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Women in Leadership Positions in Tennessee Public Schools:
A Qualitative Study of Female Directors of Schools

A dissertation

presented to

the faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis
East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Education

by

Joy O'Dell Yates

May 2005

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Keywords: Education, Gender, Glass ceiling, Leadership, Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire,
Transformational, Transactional

ABSTRACT

Women in Leadership Positions in Tennessee Public Schools: A Qualitative Study of Female Directors of Schools

by

Joy O'Dell Yates

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to determine the best methods for achieving key leadership roles in education. The problem was to define the qualities that are important in leadership positions and to determine how those qualities relate to the top-level positions in school systems across Tennessee.

Nineteen female directors of schools were interviewed. Directors also completed the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (5X-Short). Characteristics of transformational and transactional leadership styles were included in the study. Most of the directors scored high on using the transformational factors (idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration) of leadership and on using the contingent reward style of transactional leadership.

The female directors of this study perceived communication skills, a caring attitude, honesty, being a visionary, and having people skills as important leadership characteristics. Other emergent themes included the qualities of males and females in the workplace, barriers to success, and the best practices that leaders are currently using in the workplace.

The retention of top leaders in education is important. The perceptions of the 19 directors of Tennessee's public schools in this study are vital in understanding how women in leadership positions work. Mentoring, peer coaching, and providing time for directors to network,

collaborate, and receive quality professional development are essential practices that should be promoted and continued to retain these leaders. The implication from this study is that higher education institutions should also consider best practices for preparing future administrators to be successful. Attention should be paid to the differences in which males and females work and to the difference of personality traits and characteristics of leaders that may affect success in top-level positions in education.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my parents, Raymond and Juanita O'Dell, and to my husband, Dale Yates.

To my mother for instilling the love of learning and the love of reading in my life and for teaching me that caring and compassion are the essentials to a good life.

To my father who was my sounding board, my encourager, and who always taught me that a positive attitude, a smile, a good sense of humor, and a great work ethic were much more important than monetary values and that those values would carry you a long way in life. He has been the angel on my shoulder through all of my endeavors.

To my husband for his love, support, and listening ear that he so freely gives everyday.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

General Information

The privilege of working in the field of education for the past 34 years as a teacher, counselor, and an administrator has caused this researcher to develop a strong interest in leadership styles. After working in numerous schools and under numerous superintendents, supervisors, and principals, it became obvious to me that each person brought a different approach to each situation during his or her leadership term. Some of those administrators have been classical top-down theory managers and some have been very low-key, not much involved managers. Each situation was different and each administrator brought certain strengths and weaknesses to the education field. Also, very few of my leaders were women. All of my administrative mentors were male except for one elementary supervisor. During the last six years, the number of female administrators in principalship positions in my school system has doubled. To my knowledge, the system has had only one female superintendent and that occurred over 40 years ago.

The May 2001 issue of *More* magazine contained an article titled, “Alpha Women in the News: *More* salutes 50 powerful women across America” (Brooks & Paonita, 2001). High achieving, successful women are seen often in the news, on talk show circuits, hosting their own talk shows, and leading major businesses.

Currently, there are 13 female senators in Congress. Condolezza Rice was the first female National Security Advisor in the United States and was selected to serve as the Secretary of State during the second term of President George W. Bush. During his first term, President Bush’s cabinet included Ann Venemar as Secretary of Agriculture, Gale Norton as Secretary of Interior, and Elaine Chao as Secretary of Labor. Indra Nooyi is the chief financial officer of

PepsiCo. Donna Dubinsky is one of the creators of the PalmPilot, the hand-held computer device that is sweeping the nation as the must-have technological tool. Ruth Simmons is the first African-American to run Brown University--or any Ivy League school. From politics to business, entertainment, and the media, women are in the forefront of progress today (Brooks & Paonita, 2001).

Out of the 137 directors of schools in Tennessee during the 2003-2004 school year, 117 were males and 22 were females. At the beginning of the 2004-2005 school year, 117 (86 %) directors were male, and 19 (14%) directors were female. Seven new directors were chosen for the 2004-2005 school year. Three positions were formerly held by males who were replaced by females. No positions were held by females and replaced by females. Four positions were held by females and replaced by males. One system had a female director but the system was merged into another school system led by a male director.

According to numerous studies over the past 20 years, only a small percentage of female school superintendents work in this predominately White-male-dominated position. In their *Study of the American School Superintendency*, Glass, Bjork, and Branner (2000) reported that the American Association of School Administrators noted that of 2,262 superintendents across the nation, only 297 were female, which is approximately 13% compared to 6.6% who were females in a similar study in 1992. Cooper, Fusarelli, and Carella (2000) also reported similar results in their findings with 7% as the number of female superintendents in 1992 compared to 12% in 1999.

One aspect of this study was to determine the leadership characteristics that female superintendents bring to the position. Many research studies have been conducted to determine what makes leaders successful. Leadership may be defined as the ability to get people to work together to accomplish common goals. Numerous characteristics such as intelligence, charisma, integrity, attitudes, and people skills have been identified as skills needed to become a successful leader.

Transformational leadership is one model that appears to encompass many of the elements that are needed for leadership in today's world. Northouse (2004) defined transformational leadership as "a process that changes and transforms individuals. It is concerned with values, ethics, standards, and long-term goals and includes assessing followers' motives, satisfying their needs, and treating them as full human beings" (p. 169).

Bass (1990) developed a model for leadership that covers the span of transformational leadership being at one end of the continuum to transactional leadership and then to laissez-faire at the other end of the continuum. The factors of transformational leadership are idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and idealized consideration. The factors associated with transactional leadership are contingent reward and management by exception.

Transformation leadership may be seen in the leadership model called the web of inclusion. Helgesen (1990) followed up studies by Mintzberg (1980) to determine if there were differentiating qualities of females versus males in the workplace. Helgesen found that her comparisons showed a circular management model called the web of inclusion. The interrelated connections of individuals within an organization were bound together by connections going in different directions from a central person, or the heart of the organization.

This study was conducted by using qualitative methods to research the leadership styles of the female superintendents in Tennessee's public schools. Personal interviews and the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire were used to obtain data for the study. Data analysis was conducted using the NUD*IST (non-numerical unstructured data indexing, searching, and theorizing) computer program.

Statement of the Problem

The leadership roles of women in society are constantly changing. The problem is to define the qualities that are important in leadership positions and to determine how those

qualities relate to the top-level positions in school systems across Tennessee. It is also important to provide information to females who are interested in pursuing top-level school district positions, but may not know how to get there.

Determining if there is a change in the number of females going into leadership positions is important to females who may be thinking of career choices leading to administration in education. Finding ways to assist females through staff development activities, leadership training courses, and improving existing college courses could be very beneficial in providing opportunities for future female leaders. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to determine the leadership perceptions in relationship to the characteristics of leaders and the barriers to success of women who have achieved the top leadership roles in the state's educational system.

Research Questions

Questions posed for this research project include the following:

1. What do female school directors in Tennessee perceive to be the most important leadership characteristics in successful school leaders?
2. What do female school directors in Tennessee perceive to be the similarities and differences in the leadership characteristics of male and female school leaders?
3. What do female school leaders in Tennessee perceive to be the major barriers to women achieving school leadership positions?
4. What are the best practices being used by female leaders in Tennessee to develop leadership and decision-making skills?
5. Do female school directors in Tennessee exhibit transformational and/or transactional styles of leadership as measured by the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ)?
6. Are there major similarities or differences in the views of the school directors identified as transformational and those female directors who are identified as

transactional leaders based on the results of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ)?

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is the potential for helping women who aspire to be educational leaders to gain an understanding of the qualities, characteristics, and leadership traits that might guide a female into becoming an effective leader in education. The findings in this study should lead to a better understanding of the types of guidance, mentoring, and educational and programming support that might assist in developing high quality female leaders for the future.

Definitions

1. *Alpha female*--a contemporary term used to describe a high achieving female in the world of industry, finance, or business (Brooks & Paonita, 2001).
2. *Tennessee public school system*--a school system that is supported by public funding and is recognized by the state of Tennessee
3. *Web of inclusion*--a leadership model that is characterized as both a structure and a process. The model is built from the center out and is likened to a spider's web. Balance, harmony, access to information, constant dialogue, interdependent parts, flexibility, and augmentation of the influence of others are characteristics of the web of inclusion (Helgesen,1995).
4. *Transformational leadership*-- A "process whereby an individual engages with others and creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower" (Northouse, 2001, p. 132).

5. *Charisma/Intellectual*--Provides followers with a clear sense of purpose that is energizing; a role model for ethical conduct that builds identification with the leader and his/her articulated vision (Bass & Avolio, 2000).
6. *Intellectual stimulation*—A process that gets followers to question the tried and true ways of solving problems; encourages them to question the methods they use to improve upon them (Bass & Avolio).
7. *Individualized consideration*--Focuses on understanding the needs of each follower and works continuously to get them to develop to their full potential (Bass & Avolio).
8. *Contingent reward*--Clarifies what is expected from followers and what they will receive if they meet expected levels of performance (Bass & Avolio).
9. *Active management-by-exception*--Focuses on monitoring task execution for any problems that might arise and correcting those problems to maintain current performance levels (Bass & Avolio).
10. *Passive avoidant*--Tends to react only after problems have become serious to take corrective action. Oftentimes will avoid making any decisions at all (Bass & Avolio).

Limitations

This study was limited to female administrators who were serving as directors of schools in Tennessee's public schools during the 2004-2005 school year.

Overview of the Study

Chapter 1 introduces the study by providing information about the demographic and statistical information of females in top managerial positions in business and education. It also presents the statement of the problem, the research questions, and significance of the study. Definitions of terms used in the study as well as limitations are also given. Chapter 2 is a review of the literature on the characteristics of effective leaders, transformational leadership, gender differences in administration, the web of inclusion style of management, barriers to success, the

glass ceiling, and implications for the future. Chapter 3 provides a description of the participants, the method for collecting data, and how the data will be analyzed. Chapter 4 is a presentation of the analysis of the data collected. Chapter 5 presents a summary, conclusions, and recommendations for future practice and for future research.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

After reviewing the literature in the area of educational leadership, the topics include characteristics of effective leaders, transformational leadership, transactional leadership, the web of inclusion style of management, gender issues, women in educational administration, barriers and the glass ceiling, mentoring, peer coaching, implications for the future, and a summary.

Characteristics of Effective Leaders

In *Leading Minds*, Gardner (1995) defined leadership as “the ability to influence--either directly or indirectly--the behavior, thoughts, and actions of a significant number of individuals” (p. ix).

Zichy (2001) developed a color-coded model of leadership styles to categorize leadership characteristics. He divided the styles into trustees, conservators, strategists, innovators, tacticians, realists, mentors, and advocates. Those categories could also be noted as introverts and extroverts. Zichy formulated a hierarchy of building blocks to lead to successful leadership. The steps that lead to true leadership abilities are composed of the following in ascending order: (a) self-knowledge, (b) self-management, (c) self-confidence, (d) accomplishment, (e) self-esteem, and (f) leadership.

The Anderson Consulting Institute for Strategic Change (American Society of Association Executives, 2000) named 14 qualities as being essential for effective leadership. Those qualities were:

1. creating a shared vision,
2. ensuring customer satisfaction,

3. living the values,
4. building teamwork,
5. being able to think globally,
6. appreciating cultural diversity,
7. empowering people,
8. anticipating opportunity,
9. achieving a competitive advantage,
10. being able to embrace change,
11. share leadership,
12. demonstrate personal mastery,
13. show technical savvy, and
14. encourage constructive challenges. (p. 23)

Butcher and Atkinson (2000) wrote of “pockets of good practice” (p. 431) in which leaders adopt certain practices to encourage creativity and change within an organization. Leadership at all levels is encouraged to create a climate that is more than a top-down hierarchy. Many research studies have been conducted to determine what makes leaders successful. According to Bass (1990), factors associated with leadership include (a) intelligence, (b) originality, (c) judgment, (d) achievement, (e) responsibility, (f) participation, (g) status, (h) mental level, (i) skills, and (j) interests and objectives of followers. The leader rises to the status of leader through his or her ability to get others to work together in a cooperative way for a common goal.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is one model that appears to encompass many of the elements that are needed for leadership in today’s world. Northouse (2001) defined transformational leadership as:

A process that changes and transforms individuals. It is concerned with values, ethics, standards, and long-term goals. Transformational leadership involves assessing followers' motives, satisfying their needs, and treating them as full human beings. It is a process that subsumes charismatic and visionary leadership. (p. 132)

In 1973, Downton wrote *Rebel Leadership: Commitment and Charisma in the Revolutionary Process*. Downton's purpose in writing the book was to further the understanding of leadership within the context of the leader-follower relationship. Psychological and social forces are a part of the leader-follower relationship. The follower must be willing and must be motivated in order to accept a person as his or her leader.

Commitment may also be achieved in a charismatic relationship in which the follower develops a psychological relationship with the leader fulfilling the role of comforter, idealist, or spokesman for a specific cause. The leader may also base commitment on the inspiration of the follower. A shared vision, commitment, or philosophy could help to bond the follower to the leader (Downton, 1973).

Burns (1978) was a political scientist who studied and wrote about leadership. Burns (1978) defined leadership as being of two basic types, transactional and transformational. Power and leadership should be viewed in the prospective of relationships. In transactional leadership, goods, services, or things are exchanged for meeting the needs of individual interests or groups. Honesty, responsibility, fairness, and honoring commitments are essential to transactional leadership.

In transformational leadership, Burns (1978) concluded that the relationships between leaders and followers might be stronger than transactional relationships. He explained:

The transforming leader recognizes and exploits an existing need or demand of a potential follower. But, beyond that, the transforming leader looks for potential motives in followers, seeks to satisfy higher needs, and engages the full person of the follower. (p. 4)

In a later work, *Transforming Leaders*, Burns (2003) sought to define the difference between change and transform. He considered, "To change is to substitute one thing for another,

to give and take, to exchange places, to pass from one place to another” (p. 24). This would relate to transactional leadership. He described transform as:

To cause a metamorphosis in form or structure, a change in the very condition or nature of a thing, a change into another substance, a radical change in outward form or inner character, as when a frog is transformed into a prince, or a carriage maker into an auto factory. It is change of this breadth and depth that is fostered by transforming leadership. (p. 24)

Studying leadership from a personal trait basis as compared to more of a psychological basis of the exchange and interactions between leaders and followers led to Bass’ (1990) model of transactional and transformational leadership. Bass studied the characteristics of leadership by examining the literature written between 1904 and 1947. Factors associated with leadership included capacity, achievement, responsibility, participation, status, and situation.

The works of Downton (1973) and Burns (1978) actually laid the groundwork for Bass’ (1990) transformational model of leadership. Bass developed a model for leadership that covers a continuum with the span of transformational leadership being at one end of the continuum and transactional leadership at the other end of the continuum. The factors of transformational leadership are (a) idealized influence, (b) inspirational motivation, (c) intellectual stimulation, and (d) idealized consideration. The factors associated with transactional leadership are (a) contingent reward, and (b) management by exception.

The components of transformational leadership as reported in Avolio and Bass’s (2004) Full Range of Leadership model include (a) idealized influence (attributes and behaviors), (b) inspirational motivation, (c) intellectual stimulation, and (d) individualized consideration.

Idealized influence, often noted as charisma, is the first factor of transformational leadership. Leaders usually have high ethical and moral standards of which respect and trust are the foundation. Followers want to follow the charismatic leader in order to help achieve the mission and the vision the leader has set forth. Leaders who exhibit idealized influence characteristics may be admired, trusted, and respected. The leader considers the followers needs. Idealized attributes include setting examples, instilling pride in others, going beyond self-

interests for the good of all, building respect, being able to share risks, having high standards, and relaying a sense of confidence and power. Idealized behaviors include talking about beliefs and values, having a sense of purpose, considering ethical and moral consequences, and bringing together a mission shared by those within the group. (Avolio & Bass, 2002)

Inspirational motivation is leadership in which the leader communicates a vision and followers are challenged to help achieve that vision. Meaning and challenge to the work process are provided in order to motivate followers. Followers are encouraged to look beyond the present and to see the ultimate goal. Behaviors include talking about the vision, displaying enthusiasm, arousing team spirit, and expressing confidence in reaching the goals of the mission (Avolio & Bass, 2002).

Intellectual stimulation is the style of leadership in which the leader encourages followers to be creative and to develop and try new ideas to solve problems. Leaders who use intellectual stimulation behaviors tend to encourage creativity and innovative thinking. They encourage followers to look at problems from different angles and encourage new ways to solve problems. The leader tries to create a safe environment in which new ideas can be shared. Followers are not criticized for thinking differently from their leader (Avolio & Bass, 2002).

Individualized consideration is the style in which the leader listens to the needs of the followers, and then helps to develop a supportive climate in which problems can be solved and ideas can be developed. The leaders who use individualized consideration behaviors act as a mentor or a coach, paying attention to what each person needs to be self-fulfilled in a safe, supportive work climate. Avolio and Bass (2004) expanded:

It means understanding and sharing in others' concerns and developmental needs and treating each individual uniquely. In addition, Individualized Consideration represents an attempt on the part of leaders to not only recognize and satisfy their associates' needs, but also to expand and elevate those needs in an attempt to maximize and develop their full potential. (p. 29)

In individualized consideration, tasks are assigned based on the follower's needs and abilities. Management by walking around is prevalent. The leader tends to listen effectively to the follower (Avolio & Bass, 2002).

Tichy and Devanna (1990) noted that a transformational leader will be able to recognize the need for change, will be able to create a new vision, and will be able to help bring about the change needed. They cited the characteristics of transformational leadership as (a) being a change agent, (b) having courage, (c) believing in people, (d) being value-driven, (e) being a life-long learner, (f) having the ability to deal with "complexity, ambiguity, and uncertainty", and (g) being a visionary (p. 271).

According to Hacker and Roberts (2004), the top leaders of today must be leader-managers, not one or the other. According to the authors, the qualities of a leader-manager encompass being "visionary, creative, and empowering" (p. 68). Leaders must also take the qualities of a manager as being "pragmatic, energetic, and analytical" (p. 68). By combining these qualities, leader managers can draw upon the strengths of both areas to be successful leaders. As explained by Hacker and Roberts, "In an organization of meaning, transformational leaders are called upon to help others access the power from within themselves through clarity of purpose and self-awareness and to manifest that power through their unique talents and gifts" (p. 69).

Hacker and Roberts (2004) also differentiated between the past role of leaders as those who took command and had control to the role of today's leaders as one of concentrating on the follower's creativity and energy. By tapping into other's creativity, leaders have the opportunity to create the power to change. The eight characteristics of transformational leadership, as pointed out in Hacker and Robert's model, are (a) visionary, (b) empowering, (c) community builders, (d) creative, (e) administrative, (f) analytical, (g) energetic, and (h) performer (p. 76).

Rosener (1990) stated, "The command-and-control leadership style associated with men is not the only way to success" (p. 119). In 1989, Rosener (1990) conducted a study for the

International Women's Forum Leadership Foundation in order to learn about the leadership styles, work and family issues, and personal characteristics of both men and women. The entire membership of the International Women's Foundation was surveyed, with a 31% response rate. Each female was asked to send a questionnaire to a corresponding male within her particular business enterprise. From the study, Rosener (1990) found that women were more likely to use a transformational leadership style by motivating others through working for the good of the whole group. Women were more likely to use personal power to their own benefit as opposed to structural power. Women were more likely to use their charisma, their work records, their interpersonal skills, or their personal contacts to achieve goals. Men tended to use more structural power based on the organizational pattern, the title, and the ability to reward and punish. In the survey, both the men and the women described themselves as having an equal mix of feminine and masculine characteristics.

Rosener's (1990) study also suggested that women leaders tend to share power and information, encourage and energize followers, draw people in, and encourage participatory management. The statement, "People perform best when they feel good about themselves and their work" (p. 120) is a powerful statement that appeared to be at the heart of interactive leadership. The contention is that people mostly want to be a contributor to a higher purpose as well as have the opportunity to feel successful and to learn and grow. However, Rosener (1990) also stated that it was indeed a mistake to link interactive leadership directly to being a female. She stressed that there are males who also subscribe to this type of leadership style.

Thomas (2000) studied the transformational leadership styles of 283 women in volunteer organizations. Female leaders were found to exhibit high levels of transformational leadership, feminine and masculine gender attributes, and leadership effectiveness. There appeared to be no significant differences in the gender role orientation and leadership effectiveness.

One example of a transformational leadership is the way Mohandas Gandhi (as cited in Burns, 2003) made a difference in the lives of others in South Africa and India. Gandhi went to

South Africa in 1906 as a young lawyer. As he saw injustices in the way others were treated, Gandhi worked to try to correct those injustices. He used nonviolence and passive resistance in order to protest the way Indians, Arabs, and Turks were treated in South Africa in the early 1900s. In coining the term, *Satyagraha*, which means, “power born of truth and love, or non-violence,” Gandhi stressed that “true freedom is disciplined rule from within” and the ultimate goal is the “transformation of society and self” (p. 155).

According to Burns (2003), Gandhi returned to India in 1915 and spent the next 20 years helping to change the injustices of British rule in India. He continued to use his skills to influence followers to make a difference in nonviolent ways. The 1930 march to gather salt from the Indian coast covered 200 miles over 24 days and was a true symbol of people uniting together in a nonviolent way to make a political statement. Burns (2003) explained:

Gandhi sought to teach and transform people who in turn would join him in the collective, national struggle, and the strength of his cause, which ultimately trumped the vast material-but feeble moral- resources of the British, was in his followers’ unshakable inner discipline and devotion to Gandhi’s transforming concept of nonviolent direct action. (p. 158)

Another example of transformational leadership was a method reported in Godard and Lenhardt (1999) in which Godard approached the 1986 merger of Rhone-Poulence Agro, a French pharmaceutical company, with Union Carbide Agrochemicals, a United States company. Godard was a corporate executive who developed an operating system that stressed to Simplify, Decentralize, and Manage (SDM). In 1993, as the company went through a period of low financial performance, Godard made changes in the management of the company. As Godard’s intent was to “mobilize everyone, empower the workplace, appeal to the imagination and intelligence of all, and all within the framework of a clear project” (p. xi), he introduced a strict code of ethics and a simple but very efficient financial management system. Godard stated that “The most successful part of our story is the proof that one can successfully combine economic and social concerns, focus on the bottom line, and care for people” (Godard & Lenhardt, p. viii).

Transactional Leadership

Transactional leadership behaviors included both constructive and corrective transactions. Contingent reward leadership is a constructive style that involves the clarification and recognition of goals and objectives. Followers receive assistance in exchange for efforts. Recognition is given when goals are achieved. Management-by-exception is a corrective transactional leadership style. The style may include behaviors that are active or passive. The leader who uses active management by exception “arranges to actively monitor deviances from standards, mistakes, and errors in the follower’s assignments and to take corrective action as necessary” (Avolio & Bass, 2002, p. 4).

Passive management by exception is reactive. The leader may fail to intervene until the problems are serious and show a belief in “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it” (Avolio & Bass, 2004, p. 22).

The laissez-faire leadership style, located at one end of The Full Range of Leadership Model, is basically an uninvolved style. The leader may often be absent, avoid making decisions, and delay responding to situations (Avolio & Bass, 2002).

In Downton’s (1973) work on rebel leadership, communication and commitment are key factors that must be recognized. A transactional basis of commitment is an exchange process between the leader and the follower where faith and trust are exchanged for rewards. The rewards may include the sharing of information, material benefits, or other things that might be of value to the follower. This can be a positive exchange with rewards or a negative exchange with punishments.

One example of transactional leadership might be the way in which Franklin Delano Roosevelt dealt with his conservative constituents in 1932. According to Burns (2003), “His [Roosevelt’s] campaign proclaimed its support for economy in government, a balanced budget, a sound currency, along with new economic and social reforms. In effect, he was offering transactional leadership that would mediate among the Democratic blocs” (p. 180). Constituents

were promised what they wanted, (government support, a balanced budget, and economic and social reforms) in exchange for political support.

Web of Inclusion

Another aspect of transformational leadership may be seen in the leadership model called the web of inclusion. Helgesen (1995) followed up studies by Mintzberg (1980) to determine if there were differentiating qualities of females versus males in the work place. Helgesen (1995) found that her comparisons showed a circular management model called the web of inclusion. The interrelated connections of individuals within an organization were bound together by connections going in different directions from a central person, or the heart of the organization.

Helgesen (1990) compared the work of Mintzberg (1980) with her study of female leaders. In compiling this study, she found that there were differentiating qualities between men and women. By examining those behaviors, Helgesen (1990) reported that Mintzberg found men exhibited some characteristics that were not necessarily as predominant in women. Executives worked at a fast pace with no breaks. There were constant interruptions in the workday that appeared to leave the managers feeling fragmented. Little time was allowed for anything other than work. Live-action encounters were preferred. A complex network of relationships with people outside their own organizations was maintained. There was little or no time for reflection during the day. Everything had to be kept moving. The men had difficulty sharing information and their identities appeared to be attached to their job.

In comparison, Helgesen (1990) repeated Mintzberg's (1980) study using women as the subjects studied. Twenty-two years later Helgesen (1995), after closely studying four women in leadership positions, noted a difference in the way men and women viewed their roles. Women tended to work at a steady pace but structured small breaks into the schedule. There was an attitude of caring, being involved, helping, being cooperative, and being responsible. Unscheduled tasks and interruptions seemed to be a part of the flow of the day and were viewed

as a natural part of the job. Women tended to make more time for activities not directly related to work, such as family, committees, and personal encounters. They maintained a complex network of relationships outside of their own companies. Women tended to focus more on the broader view of the big picture. Their own identities were multifaceted with the job not being their total identity. Women also made more of a deliberate attempt to share information.

Helgesen (1995) viewed the role of women in leadership positions as compared to a spider's web. This web of inclusion was a circular management model in which the leader is "in the middle of things" (p. 47). Helgesen (1995) likened it to a spider's web with connections going in every direction from the center outward, a series of interrelated connections. "Teams are formed and disbanded as needed. The leader is at the heart of the organization acting as a transmitter, absorbing information, then beaming it out to wherever it needs to go" (p. 47).

Mahoney (1999) contended that the web of inclusion is both a process and a pattern in organizations. Flexibility and an openness to change are encouraged with this leadership style. There is more of a focus on what needs to be done rather than on who is going to do what needs to be done. La Barre (1995) viewed the web of inclusion model as being "primarily preoccupied with strengthening ties throughout the organization by breaking down barriers and making everyone feel included" (p. 52).

As more females rise to top managerial positions, females may be viewed in different ways as to how they relate to leadership roles. The web of inclusion model has benefits for males and females who can make this work in their management style. Being able to draw people into the web of inclusion and working together in harmony is worth studying and implementing into the workforce.

Mays' (1996) interpretation of the web of inclusion model of leadership was that it is a style that can help meet the demands of today's changing world. If one visualizes a spider's web as "organic, flexible, constantly changing, interdependent, and permeable" (p. 22), then this model of leadership can allow others to be empowered to work together to support an

organization.

Eisenberg and Goodall (1997) listed such attributes as having “fluid boundaries between personal life and work life, a balanced lifestyle, a network of relationships outside of the organization, a service orientation to clients, and a view of leadership as a web” (p. 160) as being seen in the leadership roles for women.

Gender Issues

In reviewing the book, *Games Mother Never Taught You*, (Harragan, 1977), one might be interested in how females are perceived to function in a predominately male-dominated profession. The author used male-dominated areas, such as sports, the military, and card playing to explain the rules for females who were operating in male arenas. The essence of the book appears to be how a woman can use a man’s tactics to get where she wants to be and to exhibit those leadership styles to move up in management.

In 1968, Mintzberg (1980) conducted a study on managerial work. He studied five male managers to learn what actual tasks were performed and how the managers went about performing those tasks. Mintzberg found that men tended to work consistently with few breaks, appeared to be focused on the end result of the job at hand, and tended to have less personal time for employees.

Rosen (1996) noted the ideal leader as one who is androgynous, having both a masculine and a feminine side. The masculine characteristics of decisiveness and accountability are blended with collaboration and open communication (traditionally feminine characteristics). Rosen considered the strengths in male leaders as being able to set boundaries, assign clear responsibilities, have quick responses, have an ability to weed out weak performance, and possess the ability to keep sensitive information confidential. Rosen added that the strengths in female leaders tend to be the ability to bring about teamwork, the ability to use peer pressure to encourage accountability, the use of collaboration to encourage innovation, the ability to improve

quality by giving more attention to the process, and the use of access to information as a continuous means of improvement.

Wylie (1996) stated, “Women have many strengths, but being a man is not one of them” (p. 21). Wylie’s studies revealed that there are some physiological differences in females that may allow for gender specific strengths. Women’s brains may allow women to think more nonlinearly; this allows them to consider more possibilities when problem solving. In addition, more connective tissue between the two brain hemispheres may allow women more interaction between the two sides of the brain during thought processing. Women also may tend to have a more innate ability to receive sensory data.

In specifically researching the styles of women educators, Edgar-Gradstein (1999) found that females tended to create environments that included the sharing of ideas and experiences. In surveying female secondary principals, Bynum (2000) also found that women tended to be nurturers and team builders. Women tended to see communication and collaboration as related to job performance (Applewhite, 2001). Female leaders may be more likely to use these characteristics in transformational leadership styles (Remondini, 2001). Women also have other concerns to deal with when they are in leadership positions. Time away from the family was a factor noted in Hutchinson’s (2001) research as being a concern.

After reviewing literature concerning male and female leadership models, one might be able to draw several conclusions. First, there are definite differences in the way women and men adapt and react in their leadership roles. There are characteristics that males and females each use to best fit his or her leadership style. Some females may be able to use some male characteristics effectively, and in the same respect, some males may be able to use some feminine characteristics effectively. To be an effective leader, one must find what works best for that particular individual.

According to Claes (1999), only about 3% to 6% of managerial positions were held by women. In order for an organization to thrive in today’s society, more emphasis must be placed

on recognizing the gender qualities of men and women that are inherent in management culture. Using the qualities of both males and females may be more helpful to the organization. Empathy, relationship building, communication, cooperation, team spirit, and commitment are essential for achieving excellence and creating a network of relationships.

Restine (1993) summed up the gender issue best in the following statement:

Envisioning schools as communities of learners and leaders means that the environment of work must be challenged- which in turn means that the prevailing norms of power and powerlessness, the kind of relationships within and outside of school, and patterns of communication must be questioned. It is likely that we can make as many quantum leaps as our students, and it is equally possible that those leaps will not fall into some prescribed gender or time frame for such events. (p. 36)

Rosener (1995) stated, “Women are different from men, but not superior or inferior, and the differences women bring to the workplace constitute an economic resource--an added value” (p. 201).

Women in Educational Administration

According to the statistical information from the Tennessee Department of Education website, there are 136 school systems in Tennessee. During the 2003-2004 school year, there were 137 directors of schools in Tennessee; 117 were males (85.4%) and 22 (16.1%) were females. At the beginning of the 2004-2005 school year, 117 (86 %) directors are male, and 19 (14%) directors are female.

Shakeshaft (1989) reported the comparison between the percentages of female teachers to the number of female principals and district school superintendents over an 80-year period between 1905 and 1985. In 1950, 91% of the elementary teachers were female, 38% of the elementary principals were female, 56.2% of the secondary teachers were female, 6% of the secondary principals were female, and 2.1% of the district school superintendents were female. In 1985, 83.5% of elementary teachers were female, 16.9% of elementary principals were

female, 50.1% of secondary teachers were female, 3.5% of secondary principals were female, and only 3% of district school superintendents were females.

In their 2000 study of American school superintendents, Glass et al. reported that the American Association of School Administrators pointed out that of 2,262 superintendents across the nation, only 297 were female. This is approximately 13% compared to 6.6% in a similar study in 1992. Cooper et al. (2000) also reported similar results in his finding with 7% female superintendents in 1992 compared to 12% in 1999.

The 2001 study by Rhodes was conducted by interviewing five women who were selected as the 1999 MetLife/National Association of Secondary School Principals. Five themes were found in the study as important factors in the principals' success. The areas noted were (a) support, (b) mentoring and networking, (c) leadership and role definition, (d) focus and personal strength, and (e) adaptation and gender expectations.

Katz (2001) studied the perspectives of female public school superintendents. The purpose of the study was to obtain an understanding of how those superintendents described their leadership practices and use of power in the leadership role. Katz used a leadership practices inventory as well as personal interviews in the research process. Five leadership practices provided the framework for the inventory: (a) challenging the process, (b) inspiring a shared vision, (c) enabling others to act, (d) modeling the way, and (e) encouraging the heart. Findings showed that the female superintendents in the study "believed good hiring practices and specific qualities of a leader were essential elements to effective leadership" (p. 410). This study also revealed that women tended to use their personal power rather than their position power in order to influence others to work toward goals.

Suiter (2001) studied three nationally recognized female leaders who had been instrumental in educational reform in their respective states. Throughout the study, each woman was shadowed through onsite visits and other forms of meetings and correspondence. The leadership style of each of these women dealt with working from within the middle of the

organization rather than leading from the top. Shared leadership, which included others in the decision-making processes, helped to create a culture of everyone's acceptance of the responsibility of work that needed to be done.

Brunner's (1999) study of four female entry-level superintendents revealed that some of the critical issues faced during their tenure were political factors, school board dysfunction, union influences, noneducational focus on funds and facilities, and ethical clashes. She used the metaphor of "dancing in red shoes" to describe why some women leave the superintendency. The story "Dancing in Red Shoes" was about a pair of magical shoes that a young girl wished for and received but she had to have her feet removed in order to get rid of the red shoes. The girl ended up crippled and never again wished for red shoes. This metaphor related to female superintendents who "become consumed by the job, its visibility and vulnerability, which may cripple their power and the energy" (p. 161).

Brunner (2000) also wrote *Principles of Power: Women Superintendents and the Riddle of the Heart*. As a framework for presenting her research, she used Carlos Castanedes' work on the beliefs of the Yaqui Indians as the basis for presenting the stories of 12 female superintendents whom she had interviewed. In her research, Brunner (2000) used personal interviews and focus groups of 29 female superintendents and administrators as a part of the process. The focus groups met over a period of two years to discuss and react to the data that Brunner (2000) had gathered.

Brunner (2000) likened the stories of the research gathered to the metaphor of "Warrior's Path," presented by Castanedes, in which seven principles of power led to the riddle of the heart. The key to the riddle began with "caring in relationships," which was followed by practicing the principles of power. The seven principles of power were "knowing the battleground, discarding the unnecessary, choosing battles, taking risks, seeking retreat, compressing time, and exercising power" (p.25). By using the seven principles, warriors could show evidence of mastering the riddle of the heart by demonstrating "the ability to laugh at self, the ability to be patient without

fretting, and the ability to improvise” (p. 27). Brunner’s (2000) work was very insightful into how female superintendents survived by understanding the relationships of reality in the present and the possibilities in the future.

Today’s educational leader must be more than a manager or a person who manages the day-to-day routines in a school or school system. Today’s educational leader must be able to master educational, managerial, and political roles. The superintendent of a school system must have a teaching mission and be able to build collaborative relationships, establish a shared purpose, have a commitment to school improvement, be able to develop and coordinate strategies for action, and be able to nurture and receive respect and trust with the stakeholders in the school system (Johnson, 1996). Developing a “community of learners” is important to leaders in leading a school system toward the future (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000; Restine, 1993).

Barriers and the Glass Ceiling

Barriers to achieving top leadership positions include overcoming preconceived myths that may permeate one's thinking. White (1992) listed 10 myths in the business world that must be dispelled in order to consider the truths. Those myths included:

1. Women don’t have what it takes to be top managers;
2. women can get ahead in a company by merit alone;
3. women can get ahead by possessing preset leadership skills or working twice as hard as male counterparts;
4. a woman can get ahead by being a good girl, waiting patiently and keeping her mouth shut;
5. all women are equal;
6. creating quotas help all women who want to be in top management;
7. most women feel guilty about working;

8. it's impossible to determine how friendly employers are to women just because day care and maternity leaves are provided within that company;
9. men are the enemy; and
10. women just need more time to crack the barriers of the glass ceiling.

Cultural barriers that may keep women from advancing to top leadership positions in education include the following: male dominance in key leadership positions; lack of political savvy; lack of career positioning; lack of mentoring; lack of mobility; internal barriers (discrimination, being ignored, lack of social invitations because of gender, and low expectation patterns); and bias against women (lack of confidence and challenging cultural expectations) (Hill & Ragland, 1995).

Restine (1993) noted that women are underrepresented in educational administrative roles because of their socialization beliefs (knowing one's place in the field of education); formal barriers (preparation and certification issues); informal barriers (inclusion and association with the centers of power in the education arena); and the myths that perpetuate the system. The myths include such concepts as women fitting into the political area of education, the different perspectives of what leadership actually is (a manager with top down authority versus a facilitator who enables others to participate in management of the school system), and creating an structure in which multiple leaders lead the charge for change.

In an article concerning Michigan superintendents, Mask and Trela (2004) wrote that 59 superintendents had left the superintendency during the 2003-2004 school year. That number was double the number who had left the previous year. One superintendent stated that she loved the people and the students but hated the job. Having to deal with continual budget cuts for three years had taken its toll. The time commitments and the stress related to the job of superintendent appeared to keep prospective administrators from applying. In order to battle a shortage of candidates for superintendents, administrative leadership programs are being developed that will

train future superintendents. Some systems are setting up programs to develop leadership from within their own system.

The Association of Wisconsin School Administrators reported having 70 female superintendents in Wisconsin in the 2002-2003 school year compared to only 54 female principals who served secondary schools. If one considered that serving as a principal is a stepping stone to the superintendency, then a decline in the number of women who would become superintendents could also be on the decline. Societal bias did not appear to be the reason for the decline. The intense commitment of time and the extracurricular activities to which most high school principals are committed appeared to be major factors in keeping females from going into those positions. There appeared to be more appeal in going into other administrative positions, such as a curriculum director's position, with fewer constraints and the same pay ("State Sees More Female Superintendents," 2003).

Kranz (2004) cited numerous reasons why educators may choose not to pursue the superintendency: the complexity of the job, the demands of long hours, stress, low pay, increased demands from unfunded mandates, the increased demands for higher student performance, greater public expectations, diminishing prestige, fear of poor superintendent/board relationships, and inadequate funding. She also listed three reasons for the shortage of superintendents as political difficulties, the salary gap, and public criticism of superintendents.

From a 1992 study conducted by the American School Superintendency Association, Tonson and Shaw (2000) listed the top 10 concerns that superintendents have in working in the superintendency:

1. financing,
2. assessment and testing,
3. accountability/credibility,
4. changing priorities in curriculum,
5. changing societal values,

6. administrator/board relations,
7. new teaching demands,
8. compliance with mandates,
9. parent apathy and irresponsibility, and
10. Special Education/Public Law 94-142. (p. 20)

The many concerns that superintendents have in the office may act as barriers to others considering the position.

Another barrier to success in the superintendency may be the lack of understanding of the unwritten rules of relationships with others in the community. Chion (2003) listed eight unwritten rules for developing positive superintendent and school board relationships:

1. Everything begins and ends with integrity;
2. groups go through an evolution of growth;
3. fear motivates;
4. when board members do battle, the superintendent bleeds;
5. change involves a grieving process;
6. getting caught up in a battle of wills is useless;
7. humility is a virtue; and
8. there has never been an outstanding school system without an outstanding board. (pp. 1-3)

Remembering these rules may help build important stakeholder relationships and break a barrier that becomes larger and larger if trust cannot be established between the superintendent and the school board.

Cross (1981) studied adult learners. Barriers to adult learning could fall into three categories: situational, institutional, or dispositional. Dispositional barriers could be evidenced by the attitudes and beliefs that a person might have about his or her own capabilities or self-

worth. The impact of dispositional barriers might be evidenced by whether a director perceives himself or herself as capable of fulfilling the role of director of schools.

Glass et al. (2000) suggested that in order to entice more females into seeking the office of superintendent, changes should be made to solve some of the most difficult problems. He suggested increasing funding to increase central office support staff in order to help carry the demanding load, allowing superintendents more time to work in areas in which they can excel, providing incentives for women to obtain superintendent's certification, and rewarding school districts for hiring women or minorities would help encourage and retain women in the superintendency. From a 90-item survey conducted by the American School Superintendency in 2000 (Glass et al.) of which almost 300 out of 2,200 responded, the following reasons were listed as to why there are not as many women in superintendent's positions. The reasons cited were that women may not be in positions leading to the superintendency, are not obtaining certification and credentials in preparation programs, are not as experienced or interested in the fiscal management processes as their male counterparts, are not as interested for personal reasons, enter too late, or may enter education for reasons other than becoming administrators.

Ornstein (2004) looked at salaries earned by CEO's in the corporate world and compared his findings to superintendents' salaries. The top CEO's of 365 companies earned 500 times the amount that the average factory worker made. In looking at salary of superintendents, the average pay was only 2 ½ to 3 ½ times more than the average teacher's salary. Ornstein's article focused on the question as to whether superintendents can be paid what they are worth. The conclusion was that it was basically a no-win situation. Included in the findings were pressure to keep budgets and taxes down, superintendents already made more than most other government officials in the district, political aspects of the superintendency, and superintendents could not easily be paid on the same scale as CEOs of corporations. In interviewing superintendents from small and mid-sized districts, he found that dedication to the job meant more than merit pay.

Other barriers included the lack of encouragement from other females in management, the dual demands of work and home, limited interviewing skills, lack of recognition of acceptable differences in leadership styles, male-oriented training programs, and overcoming the “good ole’ boy” network (Hicks, 2000, n. p.).

In a 1982 study by Heller, certain myths concerning women as leaders were noted. Men are too focused on procedures whereas women are too focused on people. Women are too emotional whereas men are too remote and inaccessible. Women are not assertive enough. Women are more humane, egalitarian, efficient, and organized. Men are more relaxed, humorous, able to separate work and social roles, and able to think more categorically and to work more independently. Some of these myths are still perpetuated along gender lines and can be barriers to success for females interested in administration.

In 1991, President Clinton created the Glass Ceiling Commission (Wylie, 1996). One of the purposes of the Commission was to study the common barriers to the advancement of women and minorities in United States corporations. Recruitment practices, corporate climates that isolate and alienate, and pipeline barriers (placement, mentoring, training, access to developmental processes, differing standards, counterproductive behavior by colleagues, and lack of access to networking systems) were listed as barriers to successful advancement in leadership positions. Wylie (1996) stated, “It is important for women to recognize their strengths and weaknesses. They must try to compensate for their weaknesses by building a team around them that is well-balanced and addresses all aspects of both managing and leading” (p. 72).

Mentoring

Watt (2004) gave a definition of mentoring stating, “Mentoring is the form of providing support in which individuals with more advanced experience and knowledge (mentor) are matched with lesser-experienced and knowledgeable individuals (mentees) for the purpose of

advancing the mentee's development" (p.14). The basis of a mentorship involves communication, trust, and respect from both parties.

Evans (2003) stated, "A mentor is someone who helps you figure out what you want and shows you how to get it" (p. 69). She noted that mentoring was an obligation for women to help other women become successful. In order for mentoring to be effective, the process should be natural. When mentors are assigned to mentees, the relationship may not be successful because the pairing of the two individuals may be artificial and the willingness and opportunity to build a mentorship relationship may not be a natural process. Mentors may act as teachers, role models, or helpers to allow the mentee to excel.

In *Developing the Leaders Around You*, Maxwell (1995) said, "Leaders who mentor potential leaders multiply their effectiveness" (p.10). Developing and sustaining mentoring relationships is a way of enhancing the growth of an organization. Recruiting and retaining good people helps further the vision and the goals of great leaders and productive organizations.

Lovell (2004) recognized the need to develop formal mentoring programs at a school district level as a way to help new administrators meet the challenges and demands of a central office position. He stated, "An individualized and specialized mentoring program can enhance traditional staff development programs and can save time and resources for the district in the long run" (p. 14).

Peer Coaching

Executive coaching, also called life coaching or peer coaching, has been used by corporate America for several years. The private sector has used executive coaching to increase productivity, improve job satisfaction, improve the retention rate of leaders, and develop the leadership skills of corporate teams. Pardini's (2003) study showed that 40% to 50% of the Fortune 500 companies used coaching with their executives. The return on their investment has been five or six times the cost of the investment (Pardini).

The purpose of executive coaching is to provide a high quality form of professional development through the interaction with the coach and the executive, or leader. The goal is to deepen their learning, improve performance, and enhance the quality of life for the person being coached. Coaching is carried out via phone conversations, emails, and sometimes face-to-face interactions. The coach listens to the person being coached, asks probing questions, and encourages and tries to help that person find his or her own solutions and paths to follow. The coaching method is a way to help the leader clarify goals and seek paths to achieve those goals. Coaches do not offer solutions to problems or offer advice. Coaches do help the leader focus on internal strengths and give feedback as needed. In 1996, the International Coach Federation was formed as a nonprofit, professional organization that has a certification program for coaches and also acts a referral service for those seeking coaches. The Federation has over 6,400 members as coaches (Pardini, 2003).

A pilot project for peer coaching was started in 2002 as a joint effort between the National Staff Development Council and the Brande Foundation (Irwin, 2003). Thirty educators from across the United States were trained as peer coaches with the intent that these coaches would coach others. Participants were chosen by the National Staff Development Council. The training was provided by the Brande Foundation, an organization that provides coaching to nonprofit groups. This innovative type of staff development offered support to leaders to help the leaders focus on their own personal strengths and seek ways to strengthen their leadership skills. This type of professional development is ongoing, and is based on the needs of the individual who is being coached. Irwin stated that coaches help clients to:

navigate the continual changes and transitions that accompany life and leadership experiences; tap into their own brilliance and resources, focus on the future and unlimited possibilities, set stretch goals, recognize and mitigate the effects of blind spots that hinder accomplishments, and develop and implement action plans that best fit the client and the situation. (p. 2)

Reiss (2003) started a pilot program in May 2002 called Leadership Coaching for School Change. Four school administrators were chosen to participate in weekly 45-minute telephone

sessions. An initial session was used to orient the participants to the process and allow them to set goals. Baseline assessments were used at the beginning of the coaching process to assess strengths and areas for professional growth. Each participant worked on individualized goals by using specific action steps that were developed with the peer coach on a weekly basis (Reiss).

As a superintendent in the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District in Alaska, Peterson (2003) used peer coaching to build her leadership team. She explained that a change was needed in her central office because there appeared to be a resistance to change and she noted the inability to move forward as she had hoped. With the help of a peer coach, Peterson was able to work through some of the issues that were hindering progress. As a result, she was able to build a team with a “commitment to open communication, shared goals, trust, interdependence, standing together, and a belief that shared decisions produce better results” (p. 5).

Coaching and mentoring are not the same experiences. In mentoring, a person may be paired with someone who has been in the other person’s position and has similar experiences to share. In coaching, the coach is trained specifically in the process of change and has many hours of practice to develop the coaching skills. The coach does not have to have worked in a similar position in order to coach. The coach is trained to listen, to nudge, to give feedback, and to help the person who is being coached focus on positive actions (Reiss, 2003). Reiss pointed out that the International Coach Federation is an organization that certifies training programs for coaches, and it is very important that coaches receive professional training with high standards.

Implications for the Future

Brunner’s (2000) answer to the power of being a successful leader was being able to care for and about others. She called this ability the principle of power, or the riddle of the heart. In order to be a successful leader, individuals in education can follow the tenets in transformational leadership and the riddle of the heart. Being able to laugh at yourself, to have patience without fretting, and be able to improvise and show creativity will help future leaders.

Brunner (1999) listed seven strategies for success. Women superintendents need to: learn to balance role expectations with gender expectation, simplify agendas, develop the ability to be culturally bilingual (feminine and masculine cultures), act like women, let go of stumbling blocks to success, be fearless and courageous, plan for retreat when the impossible arises, and be able to share both power and credit.

Patterson (2000) also offered advice for females in the superintendency by suggesting the importance of building positive school board relationships, maintaining trust and confidentiality, promoting community relations, befriending the media, and working with, not against the union. She also suggested that the saving grace for all the hard work and the trials of a superintendent is to work toward a set of core values that are for the students in the school system.

As cited in Guido (2004), Rayona Sharpnack was the founder of the Institute for Women's Leadership, a company based in Redwood, California. The institute trained thousands of women from the United States, Canada, and Australia. Sharpnack's training was designed to "allow women to lead without being forced to take on more aggressive management characteristics often associated with men" (p. C2). Sharpnack's training exercises allowed the women to work with horses. Those exercises revealed how the woman interacted with the horse in making the horse walk around a training ring, trot, and halt. The purpose of the exercise was to reveal valuable information about how the woman worked with and led others in the workplace. As cited in Guido, Sharpnack stated that the lack of targeted training for leadership roles keeps women from achieving higher ranks in the corporate world, not a lack of ambition.

Developing beneficial leadership preparation programs could be of great help to future superintendents. Tonson and Shaw (2000) have developed a two-semester class in York, South Carolina. Tonson was a professor in Educational Leadership and Shaw was the superintendent in a local school district. The class that they have developed allows the prospective leader to get hands-on experience in the field as well as learn from the perspective of two different backgrounds. The students are required to network and develop mentoring relationships.

Summary

As the world of work has changed today, so has the need for different leadership and managerial styles. Using a top-down, classical approach of hierarchy model may not be as effective in management situations of today. A need for more collaboration, team building, and problem solving in our information and service-oriented society has prompted a need for the transformational leader. As we have moved from the industrial age to the age of information, new demands have been created to challenge administrators and managers.

Effective leaders must be visionaries and have the capacity to empower and challenge those they lead. Effective leaders must be able to create a safe place for change to meet the demands of today's world. Transformational leaders tend to possess skills that bring out the best in others. A transformation of both the leader and the follower may be accomplished when leaders use this style of leading others.

Avolio and Bass' (2004) Full Range of Leadership Model is a model based on the factors of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration as transformational characteristics on one end of the continuum. Transactional leadership is at the other end of the continuum with the factors of contingent reward and management by exception. Males or females may use transactional behaviors but there may be a tendency for males to use transactional leadership styles more than females do.

Transactional leadership may be effective in certain situations. Contingent reward appears to be more effective than management by exception. Giving others what they want in exchange for rewards or promises of rewards can bring about change.

The web of inclusion is another model of leadership in which the leader works from the center of the organization by bringing in others as needed to accomplish goals within the organization. Relationships are important to encourage openness, flexibility, and the sharing of ideas.

The gender differences that males and females bring to the workplace are worthy of

attention. Males and females do tend to react differently because of physiological differences, learned behavior, and their experiential baseline. Women tend to collaborate and communicate more readily. The gender issue should not be used as a point of contention as to one gender being superior over the other but as a way to understand how males and females function. Understanding differences is a way to understand how people work that in effect assists in understanding how to bring about change.

Women represent fewer than 5% of the superintendents and principals across the United States. In assessing data over the past 50 years, the number of females in educational administration has not increased comparatively with the number of females who are in education. Various reasons for females not being involved in top-level positions may include lack of networking, lack of mentoring, political issues, and family demands.

Barriers to achieving top leadership positions include myths that permeate the thinking of females who consider going into administration as well as others in the community. The idea that women are not strong enough or cannot deal with others as effectively can keep women from succeeding in administrative roles. Cultural barriers, such as opportunity, discriminatory practices, expectations, and bias may hinder females in preparing for administrative roles or may act as barriers once the individual is in the workforce.

Female educators may choose not to seek the superintendency for a variety of reasons that include a lack of interest in filling administrative roles versus an interest in actually teaching, long hours, political difficulties, stressful interactions, and the increased demands of the educational environment of today.

Administrators of today are concerned with fiscal issues, assessment and testing, accountability, changing priorities in curriculum, changing societal values, relationships, compliance with mandates, parent apathy and irresponsibility, and Federal laws.

Executive coaching, or peer coaching, has been used in the corporate world to help executives meet the challenges of administration to improve productivity, increase job

satisfaction, retain leaders in their positions, and develop leadership skills. Several pilot programs have been developed to train coaches for educational leaders. Peer coaching could be an effective way to help retain females in administration by giving them the support and encouragement to develop the skills necessary to survive in superintendency roles.

In order for more females to seek administrative positions, appropriate training programs must be in place to encourage women to seek administrative roles. Using the strengths and talents of women and encouraging different ways of thinking as administrators could be effective methods to entice women to seek top-level positions. Training programs that support “culturally bilingual” (male and female) ways of thinking could be effective in helping to break the barriers that exist or are perceived to exist.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Rationale for Qualitative Research

Creswell (1998) gave eight reasons why qualitative research should be used in a particular study. Those reasons include: (a) the nature of research questions in answering how or what, (b) exploration of a topic, (c) presenting a detailed view of the topic, (d) the ability to study individuals in their own setting, (e) having an interest in writing, (f) having time and resources to collect and analyze data, (g) receptiveness of readers to qualitative data, and (h) being an active learner in the research process--telling a story from the other person's viewpoint.

Creswell (1998) also stated: "I think metaphorically of qualitative research as an intricate fabric composed of minute threads, many colors, different textures, and various blends of material" (p. 13). Because this research project involved interviewing female directors of schools in Tennessee, the assumption was made that there would be many different personalities to encounter. From those interviews, many commonalities and many differences should be found. That is the beauty of jumping into the unknown--the discovery of what is out there, looking for the "how" and the "what."

The methodology of this research project was to gather information by using the long interview as the primary method of data collection. McCracken (1988) described the long interview as a method to "take us into the mental world of the individual, to glimpse the categories and logic by which he or she sees the world" (p. 9) and "gives us the opportunity to step into the mind of another person, to see and experience the world as they do themselves" (p. 9).

An interview protocol was developed to collect data from each director through face-to-face interviews (Creswell, 1998). Interviews were audio taped and transcribed. Demographic

information was collected from the interview process and from information listed on the Tennessee Department of Education's website. Each respondent was asked to complete the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Bass & Avolio, 2000).

Interview Protocol

A letter requesting participation in the research study and providing information to explain the process was sent to each director of schools (see Appendix D). Each director was asked to participate in a face-to-face interview scheduled at her convenience. If the director had been unable to meet with the researcher, then a request to conduct a telephone interview would have been made. In order to collect the data, a set of questions was sent to each director prior to the scheduled interview. A copy of the Informed Consent form, approved by the Institutional Review Board, was also sent along with the questions in order to allow time for the participant to read the information and to provide the opportunity to request additional information or have questions answered as needed (see Appendices G & H). The initial contact was made by email, followed by formal letters sent through the postal service (see Appendices D & E). Email appeared to be an effective way of making an initial contact to introduce the researcher and to let the participant know that information was being sent.

After the pilot interviews, an Interview Protocol Checklist (see Appendix F) was developed in order to use the same procedures throughout the study to collect the data. The form was also used to make sure that all of the information was collected and recorded properly.

The interview guide (see Appendix B) with a selected set of questions was used in order for the researcher to take notes during the interview process and to make sure that a specific set of questions were consistently used.

Each interview was audio taped by the researcher and transcribed by a professional transcriptionist. After the interview, a response form (see Appendix I) and a copy of the transcription was sent to each participant in order to be checked for accuracy and to allow the

participant to add any additional comments that were needed to clarify understandings. The participant was given the opportunity to send back the transcription to the researcher with any additional notes or comments that she wished to correct or add.

During each interview, my notes and jottings were written and filed with the interviews. At the conclusion of each interview, the directors were given a copy of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire and an addressed, stamped envelope. The directors were invited to complete the questionnaire and mail it back to the researcher. Returned questionnaires were placed in a folder, unopened, until after the interviews were transcribed and coded using NU*DIST software.

Each interview was coded and analyzed by using the NUD*IST computer software program. Coded material was divided into different categories to determine the basic leadership styles of each of the participants, to find similarities and differences in the interview responses, and to answer the research questions stated. The purpose of categorizing the interview data was to “reflect the data--incidents, events, ideas, interactions” (Gahan & Hannibal, 1998, p. 56).

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire

The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire was developed by Bass and Avolio (2000). The questionnaire was referred to as a benchmark measure of transformational leadership that measures a range of leadership behaviors from passive (transactional) leadership to leaders who transform their followers into becoming leaders (transformational). The six factors that are defined by the MLQ are: Transformational styles that include idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration; transactional styles that include contingent reward, and management by exception (active and passive avoidant); and laissez-faire.

At the conclusion of the interview, each director was asked to complete the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire. The questionnaire and a self-addressed, stamped envelope were left

with the director in order to return the MLQ to the researcher. Questionnaires were not scored until after the interviews were completed and coded in order to not prejudice the researcher with prior information.

The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire is a research-based questionnaire that has been used to study leadership styles in various organizations such as manufacturing, military, education, and religion (see Appendix L). The technical report summary of the MLQ supports the construct validity and the reliability of the survey for the MLQ 5X. The MLQ consists of 45 statements that are scored on a scale ranging from 0, meaning that the statement doesn't fit the person at all, to 5, which means that the statement fits the person frequently, if not always.

Pilot Study

In order to pilot the interview protocol, a pilot study was conducted using two female directors in the Northwest Georgia area. Interviews with each of the two pilot study directors were audio taped. Data were analyzed from those interviews and adjustments were made to the questions.

Participants

During the 2004-2005 school year, there were 19 female directors of schools in Tennessee. A 100% participation rate was reached because all 19 directors participated in the study. All interviews were face to face at each director's office, with the exception of one interview. One interview was scheduled for a face-to-face interview session, but had to be cancelled due to a scheduling conflict. Through a mutual decision between the director and the researcher, that interview was conducted through emails.

Data Collection and Data Analysis

Data were coded and analyzed using the Non-numerical Unstructured Data of Indexing,

Searching, and Theorizing (NUD*IST). The data were analyzed in order to answer the following research questions:

1. What do female school directors perceive to be the most important leadership characteristics in successful school leaders?
2. What do female school directors perceive to be the similarities and differences in the leadership characteristics of male and female school leaders?
3. What do female school leaders perceive to be the major barriers to women achieving school leadership positions?
4. What are the best practices being used by female leaders to develop leadership and decision-making skills?
5. Do female school directors exhibit transformational and/or transactional styles of leadership as measured by the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ)?
6. Are there major similarities or differences in views of school directors identified as transformational and those female directors who are identified as transactional leaders based on the results of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ)?

Trustworthiness

In order to persuade the readers of a research study that the research project is worth the paper it is written on, the researcher must adhere to the procedures conducive to establish trustworthiness. Lincoln and Guba (1985) defined trustworthiness in terms of establishing truth value, applicability, consistency, and neutrality. Internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity are the correlating terms that are essential to establishing trustworthiness.

The personal interviews were audio tape recorded. A professional transcriptionist transcribed the audio taped interviews. The researcher reviewed each interview and made corrections as needed. A transcript of each interview was mailed to each participant after the interview to check for reliability. Feedback was solicited from each director in order to rule out

the possibility of errors in what was actually said and what was transcribed. A response form was included with the transcript (see Appendix I). Respondents were given the opportunity to clarify and/or make additional comments. This process of member checks (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) helped the researcher maintain credibility. Each participant received a Dissertation Review Form (see Appendix I), a copy of the transcription, and an addressed, stamped envelope to mail back the corrections and comments. Seven participants returned the transcript to add comments and corrections.

A written record was maintained on a protocol checklist (see Appendix F) for each participant in order to make sure that the same procedures were followed in collecting the data and to make sure that all data were collected.

In an effort to further establish credibility, a peer debriefer was used to help the researcher maintain trustworthiness. Dr. Julie Mitchell, a member of the doctoral cohort, served as the debriefer (see Appendix K). Personal meetings and emails were used to keep in contact with the debriefer in order to help the researcher stay on target.

An audit trail was kept to include audio tapes of interviews, transcribed interviews, personal notes and jottings, and the completed questionnaires. Checklists and other pertinent documentation were archived.

An inquiry auditor was used to examine the data, findings, interpretations, and recommendations in order to support confirmability and dependability. Dr. Sherry Shroyer, a member of the doctoral cohort, served as the auditor (see Appendix J).

Summary

This study was conducted by interviewing all 19 female directors of schools in Tennessee who served during the 2004-2005 school year. A pilot study was conducted by interviewing two superintendents of school systems in the Northwest Georgia area. Adjustments were made to the interview guide and to the procedures as needed to clarify the information received.

Eighteen participants were interviewed in face-to-face interviews. One participant was interviewed via email because the interview had to be canceled due to a scheduling conflict. Using a standard set of questions, each participant had the opportunity to talk about her role as a director of schools.

All interviews were audio taped, transcribed, and coded. The NUD*IST computer software program was used to analyze the collected data. Emergent themes were analyzed and categorized.

Eighteen of the 19 directors also completed the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). The MLQ was scored and analyzed for areas of strength in the transformational and transactional leadership styles.

In order to establish trustworthiness, a peer debriefer was used to maintain credibility and keep the researcher on track. An auditor was used to support confirmability and dependability.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

In collecting data for this research, the ultimate goal was to obtain information from an intact group of educators, all of the female directors in Tennessee, who were currently serving during the 2004-2005 school year. Without exception, all of the directors were very accommodating and kind in working with the researcher to set up face-to-face interviews. Each interview lasted from 45 minutes to 90 minutes. The dedication to education and the professionalism by each participant was clearly evident.

Nineteen female directors participated in the research project. Pseudonyms were randomly selected in order to protect the identity of each person. Extensive attempts were made not to specifically identify any of the participants or their school systems. The pseudonyms chosen for the participants were Julia Kyle, Victoria Austin, Alice Baker, Charla Murray, Sherry Jones, Vanessa Emerson, Harriett Murphy, Clare Martin, Flora Patterson, Caryn Shroyer, Rose Cooper, Sheryl Mullins, Deidra Thompson, Juanita McBryar, Nancy Hale, Debra Rhodes, Emily Hunt, Terri Ford, and Lillian Phillips. The names of persons identified in the transcripts were also changed to an appropriate pronoun or were given another name in order to keep the identity of all participants confidential.

The participants were in charge of school systems that had populations ranging from 400 students to over 100,000 students. Three participants supervised school systems that contained one school; one participant supervised two schools; seven participants supervised school systems that contained three to nine schools; five participants supervised school systems that contained 10 to 15 schools; and three participants supervised systems that had between 30 to 175 schools in the district (see Appendix A).

The participants came from a wide variety of educational backgrounds. Seven participants had doctorate degrees. Two participants were in the process of completing doctorate degrees, and one participant had a doctorate of jurisprudence degree. Table 1 presents the demographic information of each participant that was collected in the interview process.

Table 1

Participants in the Study

Pseudonym	System Size Category	Years in Education	Years in Current Position	First Female Supt. In System	Positions Held*		
					Teacher	Principal	Supervisor
Alice Baker	1	25	<2		X	X	
Charla Murray	1	25+	NA		X		X
Emily Hunt	1	25+	NA	X	X		
Deidra Thompson	1	25+	<2		X		X
Harriett Murphy	1	30+	NA	X	X	X	X
Sheryl Mullins	2	30+	<2		X	X	
Flora Patterson	2	30+	10	X	X	X	X
Lillian Phillips	2	30+	NA	X	X		X
Rose Cooper	2	20+	2	X	X	X	
Juanita McBryar	2	25+	<2	X	X		X
Caryn Shroyer	2	30+	7	X	X	X	
Julia Kyle	2	25+	7	X	X		X
Victoria Austin	2	25+	NA	X	X		
Clare Martin	2	15+	NA	X	X	X	X
Nancy Hale	2	NA	4	X	X		X
Sherry Jones	2	25+	<2	NA	X	X	X
Vanessa Emerson	3	NA	<2	X			
Terri Ford	3	NA	<2	X	X	X	X
Debra Rhodes	3	NA	4		X		X

System Size Category

1= 1-3 schools, population 400-1300

2= 5-15 schools, population 1500-8,000

3= 16+ schools, population 9,000 +

*Positions are noted in interviews- may not be all inclusive

NA= information not available

Twelve of the participants were the first female directors in their respective school systems. One participant said she thought that there might have been a female superintendent many years ago, but she was not exactly sure. Victoria noted that she was the first female and the first outsider to serve as the superintendent. Lillian said that she was the first appointed director in the school system. Two directors were preceded by female directors. At least four of the participants had been in the same school system for their entire educational careers.

In observing the environment in which each director worked, the researcher attempted to note things in the surroundings that might give a clue to each person's personality. Some offices were large and spacious with a conference table in the director's office. Some participants had pictures of family on the wall or on bookshelves in the office.

After the formal interview, Rose talked about a particular picture that her daughter had made for her that was displayed on the wall. She talked about wanting to make a difference for the children in her school system and about the important characteristics of effective leaders. She said the picture reminded her of what her focus should be. She also had a picture of her daughter on her desk, which prompted her to say:

Everything I do and every decision I make, I look at the picture of my daughter on my desk, and I think, "Is this good for her?" If it is not good for her, it is not good for the other 2,500 students in the county. So, you know, that is important. Again, I think [it is] compassion, a calling, doing what is right and keeping your focus on your students.

Leadership Characteristics

One research question asked what female school directors in Tennessee perceived to be the most important leadership characteristics in successful school leaders. When asked what the directors perceived to be important leadership characteristics that they possessed or that characterized those with whom they worked, there were a variety of answers.

Communication

Fifteen participants listed communication as an important leadership trait. The ability to listen as well as to communicate verbally and in writing were noted as communication skills that were needed by leaders. While oral and written communication may not come naturally to people, those skills must be perfected in order to function well as an administrator. Clare stated:

I look for ability to communicate orally and written. I have to say that does not come naturally, even with people with an Ed.S. degree. They cannot speak and write well or they do not want to work. So, if I can get through to them, enthusiasm, written and oral communications, and most importantly, a way to solve problems without creating more problems . . .

As a former classroom teacher, Juanita said that the ability to communicate was her greatest strength. She stated that in order to build relationships and trust with others, communication skills are necessities. When asked what her greatest strength was, Juanita admitted:

My ability to work with people and my ability to communicate. I am a good communicator. I can answer questions and get people the information that they need to know. Building trust with communication and working with people is what I would say are my greatest qualities.

Communication is essential in motivating others to work together. If success is to be achieved, then clear communication is necessary. Lillian explained this concept:

I think you have to be a good communicator. I think that is crucial in this job and you have to be able to communicate with the public, parents, students, and most of all, you have to motivate and communicate with your staff. And, I am not just meaning the simple office staff, but the entire school system because the only way we are ever successful in schools is if we work as a team.

Caring Attitude

A caring attitude was listed as an important leadership trait by 11 of the participants. Sherry commented about caring by saying, "You've heard the old saying, people don't care what you know until they know how much you are. I think there needs to be a caring nature there, not just fluff[ing] people off."

A director of schools may be involved in handling situations with teachers, parents, and

students. Getting everyone to work together for the benefit of the student can be a difficult task. Charla was involved in helping a particular student succeed in school. Her concern and caring attitude were evidenced by the fact that she could not remove from her door a picture that the student had drawn for her. She explained:

We had a situation last week where we had a child who was not performing and I had a very intuitive teacher who decided that the child could not perform better and who was just a couple of years behind. The child has a real bad attitude. I think what happened is his attitude masked his inability to do the work. For the last two or three years, as he was falling behind, the teacher said, "He has a bad attitude." Well, he really did not. He had a bad attitude because he could not do the work. This teacher is going to pull him over and work independently, and we called his mom in because we wanted her to understand. He cannot do sixth grade work and we want to pull him back and just do a little bit, trying to keep from testing him for Special Education. We will test him if we have to, but we are going to see if some modifications will work. We wanted the child to be in here because we want the child to know that he is not being punished and he did not do anything wrong. We were not sure how this parent was going to portray it to the child. She stays on him pretty much. He drew this picture right up here and brought it to me last year. He told his art teacher somebody would throw it in the trash and they would not put it up. It was taped on that door for a year and now I cannot even put it in the trash.

In making administrative decisions, the ability to care about those who will be affected should drive the decision-making process. Nancy maintained:

But I do care about people and I care about what happens to them. So I think that is important. I think that when you are making decisions related to schools, you have to remember that we are in the people business. We deal with people in almost everything we do. We do not deal much with things. We deal with people. We deal with our students, employees, and our public. So I do think that having a concern for people, having a sense about people, and being able to make decisions with that in mind are key qualities. ... But I am going to take care of the kids. I am going to take care of the employees. I am going to try to take care of parents if I can, as best I can, and meet their needs. But I think people know that I am 100% for the school system. I am going to bat for it anywhere and anytime. They know that I care about them as people. I think that is important to them.

Honesty, Integrity, Truthfulness, and Respect

Ten participants mentioned the need for honesty, integrity, truthfulness, and respect as important leadership characteristics. Whereas creativity, curiosity, and a good attitude are also important, Julia said that the key to leadership is honest and integrity. She expounded:

But I think the key thing is they have got to believe that you are honest and that you are going to come in and do everything that you possibly can in an honest way. So, to me, honesty and integrity are the first two things that come to mind. And, of course, you have to look at character of a person. And, moving a little bit away from that, you have to look at that person and do they have creativity and curiosity? I think a person has to have a lot of faith to believe that you are going to be a success. If you come in to work everyday and you have a defeatist attitude, you know, and that is pretty easy to do sometimes. I think that just having faith and the belief that you can do a job. It still comes back to honesty and integrity.

Trust and respect must be earned through honesty and fairness. Lillian noted how important this was in dealing with difficult situations as she added:

I believe to be honest, respected, and trusted. One of the problems we had in this school system for many years was that we would go to the county commission or to the budget committee of the county commission and they always thought we were hiding things from them, or we had padded the budget, or whatever. So, I believe what has been most important to me is to earn their trust and in turn, earn the trust of the whole county. I particularly want children to trust me and I want parents to trust that I will shoot straight with them. I will be fair with them. I will not always be easy with them. You know, there will be times and I do believe that when we are dealing with disciplinary matters and all of us deal with some zero tolerance situations. I do believe that the worst thing that we could do is teach children that there are no consequences for their behavior. So, there are times that I have to be really firm and hold a firm stand with kids because that is what is right for them. It is what helps them grow. But, I hope that I am respected and trusted. I think those two things are the most important to me and to know that I have the trust and respect of our students, parents, public, and of course, when it gets to the budget.

When asked what her greatest strength was in leadership, Julia said, “Probably if I had to say one thing, it is just having a good reputation.” Building a reputation is based on the previous characteristics that were noted: integrity, honesty, trust, and fairness.

Visionary

Eight participants listed having a vision as an important leadership trait. Sheryl listed having “a sense of purpose and vision” as important, along with having “integrity, commitment, and the ability to recognize, appreciate, and develop skills of others to further the goals of the organization.” Debra noted:

I think you have to have a real strong passionate vision for what it is that you believe

public education should contribute to children and to the community. But, I also think you have to be flexible enough to see shades of gray and to realize that it is going to take a lot of different perspectives in order to get that vision to become a reality.

In addition to passion and flexibility, leaders needs goals and vision of what can be accomplished. Deidra offered this method for developing that vision:

Every good leader needs goals and visions. They must stay focused and listen to ideas on how to reach them. Set your goals, listen, be a team player, lead by example, follow through with decisions, stay focused and be flexible.

People Skills

People skills, or the ability to successfully to interact with others, was listed by seven participants as an important leadership characteristic. Juanita related:

I think you can be a real person and you can connect with your people, and you can have fun with them. And, at the same time, when you have to get tough and make a tough decision, that does not mean that you cannot do that. I think it almost adds a little bit more respect because you are approachable and you are a real person to them.

Intelligence

Six participants listed intelligence as an important leadership trait. Victoria specifically noted emotional intelligence as a necessity, stating:

I am finding more and more as I deal with administrators, principals, and things that the emotional intelligence of those people is so much more important than their ability to be a leader than so many other things, and the fact that they have good people skills. That has probably changed for me over the years. Probably a couple of years ago starting out, I thought you have be a good decision maker. You do have to do all of those things. But I think top priority is the people skill person with good emotional intelligence and good people skills, because you cannot get to those other areas if you cannot talk to people and you cannot get information from them, and you cannot diffuse problems in all of those areas.

As an integral part of what school administrators do daily, problem-solving skills is a necessity. Emily noted:

I am a good problem solver simply because I will make a key. If there is no key to unlock that problem, I will think about it all night long. I will go to my friends and ask them. It will be constant conversation. And, I think that is a difference.

Courage, Flexibility, and Experience

Four participants listed courage, flexibility, or experience as important. The ability to think through a situation can be an asset. Taking the time to listen and gather information can be rewarded by making effective decisions in order to solve problems and to successfully interact with people. Deidra pointed out that the end product of one's decisions varies because of the variety of situations that are handled on a daily basis. She explained by stating:

I think you have to be flexible. I think you have to be able to step back from the issues and look at the problem as a whole as a non-partisan and be non-biased. You have to be able to lead, but at the same time you have to be a team player. There is just so much I have learned. One thing, extremely quick, is to not make an immediate decision. There is nothing that cannot wait 30 minutes or another day. But I think you have to be flexible and you have to be strong. You have to be willing to listen to several viewpoints.

She continued by sharing some of her personal philosophy:

I really and firmly believe, even though you are a leader, you are an administrator and the buck stops here, this my personal belief. There are just so many different ways to look at a problem and there are so many different outcomes. And, when you make a decision, you affect several people. It is not just one person on the average, but several. So I think you have to be real open-minded and you have to be able to, as I said, be flexible and be willing to listen, as well as be a team player. You just have to be. In this line of work, our end product is not something concrete. It varies so much. And, I think even though we have formed policies with everything that is coming along, sometimes you cannot just put everybody in a little pigeonhole. And that is the way it is. So you have to be flexible, open-minded, and willing to listen.

Organizational Skills

Directors of schools handle a multitude of tasks on a daily basis. Being organized and having organizational skills were noted as important by three participants. Debra suggested:

I think you have to be extremely organized and thoughtful in how you plan. But, again, I think you have to like chaos, stress, and hectic-type schedules. You definitely need to have a high tolerance for ambiguity. I think that the best leaders are those who really truly understand change, how to implement change, and how to create a culture of professional learning and development.

Sense of Humor

Putting everything in perspective can make a difference in the way situations are handled and the way the person who handles the situation reacts. Three participants listed having a sense of humor as important to survival in the leadership realm. Vanessa conceded:

I think you have to have a good sense of humor because I think you just have to be able to just say, "Well, you know, this is not the most serious thing in the world. We can go this way and be fine." So you cannot take everything seriously; just know what to take seriously, I guess, and choose those things. Then just let those other things roll off your back. I think you have to be tough-skinned but tenderhearted in a way.

Flora added, "I think emotional stability, good communication skills, and a good sense of humor."

Other Characteristics

Creating a safe environment where people have the opportunity to take risks was also mentioned as an important leadership trait. Vanessa stated:

I think as the leader of a school system, or really any organization, you have to be willing to take the arrows for your people. You know, you have to be willing to be out front and the buck stops here kind of thing, and protect everyone that is in the organization with you. Now if people are doing things that are uncalled for, you have to counsel them on how we are going to do better at this; but on the public end of it, you have to be willing to say, "The buck stops here. We are going to fix it. It is my fault." And then just move on and fix it. People have to know you will do that because I think it is important to set up an environment where people will take risks in the right direction so that we can make the changes we need to make and most people are uncomfortable taking a risk if they know they are ultimately responsible. But if someone is out there kind of shielding them, they will take a risk. And, if they know they can, if they fail, it is going to be okay. They are going to be given a chance to try again.

Educational leaders are often thought of as being surrounded by others all day long and their positions are rarely considered lonely ones. Clare had an interesting concept of what leadership positions are actually like as she shared:

There is an old saying, "It is lonely at the top." And, in a sense, that is true. You know people are going to be criticizing and talking about you. Leadership positions are like a person wearing a T-shirt with a target on it. Somebody is always going to be shooting at you. And you just cannot worry about it. You just have to be courageous, dodge the bullets, and keep going.

Emily also commented on the feelings on loneliness at the top. Although she noted that she had a great relationship with her teachers and they often came to her for help, she still acknowledged a difference in her relationships with others. She detailed:

But as a rule, I think I have a good respect in the community. I am not close friends. One of the things to me that has been sad, I guess, about this job is that I feel like I do not really have friends. That is me and probably my problem. But I used to have a lot of friends when I was a teacher. But once you are in a leadership position, especially in a small community, I have a lot of acquaintances and a lot of people that, I mean when you go out, you know everyone. But, do I have anybody that I really share a lot of stuff with?

Similarities and Differences in Female and Male Leadership Characteristics

The second research question was asked to determine what female school directors perceived to be the similarities and differences in the leadership characteristics of male and female school leaders. When asked if there were differences in the qualities that males and females in leadership positions possessed, 13 participants said that there were no differences; however, many of the 13 proceeded to note some differences that they had observed. Seven participants cited personality as the prevailing reason for differences, rather than gender. One participant said that she tried not to think in terms of gender. One participant said she thought the differences that she saw were more in terms of learning styles and thinking styles.

Personality, Learning, and Thinking Styles

Nancy said it was more about the “right fit” of fitting the person to the leadership position. She stated, “Everything is about fit, whether you fit.” She also pointed out that differences had more to do with different learning styles and thinking styles than did gender. She said, “Some of that is just difference in learning styles and thinking styles, and is not so gender. ”

Perhaps one way to compare the similarities and differences in the way that males and females perform in the workplace is to relate those differences more to personality than to

gender. People often revert to a basic personality in times of conflict. Those behaviors may change if experience or training has an effect on how the person reacts in stressful times. In asked if there are differences in the ways that males and females handle situations, Vanessa stated:

I think there probably are different ways they handle it; but, I do not think it is male versus female. I really think it is more personality oriented. And I know like you have probably taken the disk inventory? Have you taken it? They kind of tell you if you are more directive, more intuitive, or more social? It is not the Myers-Briggs, but it is similar. Basically it tells you if you are in a conflicting situation, what will you normally resort to because that is just who you are. And I really think it has more to do with that. And I have not studied it at all to see are there more males who tend to be this way or are there more females who tend to be that way. The only thing I can say about that is people may not know themselves very well. So they react in a certain way that might not be the best, but they do not realize it so they have not done anything to overcome it. I am a very direct person in a conflict, but I know not to go there most of the time.

She went on to relate a personal experience by stating:

In fact, we did this in a class this summer in my doctoral class. My two professors saw what I was and said, "There was no way you are that. You are this." And I said, "No I will tell you this is where I am. I just have learned over time that this is where I have to be in those conflicting situations." So I think it is more that than it is male versus female because most people would say the direct is a male characteristic. I think it is more of a personality rather than a gender issue.

Terri was careful not to over generalize about the different ways in which males and females act in the workplace. She seemed concerned about the negative use of power in an administrative position, saying:

I would say that it is really not so much male and female. It is a little bit more people dependent. But if I were going to make a generalization, I would find myself sometimes in a group where there are mostly men, where I forget sometimes that their egos need to be stroked. And so I am just merrily going along and then I realized, you know, what is going on here. And then I realize, okay, they are used to being reaffirmed more frequently. . . . They seem to need to be the center of attention. They have to have the last word or it has to be their idea. I am making very different generalizations that I do not think are always true. But I do think that what is true is that because of the ego issues that I described before, sometimes conflicts move right into power distribution issues where women may diffuse that with a certain set of skills or how you influence people without overtly using the power of your position. And this is not always true because I know women who inadvertently use power incorrectly, too. But there is a way to effectively use power. You just have to be sensitive to the fact that it can be pretty

corrupting. We have to remind ourselves that, as one of our directors says, "It is not about you." You know if you get too hung up on everything being about you, you lose sight of what's really important. It is really about the kids. I think that men have been in environments where the culture has not supported them expressing their feelings or their passion about their work. And women have always been encouraged to be, I think, willing to share their feelings and be more passionate. I think women tend to work more in teams and are more comfortable sharing a leadership role. And the new leaders of the future, I think, are required to have more team-building skills. So I think in those ways, and as a generalization, because obviously there are men, and I have had many mentors, who are very passionate about their work and very committed, and who feel very comfortable sharing their feelings. They also share power very easily. So it is not just a female and male thing, but because women have always had to use influence skills a lot more because they have not been in positions of power very often, they have had more experience influencing people versus directing people.

Ways to Approach Tasks

The administrators in this study have had vast experience in working with males and females. This experience also allowed each of them to observe how people in general approached tasks. When asked if there was a difference in the way that way that males and females approached tasks, Rose noted:

Probably the quality [of leadership skills] is not any different, but I think, sometimes, it is harder for a female. Sometimes I feel you have to really prove yourself more so than a man, and maybe not. But just looking back on different directors and different things in our county, I am the first female director in our county. And, I think you have to prove yourself a little bit more as a female.

Clare had worked on various committees with males. She noted the different ways in which males and females worked. She explained, in her experience, males tended to want to complete tasks quickly and not work as much on the details. She said the males called this being elaborate. Clare's response was more to relate to paying attention to details, rather than being elaborate as she stated:

Frequently, men on my team would want to take shortcuts. They would want to do it a certain way and get it down a certain way. And, I needed for it to be done accurately as described to me. The men would sometimes say, and this is a characteristic of their shortcut, "You do not have to be so elaborate with this." That was their way of trying to tone me down. And I would say, "We are not being elaborate, we are being accurate. This is the way we need to do it."

Victoria noted that women tended to approach tasks using more softness and a nurturing attitude. She also noted the ability of women to multi-task, essentially because that is what women normally do in taking care of a home, family, and a job. She stated:

I think that some of us bring to the table more of a softness and more of a nurturing type of thing, and more of the ability to multi-task because of being mothers. We are always multi-tasking. I have worked with several men and it is one project and one thing at one time. And, being in other administrative positions, I would have a multitude of projects going on. We were preparing for inservice, give me this agenda; we have this meeting this day; I am having bus drivers on this day and we are having in-service on this day. That was so common for me and for my other women that happened to be working around me. I think it is just the fact that we have done that as mothers. We have gotten the kids to this camp and to that sport and done the housework and done whatever we have had to do. And, men have not had to do that. So that is definitely something that we bring to the table.

Deidra said that men tended to be quicker to make decisions and were more authoritarian in the workplace. In her experience, she had also noticed less of a team approach. She noted:

I think males are more dominating as far as they make a quicker decision. This is just what I have seen. It may be it is just like we are going to make it and we are going to do it right now. They have a more authoritative approach and maybe that is just the way I have seen those things come about. There is less of a team approach, maybe.

Speaking from her own experiences, Caryn stated that personally she tends to go more in-depth in issues and pay more attention to details. She said that it was easier for her to turn loose of control and allow others to become risk takers:

I think with some issues we probably handle them differently, but I think there are qualities that anybody in this position would need. I have found, and I am just speaking from my experience, that I do go in-depth a little more with issues. From talking to my counterparts, most of whom are male, it is a little easier for me to turn that control loose without having my thumb on every topic and overseeing everything. It is easier for me because there is so much to do and I think I do spend a little more attention to detail and a little more time. But I have to do that. So when I hire someone and give them the job, I turn them loose to do it. If people come to me, I am pretty flexible about being a risk taker. If you come to me and you have some documentation, data, or something is data-driven and is something that you want to try with an end result that you expect, I will let you try it. So I think that there may be a little difference in just the way those things are handled, but the issues out there are the same.

Another difference in the way that males and females handle situations concerns attention to details. Juanita viewed men as sometimes not being bothered by the details, while women may pay more attention to the details. She claimed:

And, if you ask them to fill out a form to send in enrollment for today, the women will do that. The men will just send you the last column. You have experienced that too? (Absolutely!). I just think that for many men they are not bothered by details. They get past the details and women see a lot more detail.

Rose also commented on the differences in paying attention to details. She said that women were more detail oriented and were also more likely to show a nurturing and caring side than were male counterparts. Rose explained:

I think sometimes females pay a little bit more attention to details. That is probably not always true, but I do think that sometimes a little more detail oriented than males. I think the compassion for it, and I know I have said that too much, is easier for females to show than males a lot of times. I think it is just because of our nature that we are more nourishing and more caring, not to say they are not, but we show it more than a male does. So I think those are some of the differences.

With a softer perspective, women may pay more attention to details and be more intuitive than males are in approaching situations. Emily noted that she was much more apt to spend the time to listen, to be patient in gathering information, and to use compassion in dealing with others. She observed:

I think that definitely the female perspective is a little softer. I do not mean that I think that we are weaker in any way, but I think that females pick up on clues more quickly than males. I think that females are probably more into detail than males. I think they use every avenue that is available to reach their goal. Sometimes for me I think that means that (I am trying to think of the way to say that) I am going to put up with I guess behaviors. And I do not mean rudeness, cursing, or anything, but I may put up with a person who is going on and on about something that has nothing to do with the topic in order to get to where I need to go. So I may spend more time. I think females do more direct meeting with people. I just have to see this from an educational perspective. I am the female director of schools. I have a male principal. So I can look at our comparison. But I spend more direct time with parents, teachers, sales people, and people like yourself, because I am a woman. That is how I would want somebody to do for me. I see those things as details, as extraneous. Those things do not educate children but they further education. So I do not just look at the goal of educating children. I look at the big goal of everything that is involved in getting children educated. I may be their friend. I may be their psychiatrist in listening. But I do, I guess I go into some of those areas that I think men probably would not go into to. I look at the whole child. I try to know my

parents if the child is in the hospital or if somebody dies in the family. You know, I tend to those kinds of details and I do not think men often do those types of things. I think when a woman becomes a superintendent, I would be curious as to the statistics, because I think we dig in maybe more so. And, I think women will say, why? why? I think we are key makers and by that I mean if there is no solution to the problem, no obvious solution, I find that men go, well, there is no solution to the problem. They do not even care to go to the newspaper and say, such and such is a problem and we should recognize it. I think women will make a solution. I think they will look. I think we recognize that we do not know everything and that we surround ourselves with people who do know. I think it is part of the female character; it is kind of like the positive side of nagging. Because I think that men think that women nag and I think that women are more open to sharing their problems than men are on a personal level. You and I, if we have spent much time together would probably know more about each other than two men who had lunch together, because that is part of our nature. I think that is one of the reasons that I am effective is because I am open in certain--not necessarily personal areas, but I am open. And, if I have a problem, I am not embarrassed to say in my school, I have a problem with this and what do you do? I have developed friendships across the state and across the nation. And, I do not care to get online or call somebody to say, you know, we are having this problem. Why should I reinvent the wheel? I think men tend to reinvent the wheel or try to when women are just more . . . it is not a matter of my self-esteem.

Julia's comments indicated that she saw women in leadership roles as being more honest and not as willing to take risks in a dishonest way. She related:

I do not know if this is true or not. But, from my observation and it may be mainly because there are more males in leadership positions--I actually believe that women in general were more honest. But probably they were not as likely to be risk takers on a large scale. So that would be the main difference that I would see is that women are probably not going to take risks in a dishonest way. I think we will take risks in other ways, but not risks in a dishonest way. Typically, that has been my opinion, whether it is correct or not, I do not have any idea.

The ability to make decisions without worrying about the feelings of others was observed by Juanita. She said that women had a much more difficult time not worrying about the consequences of their actions and admitted:

I think men can have a final say-so. I think they can have a bottom line. I think they can make that decision, turn off, and not worry about how the feelings are involved in it. "I am the superintendent and that is the way it is going to be." I think they can truly say that, turn it off, and go home and watch Monday night football. I do worry about how people feel about these things. Did they really understand why we had to do it that way? And I think men sometimes can cut it off, go home, and do what they want to. I think it is harder for women to do that. I know it is hard for me.

The ability to take time to slow down, gather facts, and not make hasty decisions was noted by Lillian. She stated that males tended to be more analytical, whereas females tended to see things from a different perspective. Lillian also said:

I am not a crying woman and I do not want to picture women as getting emotional. But I think women spend a little bit more time thinking about how will this impact others and how will they feel? How will they react to it? Men are a little more analytical and look at the situation to figure out exactly what needs to be done. I do not believe men give as much thought to how it will impact other people and how will they feel about it. So, I think women are probably a little bit better at cohesive teamwork than men, because I think men sometimes cannot imagine that you need to slow that decision down, work through it, and figure out how it is going to impact everybody. I think most of the time they just decide. So, I guess there is a little bit of difference there.

Handling Situations

When asked if males and females handled situations in different ways, several directors expressed the opinion that women had to work harder to prove themselves in various ways in male dominated positions. Lillian's sense of humor was evident in looking at the positive side of times when males and females were at meetings together. Lillian related:

I think women work a little harder than men to prove themselves. That is a society thing and not necessarily something required by the system, or required by me. I feel like females have to work a little harder to prove themselves to the public as well as to staff or to anybody. That is true in any profession in this country, particularly if you are in a role that was predominantly male in the past. And, directors of schools or superintendents in Tennessee, and I think in the country, have been predominantly male, even though the teaching profession is predominately female. But, I said that the nicest thing about being a superintendent of schools or a director of schools that I have found is that it is the only group I attend where the line for the women's bathroom is shorter than the men's. That is a good plus.

When asked if there were differences in the way that males and females handled situations, Sheryl said that it was easier for males to make a decision and not second-guess the decision after it was made. She also noted that women were more verbal and had a tendency to make decisions in other ways. She pointed out:

Males tend to make decisions and move on with little thought once the decision has been made. Females tend to second guess after the decision and have a more difficult time moving on. Women talk more and think out loud, which can be dangerous and seem to

process from an affective point of view, whereas men tend to focus on solving the problem similar to playing a chess game . . .

During the interview, Julia also discussed a conversation that she had with a male counterpart. The administrator said that he thought of himself as one way in his personal life and another way in his professional life. She said she was thinking throughout the conversation, “I am not two different people. I am just the same person whether I am at home or at work.” She also considered:

They [females] will just face the issues and make great decisions. I think this would be the major difference. Women are willing to take the time to listen and to talk with the parents. From my observation of men, they are more likely to be very dogmatic and in charge, rather than work through the issues with parents. You might come to the same conclusion, even with the women, but they [women] have worked through, have listened, and they will take the time and are patient. Men want to; I guess this is really back to what I said a while ago, get to the same place, but it is how they get there. I think they cut some people off and make people mad . . .

Some males have a more direct approach in their leadership style as noted by Debra. In reference to literature that she had read, she said that leaders tended to narrow their leadership style in order to be successful. Her personal view was that the important approaches to leadership should include teambuilding and getting everyone to work together as a team, a process that was suitable for both genders. Debra related:

What I have read in leadership is that you will see successful females meaning they stay in the position and they are able to affect change, narrowing the style that they use to be successful. I think successful males probably follow that same narrow style, but there is another ribbon of men that are deemed successful, who use a more direct approach. I believe building capacity, facilitating, working as a team, creating a core sense of values and holding yourself accountable to those values, both genders should use. They are critical to both genders, but, I think there is a narrow ribbon of men that are called good superintendents who might not do exactly that. I would question whether they are as effective as the other style.

Deidra said that women had more of a tendency to talk out situations and to discuss ways to handle different situations. She observed:

From my experience, we talk about them more. We are willing to get in groups and say okay, these are our problems. Whereas, men think about it themselves and they make that decision. I do not know if that is just my observation.

Vanessa said that although the same qualities could exist in males and females, those qualities might be viewed differently. Behaviors that males exhibit may be considered too strong or even rude when practiced by females. The perception by others as to how women are viewed might actually have an impact on the handling of certain situations. Vanessa explained:

I guess the difference I would see is males and females can have those same qualities. Sometimes females are judged differently in practicing them. I think sometimes females might be thought to be too compassionate where you might be doing exactly what a man would do, but it is just not seen that way. And, I think, if women are too strong in convictions, they are not seen as strong in convictions, they are just seen as stubborn or opinionated, or even rude. I have even been called rude before, which I did not think I was being rude. I just thought that I was being opinionated. So, I think women personally have to be more careful about how people are perceiving your message than men do, even when they have the same beliefs, strengths, ideas, and statements. I think women just have to be more careful about how they are being perceived in a lot of situations.

In looking at the ways males and females handle situations, Nancy explained that males might act more demonstrative and get away with it. Females must show more control in situations or be viewed as emotional. She also stated that it was important to not take situations and comments personally. Seeing disagreements as specific issues, rather than personal attacks, was a better mindset in working with colleagues, according to Nancy. She added:

I do not know that the skills are necessarily significantly different, but I do believe that when there is a tough situation, a man can slam his hand down on the desk, utter a few expletives, and everything is okay. People do not get upset about that. A female, on the other hand, had best be in control. ...Now I learned this from a man, actually. He spent a number of years doing some coaching, but was also a high school principal and a lot younger than me. One of the things that he taught me was to not take it personally. Do not ever take it personally. When you are in a disagreement about an issue, it is not personal. It is about the issue. Sometimes your position will prevail and sometimes it will not. I think that may be more a male characteristic than it is a female characteristic. I think as women we do take things personally. I think if people do not agree with us or if they attack us, it is very hurtful and it becomes personal. Whereas, men just see it as a part of the game. It is a part of how the business is done. I cannot say I am always perfect in that, but I try to remember what he told me. It is not personal. And, if you do not take it personal, you can keep your blood pressure way down and you can keep your voice level way down. And, remember to smile.

Nancy continued by speaking of a distinct difference she had perceived between males and females in leadership positions, explaining:

I do not see a difference necessarily between men and women with the exception of one thing. Women are rule followers. If there is a rule, a regulation, or a guide, women tend to follow it. Men tend to ignore it. If they cannot get around it some legitimate way and if it is bothering them, they will just ignore it until somebody calls their hand. And, I have known this for years. I do not know that necessarily being a rule follower is always the best thing to do. You know, because I have to sometimes think how can I not violate that rule but get around it in a way that benefits what I am trying to do for students, staff, or whatever. I have some men who are to the period organized, got it all laid out, got all of the plans made and know exactly what is going to happen, blah, blah, blah. My women know that without any exceptions. My women principals, they do that. But I have men who do not. I have men who are just like a cheerleader. They are just somewhere. But some of that is just difference in learning styles and thinking styles, and is not so gender. But I do think if you are just trying to separate people out by gender, I think women far more are willing to follow the rules. They may want to change them, but while they are in place, they are going to try to follow the rules and do it the way you ask them to do it.

Perceptions of Lack of Gender Differences in the Workplace

When asked if she saw differences in the qualities of males and females in the workplace, Sheryl said, “Not really--females may respond in a different tone when communicating, which may nullify their responses to some.” Harriett also responded that she did not see gender differences. She discussed her own misconception about males being much stronger in leadership positions by acknowledging:

Really, with the males that I work with, I don't see any differences. I really don't. The people I work with, they treat me just like one of them. I really don't see a lot of differences. But, before I came into this position, I just thought—well, a male is so much stronger, probably gets more done, and I didn't have a good conception until I actually got into it. You see that there's not that many differences.

Clare stated that she tried not to see gender as an issue. She said she viewed the situation in her office more as being personality characteristics of those with whom she worked. She admitted:

I try not to see gender. I am looking for enthusiasm, efficiency, and problem-solving from whomever I can get it from. So that is the way I view them. Now, with some percentage of the male administrators in the central office here and in the principals' ranks, they are fine with me. They come in and they say, "Why don't we try this? I want to do this or that."

She continued by describing another personality group, recounting:

And, another percentage of male administrators just kind of shy away from me and think, "I cannot talk to her. What do you talk to her about? I am not saying a word. I'm getting outta here. She is gonna put me to work."

She concluded her description with still more personality types, saying:

And, there are some other percentage that used to be in control, and they want control again. As long as I am here, they will not have the control that they used to have. So, it varies from percentage to percentage with those who are fine and then those on the other end of the extreme who are just avoiding me totally. Then, there are the ones in the middle who want to mess with what I am doing to gain back control. They still want one foot in it or one hand in it.

Debra said that female superintendents acted as role models to others in the profession. She expressed that the feedback she received from others was not deserved because she was a female but admitted she hoped it was given more because of her accomplishments. She noted:

I think that there are females in this organization who have appreciated having a female superintendent because they have never seen one before. So people will give you feedback that they admire you. But I do not know that I deserve the feedback because I am doing well as a female. I think you get the feedback because you are doing well. I think it is just like wanting to have minority teachers in front of children, as you want role models for everyone.

The Women Administrator's Conference is hosted by the American Association of School Administrators in Washington, DC each year. The purpose of the conference is to address professional and personal issues related to women in administrative roles. Nancy attended the AASA conference but stated that the focus on gender issues in the sessions that she attended was irrelevant to her situation. She explained further:

The whole focus of that conference was, "We are women and we are not being treated right." And, so after about the first half-day, I already had my hackles up about that. I thought, "Well, that is nonsense; why do you want to sit here and waste your time moaning and groaning about things like that, when you should be focusing on what can we do to continue to be better?" I got some good things out of the conference, but the tone was one that I did not subscribe to. I did not like and it was real interesting.

Nancy gave more details about the conference, saying:

My coworker and I hooked up with a gal from Detroit, a minority middle school principal and we just had a really great time together. We had an afternoon tour in Washington and that is when you get to know people. It is not in the meeting; it is when you are out

and about. We just had a really good time sharing. And she had the same attitude that we did and that is, "I did not come to this to talk about how women are being mistreated. I came to learn how I could be a better leader. How I could improve and sharpen my saw."

Nancy concluded sharing her insight by adding:

I just think women have to prepare themselves in much the same way that men do. You got to know your stuff. Do you have to know more? Yeah, you do. Do you have to know the curriculum better? Yeah, you do! Do you have to know the laws better? Yeah. So, I guess that is the difference, where sometimes men can wing it, at least we think they do. We have the perception that they do. We have to know the answers.

Major Barriers

Perceptions by Others

Directors were asked what they saw as major barriers to women achieving leadership positions and what they perceived as roadblocks to their success. Fourteen participants noted the perceptions about how women could handle challenging situations as barriers to women in achieving leadership positions. The perceptions included the prevailing mindset of people in the community and the perceptions that men in power and political positions had toward women in leadership. The participants noted the prevailing attitude that men are stronger and can handle more challenging situations could act as barriers. When asked what she saw as potential barriers, Clare said:

Probably an old structure of either male supervisors or male school board members who do not want a woman in their playing field. That is everywhere that I go. You know, the men are suspect of intelligent, organized women. They see those types as people who might make them work really hard. They are all tucked away in an office somewhere and they do not have to work so hard right now. And, if a woman gets the job, they will be exposed.

Caryn mentioned the mindset of some board members when she interviewed for the director's position. Her response indicated that she had to prove herself to community members as well as board members. She confessed:

When I was interviewed for this job, one of the board members, of which there were nine and only two of them were female, asked me, "When you go to the county commission,

there are nine men and a male county executive. Can you stand up to them because they are going to be talking to you, little girl, about what you want to do?" And I said, "I will not have a problem with it at all in conveying what my expectations are." But I do think it is not so much the people who interview you for the educational job, but the folks that you meet in the community that you have to deal with. And, I have found resentment about the fact that a woman holds this position and is in charge of a 19.5 million dollar budget, which is the largest in the county. That bothers a lot of men, as a matter of fact.

When asked to explain how this resentment was shown, Caryn talked about the ways in which she handled comments concerning her ability to do the job. When asked how she knew that there was resentment, Caryn commented:

Sensing it and comments made. Like, "Little lady, you need to get somebody to check behind you" and all of this kind of thing. And, I just smile, be nice, and say, "Well, you know, I think I can handle it. I have not had any major problems so far. My commitment is to boys and girls." So, yes, it is out there and especially in a small rural town like this one. In a larger city, as a principal, you hardly notice it, but you come to a small town where everybody has known you since your daddy and where you were born--that could be a part of it, too.

Caryn then brought up another interesting observation, explaining:

Just being back in your hometown and everybody remembers when you were just in elementary school. And, when I came here, five of the teachers that I had were still teaching. And I could not call them by their first name, even though they are my employees. It is still "Coach" and still "Mrs." and those kinds of things. But in a small rural town, I think it might be a little more obvious, or at least I feel it to a greater degree.

As females become directors, traditions change. Deidra discussed the differences in going from a male dominated office to an office with a female superintendent. She noted that the staff in elementary schools were composed mostly of females, but in high schools there were more males. Deidra acknowledged:

You are changing tradition. In this county, you are changing tradition. Even though, many, many years ago we did have a female superintendent, it was a predominantly male-oriented office up until just a few years ago. Now when you get to the elementary school, we have predominantly female teachers. In high school, it is predominantly male. I mean that is just tradition as it has been in our county. So you are changing tradition. Change is difficult and it takes time.

Attitudes and Beliefs

Career choices for women in the past 50 years have changed. Clare mentioned the previous lack of choices as a possible barrier. She admitted, "When I was a young child, my choices were to be a housewife, nurse, or teacher. Those were about the only choices for women back in the early 60s when I was looking at my role models."

The belief that in order to become an administrator, an individual had to first become a coach, was brought up by Victoria:

The common knowledge at that time was that the only way you are going to become a principal or administrator is if you are a coach. That was the way it was for so many years. The coaches became the principals or they moved to the central office.

Alice mentioned a barrier that she said might not be taken seriously by other administrators. She had served on a calendar committee with other administrators in her geographic area. As the administrator of a small school system and a relatively new director, she had worked hard to get input from the teachers in her system concerning staff development days. When she brought the idea of having registration one day and staff development the next day in order to facilitate curriculum planning, she said that her idea was dismissed as if she was not making an informed contribution. She detailed the experience:

Sometimes I do not think men take things as serious as they need to. I see that. Last year when I came in, I thought I had a really good idea on our calendar. We have to do a countywide calendar. That sometimes is a difficult task because you know this person does this. We are the only school in the county that does not do football or have a band. So we kind of have to go with the flow on different things that they need to see incorporated into their calendar, which is okay, and a day here and there is fine. Well, I had an idea that I thought was really good and it was like, they would not listen to me. And I thought, okay, and I said it again. So maybe they thought, "Well, hey, she is new and she does not really know." But I had emailed my teachers when we were going to go for the meeting for the calendar. I told them that the county teachers would be meeting and if you have any insight or suggestions, please email them back to me so when I go to the table I will have some ideas. Well, the idea that I presented was from my teachers. And I said my teachers would really like to see this. There was this thing that was just as simple as having registration one day and having staff development the next and we could get ready. Well, see, it had never been done that way.

When I asked Alice how she would handle this situation in the future, she said she would go back to the committee and present ideas from her teachers again. In order to build morale in her system, Alice's intentions were to support their opinions and ideas. She declared that she would go back to the table with the idea and not give up.

Emily noted the perceptions of others as possible barriers to success. Her success over the past 12 years had helped to overcome her own personal barriers. She said the perceptions of some council members had changed from her being viewed as a female in a short skirt to someone who could produce positive results in a school system. She said that if she had failed, gender would have been an issue. Building a network of supporters had helped Emily be successful as a director. She noted that while she did not know all of the answers, she did know people who were able to help her solve problems. Talking to colleagues and asking for help was not a problem for Emily. However, she pointed out:

There are barriers. I think there are barriers. I think the barriers have changed some. I have had this position for 12 years. When I first got this position, it was said by some members of the City Council that I had long legs and a short skirt, and they could not support me. I recognize that we are a small town. And, those barriers have changed somewhat, but only because I have produced. If this school had not been as successful as we have been, then I think my gender would have made a difference. I think networking is sometimes a barrier and so I have created a network in the last 12 years of lots of people who know much more than I do. I am not afraid to say I do not know everything. And, so when I do not know, I am one of the first ones out there saying, "Hey, I do not have a clue, but I know somebody who knows." And so, I am a good problem-solver simply because I will make a key. If there is no key to unlock that problem, I will think about it all night long. I will go to my friends and ask them. It will be constant conversation. And, I think that is a difference.

Previous experiences facilitated Harriet's acceptance as a director in her school system. Continuing to network within the community had been beneficial to establish a positive reputation and build relationships. Harriett was also willing to do whatever it took, including climbing on school roofs with the maintenance supervisor, to show others that she was willing to do whatever was necessary to get the job done. She stated:

The biggest barrier I saw was not so much--I think the school system was kind of used to me to start with because I worked with all three of my schools as supervisor of

instruction. I think it's getting the community to accept you as a female because the superintendent had always been a male in this county for years and years. Things are different now. That was the biggest thing. I think I overcame that by going to community meetings and speaking, like, to the Quarterback Club, the Kiwanis Club, to the Chamber of Commerce to let them know what my goals were and that I had plans. I had set five-year plans that we were going to be doing. I think that was the biggest barrier. I overcame it by being active in our community, meeting with various groups, and letting them know that I am a female and I can perform these jobs. I climb to the top of the roof with maintenance. I change clothes and I go right up with them. I see the roof damage and what needs to be done. I was doing that yesterday. I was right up there with them. I just let them know I can do this too.

Julia commented that there were no barriers until she talked with a few other superintendents. Julia admitted the belief that males are more adapt at handling tough situations could be a barrier in the administrative realm; however, she said she had not experienced this in her community as she commented that her school board members were progressive and well educated. Having built a reputation as an assistant superintendent, Julia said that she had already proven herself to board members before she became the director. Julia did learn later in her tenure that the question concerning her ability to handle tough situations came up, but did not affect her appointment as director. She shared the following:

Actually until I talked to a couple of superintendents around the state, I did not think there were any barriers. But apparently there are. Just the past belief that men are stronger and men are more likely to be able to deal with the really tough situations. Women just are not tough. I would see that as a barrier. My board is so progressive and well educated that it is just not an issue. But I have noticed that some of the women across the state have some problems with that. In my own personal situation, I do not see that and have not really noticed any barriers. I will have to say that when I was first looked at for this position, apparently this took place and I did not learn about it until later. And that was could I handle the tough situations? How would I be, you know, if something really difficult happened, how could I deal with that? And, of course, they knew me because I had been with the system for some 15 years. So it was easy for them to look back and to realize that I had been handling the tough situations. So I would see that as a barrier, but it has not been for me.

The perception of not being tough enough was further discussed by Nancy. In applying for a position that she did not get, Nancy learned that the board members were concerned that she was not tough enough to do the job. Getting past the biases and stereotyping of others was

needed to overcome those barriers. Nancy stated that these attitudes are changing because women are proving themselves in leadership roles. She added:

It is interesting because of one position that I was not selected for. One of the board members did share with me that [he/she] thought that I was tough enough to do the job. They were concerned about another female applicant who they did not think was tough enough. I never was really sure what that meant because I do not think that you have to be mean, but you do have to be serious....

She shared her personal viewpoint, stating:

But, I think many times you are dealing with biases on the part of board members, who just say they are not sure a woman can lead a school system. I think if you look across Tennessee, you will find more, and this is true everywhere, not just in Tennessee--you will find more female superintendents of very small elementary-school-only districts, than you will of county school districts, like our neighbor here....

She continued by discussing attitudes in general, saying:

But, I think in general there is this attitude and it is a stereotype. That, it is okay for women to be elementary school principals, but it is really not okay for them to be high school principals, most cases. And, it is okay for them to be central office supervisors, but maybe it is not okay for them to be directors. And that is the perception on the part of some people. I do not think it is nearly as pervasive as it was 10 years ago. I think it is continuing to change. And I think it is as women are in a position and are able to be successful in it.

Political Barriers

Five participants listed politics as possible barriers to achieving success. During the time of elected superintendents in Tennessee, several participants said that women did not have as much of a chance of becoming the superintendent. When the laws were changed to require appointed superintendents, the doorway appeared to open for more females. Even with her many years of experience, Lillian chose not to run for elected superintendent of her school system. She said that she could not win. She had considered running for election, but said she did not think that her county would elect a female superintendent. In her opinion, Lillian stated that a barrier for her was having to run in an election that she did not think she could win. When the change

came to appointed superintendents, Lillian noted that this act leveled the playing field for females to wanted to become directors. She detailed:

I am going to just stick to my particular position because I am not sure I understand exactly what the barriers are in other professions. But, in education, I think for the superintendency or director of schools, I believe that as long as it was an elected position, I really believe there was a barrier there. I did not run for superintendent for years because I did not think this county would elect a female superintendent, although I was in the central office and doing a lot of the work.

She continued the conversation on a personal basis, saying:

But, first of all I am not real political and I did not really want to get out and do what you have to do and make all of the promises you have to make. Well, in fact, I could not do it because I am a voter, too. And, I know as voters we are all guilty of wanting to hear what we want to hear. And, then we support those who say what we want to hear. And, sometimes, to do a good job, particularly in a school system, you have to make some tough decisions. It is not necessarily all of the time what people want to hear. So there is what is right for kids and what is right for students. And, then there is what is politically popular. And there is no contest with me. I am always to follow what is right for kids. And, I do not know that I would have been very popular politically. So, I think there is a barrier there when it comes to running for election. As far as an appointed director, I think women do have a little more even playing ground now to compete with the men, because I think most boards of education work closely enough with the school system. They know the employees of the school system to the point that at least if there are quality people in your own system who are capable of moving up to the director of schools, I believe that they would be just as likely to move a female up as they would a male.

Clare disclosed that politics were also evident in the daily work place. She viewed part of her job as having to deal with damage control from actions taken in the past. She expounded:

It is mostly about politics and personal agendas of people who used to be in charge. They may have a personal vendetta against a certain idea. And then if someone brings the idea to me and they think, well, I will try it with her and see what she thinks. I may think it is a great idea, but it is a personal defeat to people behind me who did not like the idea. And, I do not even know who they are or why they had a personal vendetta against that idea, but they do not want me to do it because it proves them wrong. And, all of that is just politics and undercurrents or personal agendas because of politics. I am in a lot of damage control. The barrier is some sort of political undercurrent from years past that puts me in damage control. Let us clean it up and move on.

Dispositional Barriers

Barriers to success could be external, such as political climate or the effect of attitudes and belief systems, or they could be dispositional. Self-esteem, and personal attitudes towards one's own ability could act as dispositional barriers. Cross (1981) defined dispositional barriers as "those related to attitudes and self-perceptions about oneself as a learner" (p. 98.) Three of the participants noted that roadblock or barriers came from within. Vanessa explained:

I personally think for me those roadblocks are within me. It is whatever I decide that I am not going to do or do, knowing full scale that is not a smart decision. And I try not to do that. Now that is just me. You know, I think I am just stubborn about that and that you are not going to be able to put up a roadblock that I am not going to be able to get over (laughing). Because I am just going to keep trying different ways if I have to if it is necessary. So it is when I decide personally that it is just not worth it anymore and it becomes a roadblock. Because I make the decision to quit trying...it is not an external thing for me.

Sherry also added, "I think if there are any roadblocks, we bring them up ourselves. You know the old saying, 'We've met the enemy and it is us?' I think that's true of everything." Sheryl said her greatest roadblock was, "My ability to recognize my own strengths and not apologize for having them."

Sacrifices

Four participants noted the sacrifices that women may have had to make as deterrents to going into administrative positions. Personal time, family obligations, and commitments were noted as sacrifices that females might have had to make. In discussing why females may decide not to seek the superintendency, Debra said:

Probably the first one would just be that they do not try and that they do not set it as a goal and a passion. And that might be because there are a lot of sacrifices that come along with it. Or it might be because it has been harder in society for them to get it to happen. That is probably number one . . . well, I am sure . . . you just lose a lot of personal time. You basically really have to love what you do because you are going to be doing it the majority of the week. And that is true in a lot of careers. But in this one, if you are going to push forward, you have got to do that early on. And it is difficult to do that and juggle a family and the other things that traditional female roles are expected to be. I do not think historically in this nation we expect men to stay home and raise

children. I think we expect women to do that and I think women like to do it. Men may like to do it, but it has not been expected, so they have not traditionally done it. And, I think that is hard on women.

Emily also added comments about time and energy requirements to adequately fulfill the job requirements. She commented:

Roadblocks that get in the way of being effective are time and energy. Maybe that is a woman thing. I am not sure. I do not have little children at home anymore so that certainly is not. My parents are elderly but healthy so that does not stand in the way, but it seems like there are times that my energy is not necessarily as good as I would like it to be. The other things, I guess, that I think of is that old adage that we have always done it. A lack of other people's vision, you know, or jealousy sometimes stands in the way. I see that with my employees. We all have our weaknesses, and Lord, I recognize that. I am a person who can work with you in spite of your weakness because somebody has to work with me with my weakness. One of the things that holds us back is not being willing to sit down and say to yourself, well I know they were such and such, but for this project, that makes no difference. So I think that sometimes individual differences kind of become barriers to being successful in your field.

After attending an American Association of School Administrators, Debra reflected on what she had heard concerning the reaction of spouses to directors:

I went to a preconference session for AASA about five or six years ago. It made me feel good to spend a whole day listening to the issues that other females had in the superintendency. A lot of issues were the same that you would hear in any group, but the one that was a little bit different in this group, and a little bit more unique maybe, was the reaction of partners or spouses. There seemed to be two real strong reactions. One was I cannot handle it. This was not who I married. And, another was that the relationship and the individuals developed over time and the spouse that might not have had the same kind of power position in the community became the best right hand. And I do not know that you would find that different with male superintendents because I think the job is very demanding for the families. But again, I think, traditionally, men have not expected women to necessarily move from teacher to superintendent. Now, they might have married the teacher and they did not really plan on being the spouse of a superintendent.

Juanita was concerned about sacrificing her own self-identity as she raced through the daily actions of being a director of schools. Serving as a director for fewer than two years, Juanita's concern was how she might change from who she was as a supervisor to who she might become as a director of schools. She decided that she must accept the job for what it was and decide to like it if she was going to be successful and keep her real identity. Juanita explained:

I think a lot of women think that they have to put on that suit, they have to be really tough

and they have to change who they are. They have to absolutely change who they are to do what the man before them has done. I think that I had to come to terms with that during the first few weeks or couple of months because I thought I had to have a certain persona to do this job. And I went to my second directors' meeting. We had one in Jackson in September and then we had another one in October. And I had known these superintendents in other capacities. Either I knew their supervisor and had been to their system or I had worked in SACS and been to their schools. Some of the superintendents had been supervisors here. And one of the superintendents told me and this was two or three months into this job. He said, "Nita, I have seen you three times since you have become superintendent and I have not seen you smile one time." And that just smacked me across the face. And I thought, this is exactly what I feared and that is what I told in my very first school system newsletter. That is the thing that I feared the most that somewhere in this process I would lose Juanita. And that was the scariest part about this and I did not want to lose Juanita. Because being Juanita had served me pretty well, you know, for 51 years. I did not want to lose me to do this job. And I was about to do that until he told me that. From that point on, I decided that I would like this job. I had made a decision about it up until then. And I have to decide every day that I am going to like this job because you cannot just do the work and think, "Oh, I have had a great day." You have got to decide that you are going to like it because you do not see the fruits of your labor immediately in this job like I did as a supervisor. I think that was a turning point to help me to absolutely see that if I did not do something that my greatest fear was going to come true, but I had not even seen it. I had not even seen it until somebody said that to me. From that point on, it was very different.

The Glass Ceiling

When participants were asked if they thought there was a glass ceiling for women's advancement in educational administration, four said that they did not believe there was a glass ceiling. Another four participants said that they had not seen evidence of a glass ceiling especially in their particular situation. Eleven participants said that there was a glass ceiling, but that times were changing. Flora stated:

I think obviously you look around at the numbers of men that are in administration. There is a glass ceiling there. I do not like to dwell on it. I think that there are barriers of all kinds. I look around and there are not that many persons of color and not very many Hispanic administrators. I am saying that there are other barriers other than gender. I just think that if we will admit to ourselves that you know these are some qualities that we need to have in order to break through, I think that might be a better attack.

Clare said that she had seen the glass ceiling but was able to overcome the barriers that may have held women back from success. She noted:

Well, I broke through it. I got cut and bruised, but the bleeding has stopped (laughing). It is there and in the eyes of the beholder. I believe that it was there for me more in the 80s. Women back then in the world that I lived in the 80s were getting administrative positions by default. It was because nobody else wanted it and maybe, a woman or two were the only people that applied. So, of course, then a woman would get it. Those were the worst administrative positions. The guys would not take them. And, through the 90s, I saw that glass ceiling soften a little. I saw women break through it. There were women just barely before me that paved the way. I am not too far in years behind them and I see now that it is dissipating because women are proving themselves.

Deidra said that there was a glass ceiling, but that it could be broken through with hard work. She commented that as more women came into administrative roles, more traditions would be broken. Deidra noted:

I think there is one. But, I was always taught if you work hard enough you can overcome it. I have a real hard line. It is like you work really hard and on the average, you can overcome it. Now, there are some things that you just absolutely cannot. But I find that women in a leadership, other than directorships, in the state department. I mean I have got Ms. Smith in a nearby town and several of her staff members are female. And even the vocational person who came on board is regional and female. So, I think it can be overcome, especially in the education department. I think it can be overcome. With directorships, it just will take time and change in traditions. But, yes, I feel like the glass ceiling is there and you can see out, but it is just hard to reach the other side of it. But it can be done and it will just take time.

Lillian's perspective of the glass ceiling had to do with attitude:

Well, I think that has been there in the past maybe. But I think it is changing. We have come a long way, baby! We still got a long way to go. But, I honestly believe that women have two choices. You can either look at how far we have come, celebrate that and keep working, because we are going to go even farther. There will be a female president of the United States someday. We already see females in very dominant roles in congress. And, there are several female governors.

She continued by giving an example of her personal experience:

For here in this county and the 32 years I have been here, I could have gotten bitter because I did not have as strong a chance of being elected superintendent as a male. Or, I could accept the fact that I have come a long way to be an administrator at all. And, I would like to be able to go even further. And, now I am director of schools, which, you know, I actually did not set that as a goal for myself. I did not really ever think I would be in this position. In fact, I would not have even applied for it, had I not have been asked to apply by the board. I think there has maybe been a glass ceiling in the past, but I think we are really penetrating that glass and I think we have come a long way. I think most women are positive about it and feel like we will go a lot farther. But, I do not think we have let ourselves become negative or bitter, because it has been a little more of a

struggle than perhaps it has been for men.

Nancy said she did not really think of a glass ceiling as a way that held women back. She saw job opportunities more as the right “fit” for the position. She explained her viewpoint by saying:

I do not think there is a glass ceiling. And, education may be a little different from the corporate world. I do not know. I have not spent much of my life in the corporate world, actually, none. My life has been in government service and in education. I do not necessarily see that it is there. I would never have thought the school system I left would have hired a woman superintendent. They did...But I think it is all about fit. Do you fit in this place at this time? And, sometimes you will not.

Terri said she did not know if there was a glass ceiling in education. She related the term glass ceiling more to the corporate world, explaining:

When I think of glass ceiling, I think of more of the corporate mentality, but I will say this. I do believe that women get promoted to the superintendency later in life so that women tend to have to go through all of the stepping-stones to become a leader. Men may never have had to be in many other leadership roles like curriculum directors. They may go from the principalship to some leadership role, and then right into the superintendency. And I say that because I have met a lot of superintendents through AASA. I will say to the men, “So, when did you become superintendent? How old were you?” And they will invariably say, late-30s or early-40s. And when I ask women similar questions, women tend to be over 45 or in their early 50s, which suggests to me that women have had to demonstrate greater experience and greater proficiency before they are considered for the role. And I also think that there are some superintendent jobs that some communities are reluctant to hire a woman, and if they do, it tends to be somebody who has come through the ranks and someone whom they may already know.

Vanessa offered the thought that the protection by federal laws was a way of protection against having a glass ceiling. She commented:

Well, I think that is probably true, but I do not have any real proof of it. And I think that may be more true in business. In public entities, we are probably more protecting against that. I think, because of federal laws. So when we say we do not discriminate on the basis of all of the things that we cannot discriminate on, I think that allows for fewer glass ceilings in the public roles. Whereas in business, they are in control. And I still maintain men are in control of the world. Well, they say women are in control of the world, but women can or cannot do (laughing). But I maintain we still have a male-centered control in the whole world. But I think in the public entities, that glass ceiling is less. And I think it is because of the federal law. Another course we took this summer involved doing a lot of book reports. You know you are so accepting in our day and age of the civil rights acts, but if you go and look at when they came into being, they were in our lifetime. I mean you go back to our moms and they had no rights, except maybe the right to vote. Some of our moms might have developed then. When you think about what

a short period of time it's been, it is kind of eye opening. We have actually come a pretty long way . . .

Eliminating Barriers and Paving the Way for Others

Several directors expressed a need to be successful leaders in their current positions in order to pave the way for other female directors to follow. There appeared to be a sense of responsibility to succeed so that gender would not be the issue if there was a lack of success.

Nancy gave an interesting reason for self-motivation when she stated:

The pressure on me is to succeed. This is an internal pressure. I want to succeed for myself and my own self-esteem, but I want to succeed for all of those women who are coming behind me. I do not want some other woman in this school system or in some other place who could come to this school system to not have the opportunity because I failed and it got stereotyped into a woman cannot do this. So I feel a very strong obligation to do this job right for those who come after me. . . .I am always aware that if I do not do well, the easiest explanation is, "Well, she was a woman." And I don't want to give them that opportunity.

Juanita explained that while there may have been barriers for female superintendents, those barriers are broken down as more females demonstrate success. She explained:

I think several years ago before there was the first one, the barriers were there. Every time there is one more female who becomes a superintendent, it lessens that barrier. And I do not think in this county whether I was the right one for it after all of these years, I do not know whether there are others. I cannot recall other females ever even being in the running for it when we elected them. The first appointed director was my former superintendent who retired last year and he was appointed after he had already run for election. So there has just never been anybody else. I will either pave the way or I will put up a roadblock, depending on how this all works out. You know they will either say, "Well, let's get another woman. She worked really hard and she was easy to talk to." Or, "God, we do not want another woman up there!"

Best Practices

Developing Leadership Skills

When asked what the best practices that educators and administrators are doing to assist females in leadership positions, the directors had a variety of answers. Programs run by higher education institutions, strong role models, books and written information, and staff development

offerings were listed as some of the best practices being offered for developing leadership skills. Several directors noted that the training for leadership should not necessarily be gender specific.

Lillian and Clare acknowledged that higher education institutions were offering more opportunities to pursue advanced degrees. Lillian stated:

I think we are encouraging more females to actually pursue advanced degrees in administration. For a while, it seemed to me that most males, when they did a master's degree, it was in administration. Most females did a master's degree in whatever they were teaching. For instance, I did that, too. My first master's degree was in English because I was an English teacher, but now I wanted to get better at what I did. I did not plan to be an administrator. So, I did my first master's in English and I think it made me a better English teacher. But I believe for a while, females were being encouraged to do your higher degrees in your discipline and males were being encouraged to do their higher degrees in administration. I believe that is turning around now. I think females are being encouraged more to go into administration. And, boy do we have some good strong female administrators in this state.

Lillian also referred to the strong female leadership who were currently serving in the Tennessee Department of Education. Deidra talked about the strong role model that Commissioner Lana Seivers has provided as the current Commissioner of Education in Tennessee. Dr. Seivers has risen to the top level of education from system administrator, to system director, and now to the role of commissioner. Deidra pointed out:

Well, now at the state level, our commissioner, of course, is female. I think just actually getting the role models out there and letting them see that we can do the job. That is all that I know that is really coming down the pike. I mean I know that there are organizations really promoting women and minorities in leadership, but that is all that I know of or that I am familiar with.

Alice also mentioned the current Tennessee Commissioner of Education as a role model. She said, "The new commissioner's motto is 'We are here to serve.' It has definitely been."

Charla also noted:

The present commissioner has got the biggest heart for a child I have ever met. She reeks of it. She is a magnet because she has that love of the child so much. She makes unpopular decisions sometimes, but as long as she prefaces, I have to do what is best for the child. I have got to do what is best for 500 and not 5.

Debra said that she did not think that there was a need to "follow best practices to develop leadership skills in people," and that they should not be necessarily different from those

provided for males. Sherry also agreed that whatever was offered for females should also be offered to everyone. Nancy concurred, saying, “Women have to prepare themselves in much the same way men do.”

Four participants related that they thought educators were not doing much of anything in a gender specific way for best practices. Clare noted that she thought that the best practice educators could perform was to stick together and help each other. She elaborated:

But the best thing we can do for each other is to help each other. You know with the ranks of male leaders, they all stick together. And, within the ranks of female leaders, we do not. We do not help each other. We have people who are jealous of me or will not help me. Or, if I was not around, then they would be queen, you know, in my other peer groups. Not here because I am director of schools. But women need to help each other and that is one reason why I went out of my way to let you in this door. You know, I have to help this lady get her doctorate (laughing)....And anybody that calls me for a dissertation interview, I will take it, especially if it is a woman and I hurry if they are female. I give preferential treatment to females, because I have seen men given preferential treatment to the men, and not to women. And, I think that we have got to take care of each other the same way they have taken care of each other.

Clare then began to speak of another concept, one of supply and demand, by saying:

Well, it is going to solve its own problem through supply and demand. As more administrative vacancies occur and more women are in the pool, I think the chances will improve that they will get one of those administrative positions. But, up until now, when you were interviewing, frequently the panel would be all men. Principals were all men. Supervisors were all men. And, the women coming through barely stood a chance. But then the women started coming through with doctorate degrees and the guys did not, so it started to change a little bit. I do not know if supply and demand will take care of it as quickly, but I will tell you that in my principal ranks, in the schools run by females, the males will have a female assistant doing everything. The women principals will have a female assistant that they are working with, and that is the way it looks right now in this county.

Juanita said she wondered if we were really doing anything to help females. She stated that it often took males in the workplace to assist females in rising to leadership positions. She recounted her own experience:

Are we doing anything? I mean I have never been to a workshop that said if you wanted to be a female superintendent, sign up. I think that women rise to the occasion because they have males in their organization who value them. And I have had four superintendents. Three of them never thought I was smart enough, or I was (just) Juanita. Our former director really valued what I brought to his organization. If anybody did

anything to make me feel like I could do this job, it was the previous director. He wanted the other supervisor and myself to help him problem-solve and make the right decisions, even though it came down to him to make the final one. He valued what we were doing, who we were working with, and our expertise. Your male counterparts in the organization either lift you up or they try to put you in your place. I really believe that and I had three bosses who tried to put me in my place. My last boss lifted me up. That was the development.

Harriett mentioned the support that she had received from the local college. She said that the administration programs had provided additional support to educators who went into administrative positions. She stated:

I did my Masters' and Ed.S at the college and they were really good in that aspect of getting women into the field of administration as principals, supervisors of instruction, and as directors. They're real supportive of us. The college was a big deal to us. The board that I worked under, they really pushed me into this position. They really wanted me to go for the interview for this position. Even at the same time, letting me know they felt if the other candidates were more qualified, more prepared, they were going to choose the best person. They really pushed me into this and I have a real good working relationship with my board.

Julia had provided assistance to women by talking to several groups about her own experiences in administration and characteristics a leader should possess. She also noted that the chamber of commerce in her area had provided leadership sessions for women. Julia related her experience when she was asked to develop a class for women in leadership:

I was invited to go, participate, and just talk to a group of women about how I got where I got to be, and the characteristics that I thought were important. I really feel like empowering women through things like that. I thought that was a very good opportunity. I will have to say that I am probably a little strange in that I just do not think there should be separate classes just for women. Apparently, there are women who need that. I do not know. But that is just my belief. I do not see why it is any different for women than it is for men. Leadership characteristics are leadership characteristics. But I have not had the same situations that other women have had, so I cannot say. You know, maybe there are some women who need special courses just for them. I know I am always getting advertisements to attend this leadership session for women only and this leadership session for women only. The Chamber of Commerce sponsors them and I do not attend any of them. So, am I being a snob or what?

Another best practice noted by one participant was the Institute for School Leaders, a staff development institute, developed by Vanderbilt University. Rose said that educators were not really doing the best job that was possible in helping other administrators. She related:

I just think we are not doing a good job with it. I do not think we have had an opportunity to. You know the first week I was in this position, two of the local female directors sent me cards. One called and said, "If I can ever help you." Of course, your field service offices and the regional director have been wonderful. That first month that I was in here, he was over here a lot. So I could say he is sort of a mentor. So I think they have tried to do some things, but I think we could do a lot better job and I do not really think there are any.

Mentoring to other females was sporadic. Most of the participants were mentored by males. Caryn was mentoring at least three other females who were interested in leadership positions. She had provided assistance and had steered them toward classes and groups that could be helpful.

At least three directors commented that providing leadership training and assistance should not be gender specific. Several participants mentioned specific authors, such as Crissy Bruner, Nell Mahoney, and Joyce Meyer as having written material that might be helpful to females in leadership roles. Emily specifically mentioned that Meyer's work contained information on "how to go forward in a man's world."

The Tennessee Department of Education sponsors professional leadership academies for directors of schools. Professional development sessions are also provided for new directors. Cohorts are established and directors work together to form networks and a support group. Alice commented that the training sessions for new directors were helpful. She added:

I just got back from the new directors' training and that was very helpful. Last year I had not been here but about a week and I got the registration. I thought, there is no way I can be out like now. I just could not fit it all in. So I went this year and it was very, very helpful. All of the sessions were just so practical. I do not know if it is a female-male type thing, but I know that is something that the state department is doing for all directors because they have talked about the high turnover rate with directors. It is sponsored by the state department. So I think that was great. I really felt comfortable asking really unintelligent questions. You could have conversations and dialog with other directors in other similar areas. We have funding, budget, and on BEP. It was things like that. TOSS was there and it was kind of cosponsored by TOSS. They had Christy [Ballard] there with legal and just some things that are really helpful to hear again, even though you knew it.

Professional Organizations

Several participants listed membership and participation in professional organizations as being helpful in developing leadership skills. The Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents (TOSS), Association of Independent/Municipal Schools (AIMS), Tennessee Academy for School Leaders (TASL), and American Association of School Administrators (AASA) were professional organizations that participants noted in talking about best practices for helping develop leadership skills. The American Association of School Administration hosts a Women Administrators Conference in November each year in Arlington, Virginia.

Deidra mentioned that her sister belonged to an organization of women who met monthly to work on professional skills. She could not remember the exact name of the organization but said that it had been helpful to build leadership skills.

The American Association of School Administrators is a professional organization to which Terri belongs. She recounted her experience in AASA, saying:

AASA has a national network conference every year just for women and it is in November. They invite women to speak on topics that are generic to women. I think that there are more opportunities where interns, like the one I have here, are matched with other women. I also think that as women move into leadership roles, they recognize the need for them to reach others and try to create opportunities because they are promoted to special leadership roles.

Mentoring Relationships

As stated earlier, “Mentoring is the form of providing support in which individuals with more advanced experience and knowledge (mentors) are matched with lesser-experienced and knowledgeable individuals (mentees) for the purpose of advancing the mentee’s development.” (Watt, 2004, p. 14). Each director was asked if she had a mentor. The participants talked about being mentored by previous superintendents, parents, or other professionals who had helped them achieve personal and professional success along the way. Recognizing each person’s special talents and giving the person a chance to grow was the essence of the mentoring

relationships. It appeared that many of those mentoring relationships had developed naturally through one person wanting to help another and by taking that person under his or her wing to help him or her grow.

Two directors talked about the relationship that they had with their fathers as having been their first mentoring experience. Emily discussed her father's retail business as a way of teaching her people skills. She said:

I guess my biggest mentor has been my father. He was a manager in retail for years and years. He was a manager of [retail business]. All of my life, he has taught me a work ethic. And, so I guess he has been my biggest mentor to teach me that regardless of what your field is that these are the basics of how you work with people, to get them to do the job that needs to be done, and to be proud of that job when they finished and perceive it as their job.

Clare noted that her mentoring relationships came from female professors that she encountered in college in a doctoral program. She recalled:

By the time I was in my doctoral program from 1992-1996, I had female professors for the first time and all through B.S. degree and master's degree, I did not have female professors, except for one. And, she was the exception to the rule. She led me through and was one of those women. Then, the women in the doctoral program were fascinating. They were a little ahead of me. They paved the way for me.

Eleven participants were mentored by males during their professional careers. Those mentors were principals, supervisors, and other professionals. Four of those participants also had female mentors. Three participants said that they really had not had mentoring relationships in their careers, although there had been people who had helped them. Rose stated that her husband had served as her mentor.

Five participants talked about being mentored by previous superintendents, with whom they had either worked or had developed professional relationships. Juanita talked about receiving help from her previous superintendent who had allowed her to learn from him and who had given her duties to help her grow professionally. She said:

And I have had four superintendents. Three of them I never thought I was smart enough or I was [me]. Mr. [Smith], he really valued what I brought to his organization. If anybody did anything to make me feel like I could do this job, it was the previous director. He wanted the other supervisor and myself to help him problem-solve and make

the right decisions, even though it came down to him to make the final one. He valued what we were doing, who we were working with, and our expertise. Your male counterparts in the organization either lift you up or they try to put you in your place. I really believe that and I had three bosses who tried to put me in my place. My last boss lifted me up. That was the development.

Flora also noted the relationship that she had with another superintendent who had also served as a state department official. She commented:

But the particular person that helped me most had been a superintendent. He was a former superintendent so he understood a lot of the administrative difficulties and pitfalls. I would ask his advice and you know, he was not supposed to give it to me from the state department level. But I could always tell whether or not he approved. I would say, "Let me run this by you." And I could always tell by his expression whether he approved or not. And then, he helped me grow a lot.

Having another person to encourage and push in the right direction when needed is a part of a mentoring relationship. Terri talked about applying for the position of director of schools in another situation. Her mentor had encouraged her to interview and had coached her to be ready for the interview process. Terri summed up her mentor relationship by saying:

So it helps to have, I think, people who sincerely care and who want to encourage and support you, because I think women in particular need support to feel confident about taking on leadership roles that have been traditionally held by men. Women tend to know that they are competent, but they need the extra encouragement of others to affirm their own competence, which is probably too bad, but that is one of the dynamics that occurs.

When asked if the participants were mentoring others, 13 directors stated that they were mentoring others with whom they were currently working or with whom they had made friendships. Most of these relationships were developed informally; however, Terri had specifically sought an intern to mentor from a well-known university program. She elaborated:

Right now I have an intern working with me from the Harvard Urban Superintendent's Program and she is with me for six months. She shadowed me for the first six to eight weeks and now is doing a special project with me. So I am overtly mentoring her.

Rose had developed her own version of a mentoring program, which she called peer partners, with her administrative team and her central office staff. She explained:

I think that is something in which I have worked with my leadership team, which consists of my principals and supervisors. That is something that I have established this year with

them, because I think we do a really poor job of mentoring our leaders, principals, and supervisors. I think we are doing much better now with our teachers than we did years ago and we can still improve on that. But, for our administrators, we have never really done a good job. So this year I set up what I call peer partners. Every supervisor in this building is tied to an administrator. They are required on a weekly basis to be in that school, to spend at least an hour with that principal, and then, not only the principal, but to be seen and visible in that school so that we can get away from "those are central office people." And every Friday I have done this since I have been in the job. I go out to the schools and I spend time in the classroom with the kids. Because I think the farther you get removed sometimes, if you are not careful, you will lose your focus on what you are about. And, we do so much paperwork and we think it is not affecting the kids, but it does. So that is something I have started, and I think it is important. You know, I have had so many people who have helped me.

Vanessa said that mentoring to others was an idea that she would like to implement in the future. She related:

I think there is a place to mentor there, but I think another place for me to mentor, which might be more important, is our up and coming leaders because we do have a leadership academy that we started last year for assistant principals and teachers to start learning about being a principal. And, you know, as I look at the list and what I know about people, there are some that probably are just not going to go there with what we are doing. Now, they would go there maybe if somebody would sit down and say, "You got to work on this." And, again, we tend to not go there in education. I thought, you know, I had no problem because I know all of the people and I know a lot of them pretty well. I would have no problem sitting down with them and saying, "We need to go somewhere with this." And I have thought about actually mentoring that group of people, which would not be the normal thing, I do not think, but I kind of think I might be the only person who is willing to do that with them. Whereas, the other guys can work directly with principals. So that may be something in the future that I am thinking about and I have talked about with the staff.

Processing Daily Challenges

Each director was asked how she processed what happened on a daily basis in the life of a director of schools. To reflect and process in a timely basis is a best practice that has its roots in understanding how people learn. Reflection helps people try new behaviors and then assess how their behaviors have worked or what improvement is needed (Bransford et al., 2000).

Daudelin (1996) referred to reflection as:

The process of stepping back from an experience to ponder, carefully and persistently, its meaning to the self through the development of inferences; learning is the creation of meaning from past or current events that serves a guide for future behavior (p. 3).

Activities, such as exercise, meditation, prayer, and journaling were cited as examples of solitary reflection. Reflection could occur from those solitary activities or could occur also in talking with other individuals or in small groups. To reflect is to process information and to learn from the processing.

After gathering the data, the researcher found the following activities listed by directors as how they processed on a daily basis: journaling; exercising; talking with family or co-workers; documenting daily occurrences in notebooks, calendars, or Daytimers; using prayer and Bible study, or making an effort "to think about it and let it go." At least 12 of the participants listed two or more ways by which they reflected and processed daily happenings.

Seven participants said that they used journaling on a regular basis. One participant said that she had a journal with nothing in it. She said she had not taken the time to do it. She cited this as an area of improvement for herself. Another participant said that she had tried to journal but had not been successful.

Four participants used exercise such as jogging, bicycle riding, or aerobics to reflect and process. Five participants talked with family members to share and reflect on their jobs. Three participants talked with coworkers. Caryn said she had a set time each morning, "a coffee clutch," that she used to have informal discussions with her staff. She gave details:

Every morning we try to get here a few minutes early and have a coffee clutch in the back. Every single day we usually stay in there until about 8:10. Everybody who works in this office, secretaries and everybody, sit around back there or stand up because there is not room for everybody to sit. We basically talk about what happened yesterday that we do not ever want to happen again, but we try to celebrate and say what are you up to today and where are you going? And the personal stuff goes on too. Probably that coffee clutch is one of the best things that we have ever done.

Five participants used "think time" at night to process. Several mentioned waking up in the middle of the night or early morning to sort through what had happened during the workday.

Two participants mentioned using "driving time" as think time. Emily used prayer time and Bible study time as a way of putting everything into perspective. She stated:

Prayer and Bible study, and that is not said lightly. And, I do not intend that to mean that I just think that you just throw everything up, pray for it, and the Lord is going to take care of it. But I do try to keep in mind that this is my service. I do try to spend quiet time to see what the greatest leader has done, because I think Jesus was certainly the greatest leader. And, that is not pie in the sky, because there is real things that you have to do when you hit the ground. But that is the direction for me because I tend to get overwhelmed easily and get a lot of things on my plate. I am a perfectionist so I could drive you crazy, you know, wanting to get things done.

Julia talked about her method of processing daily events that included bicycling around the neighborhood to relieve the stress. She said:

And, I think that is one of the most critical things because when you take things in and you keep churning them around, worrying about it and looking at every silly little detail, it can absolutely kill you. And I think it wrecks your relationship with the people. I think it is critical that if we have had a clash with somebody, we just move on like it did not even happen. That is the way professionals have got to do and I think I have been able to do that, not hold grudges. I mean you can think of plenty of people to hold grudges over and just silly things that go on everyday. You know, things that are said that are somewhat hurtful. But I think processing, you have got to have a method to cope and that method should be just getting rid of it and certainly never holding a grudge.

Debra talked about attending meetings when she was a superintendent in another state. As she attended the superintendents' council meetings, she noticed that most of the superintendents were males who fished or golfed. While she had taken up bike riding as a way to relieve the stress of the office, she noted:

Of course, most of them were men and almost everybody in the group, male or female, the things they liked to do were solitary things. That was the first thing I noticed about them. They either fished or golfed, mostly fly-fishing. And I thought that is interesting. The longer I have been in this job I think that is really normal (laughing). It is just a way of getting away from the community, you know, and be who you are.

Terri noted that there was a need to spend time to process and reflect, but she also accepted the realities of her position. She said:

I usually write everything down in my notebook. I always keep a notebook for all of my meetings. I do a notebook versus a yellow pad because it provides a chronological view of what my day was like. Also, if I need to reference back, I have a ready reference right there. I don't spend as much time reflecting, as I need to because things are usually

boom-boom-boom, so I am just usually too busy.

With her sense of humor and putting everything into perspective, Deidra had some interesting advice for new directors on how to process the daily happenings in the life of a director of schools. She said, “Just hang on to the seat of your pants because everyday is a new experience.”

Communication

Another best practice is keeping the lines of communication open within an organization. Communication was listed as a desired leadership trait as evidenced in this study. When asked how they communicated with others in their school system, the directors listed 16 different ways of communication which included email, newsletters, radio spots, open door policy to allow face to face visits, visiting schools, attending faculty meetings, attending administrative meetings, phone calls, attending PTO and parent council meetings, sharing information on school’s closed circuit television programs, holding students' advisory meetings, having an automated phone mail system where messages could be sent to constituents all at once, sending personal notes, recognizing accomplishments through dinners and luncheons, attending community and sporting events, and establishing advisory groups. Each director talked about multiple methods of communicating within her school system.

At least 17 participants mentioned email as a primary means of communication. As the researcher was interviewing Deidra, she demonstrated how she was using a system called First Class Mail to send information out to a teacher. She was able to relay information on a timely basis. Deidra stated, “It is better than the telephone. And that way, you do not interrupt teachers during their class time.”

Nine participants said that face-to-face communication was very important. They usually had open-door policies to allow people to come in and talk as needed. During the interview with Lillian, one person came by to talk with her. We stopped the interview so that she could have

time to talk with him for a few moments. The same thing happened with Charla and with Deidra. It was very evident that visiting with the director was a normal occurrence where people were welcomed and that the director had a genuine concern for the people with whom she worked.

Seven participants listed visiting schools as a way to communicate. Terri said that it was very important to be visible. When asked about how she fostered the relationships that she valued, she said, "I would say getting into the schools. To reach the principals and teachers, you really have to go into the schools." She was also asked if she had as much time to visit schools as she would like to since she served a large school system. To this question, she replied:

Not as much as I would like, but I am going to change my life about this one, because you really have to get into the schools. And, you know what, being in the schools is so energizing. It is by far the most energizing thing I do. You can sit in meetings all day, but it is going into the schools that energizes you, seeing the accomplishments and success, and listening to the teachers talk about their work. Principals talk about their aspirations for their school and the community talking to parents.

Debra, who also served in a large school system, spoke of several ways that she communicated within the community and school system. She had established parent community groups, student advisory groups, a blue-ribbon panel of business advisory leaders, a community advisory group, and a support staff advisory group. Debra said that communication and learning from each of these groups was important to the success of her school system. While she had the support of a communications director, she also noted the importance of personal meetings with the stakeholders in the school system.

Nancy started a director's luncheon to keep the lines of communication open from her office to the schools. She explained how this worked:

Another way I communicate with teachers is I have a director's luncheon every month. It is held here. The schools pick a representative to come. My food-service people prepare the meal. I have a cafeteria manager who does my table for me. We use cloth napkins and a tablecloth with real flatware--no plastic, no Styrofoam. Everything is the real thing with real plates, real glasses, and real napkins. And she does the most beautiful table decorations for me with wild flowers, whatever. And, the agenda is theirs. We come together for the purpose of them telling me what is on their minds. Is there something

bothering them in the school? Is there something that is going well and they want to share it? Whatever it is. We put in an automated substitute finder program last year and so that was a topic of conversation for a month or two until people got accustomed to it and we got some of the bugs worked out. But, they liked that and they really like coming to that lunch. We do a knock-out dessert. It is usually a salad. In the wintertime, salad and soup. Sometimes it is quiche and salad. It is not a heavy-duty meal, but it is pretty.

When asked if the same teachers attended each time, Nancy continued to explain:

No, no, it rotates. And it is to the point now they say, "When do I get to go?" Which is what I wanted. It depends on the school. In some of the schools, the principal will say, "Susie Jones is going to the director's luncheon this month. If you have questions or concerns, let Susie know." For others, it is done more subtly. I mean I have heard it done over the speaker when I was in a school. I get lots of thank-you notes and comments back from teachers about how much they enjoy it. We give them all a little pen. I buy these little pens from Master Teacher and they have a little saying--it may be a lighthouse. I think at the end of the year it was a lighthouse. "You are a lighthouse for our students." So they get a little memento to take back with them. That is one way I communicate.

Clare was involved with the parent-teacher organization in her system, but she wanted to extend that relationship to starting an advisory council. As a relatively newcomer to the area, she commented that it was important to establish those relationships and she seemed to enjoy getting to meet and work with the parents. She related:

The parent groups are great. I have been involved in their PTO council. We meet at Shoney's once a month just with the PTO officers. I am starting a parent council with one parent from every school this year. And, then, parents just stop me and talk to me. They are just happy I am here. They want to be sure that I know who they are. And, it has been overwhelming to try to get to know everybody.

Several participants talked about meeting with various civic groups in the community whenever invited to speak or to share information. Harriett used her communication skills to inform the community about the need for a building program. In an area where this appeared to be almost an impossible task, she was able to convince the community of the need for a wheel tax for schools. She related the details:

We were in an overcrowded situation. So I had to start working with county commissioners. That's where I really built my rapport with a body of men, the county commissioners. I had to go in to them month after month after month, explaining to them and taking them into my schools and showing them how overcrowded we were, that we were using every aspect of space that we had. We were putting up walls; we were

making tiny classrooms--four walls for a classroom and going into classrooms with them, finding land to build a new school. Getting out into the community. The community, oh good gracious, for six months I held community center meetings, getting the community oriented to the fact that we needed a new school and the way to fund the new school without raising property taxes, and getting them used to the idea of a wheel tax, and designating that for education for the other buildings, and finally succeeding. . . . Got an architect to draw the plans up, went through construction management, set up all of this, went to county court with a building project and they approved an \$8.5 million budget for us to build. And the wheel tax passed. And it went to an election to a vote in the community and it passed big time.

Juanita said that it was also important to communicate on a personal level to let her teachers and staff know that she was concerned about them as individuals. She talked about sending personal notes:

I send notes all of the time. . . .I keep a basket with just a note card. I may only say two sentences but it helps. And I will put these under the doors of people in my office. I send cards. If I find out somebody is sick and I do expect people to let me know if somebody has been sick or there has been a death. You know, I try to let them know that I care about them and not just the work that they do. I care about them first. They do their work better if they know that I care about them first.

Nancy also had a method for sending personal notes to teachers when she visited their schools:

One of the things I did last year and got it going really well is I got into 60% of the classrooms last year. What I actually have to do is not come to the office. I go directly to a school the first thing in the morning. I am there when students and teachers are arriving. I will be there by 7:30 a.m. or whatever. I go room to room and I just usually stand inside of the door of the classroom and observe. Sometimes they will let me help a child or whatever; but, when I leave I write them a little note on that card and just lay it where they will see it. I started out just doing sticky notes. Well, I did not always have sticky notes with me so I had those printed in our print shop here. So I just write them a little note. Then when I come back to the office I will sit down. I may have seen 15 classes that day, 10 classes, or whatever.

Two participants mentioned automated calling systems that they have established in their respective schools. One call could be made and then calls would go out to parents or to anyone on the calling list to inform them of events in a timely manner. For example, if schools were cancelled because of snow, one call could be made and everyone would be notified quickly.

Communication was an important best practice that all directors appeared to embrace in numerous ways. Each director said she realized that success depended on the networking and sharing of information with others within the school system and the community.

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire

At the conclusion of each interview, the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) was given to each participant. The participants were asked to complete the questionnaire as soon as they could and mail it to the researcher in a stamped, addressed envelope that was provided. Eighteen out of the 19 questionnaires were returned to the researcher. All questionnaires were placed, unopened, in a folder as they were received. The questionnaires were not opened until after all interviews were conducted and coded using NU*DIST. Categories in the coding process were used to categorize selected responses according to the MLQ Leadership factors. After the interviews were coded, each questionnaire was scored according to a scoring chart. Each item was correlated to a particular leadership style factor and the sum of the frequency scores were divided by the number of items in each category. An average was obtained for each category.

The MLQ is composed of a 45-item questionnaire with each item rated on a frequency scale of 0 to 4. “Each of the nine leadership components along a full range of leadership styles is measured by four highly inter-correlated items that are as low in correlations possible with items in the other eight components” (Avolio & Bass, 2004, p. 13).

A lower score on a particular factor suggests that the participants exhibit less of that style whereas a higher factor suggests that the person may exhibit more of that style of leadership. For example, when the scores were figured, a participant who scored 3.5 on idealized influence should exhibit more frequently the behavior of that style than a participant who scored 1.25. Table 2 lists the scores of each participant who completed the Multifactor Leadership Quotient.

Table 2

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire

		Transformational Factors					Transactional Factors				Outcomes		
Name	II (A)	II (B)	IM	IS	IC	CR	MBE (A)	MBE (P)	LF	EF	E	S	
1	Sheryl	3.25	3.75	3.5	3.0	3.0	3.25	.75	1.0	0	3.0	3.25	3.0
2	Julia	3.25	3.25	3.75	4.0	3.5	4.0	.75	0	.25	4.0	3.75	4.0
3	Flora	3.0	3.25	3.5	3.75	4.0	3.75	1.25	1.5	1.5	2.0	3.0	3.0
4	Sherry	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.25	1.0	0	1.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
5	Clare	3.5	3.25	3.5	3.25	3.0	2.75	2.25	1.5	0	2.67	3.25	2.5
6	Vanessa	3.75	4.0	3.75	4.0	3.75	3.75	1.5	1.25	1.0	3.67	3.75	4.0
7	Charla	3.25	4.0	3.75	3.5	3.75	3.7	2.0	1.75	1.5	3.67	3.5	3.5
8	Deidra	3.0	3.25	3.0	3.75	3.5	3.25	1.5	2.25	.50	2.33	2.75	3.0
9	Lillian	3.75	3.75	4.0	4.0	3.75	4.0	2.5	.50	.25	4.0	3.75	3.5
10	Harriett	3.0	3.5	3.75	3.0	3.25	3.25	1.75	1.5	0	3.67	3.5	4.0
11	Debra	4.0	4.0	3.75	3.75	4.0	3.75	2.0	2.50	1.25	4.0	4.0	4.0
12	Nancy	3.0	3.75	3.5	3.5	3.25	3.75	.50	.25	0	3.0	3.5	3.0
13	Caryn	3.75	3.75	4.0	3.75	3.75	4.0	1.0	1.75	.25	3.67	3.25	3.5
14	Emily	3.0	3.5	3.5	3.0	2.75	2.75	1.75	1.25	1.75	2.67	3.0	3.0
15	Alice	2.75	3.0	3.0	2.5	2.75	3.25	2.25	1.25	1.5	3.0	3.0	3.5
16	Terri	3.75	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.75	3.5	1.50	1.0	0	4.0	3.25	4.0
17	Rose	3.75	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.75	3.75	1.75	.50	0	3.67	4.0	3.5
18	Juanita	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.75	4.0	3.5	1.5	.75	.50	4.0	3.75	3.5

Scale 0-4

The closer to 4.0.- the higher the correlation to using that leadership factor

II (A)= Idealized Influence (Attributed)

II (B)= Idealized Influence (Behavior)

IM= Inspirational Motivation

IS= Intellectual Stimulation

IC= Individualized Consideration

CR= Contingent Reward

MBE(A)= Management-by-Exception (Active)

MBE(P)= Management-by-Exception (Passive)

LF= Laissez-faire Leadership

EE= Extra Effort

E= Effectiveness

S= Satisfaction

In evaluating the data received from the MLQ, 17 participants scored between 3.0 and 4.0 in the areas of transformational leadership styles. Only one participant scored below 3.0 in the areas of idealized influence and intellectual stimulation. This participant had fewer than two years of experience as a director of schools.

Sixteen of the participants scored between 3.0 and 4.0 in the contingent reward style of leadership in the transactional leadership area. Avolio and Bass (2004) noted that a study using the MLQ showed that females may tend to exhibit more transformational behaviors than male leaders, but also may be engaged in more of the contingent behavior reward styles that fall under the transactional style of leadership.

In correlating individual responses from the actual interviews to the responses on the MLQ, several participants mentioned behaviors that appeared to substantiate their responses on the MLQ. “The transformational and transactional leadership process builds trust, respect, and a wish to work collectively toward the same future goals” (Avolio & Bass, 2004, p. 18).

Transformational Leadership

The components of transformation leadership in Avolio and Bass’ (2004) Full Range of Leadership model include idealized influence (attributes and behaviors), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration.

Idealized Influence

Leaders who exhibit idealized influence characteristics may be admired, trusted, and respected. The leader considers the followers needs. Idealized attributes include setting examples, instilling pride in others, going beyond self-interests for the good of all, building respect, being able to share risks, having high standards, and relaying a sense of confidence and power. Idealized behaviors include talking about beliefs and values, having a sense of purpose,

considering ethical and moral consequences, and bringing together a mission shared by those within the group (Avolio & Bass, 2002). Clare shared:

I would bring in people that I trust to talk to about the problem and possible solutions. And, if I had a problem and there were people in the room that I did not trust, there is a chance that they would make the problem greater. So I have to continue to surround myself with people that I trust.

Harriet said that her energy and her zeal to work hard would let others know she was willing to do whatever was necessary to get the job done. If necessary, she was willing to climb up on the roof to check maintenance problems. By proving her commitment to the system, she was able to get others on board to work with her for the good of the system. She stated:

I'd say probably after a month into this office, they saw that I could get the job done and that I was eager, energetic, and willing to attack anything. And the working relationship became better. I think you have to prove yourself.

Inspirational Motivation

Meaning and challenge to the work process are provided in order to motivate followers through inspirational motivation. Followers are encouraged to think about the future. Behaviors included talking about the vision, displaying enthusiasm, and expressing confidence in reaching the goals of the mission. Leaders who use intellectual inspiration encourage innovative and creative thinking. The leader will strive to motivate and inspire. Thinking, problem solving, and looking at problems from different angles are encouraged (Avolio & Bass, 2002).

Emily spoke of her commitment to her school system and to her students. Her intent was to build a bridge for future progress. Her concept of "If you can think it, you can do it" was evident in the way that she approached her job. She stated:

I think you have to be able to deal with conflict. I do not like conflict, but I do not put it off. I try to deal with it as it comes up because I have learned that when you sweep a little problem under the rug, it just grows and grows. So I think that my staff would probably say that if there is a significant problem, they bring that problem to me because they want it dealt with. And, I have visions. I think that is another strength.

She continued by sharing her philosophy:

My philosophy is if you can think something up or if you can visualize something and it is for the good of the kids or the mission of your organization, I do not worry about the money. I think the money will come in the end. I have visions not just for today or this year, but I have a vision for years to come, even when I am not in this position. As I walk around, and I drive around, or as I just live, I am constantly thinking,, "How could that work? How could that work for me? How could that make me a better leader?" I read a lot of stuff and I just think if you love what you do, you want it to go on and on. I know that I am replaceable and I do not think when I leave here, "That poor place, what is going to happen to them." I am building a bridge here for the future with what I do and I want whoever comes in to go the mile further than we have gone. I am not trying to do something that will die at this point when I am not here or make myself a job. But I think your vision takes your position. This is a very sacred position and I want it to be something that moves forward and forward and forward when I am not here.

A concept of inspirational motivation is to motivate and inspire others. Terri said that she wanted to be hopeful and to inspire others to have visions of success. She added:

I do not know how people perceive me. I think people want so badly to be hopeful and I am hopeful--I am a hopeful person. I am a real optimist. So I think that to the extent that they hear a hopeful message, they feel encouraged, and to the extent that they hear a less hopeful message, they feel discouraged. It is really, really important, I think, to build capacity within any organization and within the community. Obviously, the ultimate test of how people feel about you is whether you get student results. But in the meantime, if they have a sense that you have a vision of where you are going and that it is a hopeful vision, they can support you.

Getting stakeholders together to discuss the future was the starting point for Flora to develop a win-win situation for everyone. She commented that if leaders could talk about their ideas and develop plans to achieve those goals, those goals could be accomplished. She elaborated, stating:

I would probably get the leaders of each of the entities and we would try to talk about the future. I would hope that it would be their idea to begin with, but if that did not work, I would say, "Where are we heading with this? What are your thoughts? How should we go about it?" And I would try to incorporate what they would like with what I want. Then everybody buys in, and it works much better, if everybody is working toward what they think is a good goal and something that they want to see.

In attempting to get a much-needed building program started in her school system, Harriett helped to provide meaning to the challenge. She tried to communicate the vision so that others could be involved in the process and could see the need in order to buy into the vision. She explained:

That would be just like I agonized with my building program. Of course, our board members, you need them on board and then you've just got to get your county commissioners on board by bringing them in and let them see the problems. Don't try to verbalize and tell them, let them actually see; then they know if they've got to fight, they can actually see what's going on, they know what's happening. Then I had to go out and involve the community. Invite the community in to see. I'd say over that process of getting the building program started, we had about 200 parents who came into the schools to actually see what we had done to make space for teachers and for children that was not adequate. I had to get my state people to work with me and the Special Ed to give me a period of time to get this corrected. They worked with me over several years. It's just a process that you involve your office staff. You involve your teachers. The principals talked with the teachers about what you need in the classroom, about the marker boards, map charts, the different things that the teachers actually need in the classrooms with their input. Of course, we couldn't get everything they wanted and everything they needed. It was like podiums and we need the marker boards on certain walls and things like that that we could do for the teachers. You just have to involve everybody. You can't do it by yourself.

Clare worked as an administrator in an alternative program in another location prior to becoming a director. Through her care and concern, she was able to motivate and inspire her students to succeed. Clare shared experiences in working with students:

Another important experience, I believe, was being principal of the alternative program because all of my students, I hate to say it, were males. They were great big teenage boys who got kicked out of school for one reason or another and they were twice my size. But, after enrolling them in the alternative program and working with them on the path of their lives and what screwed it up to start with. What did you do to get here? How can we turn it around? They would have done anything for me. Those young men would have been my bodyguards if I had asked them to. So, those kinds of communication skills were critical in a job like this, to understand someone's anger, to turn it around and set them on the right course.

When asked how she might proceed in achieving goals that she wanted for her system, Debra stated that she would make sure that she had collected the appropriate data to develop a clear picture of what was needed. She also said that she would involve others in developing the plan. She explained:

Well, the only way I would have a goal is if I had data to prove that we needed a goal. And so, the way that it would start is that you would be talking about the data that you collect and do we have a clear picture of what the needs are in the organization. You may not have a goal just because you never collected the data. And, whether you decide to collect the data means you need a group of people that, when I say intuitive I do not just mean that they have intuition, I mean that they are sensitive, astute, they listen, and

they are responsive to the organization. I visit each school for about half a day every year and then I have a lot of informal interactions. I have lots and lots of communication groups that I gather data from. If I hear three or four times in any data gathering scenario that this is a real issue for people, I do not need to hear it a whole bunch of times to know we ought to sit down and figure out if we have any data on this topic.

Intellectual Stimulation

Leaders who use intellectual stimulation behaviors tend to encourage creativity and innovative thinking. They encourage followers to look at problems from different angles and encourage new ways to solve problems. The leader tries to create a safe environment in which new ideas can be shared. Followers are not criticized for thinking differently from their leader.

Clare's comments demonstrated a move from using a contingent reward style of transactional leadership to moving toward a more transformational style. In the beginning, she said that she needed to supervise and use caution in delegating tasks to use the strengths of her team members to accomplish goals. She said:

My greatest challenge is probably in total delegation. I need to give things away and get them off my desk. And, because I want them done correctly and I am not sure about the skill level of the person working with me on a project, I give it out in bits and pieces. Then it comes back to my desk and I check it. Then it goes back out again in five or six rounds, when I should just give it away and let them do it. So, delegation is probably my weakness right now...It is because of the number of years. And, I can just say that specifically in the months that have gone by. At first, I was doing everything. And then I figured out the strengths of some of the people on my team, and I was able to give them more and more to do. And, I will continue to do that...Anything that I am working toward is written down either on a worksheet or a calendar. And, I would find a core of people who would also be enthusiastic about making that happen. And, then, I would get some ideas from them about how to make it happen or present my own ideas and say, "Who wants to take this one? Who wants to take this one? Let us set a deadline and come back together to see how it works."

Debra said that she had an intuitive sense of people and tried to surround herself with a team that would work well together. She commented that she was quick to figure things out and that it was sometimes difficult for her to slow down and think through things. She used this method to compensate for what she deemed as a possible weakness. She explained:

The way I try to compensate for it is to surround myself with a team. You get a variety

of personalities and styles on the team. Somebody will say, "Whoa, whoa, wait a minute" if they are brave enough to do it. You have to create a culture where they feel like they can tell you that what you are doing wrong. And, that is really important, I think, in any leadership position. You have a group of talented folks around you that is not just doing work. They are also giving you feedback on how your own work is being perceived and whether it is moving the organization in the right direction.

Debra also noted how she prepared budgeting information for her board members. She said:

Well, it totally depends on the depth of the problem and the kind of problem that it is. If I had a problem like three board members did not understand a part of the budget, then I would go get the finance guy and figure out a way to make it simple and make a presentation. If it is a deep problem like the community believes we are not appropriately using computers, what I would do is to start identifying and clarifying the problem with the senior leadership team, figure out a way how that problem fits into our need for strategic planning, and decide if it is a high enough priority that it gets kicked into our strategic planning cycle. So that is another hour of presentation about how you would do that kind of planning, but that is what I would do if it is a deep problem--analyze it, figure out how critical it is, and then, if it is critical, figure out how to work it into the strategic planning cycle so that we have a thoughtful, thorough way of working on it. I do not have a set rule of who gets to be in senior leadership team. I design that based on who has the best capacity in the particular organization I am working in. So, if the problem that was pervasive really, really needed teachers problem-solving it, then I would see that we got teachers on the senior leadership team. Right now, what we have are people on this senior leadership team, five people who in the last three years have been principals. So we have a good enough balance of practitioners with people who have been central administrators, that we can solve most of them. Not solve them, but we can get the planning done at this table. Then they go out and use folks who are in the schools and buildings to help put together the details. But the planning process happens here.

When asked how she would go about solving problems, Juanita talked about the types of problems and how males might look at the policies and make a ruling whereas she might be more inclined to look at alternative ways to solve problems. If one solution did not work, perhaps another solution would be more suitable to the situation. She related:

If it is a school problem, I would have to collect every thing I could from the principal or teacher about the event or the complaint. Then I would have to look at what was out there. Is there a way to solve this that does not break a school board policy or a rule? Is it clear who is in the right and who is in the wrong? It would not be very difficult to solve that problem. The hardest problems are when I think, and maybe that is because I am the nurturing type . . . Is there a way to look at this and still stay in the school board policy? I think men like to look at policies as black or white. I look at it as, if the kid can only stay for detention on Tuesdays and Thursdays because that is the only day the single mom

with one car and the child does not drive—those are the only two days that she does not work night shift. Is there not a way we can assign detention on Tuesdays and Thursdays to help that mom out? You see, I let those things work on me a little bit. I think you can still punish kids, but I think you can have some sensitivity about it, too.

Individualized Consideration

Leaders who use individualized consideration behaviors act as mentors or as coaches who pay attention to the needs of each person in order to be self-fulfilled in a safe, supportive work climate. Individualized Consideration “means understanding and sharing in others’ concerns and developmental needs and treating each individual uniquely” (Avolio & Bass, 2004, p. 29). Tasks are assigned based on the follower’s needs and abilities. Management by walking around is prevalent. The leader tends to listen effectively (Avolio & Bass, 2002).

Lillian referred to the leadership book of *Who Moved My Cheese* when she discussed an experience in working with her leadership team. She said that it was important to consider the needs of the individual as well as the needs of the school system. Lillian discussed an experience that she had:

I will tell you another strength I think I have and maybe it is because of years and years of experience. You do gain some wisdom. You lose your memory, but you gain some wisdom. And I think, probably, a strength I have is getting people in their niches, in the right position. And, I do believe in moving some cheese. I think you can force cheese to be moved and make a mistake, particularly if you move very much of it. But, in fact, over there on the shelf you see the mouse trap with the cheese on it. It says, "Please do not move any more cheese!" That is from my staff. But, all of the cheese we have moved has been because the person decided. What I really like for people to do is for them to trust me enough to be willing to take chances and to be risk-takers. And, to understand it is okay to fall flat on your face. All of us will pick you up; we will all put the pieces back together and we will go on from there. Because of that, I think I have had some people who were willing to take some risks.

She continued by relating a personal example:

For example, the lady who used to be the secondary supervisor in the central office and the lady who used to be the elementary supervisor, the three of us were in central office together for several years. We talked on many occasions about how you really cannot make as much of a difference as a supervisor as you can if you are the principal because you are there with them everyday. Whatever you talk about, you are there to follow through with them and see that is what is happening. So, when I became director of

schools, I talked about that: I want you to trust me enough to ask for your cheese to be moved. If you are in a rut, kind of bored with what you are doing and you need a change, trust me enough to get out of your comfort zone. Know that it is going to be okay. So, the first thing I knew, my high school principal had taken a job as a superintendent somewhere else. I asked my secondary supervisor, "I am so sorry to do this to you, but would you go up to the high school and fill in until I can find a high school principal?" And, she thought about it a day or two. This was after we had all read, "Who moved my cheese?" She came in and said, "I have decided I do not want to go to the high school on a temporary basis." And, I thought, what am I going to do with that high school until we find someone? And she said, "I have decided that I want that job." She said, "I think I can make a difference up there." And she went up there and she is fantastic. I mean she has turned that whole high school around. If you could have been in it before and be in it now, you would not think it is the same school. Shortly after that, the elementary principal came in and said, "I have decided that I would like to be the principal of the new elementary school we are building. I want to go to that school and be the principal of that school." And, I said, "Gosh, what am I doing? Am I running you off?" I said everybody on my staff here is running off and leaving me. And, [Sharon] went to the new school and she is doing a fantastic job with that new school. It is our largest school and our newest school. She is doing a super job with it. So, I think a real strength is being able to identify people and not just get them into a role of administration, but into the right role and into the right position where they can really be effective. We have made a few changes. I moved a couple of principals. One of them did not really want to move and kind of fought me on it. I said you are stale and you have become stagnant. You need a change. You really need a change. I love ya and I am moving you because I love ya. Well, now, he has been in his new position. He was a principal of a little tiny school. He is now the assistant principal of that new large school. He did not want to do it but he is the happiest he has ever been. He comes by on a weekly basis to thank me for making him move. And, he said, "I did not realize. You are right. I just did not want out of my comfort zone. I did not want to change. I feel like I am alive again." So, I believe whether it is twisting arms a little bit or whether it is just giving them what they ask for, I think I have helped to get some people in the right place. [Sara] did not really come to the central office. She wanted to be a principal. And, I said, "[Sara], your real talent is in special education. And if anything is going to get me in a lawsuit, it is going to be Special Ed. I need you in the central office with me in Special Ed." She has kept us out of more Special Ed lawsuits that I can even count. So, I think I have a real talent at identifying strengths in other people and getting them in the right place. And, I have a great group of people. They really work hard and they produce. They do not just spin their wheels. They are producing.

Emily said that she should empower people by getting them to look at their own solutions to problems. She noted that her responsibility was to help the individual pull from the person's own intellect to solve the problem. Emily stated:

I am a good listener. And, I am first to say that I will not and cannot solve your problem, but I will help you see your options. And so, if you come to me with a problem, I expect

you to come in here with at least some idea of how you think you could solve that problem. It does not go anywhere with me if you come in here and say, I have a problem and I need you to tell me what to do. Even if I could tell you, I probably would not because I think that part of my responsibility is to help you learn how to make decisions and solve problems. So I think listening and helping, I guess repeating to you what I hear you say, because you have the solution to your problem when you come in, you just do not realize that. I have a unique situation because I am the superintendent of schools of one school. I am here with children and teachers, so I am available. And, I am fairly easy to get to and I do not put on any pretense. I am here and there is a way of stopping what I am doing and you could get to me. You do not have to wait for two weeks.

In asking how she would involve others in the process, Emily said she would involve them through “questioning, having them research, and making a recommendation.”

Considering the strengths and capabilities of those with whom she worked helped Clare to change from doing everything herself to capitalizing on the strengths of others to build her team. Clare said:

I can just say that specifically in the months that have gone by. At first, I was doing everything. And then I figured out the strengths of some of the people on my team and I was able to give them more and more to do. And, I will continue to do that.

Debra commented that she needed to create a culture on the leadership team to allow the strengths of others to work together. She said that although she could figure things out quickly herself, she had to work at stepping back and taking the time to build on the strengths of her team. She clarified:

I have a pretty good intuitive sense of what somebody is about and as a result, I think I am really good at surrounding myself with a great team, a team that compliments each other. And I also think I am driven and passionate about student achievement. I think it is the whole backbone of the nation and if we let that slide, we are in real trouble. So, those are the two that I think are the most helpful to me. I am a good communicator and I am pretty quick to figure things out. It is also a huge deficit for me to be that quick because it is sometimes hard to get me to stop or slow down and think through something. So every strength has a weakness..... the way I try to compensate for it is to surround myself with a team. That is really important, I think, in any leadership position...that you have a group of talented folks around you who are not just doing work. They are also giving you feedback on how your own work is being perceived and whether it is moving the organization in the right direction.

In solving problems, Julia was asked about the process she would follow and how she might involve others. She said that she would use the strong areas of her team members to develop a plan of attack to solve the problems. She explained her actions:

If it is very serious, I might involve the whole management team. If it is something that is just related to, say a finance or business issue, I always call in my personnel person and my finance person. They are just good logical people to listen to. In fact, the personnel person has a law degree and so he is always the conservative guy and he holds me back. And, you need that. You need somebody who is going to be very conservative because sometimes I am a little quick occasionally to want to make a decision. And he will say, "You know Julia, I do not know, maybe you better consider this. You better consider that." So there are very few times that I do not run it by somebody. If it is not them, then I will call my board chairman and talk to him. If it is instruction, then I go to the supervisor of instruction. If it is Special Ed, we have a great supervisor of that. I would involve her and the director of instruction.

Rose's tactic was to look at the whole picture in solving a problem then try to determine who on her leadership team should be involved in developing the solution. She said:

I usually try to look at the whole picture. I try to read through it and I try to sort it out. Then, if it is appropriate, I will include as many people as I can, my leadership team here and my supervisors. If it is appropriate, I will take it down to the next level, which would be my principals. Always, though, anything that I deal with, anything, minor or major, I keep my board informed. The first thing I do on any situation, unless it is something that I absolutely cannot, is call each board member and say this is what is happening and this is what I have done. I want you to know. So I try to involve other people to help me make those major decisions. I do not want to use just my mind and my thoughts to make something that is really important, unless I have to.

Transactional Leadership

Transactional leadership behaviors include constructive and corrective transactions. The Full Range of Leadership model displays contingent rewards, management by exception, and laissez- faire on a continuum.

Contingent Reward

Contingent reward is a transactional leadership style that involves the clarification and recognition of goals and objectives. Followers receive assistance in exchange for efforts.

Recognition is given when goals are achieved. Whereas contingent reward was listed by the directors in the MLQ questionnaire as a predominately used style of leadership, it was very difficult to find concrete examples of contingent reward in analyzing the transcripts. The MLQ scores ranged from 2.75 to 4.0. Even though directors rated themselves as using a contingent reward style of leadership, there appeared to be little mention of this in the interviews. Perhaps a weakness of this study was not probing more for concrete examples of particular ways of acting and reacting in the workplace.

Clare talked about using rewards for students for attendance and for academic improvements in the schools. She related:

I had a car dealership give away a brand new truck to a young man whose name was drawn out of an attendance pool. It was great! We had an attendance program. The chamber of commerce gives ace awards to those who are not normally recognized and those students who are most improved--there are academic aces and ones that rose above expectations in that strand. And, I will go out and give them their certificate and have my picture with them, which is in the paper.

In trying to make some positive changes in the perceptions of central office personnel's responsibilities, Rose decided to challenge her staff to do something new in exchange for a more positive reputation. She explained her actions, saying:

That is something that I have established this year with them, because I think we do a really poor job of mentoring our leaders, principals, and supervisors. I think we are doing much better now with our teachers than we did years ago and we can still improve on that. But, for our administrators, we have never really done a good job. So this year I set up what I call peer partners. Every supervisor in this building is tied to an administrator. They are required on a weekly basis to be in that school to spend at least an hour with that principal and then, not only the principal, but to be seen and visible in that school so that we can get away from "those are central office people."

Management by Exception

Management by exception is a corrective transactional leadership style. Actions are monitored for deviations and mistakes, and corrective action is taken immediately. Passive management by exception is reactive. The leader may fail to intervene until the problems are serious and show a belief in "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

Lillian wrote a comment on the MLQ questionnaire form, in reference to the statement, “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.” She said: “A sure recipe for mediocrity. I fix a lot of things that are not broken, but are also not performing at capacity.”

Laissez-Faire

The Laissez-Faire leadership style is basically an uninvolved style. The leader may often be absent, avoid making decisions, and delay responding to situations. Whereas no example could be found in the data to illustrate that a director used a laissez-faire style of leadership, Deidra noted an example she had observed as she talked about one of her former superintendents:

He believes in D&D. He will delegate it and depart. He is a D&D person, delegate and depart. He went around and ignited fires because he was the type of person who would challenge you. It may be as simple as starting an argument with you, because he was good at that. And, he always told me he would start the fires and I would have to go around and put them out. And, he did. But then, he would delegate that to us and depart.

Leadership Outcomes

The MLQ (5X) also includes scores on the outcomes of leadership actions. “Success is measured with the MLQ by how often the raters perceive their leader to be motivating, how effective raters perceive their leader to be at interacting at different levels of the organization, and how satisfied raters are with their leaders' methods of working with others” (Avolio & Bass, 2004, p. 99). Because the directors in this study rated themselves, the outcomes reflect their own views on extra effort, effectiveness, and satisfaction with leadership.

Extra Effort means getting others to do more, having a desire to succeed, and motivating. Effectiveness means how effective the director perceives that she is in meeting the needs of the followers, representing them to others, meeting organizational requirements, and leading effectively. Satisfaction with the Leadership is how well the director perceives that she “uses

methods that are satisfying and works with others in a satisfactory way” (Avolio & Bass, 2004, p. 99).

Life Stories

Each of the participants in this study had interesting stories to tell concerning her experiences in life and in education. Some were humorous and some gave insight into the person’s reason for being in education. While impossible to include all of the stories, the following ones had a lasting impression on the researcher.

Victoria had an interesting story as to how she became more than the superintendent in developing relationships in her new job as a director. She explained:

I coached girls basketball this year at [community] on the other side of the mountain. The basketball coach kept coming through my office saying to me that she wanted her girls to meet me. She wanted them to know that there is a female director. She had a little girl there whose last name was my maiden name and she had scored like 32 on the ACT test. She said I want her to know that she can go on. I want her to know that she can do anything. Will you come? They are going to have a pool party. Will you come and talk to them? Well, that was rained out. We are going to the lake and will you go talk to them and then, that got rained out. But I met her during the interview process. She said I heard you used to coach basketball in another school system. Anyway, she did not have an assistant coach and she came by here one day again. She and her husband were going to work the concession stand at the high school and she said the money we get tonight goes to my girls' program. Well, I am new here. I am widowed and there is no big party happening in my life and you know, I am working. I said well if you want me to, I will go help you. And she just gave me this really funny look and said okay? I said you just need to tell me and if you want me to help you, I will help you. Well, okay, and so we arrange a time and she comes back to pick me up. She still has this puzzled look and of course, I tell her she looks puzzled all of the time now anyway. You have that puzzled look again! And I said I am not sure you wanted me to go. She said I am in just a state of shock that you, a superintendent, would help in the concession stand. Well, it was like a monkey in a cage because I am back there, flipping hamburgers and both board members over there are bringing everybody by that they knew to meet me. I am like, guys, I gotta make a hot dog back here, you know? You know I think a male superintendent would have gone up and sat down in the stands. And, here we are just so work oriented, but they kept bringing them by to meet me because I was back there working. The next thing I knew, I am sitting on the bench at ballgames. And we would have a Thursday night ballgame, and I would say, well, I have a board meeting. And the girls would e-mail and say are you coming over? And I just do not understand why that board would not let me coach that ballgame instead . . . (laughing).

Rose's story centered on her pathway to the superintendency. She was raised in the school system in which she now served as director and had strong ties to the community. Rose began by describing her early family life: :

I was very fortunate to have a wonderful mother. She raised four of us as a single parent from birth on. I think seeing her work ethic and I can remember days when she was sick that she went to work. She was always encouraging. I had wonderful grandparents. Those people, and if you have ever read the book, *Boat of Dreams*, it talks about people in your life who help mold who you are and I think those individuals are responsible for where I am. I had wonderful teachers in high school when I was going the wrong way who cared enough about me and had compassion. And, that is what I want to push now and let my teachers know that you can make a difference in a child's life. And, I had some of those individuals.

She went on to describe those teachers who had made a difference in her own life and told about an inservice in which she invited her former high school teacher to participate:

I had an individual as a kindergarten teacher that I will never forget. But she, even at that young age, helped mold and encourage me to go on. I had a wonderful high school teacher and I invited her back last year. She is no longer in the profession. She is in another state doing computers. She spoke at our inservice because she made a difference in my life. You know, she stood up for me. So, I think those things helped me get to where I am.

Often, one does not realize the personal struggles that another individual goes through to reach their position in life. In her interview, Emily mentioned how she wanted her daughter to have a successful life and be whoever she wanted to be. Her own personal story demonstrated her perseverance to be a successful educator. When asked to relate the life experiences that had an impact on her decision to become an administrator, Emily told the following story:

An abusive marriage. I am the most unlikely person probably in my neighborhood that people would ever have looked at and said, I mean people have said this to me, "You are the superintendent of schools. Who would have ever thought?" I said that about myself because I was a very passive, quiet student. I was not outstanding academically. I was not an outstanding beauty of any kind when I was a student here or even in high school. I was liked and had friends but I was not known for anything. I was not an academic scholar or an athletic person. The first person in my family to go to college. I got married and lived in an abusive relationship for 17 years. In that time, I guess, with that kind of living or existence that I had, I decided that I did not want to be dependent. I was fairly dependent at that point. So I went back to school with the feeling that I am going to break this one-day. And, my daughter will never be dependent like this. I mean I had a college degree, but still, it was not quite the same. I still never really gave it any thought

that I would ever be the superintendent of schools. I was a teacher and was getting more and more education. But, you know, I never thought about being the superintendent. That just kind of happened. My husband killed himself and that was sort of a turning point, I guess. It was like a new life. I mean suddenly you had this whole "no plan" kind of thing. And, so people that would look at me today and would say, "Where did your confidence come from?" I guess that was in me, the ability was there, but I did not bloom until a lot later. I guess I was probably 41 when my husband died and I was an administrator at that point; but at that point, I got an opportunity to direct my own life, where I had it directed for me and was submissive in all of those things. And so, when the superintendent who had been here for 10 years--prior to that, the superintendent had been here for like 50 years. When the superintendent left, we had a lady on the board who had become a friend of mine and that is how I got the job. And, there were a few other women who had made application, but I was not a known person really. But, all of those times of giving extra hours and doing extra things kind of came to play for me. And, I, not being a person who likes attention and likes to speak in front of groups or anything, found myself in a whole different world, and I like that. I think I had a heart for it, so I guess that was probably it--17 years of being submissive to things that I did not truly believe in, thinking I was not important, and thinking that my job was not important. Thinking that I was never going to change anything by the job that I did was pretty much a turning point. And, then the other positive side of that was the fact that my father had always modeled. He has wonderful leadership skills. People really thought highly of him. He did not even have a college education and seeing that, and just developing, I guess, self-esteem, to be able to do that.

One of the most profound stories was told was by Lillian. She had been involved in a very serious accident. Her love for her students and the impact that she had on a particular student came back to assist her in a most difficult time in her life. She recounted:

Now this is a personal story and I do not know if you want to use it in any of your research, but I was involved in a real bad accident several years ago. I was hit by a hit-and-run driver while I was walking for exercise. I had two badly damaged legs and well, at first, the doctors did not think that I would live. Then, they said, well she may live but she is probably not going to walk again. Then they said well she may walk but she probably will be walking on artificial limbs. Then they decided that well maybe she is going to make it after all and they started working on my legs. I had 11 surgeries and spent months in a hospital without any break from a hospital. And, I was in the hospital from May 28 to August 21 nonstop. But, I had 11 surgeries that ended up in a wheelchair, then a walker, then crutches, then a cane, and then finally, I can walk unassisted now. I laugh and tell everybody I can do everything I once did, but I cannot run as fast I used to and I cannot jump as high as I used to. I cannot squat, but I could not squat before the accident either. But, that accident really had a profound effect on me. It gave me the time. You know, we are always talking about we do not have time to reflect or we do not have time to think. We are too busy doing the job. Well, I had hours and hours, days and days, weeks and weeks, and months and months to think and reflect. I really decided what had I done that had made a difference in life and what had I not done

that I should have done. I promised the Lord a lot of things during that time and I said that I have never done anything to recognize academics, you know, excellence in academics, and not really anything system wide. We do individual things, but we do not do anything system wide. And I said, Lord, when I get out of this hospital I am going to do something system wide. So, I did the first academic excellence award ceremonies and was still on a walker, I think. I do not think I was in a wheelchair at that point, but I was on a walker. But, I think that accident helped me get a lot of things in perspective and gave me a lot of time to reflect and figure out what do I want to do when I grow up. And, what have I done that has made a difference? What should I have done that has made a difference?

Lillian continued her story, saying:

One thing that really made a difference for me is that I had always used the story of *The Little Engine That Could* in my teaching career. In fact, you see books and things about trains around. But, when I first started teaching, I used that with some juniors and seniors in high school who had very low self-esteem. And, every time they would say Mrs. [name], I cannot understand poetry, I cannot get up in front of the room and give a speech, I cannot read an essay, I cannot, I cannot. I would say, "Oh, you need to hear the story of *The Little Engine That Could*." And, I would tell them that whole story, not part of it, the whole story with all of the drama I could muster. And, it was not long until students would say to each other, do not say that you cannot in her room, she will tell us that dumb story again. So, it changed their whole mindset and they started trying getting in front of the room to give a speech. One boy was so shy and he is now a minister. He gets up in front of congregations all of the time. But he was so shy; he absolutely could not get up in front of the room and give a speech. And, finally, I said, "Mike, don't you play a guitar?" And, he said yes. He is a real authentic country boy. And, I said, "Do you ever sing?". And he said, "Well, yeah." And I said, "Okay, I will make a deal with you. If you will write a song, and it has to be original, I will let you sing your speech to the class." Well, he did and I will never forget that. It was if you will be my woman, I will be your man. We still laugh about it. If I am in his congregation today for something at his church, he will say, "Right back there is the lady who first got me up in front of people." And he begs me not to tell them what the name of his song was. But, I used that book for years. I still use it with my staff. Every year at the beginning of system wide inservice, I sing to them. I have a horrible voice and I sing to them to show that my voice is awful, but I can sing. I sing about trains and we do all kinds of crazy things. I bungi-jump and that is another crazy thing. I still use that book.

Lillian concluded her story by sharing a heart-warming incident:

But, to tell you about the accident, I was lying in the hospital bed one night really wallowing in self-pity, just wallowing. I would put on a good front while my family was there, but about 9:00 at night, they would leave and then I would have myself a good cry. Just poor ole me, why me, Lord? Why did this happen to me? What have I ever done to deserve this? And, one night about 9:30 or 10:00, I was lying there in that shape and a former student from Virginia came in. He was then a grown man who lived in Richmond, Virginia. His mother had called him and told him about my accident. So, he

went to a bookstore in Richmond and bought a copy of *The Little Engine That Could*. He came to the town where I was and stopped to see his mother. He said, "I am going to the city to see Mrs. [name]. I have got something for her." So he walked into that hospital room about 9:30 that night and I am lying there in the dark crying. And, he took one look at me and said, "Mrs. [name], do you remember me?" And I said, "Well, yes, I do." And, he said, "Well, I just thought this might be a time in your life that you needed to be reminded to practice what you preach." And he put the book on my bed. He walked out of the room. That is all he said to me. I mean he just walked out. I still believe he was an angel sent by God. And, I lay there that night and looked at that book, and thought how many times have I told 16- and 17-year-olds, "Don't you ever give up! Do not ever say you can't! You are always to say you will try." And I thought, "He is right. This is the first time I have ever really been tested. Can I practice what I preach?" So, the next morning when my husband got there, my whole attitude was different. I told him, "Don't you dare let them amputate my leg!" By that time, one leg was really in danger of being amputated. The other one was not. "No matter what they come out of the operating room and tell you, don't you let them take my leg off. This leg and I are gonna make it. I am going to walk again. I am going to walk on my two legs and I will conquer this thing." And my whole attitude was different. Just a reminder of what I had said to kids for years turned the whole thing around for me. Now, it was a long struggle and it did not happen overnight. But my attitude changed overnight. And, I share that with you because I do think it had a great impact on decisions that I have made since then, because at that point I started believing that there is not anything impossible. If I want it badly enough, I can do it. And, if I see a need for it, I can fulfill that need. I can make a difference. I can make a contribution. I share that story with you because it is a good story and it is true. But secondly, it really has had an impact on my life and the decisions I have made since then.

I asked her if she thought there was anything that she could not tackle with that attitude.

Lillian's response was, "No, there is not much that I will not tackle (laughter). Now, I lose some of those battles, but there are not too many of them that I will not tackle."

Summary

In this research study, 100% participation from female directors of Tennessee schools during the 2004-2005 school year was achieved. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with 18 directors and one interview was conducted through email.

Each interview was transcribed and coded using NUD*IST software. Emergent themes were found and the information was divided into categories and sub categories.

One emergent theme was the recognition of leadership characteristics in the directors

themselves and in those with whom they worked. Leadership characteristics found to be of importance, listed in descending order of occurrence in the data, included communication skills; caring attitude; honesty, integrity, truthfulness, and respect; being a visionary; people skills; intelligence; courage, flexibility, and experience; organizational skills, sense of humor; and providing a safe environment in which to take risks.

Similarities and differences in the qualities of males and females were revealed as an emergent theme. Thirteen participants in the study said they saw no differences in the qualities of males and females with whom they worked; however, they also noted occurrences that they had observed. Several participants considered differences credited to personality characteristics rather than gender. Other differences noted were females paying more attention to details, women being able to multi-task, males acting more authoritarian, women being more honest, and males being able to make decisions and move on without second guessing their actions. Females also had a softer perspective (the appearance of a more caring, nurturing attitude) in dealing with situations.

In handling situations, the perception was that females may have to work harder than males to prove themselves. Males may also have separate personas, one for the workplace and another for their free time. Males may have a tendency to take a more direct approach to handling tasks whereas women may take more time and gather more information before decisions are made and actions are taken.

Several directors said that rather than gender, differences in the ways males and females work may be due more to personality characteristics. The right fit to the right job was another way of looking at differences in the way males and females handled situations in the workplace.

Major barriers that keep females from entering administration or keep them from becoming directors listed in a descending order of occurrence in the data included the perceptions of others, the attitudes and beliefs of the director herself and the attitudes of others, political barriers, dispositional barriers, and the sacrifices that females may have to make. Those

sacrifices could include time, time away from family, and family obligations.

A glass ceiling is a perceived barrier that may exist to keep females from rising to top-level positions of administration. A perception of a glass ceiling was recognized by 11 of the participants.

In order to eliminate barriers and pave the way for other females in administrative positions, best practices that current leaders are using were listed as important. The directors noted strong role models, programs developed by higher education institutions, and staff development opportunities as ways of developing leadership skills.

Professional organizations such as the Tennessee School Superintendents Organization, the Tennessee Academy for School Leaders, Academies for School Superintendents as provided by the Tennessee Department of Education, and the American Association of School Administrators, have provided training and support for the directors in this study.

When asked how directors processed and reflected on their daily lives, the directors listed journaling, exercise, talking with family and co-workers, and documenting daily occurrences as the main ways in which they reflected.

Directors valued communication as a best practice in being successful administrators. Communication was accomplished through emails, newsletters, radio spots, writing articles in newspapers, face-to-face meetings, establishing regular administrative meetings, and establishing separate advisory councils for community leaders, parents, and students.

All directors were given the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) at the conclusion of the face-to-face interviews. Eighteen of the 19 Multifactor Leadership Questionnaires were returned to the researcher via surface mail. The questionnaires were scored and evaluated according to transformational and transactional leadership factors. Excerpts from the interviews were matched to the characteristics of each of the factors on the leadership scale: transformational factors of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration; transactional factors of contingent reward, management by

exception; and the other factor on the scale, laissez-faire. According to the MLQ, the directors scored high on using all of the transformational factors and on using the contingent rewards style from the transactional leadership factors.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENTATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine the best methods for achieving key leadership roles in education. Nineteen female directors who served as directors of schools in Tennessee during the 2004-2005 school year were interviewed. An interview guide was used to ask each director the same set of questions. A pilot study, using two superintendents from the northwest Georgia area, was conducted to pilot the interview guide and to test and refine the research procedures.

After the interviews were conducted, emergent themes were derived from an analysis of the interviews. The characteristics of effective leaders, perceptions of similarities and differences of male and female leaders, barriers to success, and best practices were discovered through the interview process.

The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire was used to record responses from the directors according to their perceptions of their own leadership styles in reference to transformation and transactional leadership styles.

Research Question 1

Research Question 1 addressed the perceptions of female directors of schools in Tennessee regarding the most important leadership characteristics recognized in successful school leaders. The leadership characteristics that were regarded as the most important listed in ascending order of occurrence in the data were communication skills, having a caring attitude, honesty and integrity, having a vision, people skills, intelligence, organizational skills, a sense of humor, and creating a safe work environment.

Research Question 2

The purpose of Research Question 2 was to discover what female school directors in Tennessee perceive to be the similarities and differences in the leadership characteristics of male and female school leaders. Some of the participants said that rather than viewing leadership characteristics as gender specific, differences were more personality related than gender related. Having the “right fit” of the person to the job was noted as a difference in the ways that males and females worked and handled situations.

Other differences included that females may have to prove themselves more than males working as a director of schools. Females have a tendency to pay more attention to details. Females approach tasks with more softness and a nurturing attitude. Females may be more likely to multitask, which may be a result of female roles that would include taking care of children, running a household, and holding a full-time job.

Males may be quicker to make decisions, be more authoritarian, and may not be as likely to second-guess their decisions. Males may be more likely to make a decision and move on whereas females may take more time in the decision-making process. Some males may tend to be more analytical.

Women may be more apt to listen, gather information, and make decisions after all the facts are gathered. This may also be especially true in dealing with people related issues.

Research Question 3

Research Question 3 pertained to what female directors of schools in Tennessee perceived to be the major barriers to women's achievement of school leadership positions. A majority of the directors stated that the perceptions and feelings that others might have about how women could handle challenging situations could act as barriers to success. The mindset of people in the community could act as a barrier if the belief was that women were not as strong or as capable of handling the tough situations.

Attitudes and beliefs concerning women's roles in education were cited as possible barriers. The lack of career choices for women many years ago, the belief that administrators had to come from the ranks of coaches, and the attitude of not being taken as seriously in a predominately male dominated role were listed as barriers.

Five participants noted political barriers as barriers to achieving success. Dealing with political situations as well as decision making based on political issues were discussed in the interviews.

Dispositional barriers, which included self-esteem and the participant's attitude toward her own ability, were also noted as barriers to success. One director said that if there were roadblocks for her, the roadblocks were those that she set up for herself.

Some participants noted the sacrifices that they had to make to become a director of schools included personal time, family obligations, and the loss of self-identity.

When asked if a glass ceiling existed to prevent females from assuming leadership positions, 11 participants said that there was a glass ceiling. This attitude toward a glass ceiling appeared to be changing over time. Four participants said there was not a glass ceiling to prevent women from becoming administrators.

Several participants expressed a sense of responsibility and a desire to pave the way for other females in leadership positions in the future by being successful in their current positions. As women proved their capabilities and success, doors could open for others.

Research Question 4

Research Question 4 focused on discovery of the best practices that were being used by female leaders in Tennessee to develop leadership and decision-making skills. The best practices listed in ascending order of occurrence in the data were providing higher education programs that prepared women for administrative positions, strong role models, books and written resources, mentoring situations, and staff development resources for new directors of schools. Professional

organizations, such as the Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents and the American Association of School Administrators provided networking and support systems for the participants.

Another best practice that was listed was the way that directors reflected and processed what happened on a daily basis. Journaling, exercise, and talking with family members and coworkers were methods that the participants used to reflect on their workdays.

Keeping communication open was an essential practice that participants noted in the interviews. Email, newsletters, radio, face-to-face visits, closed circuit television programs in schools, visiting schools, advisory meetings with stakeholders, and ways of recognizing the accomplishments of others were listed in ascending order of occurrence in the data as ways of keeping the lines of communication open and active.

Research Question 5

The researcher sought to discover if female school directors in Tennessee exhibit transformational and/or transactional styles of leadership as measured by the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). All participants were asked to complete the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire. Eighteen out of 19 participants completed the questionnaire. Seventeen participants scored highly in the five transformational leadership factors. Sixteen participants also scored at least 3.0 out of a possible 4.0 in contingent reward factor of transactional leadership.

Research Question 6

The purpose of Research Question 6 was to discover if there are major similarities or differences in the views of the school directors identified as transformational and those female directors who are identified as transactional leaders based on the results of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). Because 17 out of 18 participants scored at least 3.0 out of

4.0 in the factors of transformational factors, there appeared to be no major differences in the views of the participants.

Conclusions

Female directors of schools need a support system and appropriate professional development in order to be effective leaders. There is a great need for time to reflect and think, often a luxury to most. Professional organizations have provided training for new directors and the training has been positively received by most.

In the interview process, directors mentioned the Tennessee Department of Education as a source for providing professional development to all directors and to cohorts of new directors of schools. Through this researcher's effort to track down information received in several of the interviews, contact was made with Barry Olhausen, Executive Director of Professional for the Tennessee Department of Education. Mr. Olhausen provided information on the professional development training for directors. Each director of schools is required to have 10 days of CEO training. The training is based on the Professional Standards for the Superintendency and the 11 Dimensions of Leadership as identified by the American Association of School Administrators. Beginning superintendents are also involved in cohort groups for new directors of schools in order to receive special training and professional development according to need.

Mr. Olhausen referred this researcher to Janice Shelby, a former Tennessee Director of Schools, and now Executive Director of the Association of Independent Municipal Schools (AIMS). Ms. Shelby was kind enough to spend time with this researcher in a phone conversation to share information about professional development that has been provided for directors in the past. She also is involved in peer coaching as a viable way to help CEO's in the workplace and to help the leaders reach goals and become more effective. She also talked about the efforts of the National Staff Development Council to provide quality professional development for administrators.

Several directors mentioned the idea of “loneliness at the top.” Although some directors had families and friends for support, others worked very long hours and had little personal time to spend because of the demands and obligations of the job. The directors who were interviewed did not complain about this aspect of the job, but peer contact and support networks appeared to be valued. Those directors who had established networks within their geographic areas expressed being grateful for the support, help, and feedback from others who were traveling in the same shoes.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Future Practice

Specific actions should be taken to retain female directors in leadership positions. The skills and experience base that each director brings to the position is irreplaceable.

Leadership programs in higher education institutions should be studied and evaluated to find if appropriate training is being given to prospective administrators. Higher education programs should be encouraged to address gender issues including similarities and differences in the ways males and females work in various situations. Helping administrators to recognize each person’s unique personality differences should also be encouraged. Recognizing personality types could be especially beneficial in building team relationships in the community, at the school system level, and at the building level. An instrument, such as the Myers Briggs, could be helpful in allowing each administrator to understand her or his personality as well as the personality of others.

In this current research study, Emily stated that it would be a good idea to get women together in group settings, such as counseling groups, to discuss roles, challenges, and ways to meet challenges.

Support systems and networks should be set up to help new directors. Formal and informal mentoring should be encouraged. Networking with other administrators should be

encouraged by current directors and by state department professional development programs. Time should be allotted to allow mentoring to occur. Current female directors should actively seek other prospective leaders.

Professional development activities for administrators should include teaching people how to reflect and how to alleviate the daily stress that is existent. Time management, building relationships, public relations, and team building could also be addressed.

Forums of discussion for all directors of schools to attend should be encouraged. Forums could address current issues that directors face on a daily basis. Time should be allocated for sharing ideas and concerns through dialogue opportunities. The forums would not necessarily have to be gender specific, but gender issues could be addressed.

Female directors should receive information on professional development opportunities, such as the American Association of School Administration Women's Conference that occurs each year in Washington, DC.

Current directors should be given the opportunity to participate in the coaching process. This could be accomplished through a state department initiative or local education initiatives. As mentioned in this study, the possibility of funding through grant monies might be sought to finance formal peer coaching opportunities.

Recommendations for Future Research

A follow-up study of the directors who are currently serving should be conducted to see what happens to them in the future, how many stayed in the position, what is the turnover rate, and what are the reasons for leaving or staying in positions.

During this research process, Vanessa stated, "It would be interesting to study boards, their appointments, and why they think the way they do, on a national level." Further research could be conducted on females in other administrative roles to determine if their perceptions of leadership differ according to the position they currently hold.

Further research should be conducted using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire with members of the director of school's leadership team. The team members' rating scale could be compared to the leadership MLQ scale to see if the perceptions of the leader correlate to the perceptions of members of the leadership team.

Another study should be conducted by comparing the perceptions of both male and female directors to discover their reactions to the research questions in this study.

An in-depth study of the transactional style of leadership using contingent reward methods should be studied to determine its effectiveness in certain situations.

Research should be conducted to see if there are differences in the perceptions of directors according to the size of their school system, the salary received, and community attitudes toward females in leadership positions. Does the composition of the community and the size of the school system have anything to do with choosing male or female administrators?

Research should also be conducted on the use of technology in a school system and how the use of technology has affected the best practices of administrators. It might be interesting to learn if there are differences in the ways that male and female administrators use technology in their current positions.

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APPENDIX B

Interview Guide

Please tell me anything that you would like to tell about your years in education, jobs you have held, years as Director, etc.

1. What qualities do you believe strong leaders need to possess in order to be effective?
2. How are those qualities any different for males and females?
3. What do you see as the greatest barriers to females achieving leadership positions in education?
4. In the position that you hold, what leadership qualities are most important to you?
5. How have you developed your leadership skills?
6. Did you have a mentor? If so, male or female? What means did he/she use in mentoring you?
7. What do you believe are the best practices we are following to assist females in developing leadership skills?
8. Do you serve as a mentor to anyone? If so, please describe what you do as a mentor.
9. What do you believe is your greatest strength in your leadership position?
10. What is your greatest challenge?
11. Please tell me what you think are the greatest differences in the way that you see males and females work in leadership positions.
12. From your observations, are there different ways that women handle challenging or difficult situations than men? Please describe.
13. What process would you normally follow in solving a problem?
14. How do you involve others in this process?
15. If you had a specific goal that you wanted to accomplish, would you involve others in helping you? If you would involve others, how would you go about getting them on board to help?
16. How do you process what happens on a daily basis in the life of a director of schools? Do you keep a journal or prepare reflections in writing?
17. How would you describe the working relationship you have with the stakeholders in this school system Board members (Central Office staff, school board members, administrators, parents, community leaders, students)?
18. What are your most important relationships as Director of Schools and how do you foster those relationships?

19. How do you communicate with others in your organization (Central Office staff, administrators, teachers, parents, students)?
20. As a woman in an administrative role, what are roadblocks that get in the way of your being as effective as you would desire to be?
21. How do men in the workplace relate to you and you to them?
22. How do you feel about the term “glass ceiling” for women in administrative roles?
23. What are some important life experiences that have had an impact on your decision to become an administrator in education?

APPENDIX C

Matching Research Questions With Interview Questions

Research Question 1

What do female school directors perceive to be the most important leadership characteristics in successful school leaders?

Interview Questions:

1. What qualities do you believe strong leaders needs to possess in order to be effective?
4. In the position that you hold, what leadership qualities are most important to you?
9. What do you believe is your greatest strength in your leadership position?
23. What are some important life experiences that have had an impact on your decision to become an administrator in education?

Research Question 2

What do female school directors perceive to be the similarities and differences in the leadership characteristics of male and female school leaders?

Interview Questions:

1. What qualities do you believe strong leaders needs to possess in order to be effective?
2. How are those qualities any different for males and females?
11. Please tell me what you think are the greatest differences in the way that you see males and females work in leadership positions.
12. From your observations, are there different ways that women handle challenging or difficult situations than men? Please describe.
20. As a woman in an administrative role, what are roadblocks that get in the way of your being as effective as you would desire to be?
21. How do men in the workplace relate to you and you to them?
22. How do you feel about the term “glass ceiling” for women in administrative roles?

Research Question 3

What do female school leaders perceive to be the major barriers to women achieving school leadership positions?

Interview Questions:

3. What do you see as the greatest barriers to females achieving leadership positions in education?
10. What is your greatest challenge?
20. As a woman in an administrative role, what are roadblocks that get in the way of you being as effective as you would desire to be?
22. How do you feel about the term “glass ceiling” for women in administrative roles?

Research Question 4

What are the best practices being, used by female leaders in order to develop leadership and decision-making skills?

Interview Questions:

5. How have you developed your leadership skills?
6. Did you have a mentor? If so, male or female? What means did he/she use in mentoring you?
7. What do you believe are the best practices we are following to assist females in developing leadership skills?
8. Do you serve as a mentor to anyone? If so, please describe what you do as a mentor.
16. How do you process what happens on a daily basis in the life of a Director of Schools? Do you keep a journal or prepare reflections in writing?
19. How do you communicate with others in your organization (Central Office staff, administrators, teachers, parents, students)?

Research Question 5

Do female school directors exhibit transformational and/or transactional styles of leadership measured by the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ)?

Interview Questions:

10. What is your greatest challenge?
13. What process would you normally follow in solving a problem?
14. How do you involve others in this process?
15. If you had a specific goal that you wanted to accomplish, would you involve others in helping you? If you would involve others, how would you go about getting them on board to help?
17. How would you describe the working relationship you have with the stakeholders in this school system Board members (Central Office staff, school board members, administrators, parents, community leaders, students)?
18. What are your most important relationships as Director of Schools, and how do you foster those relationships?
19. How do you communicate with others in your organization (Central Office staff, administrators, teachers, parents, students)?
23. What are some important life experiences that have had an impact on your decision to become an administrator in education?

Research Question 6

Are there major similarities or differences in the views of school directors identified as transformational and those female directors who are identified as transactional leaders based on the results of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) ?

Interview Questions:

1. What qualities do you believe strong leaders needs to possess in order to be effective?
4. In the position that you hold, what leadership qualities are most important to you?
9. What do you believe is your greatest strength in your leadership position?
17. How would you describe the working relationship you have with the stakeholders in this school system Board members (Central Office staff, school board members, administrators, parents, community leaders, students)?

APPENDIX D

Letter to Directors of Schools

Dear Director of Schools,

Please allow me to introduce myself. I am a Supervisor of Instruction in the Bradley County School system and a doctoral student at East Tennessee State University in the Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis department.

As a doctoral student, I am conducting research in the area of educational leadership. I have a particular interest in the contributions that female Directors of Schools have made in the state of Tennessee. Currently, there are only 22 female directors in our state, and that number has increased over the past several years.

If you would consent to participate in this research project, I feel that we can paint a picture of the contributions that females have made in one of the highest positions of education in our state. I would like to have the opportunity to interview all of the current 19 female Directors of Schools so that the research will reflect an intact group of educators.

I know how busy that you are and are constantly bombarded by so many requests, and here I am asking one more of you. If you would be willing to agree to three tasks, I would like to keep the request of your time at a minimum.

With your permission, I would like to conduct a personal interview of 20 questions that would be sent to you prior to the interview. The interview would be scheduled at your convenience. You would also be asked to complete the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, (approximately 45 questions in which you circle a response). I will transcribe your interview and send it back to you so that you may read it to offer any additions or corrections. This should insure that I have the true essence of your interview correct. I will make sure that the interview information will remain confidential.

If you will agree to participate in this research project, I will make a personal phone call to your office to ask if you are willing to consent to an interview. At this time, we could set the date and time of your interview at your convenience.

Your help in this research project will be greatly appreciated. If you would like to have a copy of the final project, I will be glad to provide a copy for you.

Thank you so much for taking the time to read this letter. I sincerely hope that you will be willing to participate in this doctoral research project.

Sincerely,

Joy Yates
Supervisor of Instruction
Bradley County Schools

APPENDIX E

Second Letter of Request to Directors

*Bradley County Schools
800 South Lee Highway
Cleveland, Tennessee 37311*

August 28, 2004

Dear Director's Name,

I am currently completing research on Women in Leadership in Tennessee Schools by interviewing female Directors of Schools in Tennessee. I would greatly appreciate the privilege of interviewing you as a participant in this project.

As an East Tennessee State University doctoral student, I hope to interview all of the 17 women who are serving as Directors of Schools in our state so that my research will reflect an intact group of educators. Currently, I serve as Supervisor of Instruction in the Bradley County School system, and this has been a very rewarding project that has allowed me to meet educators like you who are making a difference in education in Tennessee.

I am enclosing a copy of the interview questions and the Informed Consent document that ETSU requires so that you may have the opportunity to read the questions and information concerning the project. If you have additional questions, I will be happy to answer them.

I will call your office next week to ask if you might allow me to interview you. If you would like to respond by email, my email address is: [edited]

Thank you so much for taking the time to read this letter. I sincerely hope that you will be willing to participate in this doctoral research project. Your help will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Joy Yates
Supervisor of Instruction
Bradley County Schools
XXX-xxx-xxxx

Home Address:
[edited]
[edited]
[edited]

APPENDIX F

Interview Protocol Checklist

Women in Leadership in Tennessee Public Schools

_____ # Pseudonym _____
Superintendent _____ County _____

DATES
COMPLETED

- _____ Choose geographical locations
- _____ MapQuest for each Central Office location
- _____ Initial Contact by email
- _____ Send out letter to explain process
- _____ Follow-up phone call
- _____ Follow-up email
- _____ Set up date for Interview _____
- _____ Send copy of: _____
 - _____ Informed Consent
 - _____ Interview Questions
- _____ Meet with Director
 - _____ Have Informed Consent Signed at meeting
 - _____ Demographic questions & form
 - _____ Pseudonym Chosen _____
 - _____ Conduct actual interview- audiotaped
 - _____ Leave copy of MLQ
 - _____ Leave SASE envelop to mail back MLQ
- _____ Transcribe Interview
- _____ Label & Archive audiotape & notes
- _____ Send Thank you to Director
- _____ Send Barnes & Noble Gift certificate
- _____ Send copy of transcript to director
- _____ Send envelope to return corrections/additions to researcher
- _____ Received completed MLQ from Director
- _____ Received transcript corrections/additions from Director
- _____ Code interview with NUDIST
- _____ Open MLQ & correlate to study questions (at end of research process)
- _____ Incorporate research in to Chapter 4

APPENDIX G

Informed Consent 4-22-04

East Tennessee State University Informed Consent

The purpose of this note of **INFORMED CONSENT** is to explain a research project in which I am requesting your participation. It is important that you read this material carefully and then decide if you wish to be a volunteer. By no means is there any pressure for you to participate in this research project.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this qualitative study is to determine the best methods for assisting more females in achieving key leadership positions in the Tennessee educational system by examining the barriers to females advancing as school leaders and examining the characteristics of effective school leaders. Specifically, the study seeks to discover the traits of effective leaders, similarities and differences in leaders, barriers to success, and best practices.

DURATION

Participants of the study are asked to participate in a face- to- face interview at the location of the participant's work place. If a face- to- face interview is not feasible, a telephone interview will be conducted. Due to the emergent nature of qualitative research and individual interviews, the duration of each session cannot be pre-determined, and may vary from person to person. However, it is estimated that each interview may last approximately an hour. After the face-to-face interview, participants will be given a copy of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire and will be asked to complete the questionnaire within the next week. The estimated time of completion of the questionnaire is less than one hour, however this may vary according to each participant. After each interview is transcribed by the researcher, a transcript will be sent to the participant for review. The participant will be given the opportunity make any additions, corrections and/or comments concerning the transcription. The participant will be given the opportunity to return the comments and corrections to the researcher.

If you are personally interested in the results of this study, you may indicate your email address below and an electronic copy will be sent to you by December 2004.

Email address: _____

PROCEDURES

A letter will be sent to each participant that will explain the research project. A personal phone call will be made to the participant within approximately a week after the letter is received. Participants will be asked to complete an *Interview Participant Agreement* prior to the interview. Each participant will receive a copy of the interview questions prior to the interview. The interview will be scheduled at the participant's convenience. The interview will be audio-tape recorded to insure transcript accuracy. After the face-to-face interview, participants will be given a copy of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire and will be asked to complete the questionnaire within the next week. A self-addressed envelope will be given to the participant, and the participant will be asked to mail the completed questionnaire to the researcher with the next week. After each interview is transcribed by the researcher, a transcript will be sent to the participant for review. The participant will be given the opportunity make any additions, corrections and/or comments concerning the transcription. The participant will be given the opportunity to return the comments and corrections to the researcher.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS and/or COMPENSATION

By participating in this research project, it is believed that participants will be able to share knowledge with other educators, both male and female that may be interested in public school administration. Addressing the issues concerning barriers to females who wish to become administrators, and addressing the best practices of administrators may impact the mentoring of others into the educational administration as well what college programs may provide to help women succeed to high-level positions in administration.

No compensation will be given. A token of appreciation, such as a restaurant gift card, will be given to each participant at the end of the face-to-face interview. The appreciation gift will not exceed \$20.

POSSIBLE RISKS/DISCOMFORTS

No risks or discomforts should be associated with this research. However, while it is unlikely, there may be a possibility that participants may experience discomfort when addressing some of the interview questions. Participants may choose not to answer or discuss any items that provoke such feelings.

CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS

If you have any questions, problems, or research related medical problems at any time, you may call Joy Yates at XXX-xxx-xxxx or XXX-xxx-xxxx, or Professor Nancy Dishner at XXX-xxx-xxxx. You may also call the chairman of the Institutional Review Board at 423-439-6055 for any questions you may have about your rights as a research subject.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Every attempt will be made to see that my study results are kept confidential. However, because I am a member of a small number of female directors of schools in Tennessee, it may be possible for me to be unintentionally identified within the study. I understand that I will select a pseudonym for my participation in this project in order to make it less likely to be identified within the study. A copy of the records from this study will be stored at the East Tennessee State University Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis Department for at least 10 years after the end of this research. The results of this study may be published and/or presented at meetings without naming me as a subject. Although my rights and privacy will be maintained, the East Tennessee State University Institutional Review Board, research related personnel from the ETSU Department of Health and Human Services have access to study records. My records will be kept completely confidential according to current legal requirements. They will not be revealed unless required by law, or as noted above.

COMPENSATION FOR MEDICAL TREATMENT

East Tennessee State University (ETSU) will pay the cost of emergency first aid for any injury, which may happen as a result of your being in this study. They will not pay for any other medical treatment. Claims against ETSU or any of its agents or employees may be submitted to the Tennessee Claims Commission. These claims will be settled to the extent allowable as provided under TCA Section 9-8-307. For more information about claims call the Chairman of the Institutional Review Board of ETSU at 423-439-6055.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

The nature, demands, risks, and benefits of the project have been explained to me as well as are known and available. I understand what my participation involves. Furthermore, I understand that I am free to ask questions and withdraw from the project at any time, without penalty. I have read, or have had read to me, and fully understand the consent form. A signed copy has been given to me.

My study record will be maintained in strictest confidence, according to current legal requirements and will not be revealed unless required by law or as noted above.

SIGNATURE OF VOLUNTEER

DATE

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

DATE

APPENDIX H

Informed Consent 6-17-04

East Tennessee State University Informed Consent

The purpose of this note of **INFORMED CONSENT** is to explain a research project in which I am requesting your participation. It is important that you read this material carefully and then decide if you wish to be a volunteer. By no means is there any pressure for you to participate in this research project.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this qualitative study is to determine the best methods for assisting more females in achieving key leadership positions in the Tennessee educational system by examining the barriers to females advancing as school leaders and examining the characteristics of effective school leaders. Specifically, the study seeks to discover the traits of effective leaders, similarities and differences in leaders, barriers to success, and best practices.

DURATION

Participants of the study are asked to participate in a face- to- face interview at the location of the participant's work place. If a face- to- face interview is not feasible, a telephone interview will be conducted. Due to the emergent nature of qualitative research and individual interviews, the duration of each session cannot be pre-determined, and may vary from person to person. However, it is estimated that each interview may last approximately an hour. After the face-to-face interview, participants will be given a copy of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire and will be asked to complete the questionnaire within the next week. The estimated time of completion of the questionnaire is less than one hour, however this may vary according to each participant. After each interview is transcribed by the researcher, a transcript will be sent to the participant for review. The participant will be given the opportunity make any additions, corrections and/or comments concerning the transcription. The participant will be given the opportunity to return the comments and corrections to the researcher.

If you are personally interested in the results of this study, you may indicate your email address below and an electronic copy will be sent to you by December 2004.

Email address: _____

PROCEDURES

A letter will be sent to each participant that will explain the research project. A personal phone call will be made to the participant within approximately a week after the letter is received. Participants will be asked to complete an *Interview Participant Agreement* prior to the interview. Each participant will receive a copy of the interview questions prior to the interview. The interview will be scheduled at the participant's convenience. The interview will be audio-tape recorded to insure transcript accuracy. After the face-to-face interview, participants will be given a copy of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire and will be asked to complete the questionnaire within the next week. A self-addressed envelope will be given to the participant, and the participant will be asked to mail the completed questionnaire to the researcher with the next week. After each interview is transcribed by the researcher, a transcript will be sent to the participant for review. The participant will be given the opportunity make any additions, corrections and/or comments concerning the transcription. The participant will be given the opportunity to return the comments and corrections to the researcher.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS and/or COMPENSATION

By participating in this research project, it is believed that participants will be able to share knowledge with other educators, both male and female that may be interested in public school administration. Addressing the issues concerning barriers to females who wish to become administrators, and addressing the best practices of administrators may impact the mentoring of others into the educational administration as well what college programs may provide to help women succeed to high-level positions in administration.

No compensation will be given. A token of appreciation will be given to each participant at the end of interview process. The appreciation gift will not exceed \$20.

POSSIBLE RISKS/DISCOMFORTS

No risks or discomforts should be associated with this research. However, while it is unlikely, there may be a possibility that participants may experience discomfort when addressing some of the interview questions. Participants may choose not to answer or discuss any items that provoke such feelings.

CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS

If you have any questions, problems, or research related medical problems at any time, you may call Joy Yates at XXX-xxx-xxxx or XXX-xxx-xxxx, or Professor Nancy Dishner at XXX-xxx-xxxx. You may also call the chairman of the Institutional Review Board at 423-439-6055 for any questions you may have about your rights as a research subject.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Every attempt will be made to see that my study results are kept confidential. However, because I am a member of a small number of female directors of schools in Tennessee, it may be possible for me to be unintentionally identified within the study. I understand that I will select a pseudonym for my participation in this project in order to make it less likely to be identified within the study. A copy of the records from this study will be stored at the East Tennessee State University Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis Department for at least 10 years after the end of this research. The results of this study may be published and/or presented at meetings without naming me as a subject. Although my rights and privacy will be maintained, the East Tennessee State University Institutional Review Board, research related personnel from the ETSU Department of Health and Human Services have access to study records. My records will be kept completely confidential according to current legal requirements. They will not be revealed unless required by law, or as noted above.

COMPENSATION FOR MEDICAL TREATMENT

East Tennessee State University (ETSU) will pay the cost of emergency first aid for any injury, which may happen as a result of your being in this study. They will not pay for any other medical treatment. Claims against ETSU or any of its agents or employees may be submitted to the Tennessee Claims Commission. These claims will be settled to the extent allowable as provided under TCA Section 9-8-307. For more information about claims call the Chairman of the Institutional Review Board of ETSU at 423-439-6055.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

The nature, demands, risks, and benefits of the project have been explained to me as well as are known and available. I understand what my participation involves. Furthermore, I understand that I am free to ask questions and withdraw from the project at any time, without penalty. I have read, or have had read to me, and fully understand the consent form. A signed copy has been given to me.

My study record will be maintained in strictest confidence, according to current legal requirements and will not be revealed unless required by law or as noted above.

SIGNATURE OF VOLUNTEER

DATE

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

DATE

APPENDIX I

Dissertation Transcription Review

Joy Yates
East Tennessee State University
ELPA Doctoral Student

Director _____

System _____

Enclosed Copy of the Interview Conducted on _____

_____ I have reviewed the enclosed transcription and am returning the transcript with revisions and notations written on the transcript.

_____ I have reviewed the transcript as submitted to me and do not wish to make additions, corrections, or notations.

Director of Schools Signature

Date

APPENDIX J

Auditor's Certification

I served as an auditor for the following study: Women in Leadership Positions in Tennessee Public Schools: A Qualitative Study of Female Directors of Schools.

Dr. Sherry Shroyer

Date

APPENDIX K

Debriefers' Certification

I served as a debriefer for the following study: Women in Leadership Positions in Tennessee Public Schools: A Qualitative Study of Female Directors of Schools.

Dr. Julie Mitchell

Date

APPENDIX L

Permission for Using Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire

Mind Garden
1690 Woodside Road, Suite 202
Redwood City, CA

650-251-3500
Fax 650-261-3505
www.mindgarden.com

Date: March 25, 2004

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is to grant permission for Joy Yates to use the following purchased copyright material:

Instrument: Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire
Author: Bruce Avolio, Bernard M. Bass

for her/his thesis research.

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Sincerely,

Vickie Jaimez
Director of Operations

Examples of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire

Examples of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Avolio & Bass, 2004) are as follows:

Scoring scale

0 = Not at all

1 = Once in a while

2 = Sometimes

3 = Fairly Often

4 = Frequently, if not always

Example 1 Idealized Influence

I go beyond self-interest for the good of the group.

Example 2 Inspirational Motivation

I talk optimistically about the future.

Example 3 Intellectual Stimulation

I suggest new ways of looking at how to complete assignments

Example 4 Individualized Consideration

I help others develop their strengths.

Example 5 Contingent Reward

I make clear what one can expect to receive when performance goals are achieved.

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