief that things had gone so well. Having admired the former principal, they had worried about the unknown.

**Significant Features of the Transition**

In interviews, the staff identified six significant features of the transition:

1. The stability and the continuity of the vision (viewed as extremely important to the maintenance of staff focus and commitment).
2. The existence of a vision for further development.
3. The need for a greater emphasis on day-to-day management in the evolution of the school.
4. The “natural” way Debbie stepped into the position, and the feeling that she *belonged* with them
5. The implicit promise of a greater valuing of, and support for, teacher competence and independence
6. The shared strength of both principals that existed in the area of personal relationships.

Because of these factors, the transition sparked little explicit resistance. It seemed like the natural thing to do. And even Debbie's tendency to “control” enabled further development with minor demands from the staff; they learned to like some of
the advantages of managerial leadership, as long as they could use their own memories and knowledge as a base for future development.

Post Transition (2000-present)

School Culture

At first glance, the school culture is much the same as before. The school has retained its good name, and even won a few more national prizes. The staff's composition has hardly changed, and people are comfortable with the current situation.

Changes are revealed, however, when school culture is examined at the artifact level --changes that are apparent from the moment you enter the school. Debbie has invested a lot of time in improving the physical condition of the building. In fact, her first set of projects combined physical and pedagogical improvements, and included transforming an open space into a school museum, the addition of plants all over the school, and the painting of some of the walls with different colors. In her view, the advanced age of the building should not prevent it from feeling inviting and welcoming, or from creating an intriguing learning environment.

These immediate changes at the artifacts level were also apparent in school ceremonies. One of Eti’s values, expressed through the ceremonies, was to emphasize the connection with the land, so school ceremonies took place in many different locations. This changed after the transition, largely to accommodate the
teachers’ preferences. This is an example of a value that was not transferred to the teachers, and remained part of the leader’s individual vision. The staff had been accepting of the changing locations, but the placement of the ceremonies had not carried any particular significance to them.

One example of this was the “Bible” ceremony, in which the children receive their first Bible. Originally, this ceremony took place in one of the forests, because Eti preferred to emphasize the connection to nature, rather than to make the ceremony overtly religious. Now, in contrast, it takes place in a synagogue, which is the more convenient location. In the long run, however, this seemingly unimportant switch may affect the essence of the ceremony, touching, as it does, on the separations between religion and nation⁹.

Other ceremonies, however, remained the same, or developed further along their original lines. A biweekly assembly was changed to a weekly event, musical mornings were added, and new details were emphasized in the ceremonies' contents.

At the end of the first year Debbie invited Eti to attend the closing ceremony. Significantly, she refused, saying “it was her school now, she worked hard to reach this moment, and I had no intention whatsoever of taking any of attention away from her… I could visit at other times.”

⁹ This is an important issue in a nation known as the “Jewish State”, where even the national identification card specifies religion, rather than the inclusive designation “Israeli”.

159
Beyond the ceremonies, another change at the artifact level was Debbie’s more economical approach to the school finances. In contrast to Eti’s policy of approving every expenditure that could be justified with reference to the interests of the students, Debbie preferred to relate spending to the school’s educational priorities. Her personality was more business oriented, and she spent quite a lot of time looking for better bargains, and getting more for the school. However, some teachers complained that they had less say in financial matters now than before.

Most school norms remained the same, especially regarding teacher responsibilities, at least in terms of artifacts like the teachers’ notebook, teacher celebrations, policies on language use, and so forth.

The Principal’s Influence

The Teachers’ Schedule

This was kept mainly the same, but there were some changes in music, computers and the arts. To an outside observer, the changes might seem minor, but to the individuals involved, it was as though their world had fallen apart. One teacher even left the school.

For example, during Eti’s reform, the technology teacher was given a mandate to implement technological changes. She was given broad authority to redesign and define new projects in the school, and twelve weekly hours to implement the technological changes. For Debbie, this was not as high a priority, and the time
allotted was cut accordingly, leading to an impact on the technology teacher’s motivation.

*Teachers’ Workshops*

Unlike Eti, Debbie did not position herself as the lead teacher, or try to do pedagogical instruction herself. Instead, she relied on external experts for staff development. However, she was nonetheless very involved in everything that took place in class, particularly class design. Her base of personal pedagogical knowledge was known to be vast, but she did not generally serve in an advisory role as her predecessor did. Instead, she worked at developing the staff as a group. As before, the school ran a weekly course (now taught by outsiders) that related to current topics such as the school climate, self-based management and more. The whole atmosphere of learning with the principal had diminished, opening room for new ways of personal development.

*Personal Relationships*

Debbie’s personal relationships with the teachers, students and parents were very good. She liked to give personal attention to the community, and as many of its members as possible. Although some critics dismissed her friendliness as stemming from her need to stabilize her position, the overall data indicated positive personal relationships with the school community. However, her persona was not popular with
everyone. While some found her personality relaxing and embracing, others expressed fears that her need to be liked might override her core values.

As far as parents were concerned, Debbie maintained good relationships with them based on mutual help, responsibility and understanding. She paid a lot of attention to their needs –too much, at times, at least from the staff’s point of view. Several of the teachers mentioned being concerned about defending school values to a community that might not always agree or understand. In fact, when this issue was brought up with Debbie, she did acknowledge it as something she wanted to work on in her management style.

The Right to Fail

The issue of values appeared again with respect to Eti’s infamous “right to fail”. It is not so much that Debbie refused to tolerate failure –in fact the teachers seemed more comfortable with the idea of admitting failure to Debbie than to Eti. Rather, Debbie was much less likely to allow someone to fail.

Eti was famous more for asking questions than for giving answers. She offered guidance on ideological issues, but expected teachers to find their own way when it came to practical solutions. She encouraged every teacher to make bold decisions and take risks. She was very receptive to actual instances of failure, which would be challenged strongly. For Debbie, on the other hand, the response to failure was generally to prevent it before it happened.
For the teachers, it was a situation that many felt ambivalence about. On one hand, Debbie’s approach carried much less pressure, and was the more comfortable system to work under. But on the other hand, it did much less to support the teachers’ own personal development and senses of intuition.

*In Summary*

Overall, the school culture remained much the same under Debbie as it did under Eti. Under Eti, however, it was very clear that morals and ideologies were the foundation of the culture, whereas Debbie was more flexible about adjusting the ideology to suit individual needs.

*Pedagogical Practices*

*Special Needs*

Under Eti, the school’s pedagogical approach was to welcome any student. Most of its students came from its registration area, and many others came due to the school’s approach of respecting diversity. In addition, Eti used to be the answer to any of the municipality’s unusual cases. For children who did not fit into their home schools, or in cases where parents refused to send their children to special education classes, the municipality would ask Eti to create personalized plans of education for them in her school.
Debbie did her best to follow in Eti’s footsteps, and to accommodate every child. For example, in the first grade she accepted a child with Down's Syndrome, even though it required opening two new special education classes, and numerous other accommodations\(^\text{10}\).

**Personal Stories**

For Eti, the use of personal stories was an ideology. Everything surrounded a personal story. She taught the teachers how to develop a personal learning plan from each single personal story. And if that meant that one teacher needed to do 40 personal learning plans in a class, then that was what she or he was expected to do.

Debbie uses much the same methodology, but admits that she does so less out of ideology than of habit. Under her, personal stories continue to see use (for example, in building the school’s museum) but they are less prominent than before. However, they still constitute an additional learning resource for school themes.

**Dialog**

Another feature of the school under Eti was the ubiquity of both written and spoken dialog. As mentioned earlier, Eti used to write to the students how she felt

\(^{10}\) The Israeli educational system is not well trained in the concept of *mainstreaming* children with special needs. A law passed (in 2003) by the Israeli parliament on this subject has yet to be budgeted or implemented.
about their papers, and when they wrote to her she always answered them with a corresponding letter. Following her predecessor's model, Debbie uses dialog to communicate with her teachers. She is open for any dialog with any member of the school community, teacher or student, and the teachers indicated that they feel very comfortable discussing any issue with her.

She has very good skills with parents, teachers, and students. Her dialog is more humane and less ideological than was Eti’s. Everybody shares their love for her and feels comfortable engaging her in conversation. Again, however, there are tradeoffs when compared with her predecessor, who was very open to dialog, but who always took the side of the student. It was an experience that made many teachers uncomfortable at the time, but which they now see as valuable.

**Mentoring**

Eti based her professional dialog with the teachers on her personal instructional guidance. She saw the development of staff as her first goal. She believed that the education would primarily reflect the quality of the staff. Her style was based on the teachers’ commitment and abilities, as described earlier in the transformational leadership paragraph. She had the ability to lead staff both professionally and personally.

She was known for her questions. She had faith in the power of the teachers, and therefore, did not agree to tell the teachers what or how to do things. When a
teacher would come to ask for something, she generally said something along the lines of “I’m not going to tell you what you need. You should tell me what you need.”

Her motto was “with no thinking there is no doing.” Her main worry was that people would follow orders without thinking. She believed what Paulu Coelho said, in his book *The Power of Magic*: "to teach is to know it is possible, to learn, is to know it is possible for you” (1997. p. 152).

Debbie took a far more centralized approach. She was confident in the teachers’ professionalism, but second-guessed their ability to meet her high standards. She helped them design some of their classes and spent a lot of time building the new learning centers. She based the staff development on previous knowledge. She used outsourcing to enrich further learning by the staff, and utilized her personal knowledge base to develop and initiate new projects involved with educational design and learning environments.

Although Eti was involved in the content of every pedagogical step in the school reform, classroom and lesson planning was not a high priority for her. The responsibility for the educational planning belonged to the teachers. She would only give professional advice. On the other hand Debbie was very involved personally and professionally in the educational design. She personally helped the teachers design the classes.
Students Teaching

As mentioned earlier, Eti initiated the concept of students teaching students, or as they called it, young teachers. Yet none of the teachers mentioned this spontaneously in interviews. Upon further questioning, it became clear that this initiative had become such a fundamental part (or basic assumption) of the school that no one gave it any further thought. As such it was largely unaffected by the transition.

Teachers as Peer Critics

One of the first steps of the initial school reform was the use of the teachers as critics of one another, an activity considered important enough to build the schedule around. However, this is an activity that nearly disappeared subsequent to the transition. By in large, the teachers no longer viewed each other’s class activities. The more established teachers, who had learned to accept, and even enjoy their colleagues’ feedback, seemed to miss the opportunity, but the newer teachers were relieved that it was gone.

Visitors

The use of visitors as a source of professional feedback was an integral part of the school culture during the initial reform. Visits to the school occurred weekly, and the whole school schedule was planned to accommodate the visitors. The visits were
followed by feedback meetings, where the teachers would learn about their own strengths and weaknesses. These feedback sessions would also empower the teachers regarding their pedagogical abilities.

Under Debbie there were fewer visits to the school. This might have been related to the personality of the principal, or it might merely have been a function of the fact that most of the major changes had already been implemented.

Teacher Education

As mentioned before, when Eti arrived at the school most the staff was teaching with a teacher’s certificate, a document representing three years of advanced education, as opposed to the four years needed for the bachelor’s degree. As part of her program of staff development, Eti strongly encouraged all teachers to pursue further degrees. Over the course of her tenure, eight teachers attained their bachelor's degree. In the subsequent five years another eight teachers went back to school. Once again, this reflects continuity in the school's attitude.

Decision Making

During the initial reform, school policies were determined with the staff according to their gradually growing expertise and commitment levels. In the beginning, Eti determined all school policies according to her vision, based on the assumption that the teachers were not yet familiar with the ideology, and/or
committed to the change process on a level that would enable them to influence school decision-making. Through the years (as mentioned below in the critical incidents section) the teachers became ever more involved. By the end of Eti’s tenure, school staff determined and reevaluated policies as a team. After the transition, the situation was neither the autocracy of Eti’s early years, nor the democracy of her later tenure. Instead most policies simply continued as already established.

*Leadership Style and Role*

As with Eti, Debbie’s leadership role and type were defined by examining the research findings, and validated by performing a member check with the principals and their deputies. Surprisingly, although Eti and Debbie had very different personalities, their leadership quadrants were almost similar.

Debbie’s leadership style was mainly based on the *rational goal model*. Unlike her predecessor principal, she needed to legitimate her sources of power, probably as a result of having moved from the position of a teacher to that of a Principal within the same school. She worked hard to maintain her place as the director of the school, and to make sure that projects were accomplished. She spent many hours of overtime each day in the school: finishing work, fixing teachers’ work, and preparing for the next day.
Debbie’s second most dominant quadrant was the *human relations model*. Her main power derived from her relationship with the staff. As one staff member reported: “She cares about us, she is friendly, and we feel like a family”.

Although the dominant quadrant was almost same for both principals, the way they inhabited that quadrant was entirely different. Debbie’s relationships were based on informal interactions and a more centralized style of leadership. In essence, Debbie facilitated together with people. She did not let them go it alone. Thus, her leadership influence was the product of a mutually dependent relationship between her and her staff.

The teachers described her as someone who “cares about the little details”. Debbie’s mentoring abilities were dominant in the language arts as well as in pedagogical design. She created and surrounded herself with a committed staff that felt comfortable coming to work. As the teachers said, “We were not intimidated by her demands.”

Debbie’s third most dominant quadrant was the *internal process model*. Her power fed off of her knowledge, which was described by the teachers as quite broad. It was clear, even in casual conversation with Debbie, that she read a great deal, had experienced a lot, and had a fantastic memory. As previously mentioned, she was her predecessor’s “right hand”, and therefore was highly involved in both the pragmatic side and the ideology of the school reform process.
She viewed monitoring the staff as an important activity, and took special care to ensure that everything worked perfectly. As a centralist, she had access to all of the information and activities that required her approval.

Debbie’s fourth quadrant was the open system model. The teachers emphasized, however, that this was “slowly changing“, "it has begun to change in the last year, and she lets us do more”. It is important to take into consideration that she was still a new principal.

Continuation of the Reform

The fact that Debbie successfully continued the process started by Eti can be seen in this updated version of the YH achievement test results.

Table 4: Achievement Data Based on Children's Scores in School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Percentage of failure among the children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language arts</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

171
Critical Incidents

In order to illuminate the reform process, this section will present key events and circumstances for each year, starting with the arrival of Eti, and ending with the date of this research. The events that were chosen represent the school reform process in relationship to the complexity of Israeli reality, as it appeared through school documents. Some of the events are academic, others are political, but they all were significant in the life of the school.

1989

Events and Circumstances

• Eti arrives in Netanya.

• The school is cleaned

• A shift takes place from managerial to moral/transformational leadership.

• Changes in teachers' schedules are made.

• Class libraries are created.

• A daily class reading is introduced.

• Eti develops a very strong professional and informal relationship with the school superintendent.
• “Bashi evaluation” is introduced in schools.\textsuperscript{11}

\textit{Physical Environment}

• Immediate changes take place – cleaning, painting.

\textit{New Leadership Style}

• The pedagogical vision is owned and led by the incoming principal.
• Eti spends 12 hours or more a day in school.
• Instructional guidance is given internally by the principal.
• Personal weekly and biweekly meetings with the staff are arranged.
• Teachers' conferences – for teachers’ learning and self-development – are held.
• The principal accompanies teachers in class.
• The staff visits other schools.
• Eti models pedagogical practices.
• Eti writes stories with students.
• There is uncertainty among staff members regarding the pedagogical approach.

\textsuperscript{11} Bashi was the Chief scientist for the Israeli Ministry of Education – he recommended a math and language arts evaluation.
• The development of the staff's self-esteem begins.

*Pedagogical Changes*

• The schedule is changed, in preparation for reform.
• The literature learning environment is changed.
• Reading habits are changed.
• Pedagogical instruction is provided for teachers.

*External Relationships*

• A good relationship with the superintendent enables local autonomy, and support from the Ministry of Education.

*Achievement Levels*

• There is a high level of failure among students.
• Evaluation scores are not shared with teachers in order to prevent demoralization:
  • 62% failure in language arts.
  • 84% failure in math.
1990

Somewhat confused, the teachers entered into the change process. One teacher decided to relocate, as it was “too much” for her. Others began to listen, learn and adjust to the new culture that was evolving. Most of the teachers’ activities in this year were based on the principal's personal modeling of lesson plans, workshops and personal instruction. Although somewhat skeptical, the teachers were impressed with the principal’s knowledge and teaching skills.

Political Events

- The gulf war begins.

1991

The first two years of the change process are described by the teachers as a discomforting learning process. On one hand they have complaints about the uncertainties of the process, but on the other they appreciate their own personal development.

Events and Circumstances

- A change of content occurs in ongoing pedagogical development.
- A shift to war preparation takes place.
- Ceremony planning is taken over by the staff.
• Eti writes letters to the students.

• A school textbook is issued regarding the gulf war: What is a war? How do you protect yourself? Discuss fears, family stories, personal writing, etc..

• School reading and teaching materials are adjusted to the situation. For example: how to use a gas mask, learning about chemical weapons, learning about things that frighten me, from cartoons to war symbols.

• Home war instructions are used as a text.

The Staff’s Professional Development

• Teachers begin to take responsibility for school events.

Leadership Style

• The staff begins to own the pedagogical vision.

• The staff is given the right to fail, but not to be negligent.

• A new motto is created: “If you don’t make mistakes, you will not advance.”

• One teacher leaves the school.

• Eti knows all the students personally.

• The teacher is not the center of the world – the student is.
• The principal writes letters to the students, answers their letters, and starts a dialog with them, using letter-writing as a tool to reach their fears and needs. Children like to write back to the principal.

**Pedagogical Change**

• Seating in groups allows class discussion, peer consulting and learning.

• Personal learning skills are gradually developed.

• Another new motto for teachers: “No matter how much you know, you ask more.”

• The failure rate drops.

• 24% failure in language arts

• 26% failure in math

1992

The end of the gulf war was a relief to all, but ironically, the war had some benefits for the school. The opportunity to use a relevant topic to practice their new pedagogical practices enabled the teachers to strive with no fear of failure. There was no right or wrong way to approach this content. It was new for everybody, and provided practice in how to process information and knowledge.

Eti felt it was time to upgrade the reform process, despite the difficult year they were going through. Following her personal instruction of the teachers, she hired external instructors for language arts, math and computer science. When asked why
she had to bring in an external instructor (after three years of teaching the teachers herself), Eti said

The teachers were ready to expand their content knowledge as well as their teaching skills. A principal can’t address every point of teaching on this level. The external instructors taught all the teachers pedagogical skills as well as subject matter knowledge, and I made the personal bridging with each teacher at her own personal development stage.

**Events and Circumstances**

- External pedagogical instruction takes place.

**Staff’s Professional Development**

- Staff focuses on *how* to do things, rather than on *what* to do.
- Staff learns the difference between teaching math and English versus teaching language arts.
- Staff learns how to approach diversity.
- A pedagogical interaction between learners is crafted.
- Interdisciplinary teaching starts –geography, history, language arts and more.
- Teachers begin requesting learning time with Eti because “they want to learn for their personal development” and not just for the students’ sakes.
Teachers come to understand that only their own personal interest and growth will result in their students' pedagogical success.

Some student achievement scores are shared with teachers.

1993

Most of the teachers mentioned their personal development in their interviews. They were very proud to share it. They felt as though their personalities were changing. They began to spend their own time studying, not because the principal asked, but because they felt the effect it had on their self-esteem, and the increase in their confidence in teaching and learning. They had reached a stage where they could say: “we were able to decide how to do things because we already understood the why.”

A new teacher arriving at the school this year said: “I had to learn about the new teaching methods, but I could visit other classes to learn.” Some of the other teachers had become so confident and happy with their new skills that they were eager to volunteer as mentors for their new colleague.

External Instruction Continues

Teachers start to take the lead in the pedagogical change.

Some of the teachers are still not yet confident with the new teaching method.
Teachers’ Involvement

- Teachers manage ceremonies, preparations and many school initiatives.
- Teachers’ notebooks become a brainstorming tool.
- Teachers apply class seating to curricular activities and the pedagogical approach.

1994

It had taken five years for the teachers to adjust to the new pedagogical and cultural approach, but they had finally learned to like and appreciate it “once we understood what was going on”. Internal and external instruction continued, as did increases in the empowerment of the teachers.

Events and Circumstances

- The start takes place of the practice of declaring a leading subject each semester for major interdisciplinary learning.
- Many external visits to the school take place, so others can learn and experience the change process.


**Teachers’ Pedagogical Development**

- The whole school is centered on a topic (for example, fashion) and all learning is arranged to surround it.

**Teachers’ Involvement**

- There is a marked increase in the number of teacher-led initiatives.
- Teachers experience a feeling of pedagogical ownership.

**Principal's Influence**

- The development of critical thinking among teachers occurs.
- Open discussions/disagreements regarding pedagogical approaches take place.
- Teachers finally bring their own pedagogical voices into the dialog.
- Teachers become the professional authority in class.
- Personal notes are used as a tool to increase self-esteem for students and teachers.
- Support is given for teachers in relationship to parents.
- Compliments are given together with demands.
- No compromises are made on the professional level.
- Eti continues a high level of involvement in class materials and lesson plans.
1995

Although happy and excited about the interesting implementation of new pedagogical approaches through fashion studies, the school faces a national tragedy, along with the rest of Israel: the assassination of Mr. Yitzhak Rabin, the Prime Minister of Israel.

While the school reform must continue, the content of the lessons is focused on the actual ongoing events, and the confusion that accompanies a Jew killing a Jew. Following teachers' brainstorming meetings, the school decides to shift its main core subject to addressing peace as it appears in the Bible. Once again, all teaching methods remain the same, i.e. the use of reading, writing, group work, and peer teaching. However, the source of knowledge changes from fashion magazines to the Bible and other Jewish resources.

Events and Circumstances

- A new pedagogical project is created, following the assassination of Prime Minister Rabin.
- Tensions between teachers and the principal increase.

Pedagogical Instruction

- Teachers start to teach and plan from their own personal pedagogical visions
• Teachers develop personal and class projects, based on core determined-knowledge, enriched by school-selected themes, and adapted to class level learning skills.
• Unpleasant events in the school are used as a case study for all teachers.
• References to peace in the Bible are used as a resource --learning about important people, and developing a philosophical perception of the religious attitude towards peace.
• Teachers develop their personal values and critical thinking regarding the leading people of the nation.

Principal's influence

• Political stress takes its toll and causes a few incidents.
• The principal exposes her ability to apologize and admits to teachers that she has made mistakes.

1996

As the teachers become more confident with their own pedagogical practices, more arguments with the principal arise. Some of them are content related, and others are administrative. The teachers have their own voice now. Issues are clarified and teachers become more powerful in the change process.
Events and Circumstances

• All school subject matter is interwoven into interdisciplinary learning.
  There are no longer language arts or history classes.
• Curricular content is devoted to what the students want to learn.

Further Pedagogical Change

• In order to fully implement the pedagogical reform there was a need to eliminate the “walls” between different lessons. Head teachers are now expected to address a theme from all perspectives.
• The core standards serve as basic skills for program development.
• The school theme is about the development of a city. The city chosen for the whole school is Jerusalem.
• There is some discomfort based on changing teacher roles.
• Eti announces the school’s candidacy for the national education award.
• A workshop is held about the achievability of the award.
• Eti uses the award process as an opportunity to finalize school policies.
• The candidacy is also the occasion for upgrades in classroom and hallway designs.
• The school wins the national education award.
1997

The School Superintendent passed away in the summer preceding the 1997/98 school-year. She had a close personal relationship with YH, so her death was traumatic for the principal, the teachers, and the students alike. Again, this was another event that shifted the school’s focus to a learning experience based in loss and memory.

Events and Circumstances

- Based on the superintendent’s death, the school theme for this year is events from life that deal with loss.
- The superintendent’s municipal memorial service is held at YH.
- Teachers take the lead in the planning the ceremony.
- Teachers take responsibility for the ceremony.
- The P.T.O supports the theme, and helps in arranging the event.
- Students perform in drama and reading, and share letters to and from the late superintendent.
- Their contributions serve as the main part of the ceremony.
- The mayor and all other leading members of the Municipality and the Ministry of Education participate in the event.
- A very high level of appreciation is expressed by the school.
The use of actual events from real life to deal with pedagogical texts becomes standard for YH.

1998

1998 brought the completion of the superintendent’s transition, and the start of the principal’s transition, beginning with the announcement of Eti’s retirement. During that year a transition process took place with teachers, students and other stakeholders at the school. Pedagogical and cultural norms remained stable and known, and all attention was focused on the transition.

Events and Circumstances

- A new superintendent comes to the city.
- A formal, and somewhat suspicious relationship with the new superintendent is established.
- Eti announces her retirement.
- Eti prepares Debbie, a teacher within the school, for a new position.
- Debbie becomes the principal. The process of shifting the locus of leadership takes eight months.
- The style of leadership shifts from moral-transformational to transformational-managerial.
The New Principal’s Actions

- Debbie works very long school hours. She arrives very early, and leaves only when all work is done.
- Debbie hires external experts to provide instructional guidance, according to subject matter.
- Enrichment in non-school related topics is provided as well.
- Teachers receive less support from the principal in communication with parents.
- Trust and communication is established between the school leadership and the P.T.O.
- Debbie fulfils an old promise made by Eti to accomplish a change in the school’s diploma.
- The achievement test failure rate continues to drop, reaching the following lows:
  - 10% failure in language arts
  - 12% failure in math

1999

The successor principal experiences her first days as a principal. Since she is coming from within the staff, she is familiar with the school norms, the culture and the pedagogical practices. She has to adapt to her own position within the staff.
Personal relationships begin to change, her personal voice starts to be heard, and personality issues come to the surface. She wishes to provide stability and continuity, while adding her own perceptions of school life.

*Events and Circumstances*

- One teacher leaves the school.
- A connection is created with seniors from “Mizpe Hayam,” a nearby historical site.
- Some opposition to the transition is experienced, influenced by prior personal relationships among staff.
- Debbie decides to “upgrade” students' previously written books, and turn them into the pedagogical infrastructure of a future resource center and museum.
- The museum project is directed top-down in a managerial leadership style.

2000

The successor principal takes advantage of all previous learned teaching skills, and adds her own personal touch to the environment, chiefly in regard to the visual aspect. The seasoned staff continues to perform well. Professional relations between the P.T.O and the school staff flourish, due to mutual work on the upcoming school museum.
Events and Circumstances

- The Ministry of Education initiates a national system of examinations, following worldwide scores placing Israel in a low position. The Ministry of Education re-evaluates the guiding rules and adds national testing every other year in four subjects: math, English, science and language arts.

Theme of the Year

- For this year’s school theme, the students design a tour office. They accomplish their language arts, math, geography, history, English and other needed standards while planning a tour around the world.

2001

Events and Circumstances

- The school opens the planned learning museum, involving all school members in the opening. Students share their books written during the last few years, parents and grandparents contribute pictures and the municipality supports building changes.
- School grades are above national norms, especially in language art skills
- 8% failure in language arts.
- 10% failure in math.
2002

The school is now a unified whole. The actions of students, teachers, and parents are not separate, but are combined in school projects where everybody is involved. New pedagogical practices are put in place, yielding good academic achievements. The sustained reform process can now deservedly be called a success that was institutionalized into a school culture.

Events and Circumstances

- The school is named one of the 100 leading schools of the state.
- The story of the school and its history is published nationally.

These representative key events summarize the prolonging of a successful reform process as it presents itself, year by year, in the data.

The Poem

Four months after the transition, there was a Chanukah\textsuperscript{12} party for the staff, and Eti was invited. At the event, a poem was presented, written by the teachers. It provides a splendid description of the transition process and its influence on the school reform. The key value of this poem is how it reveals the shifts in leadership

\textsuperscript{12} Chanukah is a Jewish holiday.
style and the staff’s reaction. Many of the ideas mentioned in this poem can be confirmed by comparison with interviews with the teachers and the principals.

The poem's structure permits a fairly straightforward interpretation. Stanzas alternate between descriptions of the two principals. Most phrases describing Eti relate to the way she taught the teachers how to learn, teach and listen to the student. The contain verbs like *developed, led, and paved*. Such verbs portray a leadership vision in which the child is the center of teaching practices, within an environment that transmits both trust and a belief in staff abilities, commitment, and togetherness.

While the poem expresses satisfaction with the transition, the current principal, Debbie, is described in more managerial and authoritative terms, with phrases like “you don’t let anything fail”, “a fanatic making things work”, “without you it could have been difficult”, “carry the wagon”, “teachers felt all of her attention is addressed to them”, and “she is in control”. Her relationship with the students is addressed more physically (“hugging the children”) rather than pedagogically.

The teachers express a high degree of comfort in their own performance as a staff, but they do not emphasize a sense of being challenged. Where Eti presented challenges, Debbie offered support. That shift had definite positive aspects, however, as some of the teachers noted (in their interviews) that they needed the "time off" from pedagogical pressure, or that it enabled them to slightly "flex" their teaching methods.
The poem communicates a valuing of both leadership styles. The former principal's pedagogical vision is now owned by most of the staff. However, the current principal's support of the staff enables them to enact the vision with confidence and courage. For example, the dance teacher claimed that she hesitated to come to Eti with claims against a child, since she always assumed that the principal would take the student’s side, regardless of circumstances. On the other hand, she felt more confident coming to Debbie, who was more likely to be supportive of the teacher.

The poem communicates a clear desire for stability and continuity in the vision of the school as well as openness to different, more predictable ways of managing the staff. This, perhaps, is a key factor in the successful leadership transition for this school. A new principal with a new vision might have been too threatening to the staff’s custodianship of the school culture, and forms of resistance may have emerged. After all, the staff felt so confident in their pedagogical approach that they refused to consider an outsider to lead the school. As one said: “some of the teachers felt very confident about their pedagogical ideology and performance, and others were in process of learning and improving, [but we all] wanted to continue the way we believed in.”

In between the lines of this specific poem (as supported by other data sources) the teachers offer recognition of what they are giving up (Eti's personal instruction),
and what they are gaining (Debbie's managerial abilities), especially in relation to the principal's influence on their work.

These features help address the basic research questions. The recognition of the staff’s ownership and professional knowledge explains the continuity and stability of the school’s vision. For instance, as one of the teachers said: “the former principal bequeathed pride and love for professional learning to the staff by using personal modeling… there was no gap between declaration level and performance level… she modeled everything she expected us to perform”. The ownership of the pedagogical vision by the staff was the key for the continuity of the sustained change.

Table 5: The Poem

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The poem</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Is it real?</em></td>
<td>An expression of surprise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Transition begins with letting go of something&quot; (Bridges, 1991, p.5).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The leadership has changed</em></td>
<td>People have the tendency to expect &quot;earthquakes” during transitions. The staff realizes that “business is as usual” despite the transition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>And the business is working?</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Is it real?</em></td>
<td>The team is very proud of the school.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

193
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The poem</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>The leadership has changed</em></td>
<td>There was a fear of letting go of Eti due to her very powerful leadership.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>And there are no doubts that our school is on its pedestal</em></td>
<td>The school has a clear culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Our school is stable on its mound</em></td>
<td>The staff experiences stability and continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Everything is working</em></td>
<td>The transition is not threatening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Everything is appropriate</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Everything is flourishing</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Everything is sane</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>And there are no shocks, or problems</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Girls, is that really the situation</em></td>
<td>The next step after &quot;letting go&quot; as described Bridges, is &quot;The natural zone… [the] old is gone and the new doesn't feel comfortable yet” (p.5).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Is it?</em></td>
<td>Debbie’s leadership is very matter-of-fact and managerial. The staff is excited about its ability to maintain school life the way it was, but Debbie, having already expressed her belief in the staff, takes it for granted that things will work fine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Girls?</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>And Debbie would say “That is obvious”</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>And Eti would say “I am not surprised that this is the situation”</em></td>
<td>Teachers were well aware of Eti’s trust and belief in staff abilities. Under her, they</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The poem

And you will say “we were hoping that
things will be like that.
And we say
Cross our hearts
Those things could have been different
There is nothing to say
We are a staff that does big things
And with no secrecy or prudery we can say
That
We are a great staff
Great in our minds
Great in our acts
Great in our care
And great in our work morals

Analysis

developed ownership and commitment to the
shared vision.

Hopes for the future.

Group pride.

Group morale.

There is a change of attitude with a new
principal

Does this represent less fear and respect –or an
acceptance of the need for more management?

Based on the interviews, it is the latter.

There is a sense of a change of feeling and
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The poem</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>But above all</em></td>
<td>behavior, yet also that some norms should be kept.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Let’s say who forgot when she came to school</em></td>
<td>Remembering back before the reforms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>And when she left</em></td>
<td>Eti’s endless devotion to school life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Who came on her day off?</em></td>
<td>Her clear vision, way, ideology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Who is a fanatic at making things work?</em></td>
<td>Recognition of her leadership initiatives, mentoring, and enabling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>And who cares that things keep growing</em></td>
<td>Caring about things- centralizing responsibility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>But, what fun for us</em></td>
<td>The staff “comes into its own”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>To pat our backs</em></td>
<td>There is a recognition that there is continuity to the change process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>What fun to raise our heads</em></td>
<td>An expression of unity and group pride.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>And let the ego grow</em></td>
<td>Credit is given to Debbie for her work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Why not?</em></td>
<td>The need for a new leader to lead the team is acknowledged.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>After all we all work pretty hard for that</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Why not?</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Not everyday you meet a staff like that</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>But,</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>All of that couldn’t continue</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Without one necessary condition</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>All of that couldn’t continue</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Without a basic given</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The poem</td>
<td>Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A blond</td>
<td>Personal leadership.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With endless energies</td>
<td>Professional leadership.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A blond</td>
<td>The principal’s energies are highlighted –not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue eyes</td>
<td>the staff’s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debbie</td>
<td>Satisfaction with Debbie.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is nothing to say</td>
<td>High levels of expectation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Without you it was tough to continue</td>
<td>Supportive leadership.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debbie</td>
<td>Recognition of Debbie’s special gifts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is nothing to say</td>
<td>The staff recognizes new leadership potential.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Without you it could have been very difficult</td>
<td>Acceptance based on respect for, and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To march as we should</td>
<td>familiarity with the current principal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And you that stepped ahead</td>
<td>Acceptance of New Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In full turbo came up</td>
<td>Ongoing staff development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And you that stepped ahead</td>
<td>Staff’s continuing need for some</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gathered up your powers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And with potency you kept on walking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a way we did march for years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And with potency you lead the staff</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>And we all follow your steps</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And you enable us to grow</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and enable us to develop</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

197
The poem

And we are with you, we follow you
And that is really thinking big
And things are not always easy
And demands are all around
And you with your diligence
Hug all the children
You don’t leave anything not handled
You don’t let anything fail
With you we can keep on feeling
That we are a staff that lives big
So, it’s good that it is Chanukah
To take a break
It’s good that it is Chanukah
Simply to say
Thank you for being here
Because who else could
carry the wagon like that
Who else could have led everyone?
So happy Chanukah
A holiday full of light and happiness
And please rest a bit
So that can you be healthy for us

Analysis

independence.

Team work.

Professional dialog.

Diligence as a model.

Centralized control --managerial leadership.

Continuity.

Appreciation.

Debbie’s leadership style reflects managerial emphasis.

Personal concern.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The poem</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>And if we speak about light</em></td>
<td>Eti’s leadership and her heritage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>And if we say thank you</em></td>
<td>Staff has learned to teach each other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>So let us, Eti, for a moment</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Shift the light to you</em></td>
<td>Visionary leadership based on the teachers’ commitment and knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Send the light you radiate</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Because you always taught us</em></td>
<td>Trust in personal abilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>To light a candle from one another</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>And you said</em></td>
<td>Shared vision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>That whoever is full and giving</em></td>
<td>The sky is the limit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Is never lacking</em></td>
<td>Personal development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>And you filled all of us</em></td>
<td>Personal commitment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>And enriched us with no borders</em></td>
<td>Creativity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>You developed all of us</em></td>
<td>Enabling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>And believed and said</em></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>That with true belief of doing</em></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>With commitment, love and creativity</em></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>You can only ascend</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>And fly to the sky</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>And behind us we can lead children</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>And you are always within us</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>And we are with you</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>And in your very special way</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>We are proud of the path you paved for us</em></td>
<td>Recognizing the importance of change.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

199
We are proud in the way you led us  
This is the way we safely march  
This is the way which calls us  
To wake up every morning happy  

So you illuminate as a candle for us  
And your light fulfills and will never disappear  
And we strengthen it every day  
And give, fill, develop and grow  

Happy Chanukah

Analysis

Ownership of the process.  
The spirituality of the vision.  
The understanding of the "Basic Underlying Assumptions" (Schein, 1997, p.17).  
The ideology leading the change is owned by the staff.  
The stabiliztion of the school culture.  
Ongoing development.

Conclusion

The transition stages as presented above illustrate the significance of transitions of leadership to the sustained success of an educational reform effort. This study’s exploration of the transition process, combined with its comparison of the school’s performance before and after the transition, explicitly illuminate what is required in order to maintain a stable reform.

The initial reform effort in 1989 is the baseline of this research. Eti (the incoming principal at that time) had a vision of schooling that was in significant
conflict with what actually existed. Significant reform was therefore necessary. Her strategies included creating and developing the professional staff, changing pedagogical practices, and forming new personal and professional relationships. Her work not only resulted in significant improvements in student improvement, it also paved the way for the reform to outlast her own personal involvement.

Creating a professional learning environment among teachers was the first and the most important step of this reform. The use of personal modeling and lead-teaching enhanced the staff’s personal development, and laid a steady base for upcoming changes. A cycle of teaching-modeling-practicing-evaluating was formed in order to enable a gradually developing learning process among the staff. In addition Eti actively encouraged teachers to go back to school and receive their bachelor's degrees. These efforts were continued and supported by her successor Debbie.

Eti also had a clear vision of how to structure the students’ learning environment to support and implement new pedagogical practices. The physical changes she made, together with context-related changes, formed the second step towards school change.

Eti’s high level of leadership and pedagogical knowledge, and her concurrent effort to include more teachers in curriculum writing and development, resulted in the growth of commitment and knowledge among the staff. That commitment would eventually transform uncertainty into ownership; individualism into partnership, and
passivity into initiative. The process was prolonged over nine years, from 1989 to 1998. The implementation of the school vision, as emerging from the principal's vision, and as executed by the whole school community, was the key foundation for the continuity of values and beliefs within the school.

The uniqueness of this particular transition can be credited to the way it was built up over the course of years. The principal aimed not only at creating a change process in the school towards better educational achievements, but also at planting knowledge, ownership, and responsibility within the school community. In the process, the school gradually shifted from an individually led vision to one led by a group. The continuity of this vision over the course of fourteen years is surely the cause of the dramatic success of the attendant reform.

Transitions in leadership will inevitably cause changes within a school. In this particular case, the ongoing reform continued despite a change in leadership at the highest level of the school. This study of the school leads to the conclusion that the stability surrounding the transition, particularly as supported by the selection of a successor principal from within the staff, enabled the reform to continue to thrive. The new principal was committed to the existing school vision, and conceived of her role in the vision as being the provider of support, maintenance and improvement.

Contrary to expectations, the reform was not greatly affected by the changes in leadership style. Although Eti had a transformational leadership style, and Debbie’s style was largely managerial, such differences were secondary to their
shared commitment to a common vision, and to the fact that the values and skills of the school were already invested in the staff.

Nor did it seem to matter that the principals’ pedagogical style varied as well. The predecessor principal was a lead teacher for the teachers, modeling instructional behavior for them, and providing feedback. The successor principal served more as a teacher facilitator and supporter. She enabled further professional development, but preferred not to do teacher instruction herself.

Over the course of this research, I identified three main prerequisites as the most significant in enabling a sustained change process in times of leadership transition:

1. Continuity of vision
2. Persistent promotion of teachers’ professional knowledge.
3. A balanced transfer from a visionary to a manager; based on common values, and on the accountability of teachers regarding pedagogical practices.

The history of educational change contains a high rate of failure. This research, however, offers insights from a story of success, hopefully in support of other successful reforms.
CHAPTER 5 - SUMMARY AND FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

Despite the many volumes written on the topic of educational reform, there is much about it that remains unexplored. One such neglected, but important subject of inquiry is the question of how a successful reform can be sustained subsequent to the departure of the original reformer. This case study offers a valuable look at a successful educational reform, and the way in which it was sustained through and beyond a transition in leadership. In examining that reform process, this research has been the source of some surprising insights that run counter to common assumptions about the nature of educational leadership.

Leadership Transitions and Educational Change

This study suggests that we should change the way we look at the school principalship, particularly in terms of its influence in times of educational change. As a result of taking the subject of principal transitions as a focus of this study, this research examined both the impact of the school principal on organizational change, and the impact of a transition in leadership on the continuity of that change. In relationship to this particular case study, the findings indicated that the school principal was perceived as having considerable influence on the functioning of the
organization, and was viewed as the primary leader of the organizational change.

In fact, in the academic world, there is a very close connection between the concepts of leadership transition and educational change, to the point that changes in leadership are used to initiate educational reforms. As Levin (1998) notes: “studies of higher education presidents suggest that the period of presidential transition and the early phases of new presidency are times when there is considerable potential for organizational change” (p. 407). Birnbaum (1989) concurs in his research of presidential succession in higher education, when he says that a change in leadership is certain to “make a difference” (p. 123).

Characteristics of Leadership

But what is it that makes principals so important? A survey of the literature reveals a lively discourse and debate about them, their influence and their connection to educational reform. The works of Fullan (2002), Quinn (1991), Morgan (1997) and others deal with the individual aspects of leadership in depth, including organizational change, leadership, educational change and other such topics. A relevant question covered by these scholars is “What is the extent of the influence of a principal on organizational behaviors and actions?” By following that same inquiry through the perspectives of many different thinkers, we gain valuable insight into what are the effects of leadership.
A researcher, however, should be able to answer the question of *why* things are happening, rather than just the question of *how*. This entails looking for the root causes of change and continuity, and exploring the basic assumptions undergirding them. For that, we require more innovative ways of thinking and understanding, as we seek tacit knowledge outside the boundaries of lists of leadership characteristics.

The findings of this case study suggest that Evans (1996) is right to focus on “a new kind of leadership that emphasizes authenticity, translating the integrity, core beliefs, and natural strengths of school leaders into practical strategies for problem solving” (p. xiii). As Nietzsche said in his work *Twilight of the Idols* (1889), “the ‘why?’ shall, if at all possible, not give the cause for its own sake so much as for a particular kind of cause - a cause that is comforting, liberating, and relieving” (p. 62). In other words, the key to understanding leadership does not lie in the leader’s actions, but rather, in the vision underlying those actions, in the *why* rather than the *how*.

The highest virtue is to be true to your self as an educator. True maturity is to discover or create an identity for yourself within the school, and to understand the causes of your actions. It can safely be assumed that most leaders have a level of knowledge appropriate for the position they hold, but it is their vision that transforms the knowledge into a real process of change.

We should practice our beliefs in the way described by Daniel Pank (1992) in his book *Like a Roman*: “what good educators we were, when we didn’t make an
effort to educate” (p.17). In other words, if you understand the why any how can be right, as long as it is clearly aimed at a clear vision and ethically acceptable.

The leaders must guide the organizational behavior by demonstrating very clear core values in actual school acts and not only in theory. At the same time, however, they have to be aware in their decisions about what not to do. Daily acts that do not serve the goals must be diminished. The courage and the ability to publicly declare that a certain act or curriculum is not in alignment with the school’s pedagogical vision represents a high level of understanding in the implementation of school reform.

In the case of YH, as seen in this study, the curriculum was built up holistically throughout the reform process, therefore divergent streams were prevented from emerging within it. The moral values that informed the school's goals were clear, and directed every curricular activity. As an example, consider the school’s use of written language to communicate, dialog, present outcomes, express feelings such as love and anger, and perform many other functions. The idea grew out of Eti’s conviction that the children’s learning should relate to their own lives. The policy was based on values, but it led to academic results –YH was recently recognized by the Israeli Ministry of Education as one of the best 100 schools in Israel.
What Made the YH Transition Successful?

This research centered around a successful transition at one particular school. But what made that transition successful? Analysis of the data has provided a possible answer: that the successor principal shared a common vision with her predecessor, and that the same vision was also invested in both the staff, in the culture of the school, and in the relationships with the larger community.

The Successor Principal

Debbie, the successor principal, was originally a teacher from the school. Her familiarity with the school culture and pedagogies supported and enabled a smooth transition. The fact that the two principals shared similar visions regarding pedagogy and other facets of education enabled the school to successfully sustain the changes that had taken place previously.

It is important to note that, outside of vision, the two principals were quite different. Although that might seem problematic for a transition, the fact that there were differences between them was actually a benefit, as it enabled growth in areas that were a higher priority for the successor (than for the predecessor). As Debbie remarked, “I received a garden full of nice flowers, now I need to water them, and rethink what I want to add.”

It was an advantage for this particular school that the successor came from within the staff. Previously, she had taken part in the reform process, supported the
implementation of the vision, and participated in the pedagogical workshops with the rest of the staff. Bridges (2000) mentions this type of situation in his book about transitions: “In some cases, a potential leader already waits in the wings, needing only an opportunity –or invitation –to use his or her guiding and mobilizing skills” (p. 5).

The fact that there was an overlap between the principals’ administrations was also very helpful. Thus, based on this study, it can be recommended that the predecessor and the successor be on site together for a period of time during a transition. This kind of administrative overlap helps to clarify the process for both the leaders and the team.

A major facet of this study was the examination of the leadership styles and roles of the two principals, as examined using the competing values model. To determine these styles and roles, the educational and personal perceptions of both principals were examined, as described in the data presentation chapter. The identification of their styles was done according to the teachers' interviews, and was finalized and approved by both principals in the member check.

An interesting finding was that the personality of the principals and the way they used their skills were very different, yet both principals fit into almost the same order of quadrants at more or less the same level. This finding confirms the importance of the two leaders sharing a common why. (A competing values map for both principals is shown in Figure 5. Principal A is Eti, the predecessor and Principal...
B is Debbie, the successor.)

There were some additional findings of interest regarding the leadership style for both principals. They both possessed abilities from all four quadrants, developed to highly professional levels, though each had quadrants that she favored. The importance of this kind of balance has been noted by Quinn (1991), who said, “It makes explicit those values that most assessors carry around implicitly and ensures that other values are also considered in a positive way” (p. 88). In other words, many diverse kinds of behaviors are expected from a school principal. The focus is on all the abilities they present, and how they implement them in the organizational culture to create success. These various abilities satisfy the need for balance in the sensitive educational organization.
"Innovation begins with content, the actual program for change, but their success depends heavily on the readiness of people, the organizational capacity of schools’ and crucially, the kind of leadership that is exerted" (Evans, xiv).

Figure 4. Competing Values Maps for the Principals of YH
Figure 4 shows that both principals were identified as having a high level of performance in all four quadrants. Eti’s map is slightly skewed in the direction of transformational leadership, whereas Debbie tends towards having a managerial style of leadership. Both principals, however, were admired by their staffs for their own unique and significantly different qualities, among which were the following:

(a) “The right to fail”. Although Eti had a vast amount of practical knowledge, she was ready to enable failure among her staff in order to empower their learning. Debbie was more anchored in her perception of how things should be done and therefore she was unlikely to let teachers fail.

(b) The manner in which they conveyed their vision in relationships with the staff. Eti was described as a “professional listener” – a sympathetic ear. She was always there to listen, give hugs and, most importantly, provide the leading questions that would help the teachers find the answers themselves. Debbie, conversely, was described as someone who listened to make sure everything was going right. She was very warm and friendly, and provided fewer questions and more answers. Her conversations were a source of security and support, rather than of challenge and encouragement.

(c) The way in which they used personal knowledge. Eti put her knowledge into practice in the school, indirectly, through a constant
process of teaching the teachers. Debbie, on the other hand, used her knowledge primarily as a resource, to support the teacher’s own projects. One of the probable reasons for the shift is the teachers’ personal growth during the years, and their decreasing need for personal mentoring.

(d) More initiatives took place under Eti, who envisioned the growth of the school, and recruited staff to make it happen. By the time Debbie took over, the school was already highly developed as a locus of creativity.

(e) Eti’s relationship to the vision was somewhat stronger, in that she cited only pedagogical belief as a cause for her acts, whereas Debbie also took into consideration a variety of administrative concerns related to finances and resources.

Overall, what was the impact of these leadership roles on the overall reform process? From one point of view, it enabled the process to take place in the first place. Eti's role as an educator, and later as a mentor, was the foundation for the establishment of the reform, in a way that ensured its implementation for the long run. Of course, the process could not have been as successful had she not been able to adapt her role, over the course of the reform, in response to the staff's growing independence.
The findings show that the leadership role is significant to the overall change process, mainly in the way it reflects and shapes the main priorities of the organization. In this particular school the outstanding knowledge of the principal who led the reform was crucial to its success. She had interwoven every step of school life in a relevant way to achieve the expected outcomes. As a support to the process, she nurtured very strong professional and informal relationships to accompany the academic work.

The Staff

A crucial factor in this transition was the way in which the basic assumptions of the school had been assimilated by the teachers. They were educated and responsible for their own learning. They shared responsibility for the reform, and they demonstrated accountability in the process. But this state of affairs did not occur accidentally or incidentally, which leads to an important question: How was it that certain components of the reform process were implemented in such a way that they became basic assumptions of the organization, remaining stable even in the middle of a leadership transition?

The first answer is that the reform was gradually transformed from the leader’s vision into a communal vision. At the beginning of the transition the teachers needed Eti to pave the way, but as time went on, those needs changed. The leadership style became less important to the continuity of the reform, as the principal's mode of
influence changed from teaching and mentoring to facilitating and enabling. In this way, the absence of the retiring principal did not create gaps in, or a loss of, the school’s vision. The teachers had adopted it to the point that it was theirs as much as hers. This sense of ownership served as the first anchor for the staff in the sustained change process. Their approach was stable, regardless of the principal's style. The shared ideology and pedagogical views were what composed the content of reform. The why and not the how determined the teachers’ actions.

The second anchor was teacher education. The former principal conducted an ongoing instructional-learning process within the staff that continued after the transition. The teachers were also encouraged to enhance their personal academic levels. Together, the teachers’ level of knowledge and their experience with pedagogical practices became the infrastructure of the reform.

*Transforming the Staff*

The first step in changing the staff's educational perceptions took place through an integration of theory and practice. The learning teachers did about pedagogy was followed by reading assignments from one workshop to another, in which they had to come up with new theoretical insights as well as actual lesson plans. Workshops were based on developing professional discourse for practical problems, using visiting classes as a demonstration for peer learning, and learning from the analysis of practice. Supporting this, Darling-Hammond (2000) states:
“teachers’ knowledge is among the most productive means for increasing student learning” (p.1).

The mentoring and facilitation provided allowed the staff to learn from experience, to fail, and to reflect on their acts, in order to revise their pedagogical performance. A key facet of this process, as mentioned in every relevant teacher interview, was that when they came to the principal with a question or a need, they were always answered by another question.

Although the teachers may not always have appreciated this approach, it was very effective, because it guided them towards self reliance, and trained them to always ask Eti’s central question: “What is in the best interests of the students?” In this way, the leadership of the change was transferred from an individual to a staff.

Clearly much of the success in this story is specific to a certain school, which had an exceptional leader with outstanding amounts of knowledge, ample instructional abilities, and a clear moral vision. However, there is also much in this that could be used in any school.

Influence of the Staff

A standard question at this point would be, what were the organizational strategies used to cope with transition and change, and what was the overall effect of those strategies on pedagogical practice? In this case, however, the organizational strategies grew organically from the previously well-implemented individual growth
of the staff members. This aligns with the research conducted by Sheppard and Brown (1999) who found that a precondition for successful change was that “all principals were overtly engaged in the change process but also initiated structures that provided for distributed collaborative leadership” (p. 25).

Eti’s goal was that each staff member would grow from the place he or she was at personally. The idea was to embody change at the level of implementation and not at the level of recitation (i.e. to actively create reforms, and not just to talk about them). She realized, however, that every person can develop only from where he or she is. An individual, based on personal rhythms, may expand and enhance his or her knowledge base for a limited time only, and then must spend time internalizing what has been learned. Furthermore, one must always judge the learning process in relationship to the students (who, in this case, were the staff members) and not in relationship to the teacher (who, in this case, was Eti). The narrower the base of prior knowledge, the more slowly and cautiously one must proceed. This is as was reported by Duchesne (1999), who found (in a study examining the relationships between developmental learning, adaptive flexibility and critical thinking levels) that years of education were the only significant predictor of critical thinking levels among organizational leaders.

A distinctive feature of Eti’s administration was her tolerance of disagreement. If all the members of the organization obey one-hundred-percent of the principal’s demands, all they will be able to attain is what she knows to demand.
There will be no surprises, no personal growth, and no variety. What energizes the reform is the diversity, the variation, the growth for the individual as well as for the community.

The full extent of the value of this policy did not, however, become clear until the advent of the transition. If the staff had known only to follow Eti’s orders, what would have happened to them when she was no longer present? They might have been unable to continue. Instead, she knew how to let them learn in ways that gave them the tools necessary for action. Every individual in the organization was asked to take responsibility for the pedagogical practices, even (or especially) when those practices did not work. Each staff member was asked to constantly evaluate and criticize, but the criticism was a means to an end.

The transition process at large took six to eight months while the retiring principal was there, and an additional six to eight months with the new principal. The transition was smooth and most of the school activities remained the same until February or March of the following year. The research makes it very clear that there was a high level of involvement for all of the staff in the transition process. The teachers learned about the transition a few months prior to the actual date. This advance knowledge made the process less intimidating to the school community, things looked less intimidating. As noted by Bridges (2000): “There is… a potential upside to leadership transition. With preparation, teamwork, and the right strategies,
partnerships cannot only survive this period, but actually emerge stronger, better focused, and more effective” (p. 3).

The success depicted in this case study shows that a transition should be explained and prepared ahead of time. Specific why, when, who, what and how questions should be addressed. Each individual in the school must be treated as a unique person experiencing a significant change in their own professional life. The new leader should meet with the staff on a regular basis, and discuss the main issues each individual experiences before and after the transition process, on the personal as well as the professional level. Such discussions continue to enhance the knowledge and experience of the established staff, while simultaneously acting as a valuable source of information for the staff and for the new leader alike. Based on the teachers’ level of knowledge and responsibility their involvement was crucial for the success of the transition. This agrees with the results of a study conducted in 1994 by Tewel, who proposed that an “organizational transition period of [a] school’s restructuring requires special attention and that major responsibility for transition management should rest with teachers” (p.336).

Lombardi (1992), in Anderson (1992) said “Build for your team a feeling of oneness, of dependence on one another and of strength to be derived by unity” (p. 48). This notion was echoed by a number of decisions in the transition process; the announcement was very early, and all teachers were involved in the process, as both as leaders of their classes, and as individuals in the school organization.
School Culture

It is hard to overestimate the importance of school culture. As Schein (1997) said, “Once people have a common system of communication and a language, learning can take place at a conceptual level and shared concepts become possible” (p.11).

When first approaching the concept of school culture, certain existing tools were considered in the search for a method to study the special traits of this particular school. The most prominent among these was Keefe’s 1993 instrument for approaching cultural change, the *Comprehensive Assessment of School Environments--Information System Management* (CASE--IMS). This had the endorsement of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, and the advantage of being well tested. However, in order to remain open to traits not examined in the instrument, and to focus on the questions of why things were being done (not only how), the decision was made to forgo the instrument. As it turned out, this decision proved correct when classroom seating, textbook purchase, and other traits and processes not considered by the CASE-IMS turned out to be significant parts of the school culture.

Instead of using a questionnaire, this research followed the more open-ended approach of Spradley (1980), who described the facets of culture in the following way:
When ethnographers study other cultures, they must deal with three fundamental aspects of human experience: what people do, what people know, and the things people make and use. When each of these is learned and shared by members of some group, we speak of them as cultural behavior, cultural knowledge, and cultural artifacts (p. 5).

This categorization serves as a frame in which to pose questions about the real changes the school underwent during the transition. Does the school community have different cultural behaviors, pieces of cultural knowledge and cultural artifacts after the leadership transition, or do the changes simply constitute the development and continuity of the same culture?

Clearly the school culture did metamorphose during the transition period, as was described in the data analysis. After the transition, however, the school culture as it now appeared had important similarities to the way it had been before. In the larger picture, the clear vision and mechanisms that led to actions were still based on the lucidity of the school culture; everyone knew their responsibilities, their ways of communication, expectations, and their personal stake in the organization, just as they had before.

Some research indicates that 95% of school culture is hidden in internal behaviors and acts, leaving 5% to be visible in artifacts. While this may be generally true, even a brief visit to YH gives one the sensation that one can actually feel the culture in the air –perhaps because it is a place where the ideology precedes the
actions. The school community believes in what they do, and each one of the teachers privileges the goals of the organization before class goals or even personal goals.

The staff is a significant part of the school’s culture. A specific example is Eti’s deputy principal, Elisheva, who intended to retire the same year as the leadership transition. However, she postponed her own retirement in order to support the transition and to ensure the school culture would continue. It was clear throughout the research process that the staff was familiar with the school’s vision, and more importantly, understood it. As one of the teachers explained, “we know how to teach, and we have our beliefs. No one can take that from us.” Students also played an active role in the reform. Their ability to dialog about their school curriculum, writing, performing, and partnership in school activities was inherent in the school culture.

To summarize more than ten years worth of perspective on this particular school, it is obvious that there were many changes on different levels. The physical environment changed greatly over the course of the initial reform, chiefly in regard to cleanliness, as acoustic ceilings were installed, new bathrooms were built, and a reasonable physical environment for learning was created. By analogy, Eti had transformed a roadside motel into a two-star hotel.

The subsequent leadership transition was also the occasion of further initiatives including but not limited to, a school museum, a new internal design, and a future plan for renovation. In this particular case, the new principal had a very good
appreciation of esthetics, making possible amazing further developments of the physical environment. To extend our previous analogy, Debbie upgraded the hotel to a four-star establishment, by using the previous changes as a foundation. She took books in which children wrote about the history of the city, and presented them as part of the museum. Other previous student projects were similarly upgraded. The previous learning became a knowledge source for future learning.

Other changes at the level of artifacts could be observed vis-à-vis the many ceremonies the school performed. Where Eti approached ceremonies from a professional and pedagogical perspective, Debbie’s perspective was less ideological, and more based in the human details. However, the school still continued to conduct every ceremonial activity that was held before the transition. In addition, Debbie added musical mornings, weekly assemblies, and more. We might say that the transition changed the specific details of the performances, but not their importance to the community.

Another seemingly significant change was the principal’s fiscal approach. During the initial reform, Eti spent a lot of money to purchase the basic equipment and materials, to rebuild the school library, and to add a class library in every room. Her preference was to use the entire available budget. She spent a fortune on books, and technological equipment. Debbie, on the other hand, purchased only what was necessary. This created an impression among the teachers that she was very financially conscious, a trait not always mentioned in a positive way. However a
closer examination of school materials and enrichment activities shows that Debbie also made better use of preexisting resources. In fact, despite the teacher’s impressions, the number and the quality of school events and activities actually increased subsequent to the transition.

Another point of difference post-transition was the teachers’ schedule, which reflected less of an emphasis on technology, and a greater focus on music and art. As Debbie explained, this was largely a reflection of the fact that the staff had progressed to the point where they were able to integrate technology into their own classrooms in a less formal manner, freeing time and resources for more cultural arts events.

The Larger Community

Both Eti and Debbie had good relationships with their PTO, but there were definite differences. Eti saw the PTO primarily as a means to an end, and did not hesitate to pull rank when her goals did not match the parent’s wishes. Debbie, on the other hand, viewed a good relationship with the PTO as a goal in of itself. She was more concerned with the way the parents would view her acts, particularly in light of having such a dominant predecessor. Her position was also more tenuous by nature – unlike Eti, she had not yet received tenure as a principal, which, in Israel, assures permanent employment upon the completion of eight years in the office.

Reflecting her skill as a manager of resources, Debbie also made steps forward in using the network of connections available through the PTO. One
example of this is that she used a parent’s contacts to find a better security company for the school. Another, very different example is that she used pictures and stories from student’s grandparents as part of the school museum. Of course, Eti drew upon parent resources as well, but never to the same extent or with the same effectiveness.

Debbie’s work in this area bodes well for the future of the reform process, at least according to the research of Nadeau and Leighton (1996), who examined the role of leadership in sustaining school reform. Their results indicated that effective leaders cultivated a broad definition of community and gave voice to their stakeholders. They “were committed to the dream and adopted key values; used knowledge to minimize failure and encourage risk-taking” (p.1). This suggests another factor in successful continuity of reform, good community involvement.

Net Results and Findings

*The Principals’ Influence*

What did the study ultimately show about the reform process, with regard to the two principals and their influence? Both Eti and Debbie were described by their teachers as very people-oriented. When interviewing a new teacher, Eti frequently asked “How often do you stand in class with your face to the students, and how often with your back to the students”? The answer to this question would give her an immediate impression of the teacher’s personal approach to her students. By analogy,
both Debbie and Eti “stood with their faces” towards the school community. Each had her own advantages and disadvantages that were apparent in the data analysis.

Eti had an excellent relationship with the staff both personally and professionally. Although the same was true for Debbie, some of the teachers felt mixed emotions after the transition. One teacher chose to leave the school after the transition, citing discomfort with the new principal. Conversely, another privately shared a sense of relief following the transition – for whatever reason, she had never developed any personal relationship with Eti. The majority of the teachers, however, felt they had good relationships with both principals, being able to share with, to ask questions, and to make requests of either.

On a professional level, Eti taught workshops, modeled instructional behavior, led personal and group learning, and gradually shared her vision with the staff whenever she felt they were ready to own another piece of it. Having said that, it is also true that the teachers were intimidated by her for a long time, based on her demand for a high level of knowledge, or to be more specific, a high commitment to seeking knowledge. The teachers knew that they were expected to learn and grow constantly, and that the only way they could fail was by not asking when they did not know. Debbie followed the same pedagogical pathway; although she based her approach on the knowledge the teachers had already gained in their previous years, and thus focused less on “formal” learning experiences.
Sharma (1998) indicates the need to “empty your cup” and free some room for new knowledge [translated from the Hebrew]:

Like a cup, they [leaders] are filled to the edge. Their minds are replete with opinions, ideas and superstitions, until nothing new can enter; in our world which constantly changes, where leaders have to learn new concepts and trends and new abilities all the time, this is very fatal. (p. 41)

As instructional leaders, the teachers had their cup filled to the brim under Eti, and so many of them felt a sense of gratitude and relief under Debbie’s more informal learning system. The transition had enabled a shift from one kind of professional relationship to another, in a way that allowed the teachers to open new horizons for personal development, even if these were not specifically school related.

There are other differences in this area. Debbie was more exacting in the concepts she found important. Where Eti measured success in terms of teacher’s learning and improvement, Debbie demanded results. She refused to give up. She knew that she inherited a staff at a high level of knowledge and performance, and she expected them to continue to perform at that level. Her style of staff development was more oriented around discipline.

Both principals acknowledged reciprocity in their dialogs, but again there were differences. Eti tended to be described in this area as “knowledgeable”, and “motherly”, whereas the adjectives applied Eti were “friendly”, and “willing to cooperate.” As with so many other things in the school, the use of dialog as a
communication tool remained the same, but the contents changed. As mentioned in the data presentation chapter, Eti insisted that the teachers think in order to identify their needs, and express their needs in order to make decisions. Under Debbie, the situation was not the same, and the need to ask questions was less pressing, given that the teachers were more knowledgeable. She offered them ideas, but if they did not find them suitable for their pedagogical work, they knew how to argue against them.

**Discrete Pedagogical Practices**

Content-based professional development enabled the teachers to understand the underlying goals behind their classroom methods. A clear vision of good teaching led them to develop better habits, and retain them throughout the transition process. This focus on the teacher's pedagogical knowledge was based on Eti’s belief that “it is important that everyone wants to learn more than he can.”

Eti demonstrated a very high level of belief in people’s ability to learn. The individual and mutual learning process enabled the teachers to understand the essence of each classroom action, as reflected by the pedagogical approach, while developing their own personal interests. Eti told me the heart of instruction for her was developing the student’s will and motivation to learn. Nothing was taken for granted. This perspective yielded pedagogical practices that were owned by students and teachers, and thus unaffected by the leadership transition.
Once teachers had ownership of the reform process, the students were recruited as well. Recruiting the children into the pedagogical change enabled the teachers to have breathing time to look at the class as observers, and enabled the students to take an active part in teaching and learning. Children learn the most from other children. The children started to use their own personal experiences as a significant source of knowledge, happily sharing what they knew with peers and teachers, unaware that they were developing their own will and motivation to learn. You cannot tell a child to try harder, but you can set the conditions for his will to learn. Recognizing these conditions changed the students’ approach.

Reading was a major facet of the school’s culture, but the definition of what is reading was deliberately left vague. Leafing through a book was seen as important as reading. The child had the right to choose what to read, when to read, where to read, and how much to read. The use of multiple knowledge sources engaged the children in the learning process.

Eti developed critical thinking based on the assumption that a pedagogical argument can take place only between two people who have knowledge, who are literate and care about their opinions. The baseline expectations for both teachers and students, therefore, included reading assignments. The teachers had workshops on the different issues they would later have to demonstrate in class. Veteran and new teachers had to debate about instructional solutions based on their own personal knowledge base. Teachers would visit each other’s classes in order to observe.
Personal initiative was rewarded, as a way to encourage teachers to act. Thus it might happen that one class had something that another lacked. If the teacher of the second classroom demanded to know why his or her students lacked the item, the response would be “because you didn’t ask.”

The students were given reading assignments by subject, not by textbooks. In other words, they had to read on certain topics, but the particular source to use was in their own control. Eti was a great believer that all reading was good reading, so if some students preferred comics to books, she did not see that as problematic.

Under Eti, all procedures for the classroom were first modeled by the principal. She worked with them in much the same way as she demanded that they work with the students. Lucidity of purpose was the basis of the pedagogical content and practice.

Once the teachers had gone through a basic learning process they were exposed to different educational approaches in order to formulate their own personal attitudes. Diverse methods were welcomed as long as they related to the larger vision. Most pedagogical materials were prepared by the staff in school. These included class curriculums, work assignments, exams, instruction books of how to mentor new teachers in school.

The teachers’ knowledge levels, clear understanding of expected practices, mastery of the little details (which textbook to use, in what order to teach, the significance of class seating, etc.), peer observation, peer critique, and well-defined
standards formed the basic building blocks for the continuity of the successful sustained school reform through the leadership transition.

The pedagogical environment invited the students to learn, and their creativity was highly appreciated. The teachers were not the only source of information, and sometimes they became students themselves, as when the students shared findings of their own, and created new learning centers. Of all facets of the school, the pedagogical practices were the least affected by the transition.

The high quality of so many different facets of school life can be explained by following after Schein (1997) who said

Consensus on the means to be used creates the behavioral regularities and many of the artifacts that eventually come to be identified as the visible manifestations of the cultures. Once these regularities and patterns are in place, they become a source of stability for members and are therefore strongly adhered to. (p.61)

In other words, the school curriculum, materials and teaching methods became manifestations of the implemented process of reform.

Alterations in the Reform Process

As shown by this research, even when two leaders have similar traits and visions, a change in leadership transition always will entail alternations in the reform process itself. However, in this case, the unique relationship between the predecessor
and the successor meant that the changes that did take place served the growth and development of the existing reform process.

Conclusions

General Impressions

In the modern educational world change is an integral part of the process. We encounter it in the classrooms, in the teacher’s lounge and in the principal’s office; in both our professional and our personal lives. We cannot prevent change, but we can strive to make sure it aligns with our needs, our interests and our realities. And, as this research has shown, even the biggest transitions can be guided to align with the needs of the educational organization.

The biggest surprise for me as a researcher was to learn that a leader can lead a change with strong and nonnegotiable attitudes, yet at the same time be a supportive facilitator, open to working with persons at every level of ability. The best feature of this particular school, as it seemed to me, was the way it utilized every single member of the school community. It was as though Eti could see the future strengths of the people she worked with, and thus look beyond current weaknesses. Even though she had very definite goals and standards, when all was said and done, the basic mode of this reform was participative.

It is important to emphasize, however, that the rules for all participants were clearly delineated. The principal had to lead, teach, support, facilitate and evaluate
and the teachers had to learn, ask, develop and learn again. Their participation in the process of reform was to take responsibility for their own professional development. In summary, the reform process was first and foremost a change of the staff’s educational perceptions, accompanied by their assimilation of the leading values of the change.

Paulo Coelho (1997), in his book *Diario de un mago*, said “The way of tradition is not the way of selected people, it is of all human beings” (translated from the Spanish, p. 9).

Eti had a very strong moral leadership style, which she expressed in her actively transformational leadership. Coming from a foundation of firm belief, she created ownership and commitment among the staff. The results can been seen in the basic assumptions of the school community today, which clearly include ownership, knowledge, responsibility and commitment to continuous reform.

The continuity of the reform was enabled by Eti’s building of knowledge within those who would determine the future of the school beyond her departure, i.e. teachers, parents, and students. The fact that people already knew the new principal decreased the levels of stress and anxiety among the school community, which together shared the responsibility for the rhythms of reform.

The teachers indicated that they preferred someone from their own ranks. They did not want to undergo changes beyond the ones they believed in and with which they were confident. They felt that the school was already on the right path. It
had a clear educational vision and a distinctive way of life. The lines of communication formed between students, teachers and parents were important to maintain.

As Neighbors (1993) said, “School administrators must determine that change objectives are met and positively influence students, teachers, staff, and community” (p.38). Both Debbie and Eti were highly available to their staffs. They worked unlimited hours and were emotionally and physically there for the school community.

A tangential but important question raised by this research is what impact the unique interplay of culture, methodology and interpersonal relationship have on qualitative research and on the relationship between the researcher and the subject. In the particular case of this research, there was a very close correspondence between the researcher and the persons who were the main subjects of that research, because all were elementary school principals in Israel.

This correspondence had both advantages and disadvantages for the research. One of the key advantages was a level of access and transparency that would have been difficult or impossible for an outsider to achieve. A researcher coming from another culture would be immediately confronted with a host of culture-based dynamics which might obscure the individual nature of the school. For example, in Israel children call their teachers and their principal by their first name, a behavior which is seen in many American schools as a sign of disrespect. In addition, the researcher’s
familiarity with the specific job of principal allowed a clear and deep understanding about which duties and behaviors were standard and which were exceptional. For example, an outsider might not have realized how unusual it was for Etti to take on the role of lead teacher.

Another advantage of having similarities with the subjects is that it supported the formation of a close personal relationship with the subjects, which then allowed access to information at a much greater depth and intimacy than would have been otherwise possible.

There are also two major potential disadvantages to such access and intimacy. The first is that it is possible that one may overlook details or questions that might be more apparent to an outsider. For this reason, it is important to have a solid foundation in research skills and methods. The other disadvantage is that the formation of a close relationship with the subjects may lead to a loss of objectivity, or to attempts by the subjects to influence the results. Both potential disadvantages were addressed in the research methodology. For example, when findings were shared with Debbie, she was unhappy to be described as "managerial." However, to maintain the integrity of the research, I had to report the results that best fit the data, even though this led to moments of tension at a personal level.
The Three Main Phases of the Reform

The findings of this research reflect three main phases in this particular school’s history of reform:

(a) A successfully sustained initial reform process, categorized by principal modeling, a clear vision of how to approach and express knowledge, an understanding of the values of the reform and an investment of responsibility in the teachers and students.

(b) A transitional period that included preparation for the actual transfer of authority transition, engaged staff, utilized clear communication methods, and build upon the ownership and accountability of the school community.

(c) A post-transitional period featuring continuity of school culture and pedagogical practice based on a shared vision, individual growth of staff members, and recruitment of students as active partners of teaching and learning.

The traits of these three phases, as described above, enabled the school to sustain its successful reform and to maintain continuity following leadership transition.

Another significant finding was that the children's learning was based on skills and interest and not on content-related activities. The children’s ability to approach any kind of text, and the teachers’ ability to focus on the why of doing things, in preference to the how, provided the school community with stable tools
with which to approach the pedagogical content. In other words, the students and teachers had basic skills stable and excellent enough to deal with any subject matter.

Further Research Opportunities

As mentioned before, the topic of leadership transitions in relationship to preexisting educational reforms is one that has been neglected and under-researched. Therefore there are ample opportunities for further research to expand upon the finding of this particular case study. For example, the fact that the successor principal came from within the staff was apparently very significant in this particular transition. However for the purposes of research, it would be useful to examine an equivalent transition where the new principal is an outsider. Once the school staff is in the midst of a fully implemented reform process, what influence would an external principal, unfamiliar with (or perhaps even uninterested in) the change process have on the school, the teachers and the students?

Such a research project would be able to examine the question of whether a new principal would be able to overrule the initiatives of a well trained and unified staff, as well as the question of whether a reform process can survive based solely on the staff’s own ownership of the process.

Another fruitful area for research is the idea of continuity in a sustained educational reform, independent of any leadership transition. In line with the philosophy of best practices and learning from success, it might be recommended that
follow up research be done on this particular school in years to come, in order to explore the future of its unique reform process.

Implications and Recommendations

Based on this research, when searching for new school leadership, one must first define the path needed in the future: continuity or change. Once that decision has been made, the advantages and disadvantages of a local candidate in contrast to an external candidate should be taken into consideration. When a school that has a history of a successful educational reform undergoes a leadership transition, it is a different situation from a school where the reforms are inadequate or nonexistent. If the school staff is committed and owns the vision and practices, the successor needs to be able to identify with the existing vision. Therefore, in that situation selecting a principal from within the staff may offer advantages. Even if the principal comes to the school from the outside however, the staff should be taken into consideration. If the staff has a history of taking initiative, the new principal would be well advised to begin by seeking input from the staff to influence future decisions, in order to take advantage of their knowledge and experience, as well as to lessen possible future resistance.

Conversely, if a school does not possess significant or sustained reforms, and change is needed, than the new leader should be chosen based on the ability to lead the new vision. However there is an additional important lesson that can be learned
from Eti’s successes, which is that a new leader coming into such a situation should begin immediately to foster the development of future leadership. Creating candidates for the eventual inheritance of the leadership position should be considered part of the shared vision and school development. A large reason for the successful continuation of the reform at YH was that Eti had developed the staff to the point where a qualified successor could easily be drawn from its ranks.

In either case, special attention should be given to the nature of the existing situation, including the school vision, staff commitment, sense of ownership and current level of responsibilities within the organization, as well as the overall pedagogical perceptions. A comprehensive school description should therefore be created before recruiting a new principal. This information may assist in making a better match between leaders and schools, based on determined goals for future leadership. Assessment tools such as those offered by Quinn can be used to determine the leadership style and role of the incoming leader. This research, however, suggests that school vision, and allegiance to the same, is a much more crucial factor than leadership style or role.

The search committee itself should be familiar with the school vision and mission. If possible, the departing principal and some of his or her current staff members should be included in the decision making process, as their ideology and experience may be valuable in relationship to the significant decisions that have to be made by the new leadership.
In Conclusion

Regardless of other circumstances, a transition in leadership will always bring a new spirit to an organization. Even in this particular case, where there was a continuity of vision, many new ideas were added and school performance was upgraded. There is a new paradigm built with every new leader. If there is one thing that this research shows, however, it is that the success or failure of that new paradigm will depend most deeply on the depth and moral clarity of the underlying vision.
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Appendix A
ISLLC Standards

The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards have recently been developed by the Council of Chief State School Officers in collaboration with the National Policy Board on Educational Administration (NPBEA) to help strengthen preparation programs in school leadership (Van Meter & Murphy, 1997). Students enrolled in the Holy Family University Educational Leadership Program need to be familiar with these standards since they were used by ETS as the basis for developing the School Leadership Licensure Assessment examinations. Passing these examinations is a requirement for certification as a principal by Holy Family University and the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

There are six standards. Each standard is followed by the Knowledge required for the standard, the Dispositions or attitudes manifest by the accomplishment of the standard, and Performances that could be observed by an administrator who is accomplished in the standard.

Standard 1: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.

Knowledge

The administrator has knowledge and understanding of:

- learning goals in a pluralistic society
- the principles of developing and implementing strategic plans
- systems theory
- information sources, data collection, and data analysis strategies
- effective communication

Dispositions
The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to:

- the educability of all
- a school vision of high standards of learning
- continuous school improvement
- the inclusion of all members of the school community
- ensuring that students have the knowledge, skills, and values needed to become successful adults
- a willingness to continuously examine one’s own assumptions, beliefs, and practices
- doing the work required for high levels of personal and organization performance

Performances

The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that:

- the vision and mission of the school are effectively communicated to staff, parents, students, and community members
- the vision and mission are communicated through the use of symbols, ceremonies, stories, and similar activities
- the core beliefs of the school vision are modeled for all stakeholders
- the vision is developed with and among stakeholders
- the contributions of school community members to the realization of the vision are recognized and celebrated
- progress toward the vision and mission is communicated to all stakeholders
• the school community is involved in school improvement efforts
• the vision shapes the educational programs, plans, and actions
• an implementation plan is developed in which objectives and strategies to achieve the vision and goals are clearly articulated
• assessment data related to student learning are used to develop the school vision and goals
• relevant demographic data pertaining to students and their families are used in developing the school mission and goals
• barriers to achieving the vision are identified, clarified, and addressed
• needed resources are sought and obtained to support the implementation of the school mission and goals
• existing resources are used in support of the school vision and goals
• the vision, mission, and implementation plans are regularly monitored, evaluated, and revised
Standard 2: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.

Knowledge

The administrator has knowledge and understanding of:

- student growth and development
- applied learning theories
- applied motivational theories
- curriculum design, implementation, evaluation, and refinement
- principles of effective instruction
- measurement, evaluation, and assessment strategies
- diversity and its meaning for educational programs
- adult learning and professional development models
- the change process for systems, organizations, and individuals
- the role of technology in promoting student learning and professional growth
- school cultures

Dispositions

The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to:

- student learning as the fundamental purpose of schooling
- the proposition that all students can learn
- the variety of ways in which students can learn
• life long learning for self and others
• professional development as an integral part of school improvement
• the benefits that diversity brings to the school community
• a safe and supportive learning environment
• preparing students to be contributing members of society

Performances

The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that:
• all individuals are treated with fairness, dignity, and respect
• professional development promotes a focus on student learning consistent with the school vision and goals
• students and staff feel valued and important
• the responsibilities and contributions of each individual are acknowledged
• barriers to student learning are identified, clarified, and addressed
• diversity is considered in developing learning experiences
• life long learning is encouraged and modeled
• there is a culture of high expectations for self, student, and staff performance
• technologies are used in teaching and learning
• student and staff accomplishments are recognized and celebrated
• multiple opportunities to learn are available to all students
• the school is organized and aligned for success
• curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular programs are designed, implemented, evaluated, and refined
• curriculum decisions are based on research, expertise of teachers, and the recommendations of learned societies
• the school culture and climate are assessed on a regular basis
• a variety of sources of information is used to make decisions
• student learning is assessed using a variety of techniques
• multiple sources of information regarding performance are used by staff and students
• a variety of supervisory and evaluation models is employed
• pupil personnel programs are developed to meet the needs of students and their families
**Standard 3:** A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.

**Knowledge**

The administrator has knowledge and understanding of:

- theories and models of organizations and the principles of organizational development
- operational procedures at the school and district level
- principles and issues relating to school safety and security
- human resources management and development
- principles and issues relating to fiscal operations of school management
- principles and issues relating to school facilities and use of space
- legal issues impacting school operations
- current technologies that support management functions

**Dispositions**

The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to:

- making management decisions to enhance learning and teaching
- taking risks to improve schools
• trusting people and their judgments
• accepting responsibility
• high-quality standards, expectations, and performances
• involving stakeholders in management processes
• a safe environment

Performances

The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that:

• knowledge of learning, teaching, and student development is used to inform management decisions
• operational procedures are designed and managed to maximize opportunities for successful learning
• emerging trends are recognized, studied, and applied as appropriate
• operational plans and procedures to achieve the vision and goals of the school are in place
• collective bargaining and other contractual agreements related to the school are effectively managed
• the school plant, equipment, and support systems operate safely, efficiently, and effectively
• time is managed to maximize attainment of organizational goals
• potential problems and opportunities are identified
• problems are confronted and resolved in a timely manner
• financial, human, and material resources are aligned to the goals of schools
• the school acts entrepreneurially to support continuous improvement
• organizational systems are regularly monitored and modified as needed
• stakeholders are involved in decisions affecting schools
• responsibility is shared to maximize ownership and accountability
• effective problem-framing and problem-solving skills are used
• effective conflict resolution skills are used
• effective group-process and consensus-building skills are used
• effective communication skills are used
• a safe, clean, and aesthetically pleasing school environment is created and maintained
• human resource functions support the attainment of school goals
• confidentiality and privacy of school records are maintained
**Standard 4**: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.

**Knowledge**

The administrator has knowledge and understanding of:

- emerging issues and trends that potentially impact the school community
- the conditions and dynamics of the diverse school community
- community resources
- community relations and marketing strategies and processes
- successful models of school, family, business, community, government and higher education partnerships

**Dispositions**

The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to:

- schools operating as an integral part of the larger community
- collaboration and communication with families
- involvement of families and other stakeholders in school decision-making processes
- the proposition that diversity enriches the school
- families as partners in the education of their children
- the proposition that families have the best interests of their children in mind
- resources of the family and community needing to be brought to bear on the education of students
• an informed public

Performances

The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that:

• high visibility, active involvement, and communication with the larger community is a priority
• relationships with community leaders are identified and nurtured
• information about family and community concerns, expectations, and needs is used regularly
• there is outreach to different business, religious, political, and service agencies and organizations
• credence is given to individuals and groups whose values and opinions may conflict
• the school and community serve one another as resources
• available community resources are secured to help the school solve problems and achieve goals
• partnerships are established with area businesses, institutions of higher education, and community groups to strengthen programs and support school goals
• community youth family services are integrated with school programs
• community stakeholders are treated equitably
• diversity is recognized and valued
• effective media relations are developed and maintained
• a comprehensive program of community relations is established
• public resources and funds are used appropriately and wisely
• community collaboration is modeled for staff
• opportunities for staff to develop collaborative skills are provided
**Standard 5:** A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.

**Knowledge**

The administrator has knowledge and understanding of:

- the purpose of education and the role of leadership in modern society
- various ethical frameworks and perspectives on ethics
- the values of the diverse school community
- professional codes of ethics
- the philosophy and history of education

**Dispositions**

The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to:

- the ideal of the common good
- the principles in the Bill of Rights
- the right of every student to a free, quality education
- bringing ethical principles to the decision-making process
- subordinating one's own interest to the good of the school community
- accepting the consequences for upholding one's principles and actions
- using the influence of one's office constructively and productively in the service of all students and their families
• development of a caring school community

Performances

The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that:

• examines personal and professional values
• demonstrates a personal and professional code of ethics
• demonstrates values, beliefs, and attitudes that inspire others to higher levels of performance
• serves as a role model
• accepts responsibility for school operations
• considers the impact of one's administrative practices on others
• uses the influence of the office to enhance the educational program rather than for personal gain
• treats people fairly, equitably, and with dignity and respect
• protects the rights and confidentiality of students and staff
• demonstrates appreciation for and sensitivity to the diversity in the school community
• recognizes and respects the legitimate authority of others
• examines and considers the prevailing values of the diverse school community
• expects that others in the school community will demonstrate integrity and exercise ethical behavior
• opens the school to public scrutiny
• fulfills legal and contractual obligations
laws and procedures fairly, wisely, and considerately

**Standard 6:** A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

**Knowledge**

The administrator has knowledge and understanding of:

- principles of representative governance that undergird the system of American schools
- the role of public education in developing and renewing a democratic society and an economically productive nation
- the law as related to education and schooling
- the political, social, cultural and economic systems and processes that impact schools
- models and strategies of change and conflict resolution as applied to the larger political, social, cultural and economic contexts of schooling
- global issues and forces affecting teaching and learning
- the dynamics of policy development and advocacy under our democratic political system
- the importance of diversity and equity in a democratic society

**Performances**

The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that:
• education as a key to opportunity and social mobility
• recognizing a variety of ideas, values, and cultures
• importance of a continuing dialogue with other decision makers affecting education
• actively participating in the political and policy-making context in the service of education
• the environment in which schools operate is influenced on behalf of students and their families
• communication occurs among the school community concerning trends, issues, and potential changes in the environment in which schools operate
• there is ongoing dialogue with representatives of diverse community groups
• the school community works within the framework of policies, laws, and regulations enacted by local state, and federal authorities
• public policy is shaped to provide quality education for students
• lines of communication are developed with decision makers outside the school community

Dispositions

The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to:

• education as a key to opportunity and social mobility
• recognizing a variety of ideas, values, and cultures
• importance of a continuing dialogue with other decision makers affecting education
• actively participating in the political and policy-making context in the service of education
• using legal systems to protect student rights and improve student opportunities
List of Codes

An example of the first set of codes used to analyze documents and interviews is presented below. All of the following codes are taken from a single representative document and are translated from the original Hebrew. Such codes were used on interview summaries and original documents.

1. A vision dictated by the principal.
2. Weekly teachers educational sessions.
3. The principal as instructional leader (note: this was personally and professionally significant to teachers).
4. Question-asking as a tool for critical thinking among teachers.
5. A formal professional relationship, combined with a warm and welcoming personal relationship.
6. Question-asking as a tool for critical thinking among teachers.
7. Conflicts as a tool for growth and debate.
8. Warm and welcoming personal relationship.
9. Professional feedback as a tool for increasing self esteem and professional image.
10. Writing dialog as a tool.
11. Constant evaluation of curriculum development and class planning.
12. Constant evaluation of curriculum development and class planning.
13. Professional feedback as a tool for increasing self esteem and professional image.


15. Professional feedback as a tool for increasing self esteem and professional image. A vision dictated by the principal.

16. The principal as instructional leader.

17. Professional feedback as a tool for increasing self esteem and professional image.

18. Question asking as a tool for critical thinking among teachers.

19. A vision dictated by the principal, question asking as a tool for critical thinking among teachers.

20. The teacher as the manager of the class.

21. Professional feedback as a tool for increasing self esteem and professional image.

22. Teachers are grateful for their own professional growth.

23. Professional feedback as a tool for increasing self esteem and professional image.

24. Conflict as a tool for growth and debate. A vision dictated by the principal.

25. Case studies as a learning tool for the staff.

26. A warm and welcoming personal relationship, with students as well as
with teachers.

27. A principal-dictated vision as a baseline for economical decisions.

28. A formal and productive relationship with teachers.

29. A feeling of safety in the relationship with parents.

30. The leadership transition decreased the feeling of safety in the relationship with parents.

The second coding process organized all the notes from all documents into a smaller set of main topics, which were further reduced to school culture, principal influence and pedagogy. The following table identifies how the first codes were organized into three overarching themes.

*Clustering of Codes By Three Overarching Themes:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School culture</th>
<th>Principal Influence</th>
<th>Pedagogies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical condition</td>
<td>Teachers academy</td>
<td>Children teaching children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School ceremonies</td>
<td>Teachers education</td>
<td>Class layout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School field trips</td>
<td>Teachers pedagogy</td>
<td>Learning materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcoming a new teacher</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Curriculum writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitors in school</td>
<td>Reciprocal Dialog</td>
<td>Text books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Writing skills</td>
<td>Use of children's work</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Teachers notebook</td>
<td>Clear pedagogical content</td>
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<td>PTO</td>
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<tr>
<td>Internal and external</td>
<td>Empowering teachers</td>
<td>Feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relationship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship with students</td>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>Teacher watching teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff involvement</td>
<td>Letter writing</td>
<td>Reciprocal Dialog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information flow</td>
<td>Emotional support</td>
<td>Class room design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>Staff development</td>
<td>Students practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reciprocal Dialog</td>
<td>Use of personal stories</td>
<td>Use of personal stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School vision</td>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>Outside experts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student involvement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pride and Moral</td>
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</tbody>
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