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Leading Cultural Change in a School District Through a Budget Building Collaboration

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by

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Dissertation submitted to the Education Faculty of Lindenwood in partial fulfillment of

requirements of the degree of Doctor of Education

Declaration of Originality

I do hereby declare and attest to the fact that this is an original study based solely upon my own scholarly work here at Lindenwood University and that I have not submitted it for any other college or university course or degree here or elsewhere.

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Signature:__*Ricky Warren Radford*__Date:_8-13-09_

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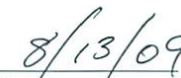
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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to assess, plan, and implement a budget building process through collaboration with the stakeholders of a targeted school district. The research question of this study was, "Will allowing the stakeholders more input, autonomy, and collaboration during a budget building process build a team environment and ultimately ownership in managing their perspective budgets?" The culture and attitudes of stakeholders were pessimistic towards the senior administration. There seemed to be a feeling of mistrust concerning the budget and allocations. Action research methodology was conducted, while applying Andragogical principles with the members of the district. This process allowed for input and collaboration from the stakeholders of the district, while inquiry was derived through openness and candor. Through open communication, participants were able to uncover biased and unequal leadership practices.

The techniques for this study utilized were; (a) pre-step: context and purpose, (b) diagnosing, (c) planning action, (d) taking action, and (e) evaluating what action was done and the effectiveness of the process. Data was collected using (a) interviews, (b) focus groups, (c) emails, (d) meeting minutes, and (e) letters. This study was conducted by an inside researcher, as the Chief Financial Officer and facilitator of change.

In answer to the research question, participants have begun to make positive comments, and relationships between the faculty and the senior administration have improved due to their involvement and participation during the process of change. The emerging themes from the participation, interviews, and focus groups were (a) trust, (b)

transparency, (c) equitability, (d) understanding about the budget, (e) teamwork, and (f) attitudes and expectations.

The implication of the study is if leadership of a district builds a healthy relationship through collaboration and participation, then there is likely to be increased morale and a positive culture, which will result in attracting "Highly Qualified Teachers" to the district. This will increase better teaching, student performance, and ultimately Annual Yearly Progress for NCLB. The most salient finding of the study was that allowing participants to be included in the budget process illustrated trust between the participants and the senior administration, which created an open relationship of collaboration and communication.

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Chapter One: Introduction

As a leader steps into any new position, known and unknown dilemmas are present and awaiting. A new leader would be wise to take the time to learn and understand the culture of the people, expectations, and norms of the new organization before implementing effective or positive change. This is no small task, especially if the new leader is not familiar with the norms and procedures of the organization. Specific cultural norms and expectations exist; some are written, while others are unwritten, just the way things are done, and can be potential pitfalls, if not negotiated appropriately. As the inside researcher started a new position, he encountered many potential challenges and opportunities to practice leadership strategies. Background factors of change in any organization can be centered on (a) organizational culture, (b) leadership, and (c) sharing of knowledge/meaning.

Background Factors

Organizational Culture

All organizations have a culture. This culture is created and maintained by the people within the organization by the norms, values, and shared experiences. People within a culture are the groups, subgroups, and organisms that develop the ritual of the organization. Bolman and Deal (1997) stated the following, "Cultures have relied on ritual and ceremony to create order, clarity, and predictability—particularly around issues or dilemmas too complex, mysterious, or random to be controlled" (p. 223).

Culture can be created into a healthy manifestation of positive leadership and follower-ship, or it can be mutated into an unhealthy environment. Yukl (2002) stated that the "vision is seldom created in a single moment of revelation, but instead it takes

shape during a lengthy process of exploration, discussion, and refinement of ideas" (p. 286). Involving stakeholders, encouraging participation, and seeking input allows for the culture of an organization to evolve.

Leadership

Leaders are the visionaries who guide organizations and the people who are the culture. These leaders utilize their traits, styles, methods, and shared experiences to make decisions and lead. Within an organizational culture, a leader must be conscience of the prevailing factors that move groups and subgroups towards change. Yukl (2002) stated, "Leadership is the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done" (p. 7). As leaders potentially attempt to facilitate change in an organization, it is vital they understand the people within the culture and how they learn. Learning within an organization requires sharing of knowledge and creating a new reality (Morgan, 1997).

Sharing/Learning of Knowledge

People make up an organization: people who learn to turn in reports; people who learn to clock-in appropriately, and people who learn to report items of importance. Therefore, for any organizational culture to change, leaders must utilize appropriate leadership practices to facilitate new learning within the people of the organization (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Marshall & Gerstl-Pepin, 2005; Morgan, 1997; Yukl, 2002). The sharing of knowledge helps people learn what values, norms, and potential new expectations are within the organization. For change to occur, there must be a sharing of knowledge between the people of the organization (Morgan, 1997).

Background Information

At the time of this study, the target district had five elementary schools, two middle schools, two high schools, and one career center. Each elementary school had grades kindergarten through fourth grade. The enrollment at each elementary ranged from approximately 200 to 600 students; therefore, there were significant differences in enrollments, and the budget allocation was different from school to school. Likewise, there were significant differences in the demographics of each elementary. These differences were due to the location and boundaries of each school. Low socio-economic families surrounded some elementary buildings, while other schools were located near neighborhoods that were more affluent. Therefore, the free and reduced lunch eligibility of students from school to school varied significantly.

There were two middle schools within the district. One middle school (MS A) had grades five and six, while the other (MS B) had grades seven and eight. When students attend these middle schools, the district blends students across district boundaries into "one" school. Therefore, fifth grade was the first time students from the same grade level across the entire district were housed within one building. After sixth grade, students transitioned to the next middle school, for grades seven and eight. The two middle schools had approximately 700 students in each school.

There were two high schools in the district. Eighth graders who were becoming ninth graders were delineated by high school boundaries and split between the two high schools. Each high school housed grades nine through twelve. While one high school (HS A) was the traditional and historic high school well known by the elders of the district, the newer high school (HS B) had more flare and a newer look, feel, and demeanor. The

enrollment of the historic high school has slowly declined, while the enrollment of the

newer high school has been decreasing at a much slower rate. This may be attributed to

such items as newer facilities, age of students in each boundry, requests for transfers from

HS A to HS B, additional staff, and classes offered. Enrollment data for the targeted

district for 2005-2009 is illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1

Enrollment at Building from Fiscal Year (FY) 2005 Through 2009

Building	FY05	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY09
High School A	1035	1015	1040	997	924
High School B	1007	1019	1011	977	993
Middle School A	700	650	645	770	720
Middle School B	737	684	585	695	731
Elementary A	322	321	318	382	369
Elementary B	598	550	559	463	421
Elementary C	240	243	217	203	223
Elementary D	440	439	438	522	483
Elementary E	279	267	280	331	312
Total Enrollment =	5358	5188	5093	5340	5176

Note. MO DESE (2008).

In the targeted district, there was a Career Center, which offered the typical post-

curricular certifications such as (a) welding, (b) nursing, (c) electrical/plumbing, and (d)

other similar programs. The career center provided services for the district's students, as

well as students from the surrounding schools. Many of these programs operated from

federal, state, and local funding sources, as did the other school buildings in the district.

However, the career center also had outside sources of revenue from local businesses and federal programs the other buildings did not have. These external sources helped to keep these programs viable and functioning. Housed in the same facility as the career center was an adult education program, which was for adult education certifications such as (a) welding, (b) computer repair, and (c) nursing, to name a few. The majority of the adult education programs were self-funding and self-sustaining.

The Problem

The purpose of this study was to assess, plan, and implement a budget building process through collaboration with the stakeholders of a targeted school district. The hope was to develop relationships and foster a cohesive culture by creating a template or protocol for building an appropriate budget for the targeted district. A problem was the lack of similar budgeted line items, allocations, and expenditures among all of the buildings' budgets. A budgeted line item is a code created specifically to expend funds for a designated purpose. For example, a line item may be the supply code for one of the high schools. Each of the buildings and different subgroups has a supply expenditure code or budgeted line item. As a result of the discrepancies, there was a lack of trust among professional staff towards the senior administration.

Many of the finance secretaries and building principals within the targeted district were aware of these inequities and discrepancies and have defined and discussed these in confidence over time. A finance secretary in a building has the sole function to code expenditures for the building in which he/she is employed. The noted inequities have caused contention among some of the building principals, resulting in a general mistrust of senior administration. The contentious atmosphere and environment have resulted in

mistrust towards the administration over time. Bensimon, Neumann, and Birnbaum (1989) stated that "gaining trust through positioning (acquired by demonstrating accountability, predictability, reliability, constancy)" was vital in rebuilding the trust through transformational leadership and conducting change (p. 11).

The building principals and secretaries have expressed some common themes as a result of collaborative meetings. Examples of these concerns deal with stipends and salaries paid to playground supervisors. Some schools have these expenditures in their budgets as line-item allocations, while other schools do not. Questions from building principals and finance secretaries arose around why those schools obtained approval to hire a playground supervisor, while other schools did not have those same types of employees available for their staff or students. Likewise, similar questions were asked about monies allocated for libraries, counselors, and activity accounts. No two schools had exactly the same budgeted line-items. It was reasonable for district personnel to expect some form of similarity in budgeting between similar schools.

Differences in budgeted line-items had created mistrust and the feeling of inequity among buildings and people. There seemed to be an air of the haves and have-nots. There did not seem to be hard feelings among the building principals or finance secretaries towards each other. The esprit de corps and general respect among the building principals was apparent, as evidenced by their communication and friendliness in meetings. However, there was an air of discontent towards the senior administration. This discontent may be attributed to the mistrust built over time.

Line-items are outlined from the specific targeted buildings' budgets to illustrate deviations between budgets. These codes are not completely exhaustive of all the

buildings' budgets. Some of the codes would not be relevant to this study; therefore, they were intentionally left out. For example, line items shown in Table 2 do not and would not be appropriate to compare on an equal basis from building to building.

Table 2

Object Codes

Object Code	Description
6111	Certificated salaries
6141	Unused sick leave for certificated personnel
6151	Classified salaries
6171	Unused Sick leave for classified personnel

Note. From MO DESE (2008).

Object codes, as noted in Table 2, are typically not controlled or used at the building levels. These object codes are created and utilized at the district level. Building principals/secretaries typically only deal with the following line items codes, which are categorized in sections. A comparison of elementary school building budgets is provided in Table 3, by line items. A comparision of middle school budgets is provided in Table 4.

Table 3

The District's Elementary Building Budget Comparison

CODE	DESCRIPTION	Elem A 369 Budget	Elem B 421 Budget	Elem C 223 Budget	Elem D 483 Budget	Elem E 312 Budget
	ENROLLMENT =	369	421	223	483	312
6312	Purchased Services	$ -	$ 10,000	$ -	$ -	$ -
6332	Repairs & Maintenance	$ 1,091	$ 360	$ 55	$ 600	$ 400
6334	Rentals: Equipment	$ 7,642	$ 12,566	$ 12,801	$ 13,368	$ 11,946
6344	Travel: Out-of-District	$ -	$ 10,000	$ -	$ -	$ -
6361	Communication	$ 615	$ 197	$ 150	$ 1,000	$ 1,500
6371	Dues & Memberships	$ 15	$ 30	$ 35	$ 15	$ 700
6391	Other Purchased Services	$ 1,500	$ -	$ 1,421	$ -	$ -
6411	Supplies	$ 27,442	$ 43,893	$ 24,843	$ 33,624	$ 25,480
6421	Textbooks	$ 11,867	$ 15,159	$ 6,000	$ 29,937	$ 12,000
6441	Library Books	$ 3,500	$ 4,719	$ 2,500	$ 6,000	$ 2,600
6541	Equipment: Non-Instructional	$ 10,292	$ 10,778	$ 9,218	$ 6,250	$ -
6542	Equipment: Instructional	$ 2,484	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 10,040
	TOTAL =	$ 66,448	$107,702	$ 57,023	$ 90,794	$ 64,666
	Total Per/Pupil =	$ 180	$ 256	$ 256	$ 188	$ 207
	6300 Per/Pupil =	$ 29	$ 79	$ 65	$ 31	$ 47
	6400 Per/Pupil =	$ 116	$ 151	$ 150	$ 144	$ 128
	6500 Per/Pupil =	$ 35	$ 26	$ 41	$ 13	$ 32

Note. The enrollment data was collected from the targeted district's finance software during the time of the study, while the enrollment data was collected from MO DESE (2008).

Table 4

The District's Middle Schools Building Budget Comparison

		MS A	MS B
	ENROLLMENT =	720	731
CODE	DESCRIPTION	Budget	Budget
6312	Purchased Services	$ 7,570	$ -
6332	Repairs & Maintenance	$ 5,390	$ 3,000
6334	Rentals: Equipment	$ 19,479	$ 16,613
6361	Communication	$ 4,111	$ 2,600
6371	Dues & Memberships	$ 15	$ 1,800
6411	Supplies	$100,165	$ 60,263
6421	Textbooks	$ -	$ 18,527
6441	Library Books	$ 9,534	$ 14,430
6542	Equipment: Instructional	$ 12,620	$ 12,170
	TOTAL =	$158,884	$129,403
	Total Per/Pupil =	$ 221	$ 177
	6300 Per/Pupil =	$ 51	$ 33
	6400 Per/Pupil =	$ 152	$ 128
	6500 Per/Pupil =	$ 18	$ 17

Note. The enrollment data was collected from the targeted district's finance software during the time of the study, while the enrollment data was collected from MO DESE (2008).

A comparison of the high school building budgets is reflected in Table 5. Noticible discrepancies, evidenced in Tables 3, 4, and 5, existed among elementary school building allocations from one building's budgeted line items to another building's code. When the building principals visited during Professional Learning Community (PLC) time, these inequities became apparent and resulted in discussions among administrators.

Table 5

The District's Two High Schools Building Budget Comparison

		HS A	HS B
	ENROLLMENT =	924	993
CODE	DESCRIPTION	Budget	Budget
6319	Other Purchased Services	$ 23,000	$ 23,000
6332	Repairs & Maintenance	$ 25,000	$ 10,500
6334	Rentals: Equipment	$ 14,531	$ 15,235
6361	Communication	$ 8,500	$ 7,224
6371	Dues & Memberships	$ 750	$ 90
6411	Supplies	$ 95,551	$ 123,476
6421	Textbooks	$ 23,400	$ 10,752
6441	Library Books	$ 25,000	$ 25,000
6542	Equipment: Instructional	$ 44,702	$ 36,513
	TOTAL =	$260,434	$ 251,790
	Total Per/Pupil =	$ 282	$ 254
	6300 Per/Pupil =	$ 78	$ 56
	6400 Per/Pupil =	$ 156	$ 160
	6500 Per/Pupil =	$ 48	$ 37

Note. The budget data was collected from the targeted district's finance software during the time of the study, while the enrollment data was collected from MO DESE (2008).

During a meeting of finance secretaries, one secretary asked if the district would create a perfect equitable budget template for all buildings, so they could at least all have the opportunity to utilize the same codes. She then further stated that she realized that the allocations per pupil would be different and appropriate for the building's enrollment, but at least the district would all be consistent and uniform. It was explained that this should be something that the targeted district worked on during the study to coordinate for the next fiscal year's budget. With that, the entire finance secretary staff seemed happy to know that budgets for the next year would be done collaboratively and equitably.

The researcher also elected to compare athletic revenues and expenditures between the two high schools over the past four years in this study. This has been a contentious area too because many times, especially with budgets, when there is a lack of information, then there is an opportunity for feelings of mistrust or bias. The two high schools conduct fund raising activities, which help supplement expenditures. These fundraising revenues are usually balanced for the year, meaning their revenues and expenditures balance to "0" for the specific expenditures for that particular club or organization.

Therefore, the majority of school clubs and organizations raise the money they intend to spend for that given year. There were cases in which a particular school club or organization may have operated in the red, or the negative, for their particular budget; however, those cases were rare. *Gate* receipts are monies paid by patrons who attended activity events that charged a fee to get through the Gate. Examples of Gate revenue are monies collected for entry into football games, basketball games, volleyball games, certain dramatic plays, or orchestra events. Revenues from Gate receipts are exhibited in Table 6.

Table 6

Gate Receipts

Year	HS B	HS A
FY05	$73,049	$54,197
FY06	$72,538	$63,357
FY07	$46,191	$49,850
FY08	$49,659	$40,972
Total	$241,437	$208,376

Note. Data was collected from the targeted district's finance software.

According to reported revenues, one can see that HS B brought in more gate receipts, with a total of $241,437; while HS A brought in $208,376. This resulted in a difference of $33,061 in a four-year period. The increased receipts for HS B could have resulted from additional games played in conferences and state matches. However, it did not defuse the feelings of unfair treatment when one high school had money to buy equipment and supplies, while another high school did not. There was an inevitable feeling of bias and mistrust. Expenditures from each high school for school sponsored activities are illustrated in Table 7. These numbers also contributed to the mistrust and biased feelings already discussed.

Table 7

Expenditures Per High School

	Expenditures	
Year	HS A	HS B
FY05	$131,618	$85,821
FY06	$150,694	$92,307
FY07	$90,162	$95,584
FY08	102011	111973
Total =	$474,485	$385,685

Note. Data was collected by the targeted district's finance program.

From Table 7, it is clear that over the past four years, HS B had expenditures totaling $474, 485. Over the same period, HS A had expenditures totaling $385,685. This resulted in a difference of $88,800 that HS B expended over and above what HS A was allocated. Some of the expenditures could be justified, such as making bleachers Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant for one building verses another.

Nonetheless, these kinds of expenditures do not quantify the deviation between the two buildings' activity allocations. Over the past few years, the athletic directors,

building principals, and finance secretaries have been made aware of these discrepancies and are ready for an equitable solution.

Scope of Study

The inside researcher collected data while employed at chief financial officer for the targeted district for a period of six month. The study ended in January 2009. During this time, the inside researcher conducted normal duties pertaining to his responsibilities, while facilitating change within the organization. This facilitation of change was captured and annotated throughout the process of building the next fiscal year's budget. After the data collection was completed, the change and deviation within the culture was described and captured for discovery.

The research question in this study was, "Will allowing the stakeholders more input, autonomy, and collaboration during a budget building process build a team environment and ultimately ownership in managing their perspective budgets?"

Delimitations

The effects of the budget on student learning were not considered in this study. Achievement is always an important outcome to any school district budget. Student learning is the goal of a school district. However, it would take several years to decipher the data with achievement.

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

The literature review for this research study has been sectioned into three parts: (a) analyzing organizations, (b) leadership, and (c) andragogy. When researching change in an organization, culture, leadership, and andragogy are prevailing cornerstones. These are the foundations that build positive relationships, which will ultimately relate to success, learning, and potential positive change. If these same fundamental ideologies are not utilized appropriately, then the unsuspecting leader may fall into political mishaps and missteps.

Analyzing Organizations

Analyzing educational organizations is as complex a task as finding a half-inch wrench in someone else's garage. It can be a treacherous path, unless you know where the proverbial alligators lie. There is no one correct way to analyze organizations, because there are many different frames, lenses, or metaphors (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Morgan, 1997) that enable one to view an organization. Bolman and Deal stated, "Frames filter out some things while allowing others to pass through easily" (p. 12). Framing enables one to look through a specific lens and see an organization from a variety of perspectives. The inside researcher framed his perspective as he listened to participants frame their perspective throughout the study.

Frames and Metaphors

The targeted school district was viewed by the inside researcher from a different perspective, rather than someone from within the organization viewing the same situation resulting in two different perceptions. For example, Bolman and Deal (1997) described the structural frame as encompassing the methods, protocols, and procedures of how an

organization does things. When the targeted district is viewed from a structural frame,

policies and procedures take on a different meaning for those within the district as

opposed to an outsider viewing from different norms, expectations, and experiences.

As an inside researcher viewing the targeted district from a structural frame, the

policies and practices take on different meanings, whereas someone from already inside

the organization will view these same policies and practices as the culture and norms.

These policies and practices may or may not follow state statute or Board policy;

nonetheless, interpretation is dependent on the person whose frame and perspective is

being viewed.

Similarly, Morgan (1997) stated that a "metaphor implies a *way of thinking* and a

way of seeing that pervade how we understand our world [italics added]" (p. 4). Both

frames and metaphors have benefits to viewing and seeing organizations differently. It

was important for the inside researcher to understand what and how others think and view

the organization's policies and practices before any change could be implemented.

Clearly, everyone has his or her own perspectives that have been developed over time.

Those perspectives or perceptions may be correct or they may be incorrect. However,

what is important to note is that the perspectives from the people are synonymous with

the organization's norms, values, and history.

Frames or lenses enable one to view or see a picture/snapshot of an organization

during a specific time or setting. Bolman and Deal (1997) stated, "Every manager,

consultant, or policymaker relies on a personal frame or image to gather information,

make judgments, and determine how best to get things done" (p. 12). Everyone has a

mental model to filter information; however, forcing oneself to view information through

another model or frame allows another perspective that may not have been as easily seen otherwise. This research study will be very important, in that, the participants will have the opportunity to experience and share their knowledge of their perceptions.

Using an organized rationality lens, an educational leader can further explain that one major input from the environment is the pressure that politicians face to improve public education due to international competition and change (Ball, 1998). Similarly, viewing an organization metaphorically allows for requisite variety and filters information differently (Morgan, 1997; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). Metaphors suggest similarities between known and unknown concepts. Morgan stated that a metaphor should be used "whenever we attempt to understand one element of experience in terms of another" (p. 4). This is similar to the methodology used when learning a new language. There must be a reference from one language to another. In learning and negotiating a new organization, there must be shared meaning and common knowledge. As the study progressed, participants learned new knowledge by their shared experiences, expectations, and norms.

Organizations as Cultures

Culture has been said to be "both a product and a process" (Bolman & Deal, 1997, p. 217). It is a product because it is the explicit knowledge embodied by stakeholders of an organization, while it is a process during the transfer of tacit to explicit knowledge and the creation of new knowledge (Bolman & Deal; Morgan, 1997; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995), as new educators enter into the organization. Culture is a mindset. It is "a 'state' or static property of a given group/organization or as a human process of constructing shared meaning that goes on all the time" (Schein, 2000, p.xxix). The

targeted district, as in all organizations, has its culture; knowledge of this culture was essential to the insider researcher. The process of learning was beneficial for the inside researcher and the participants since knowledge and norms were shared.

Another way to think of culture is "the way we do things around here" (Deal & Kennedy, as cited in Bolman & Deal, 1997, p. 231) because culture is the shared experience, assumptions, and knowledge of an organization (Bolman & Deal; Morgan, 1997; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Preskill & Torres, 1999). When any new employee is introduced to a district, he or she is understandably thrown into an unfamiliar set of norms, values, or expectations. This makes it difficult to adjust, so it is vital to learn what has been done in the past and what others think should happen in the future. Specifically, and more importantly, it is necessary to get input from stakeholders to obtain "buy in" and potential help with the implementation of anything that may be created.

All organizations are made up of people. Schein (2000) explained a common reference to culture is "how people feel about the organization, the authority system, and the degree of employee involvement and commitment" (p. xxiii). Participant involvement and sharing of beliefs, norms, and values were encouraged in this study. Study participants in the targeted district/organization interpreted the values and beliefs (Yukl, 2002) that shaped the norms, values, and culture. "Culture is . . . 'basic assumptions about how the work is and ought to be that a group of people share and that determines their perceptions, thoughts, feelings, and, to some degree, their overt behavior'" (Shein, as cited in Preskill & Torres, 1999, p. 155).

Davis (2003) wrote, "Effective leaders want to know the cultural norms and to take them into account in decision making and in designing change. They also realize that

going against the culture has its perils, and is often a key source of conflict" (p. 30). An

organization is not without the people who give credence to the policies or group/cultural

norms (Scribner & Donaldson, 2001) that "developed over time, are thought of as

'truths,' and are what guide people in their everyday lives" (Preskill & Torres, 1999, p.

66). One of the goals of the researcher in this study was to find out what the truth was

from the participants' perspectives, which will be the culture of the targeted district at

that time.

Bolman and Deal (1997) stated, "Symbols embody and express an organization's

culture" (p. 217). Here, they inspire leaders to view organizations through a frame of

symbolism. Bolman and Deal (1997) metaphorically stated, "Organizations function like

complex, constantly changing, organic pinball machines. Decisions, actors, plans, and

issues continuously carom through an elastic, ever-changing labyrinth of cushions,

barriers, and traps" (p. 217). School leaders who understand appropriate symbolism help

shape effective organizations.

Organization as a culture phenomenon. Morgan (1997) wrote about the

commonality of organizational life among industries globally and how cultures may

differ; however, the life styles of industrial workers were similar among these

organizations. For example, a math teacher in California could have an intelligent

conversation with a math teacher in Florida and share similar pedagogical approaches.

However, that same math teacher in California may not have much in common with an

insurance salesperson who lives in the same town. Similarly, there may be two building

principals at an athletic event, one from each school doing their nightly supervision duty.

As they begin to discuss the generic happenings of their schools, each principal may

discuss his/her budgets and codes and how expectations are different from one district to the next.

In the targeted district, one building principal could communicate with another building principal concerning evaluations of staff members. Similarly, *finance secretaries* could communicate to each other about coding substitutes and/or activity buses and where to code fuel. However, a building principal most likely would not talk so freely about those topics with another building's finance secretary within the targeted district. These are examples of culture phenomenon.

Morgan (1997) stated, "Many of the major cultural similarities and differences in the world today are occupational rather than national" (p. 122). Bolman and Deal (1997) said that symbols can transcend nationally; an example would be the golden arches for McDonald's franchises. Organization as a phenomenon leads to the next discussion that phenomenon of culture also creates an environment of belonging and dedication to a cultural context.

Organization and cultural context. As construction workers continue to pour concrete on a daily basis, their hands become dried out by the water and sediment from the concrete mixture. This becomes a source of pride and stature because the roughness of their hands is a testimonial to hard work. As they shake another worker's hand, there is a commonality and understanding between the two. However, if a white-collared manager walked through the job-site, talked with these concrete workers, and shook their hands, there would be a noticeable difference in the abrasiveness and texture of their hands. The manager who completes paperwork and time-cards, planning to ensure there are jobs, contracts, and materials for the next big contract, will not have coarse skin as a

testament for hard-manual-labor. This is an example of cultural context (Morgan, 1997).

Albeit, both positions work diligently at their perspective jobs; however, there are stark,

definitive differences in cultures, norms, and values between the manager and the

construction workers (Morgan; Yukl, 2002).

Morgan (1997) used an example "When auntie came to dinner" to illustrate an

antagonist attitude and deviation between two people who have different beliefs, values,

and expectations of the workplace (p. 127). In that example, Morgan provided an analogy

similar to the one described above, yet it centered on a wealthy aunt and a union worker.

The wealthy aunt stated to the union worker, "If people like you spent more time at their

work and less looking after their own interests, this country wouldn't be in its present

mess" (Morgan, p. 127). The wealthy aunt meant that instead of the labor union

bargaining for benefits and salaries, they should just be quiet, work, and be happy with

what union members were given as benefits. The union worker believed it was important

"to protect your rights" as a worker (Morgan, p. 127). The aunt claimed, "I've rights. I

provide the money that makes it possible for people like you to live," while the union

worker stated, "I provide the labor that keeps your money alive" (Morgan, p. 127). One

could potentially make a comparison from a building principal's point of view (the union

worker) to a central office administrator (the wealthy aunt). With this example, even

within the same culture, there is a context (Morgan) in which norms, beliefs, and values

are placed and are found important and different.

Corporate cultures and subcultures. All organizations have a climate and culture,

and there are subcultures (Morgan, 1997) within the overarching culture. For example, in

the targeted district, there are five different elementary buildings, separated by several

city blocks. An elementary building principal reports to the superintendent what the

building's teachers are doing to improve scores, what techniques are utilized, etc. "An

organization's culture is reflected in what is done, how it is done, and who is involved in

doing it. It concerns decisions, actions, and communication both on an instrumental and a

symbolic level" (Tierney, 1988, p. 3). The district as a whole has an organizational

culture, but each building has a distinct subculture shaped by the staff, students, and

conditions of practice in each situation.

What is considered the norm at one building may not be at another. Similarly,

there are different norms from the elementary buildings to the middle school or high

school buildings. These subcultures are based on shared beliefs, norms, values, and

expectations at each building. Morgan (1997) stated, "Organizations are mini-societies

that have their own distinctive patterns of culture and subculture" (p. 129). Teachers'

duties from one building to the next are different and unique, depending on the grade

level and expectations of the principals. A teacher in one building will have a different

mentality and responsibilities for lunchroom duty, bus duty, or even hall duty than a

teacher in another building. This can be solely attributed to the deviation among

subcultures and expectations of norms within that subculture. New people in

organizations are smart to learn the norms and expectations of their subcultures in order

to build relationships.

Likewise, one subculture may have spent budgeted monies on playground

supervisors, while another subculture was never afforded the opportunity to hire a

playground supervisor and that building's faculty rotated to supervise the playground.

Whereas it has become the norm and culture to expect playground duty in that building,

as other teachers and principals talk within the cultural context, there seems to be resentment that one building was provided assets, while another is left to fend for itself.

Creating organizational reality. Organizational reality is the perception of the people within the organization. Shared beliefs, norms, values, and work ethic are components of organizational reality (Morgan, 1997). "There has to have been enough *shared experience* to have led to a *shared view* . . . Culture . . . is a learned product of group experience [italics added]" (Schein, as cited in Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995, p. 42). Concerning organizational reality, Morgan stated the following:

> *Shared* values, *shared* beliefs, *shared* meaning, *shared* understanding, and *shared* sense making are all different ways of describing culture. In talking about culture we are really talking about a process of *reality construction* that allows people to see and understand particular events, actions, objects, utterances, or situations in distinctive ways [italics added]. (p. 138)

The cliché noted as perception is reality is important when speaking about the culture of an organization because what people in the organization perceive is the reality of how they feel, think, believe, and ultimately act. As principals and faculty spoke and found out what buildings have received concerning specific line items, a perception emerged that there had been an inequity among buildings' budgets.

Bolman and Deal (1997) stated, "The task of leadership is to help groups develop a shared sense of direction and commitment (p. 157). The beliefs, values, norms, and understanding of a building or district are constructed (Morgan, 1997) by the environment in which K-12 educational leaders operate. Patton (1997) stated it is important to help "shape what's happening . . . in an evolving rapidly changing

environment" (p. 106). Additionally, "People like their jobs more and work harder when they feel that they have a significant voice in *shaping* decisions [italics added]" (Hackman & Johnson, 2000, p. 143). Leadership can be a determining factor in appropriately shaping the culture of an organization (Bensimon et al., 1989; Bolman & Deal; Morgan; Yukl, 2002).

Culture: Rule following or enactment. Morgan (1997) wrote about a "norm-breaking passenger on the subway car" (p. 139), one who looked or stared too long, beyond what was considered acceptable. Likewise, "we can say that the nature of a culture is found in its social norms and customs and that if one adheres to these rules of behavior one will be successful in constructing an appropriate social reality" (Morgan, p. 139). Bolman and Deal (1997) stated that informal rules "are taken for granted. They come to be accepted as unalterable social realities" (p. 154). Thus, a person visiting another country/culture should be attuned to the customs and norms (Morgan). Yet, another cliché, "When in Rome, do as the Romans do," is not too highly rated if one wants to fit in and become accepted. Culture is a "proactive process of reality construction . . . it must be understood as an active, living phenomenon through which people jointly create and recreate the worlds in which they live" (Morgan, p. 141).

This fits in with the targeted district completely because many norms and values were already in place. Similarly, the inside researcher's norms and expectations were and are different from others that dealt with district finances. This was and will continue to be a challenge as steps are taken to move forward with all aspects of the district's budget. It was important that the researcher learn the way things had been done, what had been done, and what the norms were before moving forward with plans for a new budget.

Through the first few months, the inside researcher walked through a proverbial political minefield, without knowing where to step.

Certain rules are followed or enacted without explicit formal documentation. For example, parents many times do not like decisions that teachers or principals make. Therefore, comments from parents are not always polite or congenial. However, the rules do not allow educators to be unprofessional in these situations. Instead, it has become the norm for educators to negotiate with unruly parents who are obnoxious and rude. Educators are expected to be polite, professional, and subservient during a confrontation with a parent, which is another example of rule following and enactment within an educational setting (Morgan, 1997).

Organization: The enactment of a shared reality. Morgan (1997) stated, "Understanding of organization is the processes that produce systems of *shared meaning* [italics added]" (p. 141). The people within an organization must share in the policies, procedures, and enactment of those policies to have a shared culture. Therefore, it is important that stakeholders gain opportunities to share their knowledge and experiences, so that everyone can learn what the potential norms are and what the expectations may be. Bolman and Deal (1997) stated that "cultures have relied on ritual and ceremony to create order, clarity, and predictability," which allows the organization to have a shared culture and shared reality (p. 223). One goal of this research study was to build and create a new shared culture and reality with the targeted district. A "challenge of cultural change . . . involves the creation of *shared systems* of meaning that are accepted, internalized, and acted on at every level of the organization [italics added]" (Morgan, p. 143).

In education, to effect positive organizational change, leadership emerges if there is "an eye on reality-construction . . . an ability to create a *shared sense of reality* [italics added]" (Morgan, 1997, p. 145). It is paramount for leaders to allow employees to be heard and to feel they can provide input and collaboration during any decision that affects them or what they do. Additionally Morgan stated, "Cohesive groups are those that arise around *shared* understandings, while fragmented groups tend to be those characterized by multiple realities [italics added]" (p. 145).

Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) wrote that "sharing of members' experiences and metal models" helps build "organizational knowledge" (pp. 70-71). The ability of a leader to understand the culture for the employees, and how they function within it, is a vital attribute that may lead to success in any organization. Morgan (1997) wrote that an "organization ultimately rests in shared systems of meaning" (p. 147). What is evident is a sharing of tacit to explicit knowledge to create a culture (Morgan; Nonaka & Takeuchi).

A major strength of the culture metaphor is that it "directs attention to the symbolic significance of almost every aspect of organizational life" or organizational phenomenon (Morgan, 1997, p. 146). In school districts, how things are done is as important as what things are done. Symbols are not just mascots or logos. The way tables and chairs are set up for meetings, or the way a leader allows input on decision-making are symbols to staff. Bolman and Deal (1997) stated that "an organization's character is revealed and communicated most clearly through its symbols" (p. 219). Additionally, Morgan stated the following:

> Meetings are more than just meetings. They carry important aspects of
> organizational culture: norms of passivity . . . Straight lines of chairs and note

pads, each guarded by a water glass, communicate a sense of conformity and

order. The friendly chaos and casualness of more informal meeting rooms extend

a more open invitation to self-organization. (p. 147)

These symbols help set the climate and tone of an organization, which become the norms,

beliefs, and shared reality of the organization. This also begins to build and create the

culture. Cervero and Wilson (2006) stated these conformity issues were about logistics,

and that "logistics are about climate . . . getting the climate details right . . . because

through them, the impression, the message, the meaning, and therefore the identity of the

program can be created" (p. 204).

The structure and organization of any organization will determine the

professionalism and potential success. "The culture metaphor points toward another

means of creating and shaping organized activity: by influencing the ideologies, values,

beliefs, language, norms, ceremonies, and other social practices that ultimately shape and

guide organized action" (Morgan, 1997, p. 147).

Knowledge Creation

In any organization, learning and sharing information is paramount for potential

change. Nonaka & Takeuchi (1995) outlined this as "Knowledge Creation" (p. 45).

People within the organization need specifics and processes to implement new

knowledge such as (a) sharing tacit knowledge, (b) requisite variety, (c) redundancy, (d)

creating concepts, (e) building archetype, and (f) cross-leveling of knowledge (Nonaka &

Takeuchie). Each of these plays an important role in creating organizational knowledge.

Sharing tacit knowledge. The creation of organizational knowledge begins with

social interaction among members allowing them to communicate about the tacit

knowledge of the individual members of the organization (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995).

During this process, people talk about what they know and how they feel about it and

grow closer to one another as they create/share what they know (Nonaka & Takeuchi;

Paavola, Lipponen, & Hakkarainen, 2004). Participants in this process feel empathy

toward one another as they learn to better understand one another (Bruffee, 1999) in a

socialization process of sympathized knowledge.

In an educational setting, this is particularly beneficial because participants and/or

stakeholders need to understand all sides before making judgments. The social interaction

involves talking about how each individual understands things (e.g. their mental models

[Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995]). Both individuals and groups of people learn through

meaningful conversations about things that matter to them (Bruffee, 1999; Nonaka &

Takeuchi). This is a vital aspect of organizations because without shared experiences

and/or group settings of sharing, there will be an espoused feeling of isolation and a

potential for cliques to form. These cliques can begin to erode the goal of teamwork

and/or cooperation within an organization.

Requisite variety. The potential for individual and organizational learning is

greatly enhanced in an educational setting by the condition of requisite variety or having

diverse members with different points of view and ideas to enrich the group (Bruffee,

1999; Morgan, 1997; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). This concept has been of particular

importance in Lindenwood University's Ed.D. program; the need for multiple

perspectives has been stressed for teamwork (Lencioni, 2002; Katzenbach & Smith,

1993), research (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005), inquiry and evaluation (Patton, 1997;

Preskill & Torres, 1999), policy analysis (Marshall& Gerstl-Pepin, 2005), ways of

knowing (Markova, 1996) and organizations (Morgan, 1997). Having a variety of

stakeholders makes it "difficult to suppress touchy questions" (Patton, 1997, p. 353) and

allows groups to focus on signigicant topics.

Redundancy. The potential for individual and organizational learning is as

enhanced by redundancy as it is by diversity (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). The condition

of redundancy or sharing of information not specifically needed for immediate use is also

a function of high performing teams; the people in these units tend to spend a lot of time

together (Katzenbach & Smith, 1993). The habits of spending time together and

communicating are conducive to sharing the tacit knowledge of individuals which

strengthens the commitment of individuals to the accomplish the group's tasks at hand

(Morgan, 1997; Nonaka & Takeuchi). Since people in organizations work together and

spend a lot of time together, building functional teams is an important part of the

atmosphere and culture.

A sort of cognitive dissonance grows out of conversations that take place in the

first phase of the knowledge creation model; the new information and ideas of one person

may contradict or supplant the thinking of others and how "people are continually

discovering how they create their reality" (Senge, as cited in Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995).

When this happens, group members must communicate further, clarifying, questioning

and often challenging one another; all of these actions facilitate knowledge creation

(Bruffee, 1999; Morgan, 1997; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995) and optimal team functioning

(Lencioni, 2002). Tacit knowledge is metamorphosed into explicit knowledge (Nonaka &

Takeuchi). Diversity is important in order to safeguard against bounded rationality or a

limited view of the organization; a heterogeneous group generates more ideas and

therefore more options (Morgan; Nonaka & Takeuchi). An organization that can create more options is better able to respond to threats or changes in the environment (Morgan; Nonaka & Takeuchi), a process of adjustment also known as double-loop learning (Bruffee; Nonaka & Takeuchi).

Justifying concepts. A team must decide if any new idea, procedure, or concept is worth keeping. If the group is to move away from former ways of knowing or doing, the decision to do so must be justified (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). It is during this process that the trust built among members (Lencioni, 2002; Katzenbach & Smith, 1993) is needed for the team to openly discuss the merits and weaknesses of a new concept by considering the organizational mission, specific objectives, and the current and future environment (Nonaka & Takeuchi; Morgan, 1997). In addition, because the process of knowledge creation is ongoing, the justification process may start the cycle again, since "new ideas often emerge out of the dynamics of group interaction" (Patton, 1997, p. 353).

Building an archetype. Once a team settles on a justified concept, it is merged with prior explicit knowledge and becomes a new product that may be tangible or intangible. This process is known as the organizational knowledge creation model and again, an organization needs requisite variety (Bruffee, 1999; Morgan, 1997; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995) or diverse membership with a variety of skills to build a new knowledge-base that reflects the collective knowledge, abilities, and experiences of the team (Nonaka & Takeuchi). Building a team environment with collaboration is a goal for many leaders and participants of organizations.

Cross-leveling of knowledge. The process of organizational knowledge creation begins with converting individual members' tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge. As

the cycle completes with the knowledge creation model, each individual must assimilate the new process or product created by the group. The new, explicit information becomes tacit as it is assimilated by each individual (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). Each member of the organization makes sense of the new information in a personal way and uses it; this process might be visualized as pouring new knowledge over the organization and allowing it to soak in, or permeate, each individual, changing the collective knowledge of the organization. In this way, such newly created explicit knowledge becomes tacit for each person and ultimately for the organization (Nonaka & Takeuchi).

Summary

In this section, the researcher outlined analyzing organizations by using frames and metaphors. The main metaphor analyzed was *Organizations as Cultures* (Morgan, 1997). This metaphor was further dissected to illustrate how organizations contain (a) culture phenomenon, (b) cultural context, (c) corporate cultures and subcultures, (d) organizational reality, (e) culture: rule following or enactment, and (f) the enactment of a shared reality.

The researcher also outlined the concept known as knowledge creation (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995), which was broken into sections known such as (a) sharing tacit knowledge, (b) requisite variety, (c) redundancy, (d) creating concepts, (e) building archetype, and (f) cross-leveling of knowledge (Nonaka & Takeuchi). These concepts help leaders analyze organizations and determine the best methods to create an environment of positive change.

Leadership

Leadership theories, traits, and practices were compared and contrasted in this

section. Transformational leadership may be the espoused leadership theory for

educational reform; however, there is no one way to manage, lead, or follow within an

organization. It is vital that leaders understand and develop their leadership styles

depending on specific situations with the appropriate actions guided by knowledge and

expertise.

Leadership has been defined on many fronts by many authors, with no absolute or

definitive single definition of what leadership is or how it can be achieved. Leadership

should not be confused with "power, authority, management, control, and supervision" as

described by Yukl (2002, p.2), but rather with an outcome of beliefs, behaviors, reached

vision, successful organizational goals, etc. One would like to state what leadership is;

however, there are too many successful traits, situations, behaviors, theories, and

methodologies that enable the word leadership to be a verb, adjective, or just an espoused

level of achievement.

Trait Theory

Leadership research in the early years portrayed particular traits as positively

related to effective leaders (Bensimon et al., 1989; Burns, 1978; Davis, 2003; Hackman,

& Johnson, 2000; Yukl, 2002). Educational leaders possessing those traits were respected

and admired. Faculty and staff described such leaders as (a) "Assertive," (b)

"Cooperative," (c) "Decisive," (d) "Dependable," and (e) "Persistent" (Yukl, 2002, p.

178). While these traits were found in effective leaders, negative traits were associated

with ineffective leaders.

Researchers found that effective leaders possessed many of the same traits; however, mimicking traits did not provide an absolute guarantee for success. A leader may be self-confident, yet the process of gaining a position of leadership may enable that same person to gain additional self-confidence (Bensimon et al., 1989). Yukl (2002) stated, "Individual traits failed to correlate in a strong and consistent manner with leadership effectiveness" (p. 203).

The culture of the environment within which leaders operate within has been found to affect the success or shortcomings of leaders (Donaldson, 1998; Morgan, 1997; Schein, 2000; Tierney, 1988). For example, if an effective and successful leader in the military were placed in an educational setting and that same leader exhibited traits that contributed to his success in the military culture in an educational culture, there would be no guarantee that he would experience the same successful results, given the differences in culture and environment. This military leader may not fully understand the cultural context or phenomenon (Morgan) of an educational setting, which is starkly different from a military culture. Traits alone are not a recipe for success; other factors such as personality, behavior, and the situation can contribute to the success of a leader (Yukl, 2002). It is vital that leaders become knowledgable in the proverbial leadership bag of tricks. Requisite variety enables leaders to pull from experiences and gain organizational knowledge (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995).

Behavioral Leadership Theory

Educational leaders, those who are successful and those who are not, can be categorized by their behaviors. Good leaders behave differently in different situations. Bolman and Deal (1997) concluded that "vision, strength, and commitment are essential

to leadership . . . and good leadership is situational . . . what works in one setting will not work in another" (p. 297).

Behavioral leadership styles have been found from diaries, interviews, surveys, and questionnaires (Bensimon et al., 1989; Burns, 1978; Yukl, 2002). These effective leadership behaviors were narrowed into three categories: (a) "Task-Oriented," (b) "Relations-Oriented," and (c) "Participative" (Yukl, p. 53). Task-Oriented managers concentrated on planning and scheduling, while Relation-Oriented managers were supportive with behaviors that correlate with trust, consideration of employees, confidence, and subordinate development (Bensimon et al.; Yukl,). Participative leadership involves the use of others to help and influence the leader's decisions. This specific behavior with subordinates focuses on consultation, joint decision-making, working conditions, participation, decentralization, empowerment, and delegation (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Burns; Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 2000; Morgan, 1997; Yukl).

Transactional Leadership Theory

The essence of a transactional leader is that there is a transaction made between the leader and subordinates. Transactional leaders "approach their followers with an eye to trading one thing for another: jobs for votes, subsidies for campaign contributions" (Burns, as cited in Bolman & Deal, 1997, p. 314). Transactional leadership may be characterized as those seeking an exchange; there is a "relationship between leaders and followers based on an exchange of valued things" (Bensimon et al., 1989, p. 10).

Transactional leaders have been associated with the following methods: contingent reward, active or passive management by exception, and laissez-faire (Burns,

1978; Leithwood et al., 2000; Yukl, 2002). Contingent reward happens when incentives/rewards are used to influence an employee's motivation. Active management by exception happens when a leader enforces rules to avoid mistakes. Passive management by exception happens when a leader implements a form of punishment for mistakes to reduce future mistakes. The laissez-faire leader shows no interest in people, subordinates, or the jobs they perform and may be defined as a hands-off leader. Bolman and Deal (1997) state that "laissez-faire leadership led to aimlessness and confusion" among employees (p. 150).

Charismatic Leadership Theory

A Charismatic leader is someone who might be thought of as a born leader or who has a natural gift to inspire people. Followers tend to like and admire leaders with charisma. Charismatic leaders have the ability to inspire influence, vision, confidence, enthusiasm, and energy and to act in unconventional ways (Bensimon et al., 1978; Leithwood et al., 2000; Yukl, 2002). "Trust appears to be an important component of charisma, and followers have more trust in a leader who seems less motivated by self-interest than by concern for followers" (Yukl, p. 242).

Risks are inherent in leadership, and when leaders take risks and act unconventionally to improve working conditions, relations, benefits, etc., then trust and commitment form between the leader and followers (Bensimon et al., 1989; Burns, 1978; Leithwood et al., 2000; Yukl, 2002). Charismatic leaders "create a sense of urgency that requires greater effort by subordinates to meet high expectations," which in turn motivates employees to strive for "leader approval" in organizations (Yukl, p. 243).

Many qualities, such as inspiring vision, trust, self-worth, and influence, form a

charismatic leader, and these qualities overlap with transformational leadership.

Transformational Leadership Theory

A transformational leader combines many of the attributes above and applies

appropriate behaviors to each situation to best fit and motivate employees. Yukl (2002)

stated that in "transformational leadership, the followers feel trust, admiration, loyalty,

and respect toward the leader, and they are motivated to do more than they originally

expected to do" (p. 253). Transformational leadership develops resources for the leader

and followers to reach their highest potential and motivates them toward a united vision.

There are four recognized components of transformational leadership: idealized

influence, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and inspirational

motivation (Leithwood et al., 2000; Yukl, 2002). Idealized influence deals with the

emotions of the followers, who ultimately, with such influence, identifies at an emotional

and an intellectual level with an espoused vision. This behavior correlates with the

second and third categories of leadership behavior, relation-oriented and participative

leadership (Yukl). Intellectual stimulation inspires followers to see situations and

problems faced in a new light (Bensimon et al., 1989).

Charismatic leaders tend to empower employees, which in turn stimulates

thinking and learning within the organization (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). Merriam

(2001) stated that "transformational learning" was a process that opened the intellectual

eyes of employees to view the world differently and empowered them to create change

and solve problems differently (p. 16). This behavior correlates with the third category of

leadership behavior, participative leadership (Yukl, 2002).

Individualized consideration inspires employees to develop themselves and grow to their full potential. This behavior correlates with the second and third categories of behavioral leadership theory, relations-oriented and participative leadership (Yukl, 2002), that leaders are "concerned with the development" of followers and want their intellectual input (Bensimon et al., 1989, p. 11). Inspirational motivation occurs when a leader inspires a vision that employees internalize and then uses symbolism and modeling for motivation (Yukl).

A key factor in transformational leadership is that idealized influence and inspirational motivation go beyond the three categories in behavioral leadership theory. Transformational leadership seems to combine all the positive attributes of the leadership theories in this discussion. It has keys traits, such as personality, ability, self-confidence, and decisiveness (Bensimon et al., 1989; Burns, 1978; Yukl, 2002), and includes positive characteristics associated with successful behavioral leadership such as instilling trust and being considerate, supportive, and participative (Bensimon et al.; Burns; Leithwood et al., 2000; Yukl). A transformational leader is charismatic by building coalitions with employees, building trust, admiration, and loyalty, and taking risks, and inspiring employees to do more than originally expected (Yukl).

It is difficult to put into practice what is learned or known about leadership theory. Bolman and Deal (1997) stated that a "manager's talk is often unconnected to their actions" (p. 145). Therefore, a transformational leader will develop the four components of idealized influence, individualized consideration, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation with their followers (Leithwood et al., 2000; Yukl, 2002).

Idealized influence. Transformational leadership is the ability to create teachers/faculty who aspire to follow and please the leader. This educational leader builds the admiration, trust, dedication, and loyalty of the teachers, hence they follow and connect with a unified vision. For example, an educational leader may introduce a new professional development concept like PLC to a district. This may be a new concept, and to some, deemed as jumping on a proverbial bandwagon of sorts. However, transformational leaders ensure there is buy-in and commitment from the faculty and staff for new ideas, such as PLC, to be successful.

Therefore, to get buy-in, a transformational leader in the preceeding situation would be knowledgeable in the concepts of PLC's before introducing this bandwagon to the faculty and staff. This will be couched as expertise, which will be idealized by the faculty and staff as "explicit knowledge" and transferred into "tacit knowledge" of the faculty, "learning by doing" (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995, p. 69). The preceeding statement demonstrates how the faculty and staff will idealize and allow themselves to be influenced by a transformational leader in education who has the expertise of a program before leading the staff onto a proverbial bandwagon.

Individualized consideration. An educational transformational leader will care and be conscientious about the professional development of all his/her faculty and staff. Such a leader would want each teacher to grow professionally and continue his or her education/growth. Likewise, this leader would want each classified staff member's knowledge and ability to increase. This will make the entire organization a better and more professional organization. An educational transformational leader will meet with faculty and staff members and be supportive and considerate about their needs for

development. If the faculty and staff members think the educational leader cares about

their professional growth, or their making more money, getting a master's degree, getting

a Commercial Driver's License, or passing the PRAXIS II exam to be fully certified, etc.,

then the educational leader is "investing in people" (Bolman & Deal, 1997, p. 117).

    Inspirational motivation. A transformational leader in an educational setting can

develop inspirational motivation by inspiring a vision and symbolism (Bolman & Deal,

1997; Yukl, 2002) through a number of methods. For example, a principal of a building

walks the lunchroom on a daily basis to keep order. This is a symbol to the faculty, staff,

and students of the presence of the principal. If this educational leader continued to be

reliable, dedicated, and committed to the school year-after-year, then this would be an

inspirational motivation.

    Additionally, if this same principal dressed professionally, such as wearing a suit

each day, then the symbolism of professionalism would be evident. This may inspire the

faculty to dress professionally also. It is easier for a principal to keep order or be seen as

a leader if he or she is dressed professionally, rather than in a jogging suit. Another

example could be that same principal picking up trash in the hallway. This symbolizes a

sense of duty and dedication to the building, teachers, and custodians. This symbolism

creates a positive and professional working environment with employees. This creation

occurs over an extended period and does not happen over-night.

    Intellectual stimulation. An educational transformational leader will develop

intellectual stimulation by inspiring the faculty and staff to think of problems from

different perspectives (Bensimon et al., 1989; Yukl, 2002). This will also develop

organizational knowledge creation (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995, p. 46) if the leader uses

participative leadership (Yukl) and fosters double-loop learning (Morgan, 1997, p. 86) within the district. As faculty and staff begin to solve problems and think from differing perspectives, they feel a unified commitment, trust, admiration, loyalty, and personal identification with the educational transformational leader (Yukl, p. 255).

Bensimon et al. (1989) stated, "The ability to use images and symbols to project ideas is one way in which leaders provide intellectual stimulation" (p. 11). As an educational transformational leader attempts to increase intellectual stimulation, the use of symbols such as memos, newsletters, open sessions-collaboration, open-door-policies, and handbooks send messages to faculty that their leader is caring and trustworthy and helps reshape the culture of the organization (Bensimon et al.; Bolman & Deal, 1997; Burns, 1978; Morgan, 1997; Yukl, 2002).

As an educational leader, the inside researcher has applied many aspects of learned leadership as a military Officer, in a combat tour in Iraq, and in his leadership practice of administration over the years. The culture of situations helps determine the theory of leadership that may be most effective at that time or for that issue (Donaldson, 1998; Morgan, 1997; Schein, 2000; Tierney, 1988). The inside researcher's leadership style has not been solidified into a set methodology. One's leadership style should be as fluid and malleable as one's paradigm utilized on research (Brannick & Coghlan, 2005).

Transformational leadership was the approach this inside researcher hoped to negotiate through personal qualities over time. During the process of negotiating among the different leadership theories, the inside researcher was mindful about the negative impacts and pitfalls of the different leadership theories in practice. The ultimate goal of

the targeted district is to educate children, and whatever best achieves that goal is a step in the right direction.

Summary

Leadership theory and style are important. Leadership can make or break any organization, specifically during any change process. Through this section, leadership theories were discussed and analyzed to suit specific characteristics: (a) trait theory, (b) behavioral theory, (c) transactional theory, (d) charismatic theory, and (e) transformational theory. Each leadership theory is beneficial; however, no one theory fits all situations.

Andragogy

Andragogy has been categorized as learning strategies focused on teaching adults. It has also been interpreted as the process of engaging adult learners in the structure of the learning experience. The term was originally used by Alexander Kapp (a German educator) in 1833 and further developed into a theory of adult education by the American educator, Malcolm Knowles. Knowles (1990) outlined strategies and methods of andragogy. Andragogy (from the Greek words meaning *man-leading*) should be distinguished from the more commonly used pedagogy (Knowles). Knowles had **six** assumptions in which andragogy (adult learning) had been annotated. His assumptions are illustrated in Table 8.

Table 8

Knowles Assumptions on Adult Learning

Idea	Description
Need to know	Adults need to know why they need to learn something before undertaking to learn it (p. 57).
Learner self-concept	Adults have a self-concept of veing responsible for their own decisions, for theor own lives (p. 58).
Role of learners' experience	Adults come into an educational activity with both a greater volume and a different quality of experience from youghts (p. 59).
Readiness to learn	Adults become ready to learn those things they need to know and be able to do in order to cope effectively with their real-life situations (p. 60).
Orientation to learning	Adults In contrast to children's and youths' subject-centered orientation to learning (at least in school), adults are life-centered (p. 61).
Motivation	While adults are responsive to some external motivators . . . the most potent motivators are internal pressures (p. 63)

Note. From Knowles, 1990, pp. 57-63.

There are a number of ideologies about learning and teaching. Andragogy is "the art and science of helping adults learn" (Knowles, 1980, p. 43). While learning is vital to any one person, organizations learn also. However, people populate organizations. Therefore, if people in the organization learn, then the organization as a whole learns. Sinnott (1994) wrote that learning environments with "adults-only . . . are advantageous in that the specific needs of adults can directly be addressed" (p. 181). Any change in an organization is the direct result of the people within the organization changing the culture of shared norms, shared values, shared history, and shared experiences.

Knowles Six Assumptions

The need to know. Adults are motivated to learn. Adults may not have this drive internally, but as conditioned through schooling. This assumption views adults' readiness to learn as the result of the need to perform (externally imposed) social roles and their problem-solving (utilitarian) approach to learning.

Sinnott (1994) stated that the "force for change" is only implemented with a change in the "equilibrium of the system" (p. 11). Therefore, change must be somewhat uncomfortable in nature, rather than a smooth transition between known and unknown or new concepts. Likewise, for any change to occur, the participants must recognize a need to know or a need to learn.

Learner self-concept. As an adult matures, his self-concept moves from one of being a dependent personality toward one of being a self-directed being. The point at which a person becomes an adult psychologically, according to Knowles, "is that point at which he perceives himself to be wholly self-directing. At that point he experiences a deep need to be perceived by others as being self-directing" (Smith, 1999, ¶ 8). Adults within organizations look to be seen as self-directing also because they also want to be known as competent and reliable by their colleagues.

Role of learners' experience. All people accumulate a growing reservoir of experience, which in turn becomes an increasing resource for learning. However, adults seem to learn more effectively through experiential techniques of education such as discussion and problem solving. While children can be taught with direction and teaching to build their reservoir of experiences and knowledge, it is vital to utilize what adults already have available from their experiences to make references and connections.

Beatty and Wolf (1996) stated, "In efforts to foster individual change, we must find those life experiences, positive or negative, which are relevant to the task at hand" (p. 53). This is similar to pedagogy techniques with young adults; however, adults will absolutely make analogies and connections with experiences in a manner to transfer their life's experiences to newly learned concepts. Additionally, Sinnott (1994) outlined the psychologist Carl Rogers's concept that adult learning is increased through an "experiential approach" (p. 256). Adults learn better by comparing and contrasting past experiences to new ideas, by concentrating on the learners' experiences.

Readiness to learn. Adults' readiness to learn becomes oriented increasingly to the developmental tasks of their social roles. Children also perform social roles; however, a teachable moment is somewhat different for adults than for children. The drive, ambition, and social status of adults can be a motivation and stress to employ an adult to focus and learn.

It is important to make the connection between past experiences and new experiences, with readiness to learn. Adults will do what they want to do, whereas young adults can be encouraged to learn tasks by being told what to do. Boone (1985) stated about the learning experience, "it is not what the 'teacher' does to constitute a learning experience, it is what the learner does" (p. 46). Therefore, with adults, it is vital their buy-in and support are present during a learning process.

Orientation to learning. As people become adults, their time perspective changes from one of postponed application of knowledge to immediacy of application, and accordingly their orientation toward learning shifts from one of subject-focused to one of problem solving. It follows from this that if teachers did not condition young children to

be subject-focused, then they would be problem-solvers in their approach to learning. The

question here does not relate to age or maturity but to what may make for effective

teaching techniques and strategies. It is also important to note that adults have a greater

drive for immediacy of application.

　　　　Motivation. This is the drive to want to do well, regardless of the reward.

Knowles (1990) describes motivation as, "the desire for increased job satisfaction, self-

esteem, quality of life, and the like" (p. 63). Unlike a child who may run faster during

practice to prevent the coach from yelling at him/her, an adult will typically strive to do

better for personal growth, gain, or self-preservation.

Summary

　　　　Andragogy is the study of adult learning. Knowles outlined six assumptions that

he felt were the basics in adult learning: (a) the need to know, (b) learner self-concept, (c)

role of learners' experience, (d) readiness to learn, (e) orientation to learning, and (f)

motivation. Each of these assumptions is basic to an adult's concept and timing towards

his/her own learning and awareness.

<center>*Summary*</center>

　　　　The overarching knowledge base from this chapter can be summarized into three

items: (a) analyzing organizations, (b) leadership, and (c) andragogy. Each of these items

helps one to read and understand potential change in an organization. Without this

knowledge base, a leader would find positive change challenging in any organization.

People make up an organization; they live and breathe the policies and procedures that

make the system work.

Analyzing organizations. Organizations can be analyzed using frames and metaphors. Each concept will bring different perspectives to any analysis, yet the main metaphor analyzed here was Organizations as Cultures (Morgan, 1997). This metaphor was sectioned into six comparisons known as (a) culture phenomenon, (b) cultural context, (c) corporate cultures and subcultures, (d) creating organizational reality, (e) culture—rule following or enactment, and (f) the enactment of a shared reality.

Additionally, a leader who believes in sharing knowledge and experiences within an organization will help create an organization of learning. Nonaka & Takeuchi (1995) broke down the concept of Knowledge Creation into sections known such as (a) sharing tacit knowledge, (b) requisite variety, (c) redundancy, (d) creating concepts, (e) building archetype, and (f) cross-leveling of knowledge (p. 45).

Leadership. Theories about leadership styles discussed in this chapter included (a) trait theory, (b) behavioral theory, (c) transactional theory, (d) charismatic theory, and (e) transformational theory. These theories or behaviors are paramount to the success or failure of positive change with people. As leaders filter their responses and actions, it is wise to understand methods of leadership in order to affect the culture of an organization.

Andragogy. Knowles outlined six assumptions he thought to be the basics in adult learning. They were outlined as (a) the need to know, (b) learner self-concept, (c) role of learners' experience, (d) readiness to learn, and (e) orientation to learning, and (f) motivation. Andragogy is the study of adult learning, and it has an important role in creating positive change in an organization. The adults must be the people who share the knowledge to make change possible. Therefore, if leaders want to create positive change in an organization, it is prudent for them to understand adults and the way they learn.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

The inside researcher was new to the targeted district. Through collaborative meetings and because of his positon, he found that there were many employees who wanted to discuss potential inequities in general. Through the process of meeting with staff, and after having looked at the budget and previewed the past three years of district expenditures, his mission centered on working with the faculty to develop a budget that all stakeholders would be comfortable with and proud to be a part of creating. One of the secretaries of the district asked the inside researcher to develop an equitable budget for all schools and then allocate expenditures on a per/pupil basis. Because of these meetings, the inside researcher chose Action Research (AR) as the methodology for this study.

Unlike quantitative research, in AR, the inside researcher and participants do not necessarily always know where and what the outcomes are supposed to be at the conclusion of the study. The inside researcher may think he or she may know where the organization should be led. However, using AR techniques, the participants of the study may find other caveats that lead them in other directions. Through the development of strategies and increased knowledge, the goals and direction of change may transform through collaboration and time. Following will be a discussion of different methodologies and reasons AR was chosen for this research study.

Research Methodologies

In any study, the researcher must decide on the approach by which the research problem can best be analyzed. This entire study was about change in an organization. Change depends on the culture, learning, and the change-process leaders choose to take during a specific amount of time. This approach depends on the leader/researcher's

applicability of knowledge/truth and theory, which enables differing paradigms that offer different perspectives (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005; Heppner & Heppner, 2004; Patton, 1997; Seidman, 2006).

A researcher determines the epistemological and ontological approach, depending on whether he/she has an objectivist or subjectivist (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005) point of view. "Different epistemological and ontological approaches encourage different kinds of reflexivity. . . . The relationship between the researcher and the object of research" (Coghlan & Brannick, p. 5). Since there is no single best approach to inquiry and paradigms approach research differently, the methodology of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data (Preskill & Torres, 1999) should be aligned with the best paradigms for the research problem. A researcher may have a natural inclination toward one approach; however, each paradigm has inherent benefits and weaknesses. Following is a discussion and comparison on the different methodologies: (a) quantitative, (b) qualitative, and (c) action research.

Quantitative Methodology

Research problems believed to be "best answered" through quantitative methods have often been directed by a positivist paradigm (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005). Positivism relies on an impartial, independent reality of investigation by a neutral and detached researcher seeking facts (Coghlan & Brannick; Heppner & Heppner, 2004; Merriam, 1998; Taylor, Wilkie, & Baser, 2006). Reality from a positivist's "perspective is stable, observable and quantifiable" (Merriam, 1998, p. 4). "The aim of positivist science is the creation of generalizable knowledge or covering laws" (Coghlan &

Brannick, p. 6). Additionally, a positivist generally aligns with an objectivist ontology and epistemology (Coghlan & Brannick; Heppner & Heppner; Seidman, 2006).

Quantitative methods provide logical, precise, consistency (Patton, 1997), and control; however, *hypothetico-deductive* methodology works well in sciences such as medicine and agriculture but does not apply as neatly to questions about human behavior (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005, p. 6). In Human Resources practices, quantitative methods could potentially determine the number of applicants interviewed, selected, and eventually hired to establish a generalized pattern. A quantitative approach may give research subjects more privacy, which may allow them to be more open (Merriam, 1998) in their responses; it does not gauge the personal insight or emotions. Patton stated the "dominance of the quantitative/experimental paradigm had cut off the great majority of evaluators and stakeholders from serious consideration of any alternative paradigm" or other methodology (p. 270). Researchers maintain a safe distance in quantitative studies; they are detached and calculate data (Coghlan & Brannick; Heppner & Heppner, 2004; Merriam, 1998).

On the other hand, Bolman and Deal's (1997) view through the Human Resource Frame stated it is important to "invest in people" and "hire the right people and reward them" (p. 123). Likewise, Morgan (1997) stated that employees could "be seen as valuable resources that could contribute in rich and varied ways to an organization's activities if given the means" (p. 36). This is similar to transformational and behavioral leadership theory components -- individualized consideration and relation-oriented managers (Bensimon et al., 1989; Yukl, 2002). Human Resources is dealing with an

investment in people (Bolman & Deal). This leads our discussion from quantitative

methods to a more personal methodology of research.

Qualitative Methodology

A qualitative method allows participants and the researcher a more personal

rapport (Seidman, 2006) during interviews. Additionally, qualitative methods allow for

information that is not as readily discerned through a quantitative approach (Merriam,

1998). Examples could include *exit* interviews from employees leaving the district or

follow-up interviews after a new hire has been teaching for six months. Participants

subjectively construct their own understanding of truth, differing from the positivist

paradigm.

In contrast, the hermeneutic tradition known as constructivist, interpretivist, or

postmodern (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005; Merriam, 1998; Taylor et al., 2006) "argues that

there is no objective or single knowable external reality, and that the researcher is an

integral part of the research process, not separate from it. . . . This approach follows a

subjectivist ontology and epistemology" (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005, p. 6). Reality from

a subjectivist perspective is relative to interpretation and reflection (Coghlan & Brannick,

2005; Patton, 1997; Seidman, 2006).

Qualitative researchers conduct surveys, interviews, and questionnaires; they seek

open-ended responses, facilitate focus groups, maintain personal contacts, and build

rapport, trust, and reflection between the researcher and the participants (Coghlan &

Brannick, 2005; Krueger & Casey, 2000; Patton, 1997; Preskill & Torres, 1999;

Seidman, 2006). This approach works in conjunction with the concept and importance of

knowledge creation for individuals within an organization because it triggers dialogue

and reflection (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Preskill & Torres, 1999). Merriam (2001) stated, "Informal and incidental learning is at the heart of adult education because of its learner-centered focus and the lessons that can be learned from life experience" (p. 25). This brings to light an alternative approach to research, action research methodology.

Action Research Methodology

Coghlan and Brannick (2005) call AR "critical realism" (p. 6). This approach to research combines previously discussed paradigms towards research. For example, it follows a "subjectivist epistemology similar to the hermeneutic tradition but has an objectivist ontology like the positivists" (Coghlan & Brannick, p. 6). Therefore, many of the methods of quantitative and qualitative research are still utilized (Taylor et al., 2006). In AR, the researcher may continue to use surveys, interviews, focus groups, tables, graphs, etc. However, one of the main differences between a positivist perspective and critical realism is that the researcher is imbedded, with and engaged into, the research, rather than being detached (Coghlan & Brannick; Heppner & Heppner, 2004; Merriam, 1998; Somekh, 2006; Taylor et al.).

AR has the aim of solving both a problem and creating new knowledge (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005; Schmuck, 2006; Somekh, 2006), not too unlike the "knowledge creation spiral" (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995, p. 100). Knowledge creation begins with sharing of experiences; this can be explained as a transfer of tacit to explicit knowledge (Coghlan & Brannick; Nonaka & Takeuchi). Explicit knowledge is used so other members of a team or organization can foster transformational learning/inquiry (Coghlan & Brannick; Merriam, 2001; Nonaka & Takeuchi). This goes beyond routine tasks, such

as how employees turn in time cards, which would be just management (Yukl, 2002) and single-loop learning (Morgan, 1997, p. 86).

The goal of AR is to create double-loop learning (Morgan, 1997, p. 86) and transformational learning (Merriam, 2001, p. 20) and provide "simultaneous action and research in a collaborative manner" (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005, p. 13). Dialogue and collaboration with employees in an educational organization builds trust and empowerment (Bensimon et al., 1989; Bolman & Deal, 1997; Bruffee, 1999; Schmuck, 2006; Somekh, 2006; Stringer, 1996; Yukl, 2002).

Insider research enables both the researcher and the participants to be close to the data, although inherent pitfalls must be negotiated to avoid potential problems during learning in action. Coghlan and Brannick (2005) stated

> Working as a change agent cannot always be done with openness, honesty and transparency . . . the real skill in the political entrepreneur is knowing that the game is everything and that it is 'theories-in-action' rather than espoused theories that count. (p. 71)

Doing AR in one's own organization requires listening and questioning; it fosters courage, incites action, and encourages democratic participation (Stringer, 1996). Although there is never one correct way to do AR, Coghlan and Brannick (2005) present a "pre-step, context/purpose and four basic steps, diagnosing, planning action, taking action, and evaluating action" as a guide to AR (p. 21).

Pre-step: Context and purpose. During this step of AR, the inside researcher must determine/identify an area for investigation (Taylor et al., 2006) and what is desirable from the research (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005). This does not mean there is a null

hypothesis like quantitative methods, but rather a direction to move, leaving items open for further inquiry. Additionally, during this step, it is vital the inside researcher has a sense of the economic, political, cultural, ownership, and social forces this action will effect (Coghlan & Brannick; Schmuck, 2006).

There are years of the budget, from the past, that could not be explained or rationalized. These areas have been discussed and attempts have been made to rectify concerns. However, it was apparent from personal discussions with building principals, finance secretaries, and staff that there was no clear reasoning why allocations had been given to specific codes, buildings, or budgets.

After taking time to understand what might be the potential problems with inequities, it became apparent that inequities existed within present and past budgets. Although, the past cannot be rectified, leaders can move forward to attempt to equalize future allocations and build teamwork and collaboration among the staff during future processes. However, any change must come from the faculty and staff; otherwise, it will seem like a top-down approach (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995, p. 124).

It can be easy to play "Monday-Morning Quarterback" or to "sharp-shoot" ideas, methods, or practices, especially from an outsider's point of view. This can be a very slippery slope. Some within organizations will want to hold onto poor practices, merely because "that's the way we've always done them," even if they know such practices should be changed. Therefore, it was vital to construct a process to build buy-in and participation and to be able to effectively create shared learning (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Morgan, 1997; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Preskill & Torres, 1999) to build and create a new culture of budget practices.

The methods and strategies utilized were to garner support from power players within the targeted district. Of course, everyone in the district was important and had value to the process and organization. However, there is truth to the idea that the squeaky wheel gets the oil, and politics plays a role in all organizations/cultures. Therefore getting all players, including power players, involved and participating was a good first step to garner support towards the potential for change.

The *Diagnosing* stage was a perfect opportunity to build support and potential trust. This stage was the time to gather and pull-in stakeholders to help them see what might be inequitable budget problems, as was pointed out during collaborative meetings. It was critical for the stakeholders to understand what had been discussed and to determine what direction to move to potentially fix or change what they identified as problems or potential problems. During this process, participants may find issues to address that the district was not aware of and bring to the committee's attention.

Another step was to develop a potential structure, so there would be a method or to give the appearance of order. This was challenging and a potential slippery slope because leaders did not want there to be a perception or impression that the outcomes were already decided. It was very important for everyone involved to understand that there were no preconceived outcomes or predetermined decisions. If anyone thought the meetings or discussions were a waste of their time, then their participation and commitment would have been withdrawn. Likewise, if that happened, then some people in the organization could have even begun to circumvent or potentially sabotage the process (Yukl, 2002).

Diagnosing. During this step, it was important to evaluate and potentially name issues of concern to the stakeholders. Collaboration in this step was key (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005; Stringer, 1996; Taylor et al., 2006) with stakeholders and primary users (Patton, 1997). Collaborative learning and knowledge creation begins with the knowledge of the individuals (Bruffee, 1999; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). Therefore, during this step an inside researcher should not diagnose independently or in a vacuum. Determining what an organization may need to improve should be a collaborative effort, or there may be resentment, sabotage, or lack of participation (Yukl, 2002). Diagnosing collaboratively will empower employees and increase participation and potential success (Cervero & Wilson, 2006; Coghlan & Brannick; Patton; Taylor, Yukl).

One of the focuses of diagnosing is to be able to see and understand what is actually taking place in the culture in which one may be involved. When a person is a new comer in any organization/culture, it is imperative to determine the potential "need for change" (Brannick & Coghlan, 2005, p. 94) which is a process for initially diagnosing what may be a problem. It is understood that in some organizations change is not what is needed, but rather change may be a detriment.

The diagnosing of potential problems will be better received if done by collaboration, rather than direction or top-down management. It is vital that Diagnosing is also collaborative and holistic, with diverse groups within the organization providing input. In this process of diagnosing what may or may not be problems, it is critical to garner the support and political power of the group. In the case of this study, this would occur as the group begins to see, hear, and identify some problems with budget allocations. If the participants hear that these problems need to be addressed, and they are

hearing this from their co-workers who they have worked with for many years, then there will be more of a push or support to go in that direction. On the other hand, if the only people who are talking and recommending solutions are administrators, then the participants will not feel or think they have had input.

During this process, it was important for the budget committee to see the issues that arose as participants identified potential problems and solutions. The goal was for the committee to make recommendations to change the budget building process and allocations to be more equitable throughout the district. For this to happen, the committee members needed to see what was actually happening with the budget and allocations. An excel spreadsheet that contained the budgeted allocations for all the buildings was given to all participants on the committee. This showed the committee how district monies had been allocated in the current year's budget. This was potentially dangerous. The intent was not to incite a riot or violence, but rather to inform, be forthcoming, and honest.

Before this information was handed out, it was important to make qualifying remarks about the contents of the budget. For example, this information contained monies from grants that one building had that other buildings did not. Therefore, the building with the grant allocation had higher budgets than the buildings that did not have grants within their budgets. This truth alone significantly skewed the numbers and it was important for the committee to know this.

The budgeted numbers were also somewhat different because of the Free and Reduced Lunch count for the different buildings. The socio-economic status of buildings affected the Title allocations for each building. However, Title allocations were not

included in the spreadsheet given to the committee, but the free and reduced lunch

eligibility had a determining factor in specific allocations for the buildings.

An important goal during this committee process, and a reason the committee

members received the information on what all building budget allocations actually had

been, was ultimately to help build trust. It is challenging for leaders to develop a

relationship of trust among stakeholders and hard to regain if ever lost. Therefore, as the

committee recognized that the senior administration was sharing and not hiding

information, the hope was that the committee would begin to gain a feeling of trust and

mutual respect with the leadership of the targeted district.

During the first few months, to help in the process of promoting trust, there were

meetings scheduled with each building principal and finance secretary. It was important

for the faculty to learn more about the inside researcher and, more importantly, for the

inside researcher to learn the faculty and their norms, values, and practices. These

meetings ranged in topics from budget to capital outlay, the budget building process, and

concerns and questions from participants. Additional meetings were scheduled to follow

up and revisit items as questions arose. This was useful because the participants had

thought about other items that the district wanted to discuss and ask but had forgotten

during their first meetings. Therefore, a second round of individual meetings was needed

for additional questions and answers. These second meetings proved to build

relationships and openness among the principals and secretaries.

An additional concern during the diagnosing stage was the progress of Capital

Improvement projects in the district. Capital Improvements are the building

improvements that typically cost more than a thousand dollars. Capital outlay items

include improvements to parking lots, additional classrooms, renovation of restrooms, expensive weight equipment, furniture, and/or computers.

A concern heard from principal after principal was that they have been fighting year after year for building improvements. For example, one building principal asked when the windows were going to be replaced, since this had been promised. These windows had originally been installed in the early 1900's. Another principal asked about a press-box over the football stadium at HS B. It was old, dilapidated, and about to fall down. It was a safety hazard and needed to be improved or replaced. Another principal asked about playground equipment that was supposed to be replaced several years ago; however, it had been put off year after year. Principals had been told these improvements would occur, yet from year to year, the changes had not been completed.

Clearly, there were too many needs to fill all requests at first glance. However, it seemed logical to develop a five year plan to ensure the most needed, or what the Board of Education deemed priority to be replaced or improved, were included in that timeline. Identifying the capital needs of the district was an important task for the budget committee; they needed to recognize and prioritize them over time. This needed to occur synonymously with the budget building process, since it directly related to expenditures. Although it was a Fund Four (one that all capital expenditures must be coded to from MO DESE [2008]) expenditure, it was important to the overall budget of the district because a portion of the operating funds were allocated to Fund Four.

Planning action. This step follows diagnosing and analyzing the context and purpose of the issues presented in a collaborative manner (Stringer, 1996; Somekh, 2006; Coghlan & Brannick, 2005). The initial Planning Action step may be the first step in

implementing a series of steps to move forward with projects (Stringer), and a series of

reflection steps to follow. The reflection or reanalyzed method starts a series of cycles in

AR, as AR is not conducted systematically (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005; Schmuck, 2006;

Somekh, 2006; Stringer, 1996; Taylor et al., 2006).

The transition between Diagnosing and Planning Action cannot be delineated with

a definitive line or separation. These two concepts or actions are simultaneous. As budget

committee members were discussing and formulating potential problems, the group also

recommended courses of action and possible solutions to problems discussed. Therefore,

it was important that recommendations from diagnosing and planning action were a direct

result of collaboration from the Budget Committee.

As the Budget Committee convened, they were focused each meeting on a

selected number of items to tackle and discuss. After the items were discussed and

thoroughly dissected, the committee made recommendations for courses of action. This

was the method of Planning Action. With the committee's shared knowledge and input,

they drove forward with action that would be supported by the stakeholders. It is

important to point out that if the administration were to have made the same

recommendations as the committee, without allowing their input and collaboration, then

the outcomes would not have been as successful, if at all. The sheer ability to have the

support and buy-in from the committee members increased the likelihood of success

because there was an army of support from politically powerful stakeholders.

The stakeholders were the principals, teachers, and coaches in the proverbial or

actual teacher's lounge. When comments were made about a process or action, they could

step up and explain or offer support from their perspectives. As a teacher or patron

listened from the sidelines to a respected stakeholder, these comments and support

carried more weight than if the senior administration were saying the same things. Part of

the inside researcher's personal Planning Action was for the Budget Committee to be the

Public Relations spokespersons for the Budget Committee. As questions arose from

pockets of potential resistance, the members of the Budget Committee were available to

explain, from their perspectives, why decisions were made.

In the process of building a budget, there are benchmarks or goals that should be

met. For example, building principals and faculty members need supplies from year to

year. One method to develop a budget for supplies is to ask stakeholders to project their

needs for the following year during late fall of the previous year. One may think this is

too early to request that information. However, by late fall, the majority of supplies in

any given classroom or building should have already arrived. If stakeholders have a

practice of ordering and requisitioning the majority of their supplies early, so students can

begin utilizing these items, then the supply monies have been allocated for student needs

as early as possible. This also allows for teachers and administrators to identify needed

supplies to be included on the requests for the following year.

This is not a perfect method, as there are no perfect methods for projecting the

budget. However, this is a manner for the faculty to provide input and gain ownership of

their requisitions. Clearly, not all requests will be filled and approved using this type of

method. Likewise, not all supplies or needs would be known in late fall. Yet, as these

requests are made and budgets are allocated, faculty and the building principals can begin

to manage and work their budgets so they can expend within the allocations of building

budgets.

It was also paramount to begin early planning of Capital Improvments for the district. All building principals and/or stakeholders had a long list of items that were important to them in their world of capital improvements. These items ranged from additional dry-erase boards, to Emints classrooms, to computers, to new playground equipment. These were all appropriate capital needs and would be common in any school district.

The district had capital needs beyond building requests, for example, replacing or phasing in new Heating Ventilation/Air-Conditioning (HVAC) units throughout the district. Likewise, roofs needed to be repaired over time. It is always a good plan to stagger roof replacements over several years. This is important because roofs have a life-span, and replacing a roof is very expensive. A district does not want to attempt to pay for all new replacements in a one or two year timeframe. This would be too costly in a short period of time. Additionally, those same roofs would begin to wear and tear at the same rate. It is typically a prudent plan to phase in a roof replacement every few years as roofs begin to deteriorate.

In addition to HVAC improvements, other district needs for capital improvements that Budget Committee had to take into consideration included (a) parking lot improvements or expansions, (b) facility additions, (c) bus or vehicle procurements, and (d) district computer acquisitions. All of these items, along with the individual building capital needs, were important and deserved attention. However, a limited amount of funds are available for a district to expend each year on capital improvements. Therefore, it was vital that there was input, buy-in, and collaboration to support a facility plan that could be presented to the Board of Education for approval.

Another item for consideration during the budget building process was salary and benefit increases. Salaries and benefits are most likely the largest expenditure in a school district's budget. Typically sixty to eighty percent of a district's budget is allocated for salaries/benefits combined. These figures are relative to individual districts. However, in the targeted district, salaries and benefits made up approximately sixty-five percent of the total budget.

Included with salaries and benefits, another very important and expensive expenditure for district budget planning committees to consider is health insurance, which is considered as part of the benefits package. Many districts have differing forms of insurance benefits. They can range from health, dental, eye, and life insurance. Premiums are Board paid, which means the district pays these premiums for the employee. These premiums are considered as part of the salary package and, therefore, must have retirement taken out for each employee based on premium costs. These expenditures begin to grow through time. Nonetheless, it was vital that the budget committee take into consideration insurance premiums and the type of coverage expected during discussions.

The preceding list of items contained in the expenditures of the targeted district was not all-inclusive. However, these big-ticket items needed to be discussed during the planning for the budget building process. These items should not be discussed in a proverbial vacuum. They needed to be discussed in the open and with the frame of mind that no decisions would be made on any item until after all items were discussed and valued. The Budget Committee appreciated the opportunity to see the big picture and have access to this information. One of the goals of this was to build trust and

collaboration during the budget building process. This would be accomplished by a second goal, which was to share important information with the stakeholders of the district. A key phrase utilized during this process was that "finance people live in a glass house." Everything that was done was transparent so everyone could see and know what was included and why things were completed in the manner selected. Lastly, another goal was to build a budget and protocol that would be effective and appropriate for the following year. Each of these goals was important and vital to lead the district into effective and positive change. Transformational Leadership has the ability to build teamwork and inspire employees to do more than what was asked of them (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Yukl, 2002).

To achieve this result, it was important that the information given and presented to the Budget Committee members was done in a manner that invited their input and collaboration. It was important that each member had a feeling of comfort and security to speak his/her mind, while listening to other people's points of view. For example, if the committee was talking about capital improvements, it was important for each member of the committee to respect the words and needs of other building participants. Everyone who had a need would think or feel his/her need was important; however, after hearing the needs present in other buildings, individuals may not consider their need more important. For example, one may think that his/her building teachers needed a second *smart board* in each of the classrooms. However, after participants found out that there were some classrooms in the district that did not have any smart boards at all, then they may have felt that their request for a second smart board was not be as important as filling other requests first.

These conversations were important for everyone on the committee to hear. Many times people within an organization, especially in a school district, can only see and know what is directly in front of them or in their world. An effective goal to achieve during this process was to build understanding and support for the budget building process and to create understanding across all district stakeholders about how the budget was created.

Taking action. Coghlan and Brannick (2005) describe taking action as when the plans and action steps are implemented and potential interventions are made. Schmuck (2006) has a series of ten stages for AR. During a similar step, Schmuck stated, "Stage 4: Implement Action Plans . . . . Carry out an action strategy that you created in Stage 3 on a trial basis" (p. 9). This step/stage is a culmination of a series of collaborative efforts, meetings, reflective evaluative thinking put into action to evaluate potential results/change in action (Coghlan & Brannick; Schmuck; Somekh, 2006; Stringer, 1996; Taylor et al., 2006). It is vital that leaders garner input and collaboration during this process to gain support throughout the organization. If participants and stakeholders are not heard, then there is a potential for poor participation or the lack of support.

The action steps taken in this process included clustering several items. The focus was to gather information and apply new ideas to the budget for the fiscal year 2010. The items that needed to be covered and collected included (a) the economy, (b) salaries, (c) insurance and benefits, (c) capital improvements, (d) building budgets, and (e) other miscellaneous items that were discussed with the budget committee.

The aforementioned did not encompass all the action taken during the meetings. For example, meetings were hosted for everyone to have the opportunity to provide input.

Enabling and adjusting the timelines for input was a very important action that helped

instill trust within the organization. Based on initial findings, meetings were scheduled

with several principals and directors. In these meetings, the researcher discovered that

additional meetings were needed with secondary principals, their finance secretaries, and

others to share information; this was yet another form of taking action.

Although not anticipated until after discussion and ideas from different persons

involved in the discussions, these actions were added. Therefore, adjusting and allowing

for flexibility provided needed support and comfort to the stakeholders, while building

culture, community, and potentially trust. Therefore, the action steps described were

tentative until the committee fully discussed the direction in which the district should

ultimately proceed.

An important item of consideration during this process was the current condition

of the economy. Since the economy had declined and the government had officially

stated the United States was in a recession, political subdivisions were feeling the impact.

For example, the targeted district received approximately seventy-five percent of its

revenue from local sources. Current and delinquent taxes made up the majority of the

district's local revenue. With the economy in disarray, some patrons of the district would

not pay their taxes on time or at all. This caused a reduction in the local revenue collected

by the county collector, which reduced the local revenue for the district. It was important

for stakeholders of the district to be privy to this information. The building principals,

supervisors, teachers, and Board members needed to be aware of this information so

everyone could understand the need for budget restraint.

When discussing salaries with staff, one method was to find a baseline with which to start before talks began. A baseline offered participants a means to find how much it would cost the district to allow all certificated staff to move, or take a step, on the salary schedule. While taking a step was vital, an average salary increase existed between all staff. For example, a person on step one would move to step two. That percent of increase would be more or less than a person on step twenty-five moving to step twenty-six. The increased percentages were averaged, which resulted in percent of increase.

It was important to remember that the percent of increase would be applied to classified staff positions also. Therefore, their salaries needed the same percent of increase as the certificated staff, assuming the administration wanted equality among employees. This was subject to the leadership style and salary committee. However, this could have been very contentious if not handled appropriately. This was a political endeavor. It was also necessary to include extra duty stipends, extended contracts, and administrators if they were not on the salary schedule. Therefore, several items were considered in applying a base-line of salary expenditure to the budget. After having this completed, the stakeholders were given information related to costs incurred by the district to allow steps only and how it filtered through the other positions. This process gave a generic percentage of increase, and it gave the Board of Education and Salary committee an idea of what monies were available to maneuver as salary discussions moved forward.

When this process was completed, it was evident that allowing certificated staff to advance on the salary schedule would cost the district approximately $517,000, while allowing horizontal movement on the salary schedule would cost the district

approximately $150,000. Calculating Extra duty contracts equated to approximately

$25,000, and extended contracts would cost approximately $8,000. Adding the

percentage to administrators' salaries would cost approximately $72,000. Lastly, the

district added that same percentage of increase to classified staff salaries, which equated

to approximately $160,000. This brought a total increase for salaries, for steps alone, to

approximately $932,000.

An item that typically is a positive aspect to planning a budget and this particular

process includes teacher retirements. In the targeted district, a teacher at the top of the

salary schedule would typically earn approximately $35,000 more than a new hire. A new

hire was not necessarily a first year teacher. Regardless, $35,000 was a good average in

savings that the district might receive for each retiring teacher. It was estimated for this

calculation that ten teachers would retire. Therefore, this would be an approximate

savings of $350,000 to the district. This combination from the increase and decrease (for

teacher retirements) then provided an estimate that the total increase to the district's

budget, due to steps alone, would be approximately $582,000.

It is also important to remind staff that the cost of benefits typically increases year

after year. These are expenditures the district absorbs, if these costs are not passed

through to the employees. Not all districts handle or manage benefits in the same manner.

Districts typically have some form of a benefit package; however, the amount of health,

life, dental, eye, and other insurance premiums paid vary greatly among districts.

The targeted district budgeted to pay 100% of individual health, life, and dental

insurance. This was a large and healthy benefit package. In addition, the health, life, and

dental packages were extremely comprehensive. A high percentage of costs were covered

in these packages, which left the employees to pay very small co-pays, deductibles, etc. For example, the deductible for an employee was zero dollars. It was important for stakeholders to understand the value of these plans, which cost the district more to purchase and maintain and would ultimately increase the Loss Ratio each year.

Administrators needed to inform stakeholders of the costs associated with benefits offered by the district. They needed to understand that these costs must be calculated and annotated within the budget. These expenditures would subtract from what may have included extra monies available for salary raises, building supply accounts, or other expenditures needed.

Building and district improvements were a contentious issue within the targeted district. As in the budget, there were inequities across the district. While one building was completely remodeled or new additions added, other buildings received only paint or new carpet in certain areas. This had caused animosity and anger from the building principals, teachers, directors, and other stakeholders.

Therefore, it was important to inform the stakeholders what capital outlay expenditure included and how the process should work. Likewise, it was important to share and inform them about balances in Fund Four. Additionally, it was important to explain what revenues could potentially be allocated to Fund Four. These allocations were important because there were options at the beginning of the year by the Board of Education to place or not place revenue monies into Fund Four. This affected the balances in other funds, which determined if the district had a balanced budget.

The importance of these actions was that everyone understood the connectedness of placing monies from revenue in the different funds and how that affected what monies

could be utilized in the district's expenditures. As requests for capital improvements were placed on a facility plan, there would be an understanding of the viability and probability of whether or not the request could actually be funded. It was important for committee members to hear what buildings/principals were requesting for capital improvements.

It was also important that discussions of the committee were held in the open so everyone involved could hear what everyone was asking/saying. For example, there was one building in the district with many new capital improvements scheduled and completed, while other buildings had no monies allocated for their needs.

While one building principal was consistently requesting more, others did not make requests at all because they were not aware of the availability of capital funds. Therefore, it was beneficial for the entire committee to know what had actually been accomplished throughout the district. The shared experiences and selecting what would be funded was paramount for the entire committee to understand and to have opportunities to participate in the decision making process. This was especially going to help to diminish feelings of mistrust toward senior administration.

Another very important item of discussion was the individual building budgets with the per pupil calculations. Each elementary, middle, and high school had been given a per-pupil dollar amount, which was multiplied to its current enrollment. This calculation had equated to their actual budgets.

It was important to have these discussions openly so all could hear the reasoning and rationales. There seemed to have been deals made with specific individuals and buildings, which had potentially contributed to the feelings of mistrust or collusion perceptions. To counter this, and in an attempt to dissipate the mistrust, the researcher

thought it was best if everyone were aware of all budgets, allocations, and codes. This was an important step in an effort to build trust with all involved with the Budget Committee. The more they saw, the more they would begin to trust and have faith that the senior administration would do what they said they would.

As the Budget Committee began to dig through the budget, issues, and other potential concerns from the participants, there were items that needed action that had not been anticipated at the time the study began. This is the essence of AR, to collaborate and work through potential problems as a group and as issues arose.

Evaluating action. During this step, reflection is vital to determine the successfulness of the pre-step, diagnosing, planning action, and taking action steps implemented (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005). The success or failure adds experience and knowledge (Bruffee, 1999; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995) to the organization, creating organizational knowledge (Nonaka & Takeuchi) for the next cycle of AR. During AR, these steps are conducted, sometimes simultaneously, with several cycles beginning one after another (Coghlan & Brannick; Schmuck, 2006; Somekh, 2006; Stringer, 1996; Taylor et al., 2006). Future cycles of diagnosis, planning action, taking action, reflection, and evaluation are relative to the dynamics and success of previous cycles and participants.

The evaluation process of these activities would take several echelons to become effective. For example, the Board of Education would ultimately evaluate the district's budget process. They would get feedback from the participants on the progress and productivity. This feedback would come from direct interaction. The Board members were invited to attend and participate in the process of this study.

The researcher sought to listen and potentially change the process as the planning and taking action steps were addressed. As participants asked questions or had concerns, the researcher included them as deciding and determining factors in the direction and ultimate success of the process. As educators know from pedagogical and andragogical strategies, the looks on students' faces and questions they offer should be used to steer instruction to fit the particular needs of those students. The members of this committee were no different; as discussions and directions took form, the researcher used feedback from the committee to address concerns and give direction to the process/budget.

Summary

In chapter three, methodologies were discussed and analyzed. The three methods that were discussed were (a) quantitative, (b) qualitative, and (c) action research. After comparing and contrasting each of the three methods, AR was the focus of the methods for this study. There are many different approaches to AR; however, the approaches utilized during this study were (a) pre-step: context and purpose, (b) diagnosing, (c) planning action, (d) taking action, and (e) evaluating action.

Chapter Four: Results of Action Research

In chapter four, the researcher illustrates the progress made towards changing the culture of the targeted district during the budget building process. The items discussed include meetings with the Budget Committee and their specific comments. Additionally, meetings with the Board of Education, community, and building stakeholders were set up to inform the patrons about the district's budget.

Budget Committee Meeting One

During this first meeting held on November 19, 2008, the Budget Committee had an agenda. However, the majority of the conversations and input came after the initial agenda had been discussed. The building principals wanted to voice their opinions and wanted district administrators to understand their feelings about perceived discrepancies from the past. There were twenty participants on the committee during this meeting. There was an air of excitement during the meeting.

During this meeting, many important comments were voiced by participants. The inside researcher was excited that all of the participants felt comfortable enough to express themselves and add to the discussion. This was an important step in the construction and development of trust, respect, and general ability to change perceptions of the stakeholders/participants. Some building principals were not able to attend this meeting; however, it was valuable for the principals who were present to feel comfortable in voicing their concerns. Opinions and feelings expressed in this meeting were later shared with those who were unable to attend. Therefore, their candor later provided significant credibility to the whole process. Comments made in the first meeting are provided below.

First Meeting Comments

      Inside researcher's intent. As the inside researcher set up the Budget Committee, he had individually been meeting with building principals, athletic directors, and supervisors and getting their input about the Budget Committee. They seemed to like the idea and concept. The inside researcher was able to explain the intent with individuals in order to allow key stakeholders from each building to provide input and share their ideas. At the beginning of the first meeting, the inside researcher established a rapport with them individually. Therefore, when the inside researcher stated the intent to allow participation, input, and create a venue to voice their concerns, it was not new information. They had heard it before; however, it was official now and the first meeting in the targeted district was in progress. What the inside researcher had been speaking about for months had finally come to fruition.

      Show all allocations. Allocations for athletics and individual buildings were showcased and made transparent from all the stakeholders from each building in the district. Prior to this, participants had expressed the belief that there were favors and discrepancies between buildings and favored people in the district. The inside researcher liked this approach for several reasons. For one, it showed there was no fear in making the information available. This helped establish a form of trust, and it was the beginning of building that trust. Secondly, it gave the opportunity to move forward with making the budget transparent.

      Since the comment came from a participant, it was important that the committee recognized that the inside researcher would be honoring their wishes. Knowing that the inside researcher followed through with their comments and requests built trust within the

group. Additionally, this allowed the inside researcher to showcase allocations without others in the district feeling embarrassed. It was a potentially contentious situation; however, it was clear that everything in the budget was to be seen and known by everyone in the district.

What was done in the past. The inside researcher asked the committee how things were done in the past in an attempt to find out the culture, norms, and expectations. One of the building principals stated that a dollar amount would be given to them and then they were told to stay within budget. They were never asked what they needed, nor were they told what other buildings got for their allocations. Additionally, they had never been given the opportunity to participate or provide input in the budget building process.

The power in this statement was the fact that it was said in front of all participants. As this person stated these historical facts, the majority of the committee nodded their heads in agreement. The person who made this statement was a seasoned administrator in the district. This person had been in the district well over thirty years, so people listened to his opinion.

The administrator's statement regarding historical allocations had a lot of credibility because the participants knew the intent for the budget committee was to provide input and participation throughout the budget building process. This participant even stated to the inside researcher, "I would like to thank you for giving us this opportunity; we've asked to be able to do this in the past, and it fell on deaf ears, so thank you." This comment made the inside researcher feel good as a leader, but it also validated the need for the committee. Additionally, this comment set the stage for potential change;

it was an unsolicited comment that would be remembered by the younger administrators as change occurred.

   Inequities. There were several statements about inequities in budgets from building to building. The principal making one of these comments was very conscience of the audience and did not want to offend anyone; however, the statement was necessary. There was a comment regarding how much monies were given to athletics each year and how these monies and allocations were not known by others in the district. Another statement made was that at the high school level, there was more than enough money for supplies, while at the elementary level, teachers were buying needed supplies from their own pockets.

   The particular principal making the comment about supplies visited with the inside researcher after the meeting to ensure him that she was not trying to stir the proverbial pot, but rather to ensure everything would and could be brought to light. She let the inside researcher know that she had seen allocations from the different levels because she had taught at the different levels. She further stated, "It's just not right how the elementary staff does without, while there's more than enough at the high school levels". The inside researcher assured her that she was free to bring any and all questions to the committee and that nothing would be hidden or taboo. She thanked him and stated that she appreciated how this gave the elementary teachers an avenue to fix an obvious inequity.

   Capital request. In the conversation with the committee on capital expenditures, the inside researcher spoke about the process to develop a Facility Plan for the following year. This was a hot topic with many of the principals, due to the previous individual

meetings. Therefore, the inside researcher wanted to open the door for discussion and reassure each of them that their concerns would be heard and they would have an opportunity to provide input into the facility plan.

One comment from a participant addressed the perception that after the bond issue had passed five years ago, they felt that while some buildings were completely renovated and "rehab'd," other buildings in the district were "left out in the cold and maybe got new carpet for a library, but that's it." This comment was in a form of a statement but seemed more like a question. The inside researcher responded that he could not account for what had happened in the past; however, he could offer the opportunity for participants to provide the input needed for the Board of Education to determine what would be on the facility plan for the following year.

This created some healthy conversation with the other principals in the meeting. One participant asked, "So, how will the facility plan be developed?" The inside researcher told the questioner that "we, this committee, will develop the facility plan and we'll take the recommendations to the Board of Education for their approval." It was quiet; then the inside researcher began to explain the process to achieve that goal. The agenda for the following meeting was focused on facilities and how the committee needed to solidify the facility plan by February, so the inside researcher could take a recommendation to the Board. After Board approval, the inside researcher explained that the facility plan would outline the approved capital improvements, with a timeline throughout the year, so everyone would know when the plans were tentatively scheduled to be started and completed.

The goal of sharing the facility plan excel sheet was to enlighten participants. First, they would know what was actually approved and anticipated to be completed for the year. This had been problematic because there had been several comments like, "We were told our capital improvements were promised to us and going to be done," or "We thought the Board approved this to be completed." Therefore, it was important for everyone to know exactly what was Board approved. Secondly, it was important for everyone to know when projects would begin and when they should be completed. Through conversations, the inside researcher heard several comments about projects and questions about when they would begin. Therefore, if everyone knew the projected start and end dates, then this would allow some sense of calm and patience as district stakeholders waited for those dates.

Board Budget Meeting

The inside researcher set up an informational Board Budget meeting, which was held on December 1, 2008. This meeting was to inform the Board of Education about the current economic situation in the targeted district and the impact on local and state revenues for the following fiscal year. During this meeting, the following topics were covered: (a) fund balance, (b) assessed valuation, (c) tax levy, (d) projected revenues, (e) projected expenditures, and (f) items of priority from the Board.

Board Topics

Fund balance. In this discussion, the researcher explained to the Board of Education the significance of maintaining a healthy fund balance for the district. Fund balance can be identified by the amount of monies left in the district's bank account that

is liquid and unrestricted or by a more utilized concept called the percentage of fund balance. The percentage is the more widely utilized method in terms of fund balance.

District officials may use unrestricted monies for whatever they prefer. Examples of restricted monies for districts could be endowments, professional development monies, debt service balances, capital outlay balances, and bond issue balances. A fund balance percentage is the liquid unrestricted monies available to the district at the end of the fiscal year, June 30th, divided by the total expenditures for that same year.

The targeted district ended Fiscal Year 2008 with a 21.7% Fund Balance. This was a healthy fund balance for the targeted district. There are districts that keep a fund balance in the thirty-percent range; some keep a much higher balance; yet other districts maintain a much lower percentage balance. The percentage of fund balance available is different for each district because this fund is calculated based on sources of revenue and the percentage needed to make it through the calendar year without having to borrow money to make payroll.

For example, the targeted district ended fiscal year 2008 with 21.7% fund balance. However, the expenditures of the district forced the fund balance to dwindle down such that at the end of November, 2008, the district only had enough liquid unrestricted funds available to make the first payroll for December. The district had two payrolls per month. Therefore, if the district did not receive an accelerated/advanced payment from the County Collector on the current taxes, then the district would have needed to borrow money to make the district's second payroll in December.

The County Collector's office was called and they assured the inside researcher that the district would receive an advanced payment before the second payroll in

December. Therefore, the researcher informed the Board of Education that the district

would be in good shape to make the last payroll. He further explained that current taxes

would begin to filter through the district's accounting system.

Table 9 was utilized as an example for the Board of Education; it contains a

comparison of unrestricted liquid balances, at the end of specific months, from the

previous year to the current year. A review of Table 9 helped the Board of Education

understand why the district needed at least twenty percent in fund balances at the end of

the fiscal year.

Table 9

Fund Balances for FY08 & FY09

Year	July	October	November	December
	Beginning	Ending	Ending	Ending
FY08	$ 9,752,732	$ 2,664,295	$ 809,146	$ 11,804,601
FY09	$ 12,385,070	$ 3,618,431	$ 1,243,183	$ 16,067,709

Note. Data collected for the targeted district's finance software program (MO DESE,

2008).

After this discussion, the researcher asked members of the Board of Education to

make a determination on what they thought an acceptable and healthy fund balance

should be for the district. After a discussion and questions, members of the Board of

Education decided to maintain at least a twenty percent fund balance. There was not a

vote taken, but rather a recommendation and general directive from the Board of

Education. This was beneficial because it helped guide future budget discussions with the

district and patrons.

Assessed valuation. The district's Assessed Valuation (AV) for fiscal year 2009 (FY09) was $986,117,739. The County Assessor had estimated the AV would be reduced by 3.8%, due to the economy. This reduction would have a significant effect on local revenue for the district. The district received approximately $41,000,000 in local revenue from Current and Delinquent taxes. This tax revenue made up approximately sixty percent of the district's total revenue and had a significant impact on the budget.

It was important that the Board of Education understood and knew the impact of this information and potential problems this impact could create for the following year's budget. This information was shared early in an attempt to induce the administration, Budget Committee, and the Board of Education to make proactive decisions to ensure the district stayed healthy and built a viable and balanced budget for the following year. It is important to note that when the AV was adjusted, as was the Tax Levy, because of the Hancock Amendment.

Tax levy. Under the Handcock Amendment, as the AV adjusts up or down, so does the Tax Levy of any political subdivision. A political subdivision is a taxing authority of a county, such as (a) police, (b) fire department, (c) library, and (d) school districts. The Hancock Amendment ensured political subdivisions would not make a windfall from an increase in AV. Likewise, this amendment also ensured the tax levy was adjusted for a decrease in AV. A representative analogy about the connection between AV and tax levy was that if two balloons were connected and we wanted the same amount of air to stay within each of them, as one inflated and enlarged, the other balloon must deflate and get smaller, whereas if one decreased, then the other must increase to compensate.

The tax levy of the targeted district was the lowest in the county at that point; however, after the AV decreased, the tax levy increased to compensate for the lost revenue from current and delinquent local taxes. If the estimation of a decrease of 3.8% from the country assessor was accurate, then that implied the district needed to raise the school's tax levy twenty-three cents to generate the same local revenue. This was just an estimate at that point, based upon current information. As more information became available, the estimation became more reliable and credible.

Projected revenues. The discussion on projected revenues centered around the decrease in AV. As stated above, since the AV was projected to decrease, local revenues for the district would be negatively affected. This would affect whether or not the district would increase the tax levy for the patrons of the district.

The inside researcher provided members of the Board of Education a copy of Table 10 to use for a comparison and analysis of past, present, and projected revenues. This chart contained the previous year's actual revenues, as annotated by the district Annual Secretaries Board Report. It also contained the current year's projected revenues. The chart also contained a five-year projection for the Board of Education to analyze and compare and contrast.

Table 10

Projected Revenues over the Next Five Years

Source	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14
Local Revenue	$ 51,464,467	$ 52,301,218	$ 51,514,201	$ 51,936,048	$ 52,362,113	$ 52,792,439	$ 53,227,069
County Revenue	$ 916,579	$ 963,100	$ 963,100	$ 963,100	$ 963,100	$ 963,100	$ 963,100
State Revenue	$ 13,019,308	$ 13,365,937	$ 13,028,135	$ 12,809,649	$ 12,670,437	$ 12,533,313	$ 12,398,245
Federal Revenue	$ 3,798,233	$ 3,692,943	$ 3,722,943	$ 3,753,543	$ 3,784,755	$ 3,816,591	$ 3,849,064
Other Revenue	$ 326,725	$ 316,000	$ 316,000	$ 316,000	$ 316,000	$ 316,000	$ 316,000
Revenue from other districts	$ 1,372,616	$ 1,395,125	$ 1,395,125	$ 1,395,125	$ 1,395,125	$ 1,395,125	$ 1,395,125
Total	$ 70,897,928	$ 72,034,323	$ 70,939,504	$ 71,173,465	$ 71,491,530	$ 71,816,568	$ 72,148,603

Note. Data collected from the targeted district's budget preparation software.

The majority of revenues were flat-lined, except local and state revenues. The local revenues were decreased for two reasons, AV & Tax Increment Financing (TIF). The TIF monies were generated for FY09, due to an agreement between an organization and the city. The organization agreed to pay the school district $1,250,000 one time in FY09 to obtain a TIF for their new construction and land procurement. These monies could not be allocated to future revenues.

The state monies were projected to decrease due to a declining enrollment in the targeted district. The district was considered Hold Harmless; however, the monies generated from the basic formula and hold harmless were calculated on a per pupil basis. Hold Harmless means that when Senate Bill 287 (2006) was implemented, there were some districts that would receive less state funding, due to SB 287. Therefore, these districts were considered Hold Harmless and would continue to receive the same per pupil basis revenue as SB 380 (1993), the previous state funding formula.

Even though the targeted district was considered Hold Harmless and would continue to receive SB380's higher per pupil allocation, since the district's enrollment is declining, the revenue would continue to decline also. The average percent of decline and decrease was five percent. Therefore, a decline in state revenues was forecast in Table 10; this was based upon projected enrollment.

Projected expenditures. The projected expenditures had the same format as the projected revenues, with the previous year's actuals, the current year's projection, and a five year projection. The five-year projection contained some assumptions that needed to be explained to the Board of Education. These assumptions included each of the following:

1. Allow certificated staff to move steps vertically

2. Allow certificated staff to move horizontally. This equated to an average of 2.38% increase in salaries

3. Apply the 2.38% increase to extra duty contracts

4. Apply the 2.38% increase to extended contracts

5. Apply the 2.38% increase to administrators' contracts

6. Apply the 2.38% increase to classified staff salaries

7. Apply a 2.5% increase to supplies and purchased services

These increases, coupled with the shortfall of revenue, would affect the overall budget and ending fund balance for the district. It was vital for the Board of Education to see the overarching effect on the budget and where the district might be heading in time, if good decisions were not made to keep the district financially healthy. Projected expenditures over a five year period are contained in Table 11. This data was given to members of the Board of Education for their analysis and comparison.

Table 11

Projected Expenditures over the Next Five Years

Expenditures	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14
Salaries	$ 32,815,473	$ 34,537,604	$ 35,119,868	$ 35,705,978	$ 36,296,027	$ 36,890,108	$ 37,488,320
Benefits	$ 9,200,476	$ 10,421,529	$ 11,229,481	$ 11,795,077	$ 12,399,046	$ 13,044,393	$ 13,734,359
Purchased Services	$ 9,217,041	$ 10,606,068	$ 10,871,220	$ 11,143,000	$ 11,421,575	$ 11,707,115	$ 11,999,792
Supplies	$ 5,698,202	$ 6,134,039	$ 6,294,765	$ 6,459,731	$ 6,629,049	$ 6,802,834	$ 6,981,206
Capital Outlay	$ 3,816,633	$ 4,723,954	$ 1,123,208	$ 1,123,208	$ 1,123,208	$ 1,123,208	$ 1,123,208
Debt Service	$ 10,434,078	$ 7,068,256	$ 7,060,355	$ 7,098,262	$ 7,474,906	$ 7,758,696	$ 5,874,701
Total	$ 71,181,903	$ 73,491,450	$ 71,698,897	$ 73,325,256	$ 75,343,810	$ 77,326,354	$ 77,201,587
Total Revenue	$ 70,897,928	$ 72,034,323	$ 70,939,504	$ 71,173,465	$ 71,491,530	$ 71,816,568	$ 72,148,603
Budget (black or red)	$ (283,975)	$ (1,457,127)	$ (759,393)	$ (2,151,790)	$ (3,852,280)	$ (5,509,786)	$ (5,052,983)
Actual Fund Balance	$ 12,356,402	$ 12,791,009	$ 12,031,616	$ 9,879,826	$ 6,027,546	$ 517,760	$ (4,535,223)
Fund Balance Percentage	21.70%	20.73%	18.94%	15.18%	9.03%	0.76%	-6.46%

Note. Data collected from the targeted district's budget preparation software.

In Table 11, there is additional information such as the revenues for each year, whether or not the budget was in the Black or Red, the actual fund balance, and the percent of fund balance. Black means the budget is in the positive, and red means that the budget is in the negative. This information helped members of the Board of Education see the bigger picture of the budget and where it was heading the next few years.

Members of the Board of Education received the information in Table 11 well. They made several positive comments on the assumptions. One Board member was concerned that the projections were not "conservative" enough, which was a very good comment. The inside researcher was worried the Board would have thought the projections were too conservative. However, for one of the members to make that statement in front of the other Board members added credence and validity to the statements being made. Additionally, it allowed the other Board members to hear a concern and/or worry about the budget that was not only coming from the inside researcher but from other Board members, too. It was important for the other Board members to discuss these charts, and the information contained in them, openly and voice their opinions. This allowed each member to internalize and filter the information in a timely manner. They were not asked to make any decisions at this point; the information was just given to inform and educate members of the Board on the current assumptions and status of the budget for the following year.

Items of priority were the focus of this part of the discussion during the Board Budget meeting. The inside researcher spoke to the Board of Education about three items of priority: (a) certificated salaries, (b) reducing class sizes, and (c) capital improvements

in the district. There was also a section for additional comments or discussion, in case a Board member had an item he/she wanted to discuss that was not on the agenda.

Discussions on certificated salaries were focused around what potential increases could be given to the certificated staff for FY09. The district had enjoyed increases in the economy over the past several years, which had allowed for healthy salary increases. The average salary increase over the past several years had been approximately six percent.

With the economy and the local revenue showing a potential shortfall for FY09, the Board needed to consider being more conservative with certificated salary increases. The inside researcher outlined how the budget projection for FY09 was in the Red and unbalanced; this projection included only steps and column changes, with no increase on the base or steps/column increments. However, the Board members did not question the inside researcher's figures/numbers.

Further discussion allowed participants to see that a quarter of a percent increase on the base would cost the district approximately $110,000 for salaries and benefits for both Classified and Certified personnel. Therefore, just allowing steps and column changes would result in an approximately 2.38% increase, and every quarter of a percent past that would cost the district an additional $110,000. This was significant because the current projected FY09 budget was already in the Red by $759,000.

Class sizes concerned members of the Board of Education. Therefore, a document that outlined the cost of decreasing student class sizes was distributed. In the past, the district had worked hard to lower class sizes at the elementary level. The district currently had an average class size of fewer than twenty students per certificated staff member in kindergarten through fourth grade.

The Board of Education had asked the Finance and Human Resources departments to figure what it would cost to reduce class sizes throughout all grade levels. This had been an item of discussion for the Board since the inside researcher took the position in July of 2008. The key point of interest with which the Board of Education was concerned was how much it would cost to reduce class-size throughout the entire district. The unwritten goal was fewer than twenty-five students per class. The estimated cost to reduce class-size to this number was $400,000.

Discussion on capital improvements focused around the fund balance and expenditures for capital outlay for the district. This also was a very sensitive and contentious topic. Several stakeholders in the district were angry and upset about specific agendas important to them. Out of all the three priority topics discussed, this topic generated the most discussion and passion.

A conversation about Fund Four anticipated ending fund balances for the year was brought into the discussion; this balance was approximately $1.9 million. Additionally, the district for the first time had put $0.10 of the tax levy into Fund Four. This generated approximately one million dollars into Fund Four for capital expenditures. This allowed for a phasing in of (a) HVAC, (b) roofing needs, (c) technology upgrades, and (d) other building capital outlay improvements.

Based upon the balances, the district would have approximately three million dollars available for capital outlay. However, it would not be prudent to deplete 100% of the funds available in fund four in one year. It was appropriate to maintain a balance in fund four for potential emergency expenditures. Emergency expenditures are unforeseen situations that can deplete the operating funds, if not appropriately managed.

Fund Four is capital outlay utilized to procure equipment, land, renovations, etc. Specific guidelines exist in the MO DESE (1997) accounting manual; it outlines what can be considered a capital expenditure. These requirements for capital expenditures should meet the following tests: (a) last longer than a year, (b) repair rather than replace, (c) independent unit rather than incorporated into another item, (d) cost of tagging and inventory is a small percent of item cost, and (e) cost $1,000 or more.

As previously mentioned, the discussion among Board members related to capital outlay was passionate and intense. Each member of the Board had friends and family in different buildings. Each of these buildings had needs and ideas for improvements that were all important. During this discussion, the inside researcher did not interject any thoughts about where or how the district needed to spend fund four monies. Instead, the Board members generated the discussion relative to what their thoughts were on capital.

This was not a time to push administrative agendas. It would have potentially caused the Board members to steer away from ideas presented by the administration. This was a time to allow the Board members to hash out their ideas and concerns and give them an opportunity to realize the dilemmas. Each Board member had his/her own ideas of what was a priority and need for capital improvements for the district. However, it was important that the Board understood there would not be enough money to accomplish all the needs of the district.

At the end of this Board Budget meeting, the Board members asked the inside researcher to set up meetings with district personnel and community members to share this information with them. They thought the entire faculty should be informed. This was a fantastic idea that provided the researcher with an opportunity to share budge-related

information with the stakeholders of the targeted district. The researcher saw this as progress; the Board was aware of important issues, and they wanted to share this with the stakeholders of the district. Sharing what is currently known builds a new and improved culture for the district (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Paavola et al., 2004).

Budget Committee Meeting Two

During the first part of the second budget meeting, the inside researcher shared all the information previously shared with the Board of Education. It took approximately thirty minutes to complete the presentation. However, the time spent proved to be beneficial because building principals were very receptive. Many of the participants knew the majority of the concepts presented; however, they did not know the detailed information. The combination of their prior knowledge and the status of the projections set the stage for discussion.

After the presentation, the discussion moved to items on the agenda. The first item of discussion was the per pupil allocations per buildings. In the past, elementary buildings were given $120 per pupil, while middle schools were given $135 per pupil, and the high schools were given $160 per pupil. The elementary principals asked why their allocations were so much less than the other buildings' allocations. One principal asked, "Why are students at elementary worth less than students at the other buildings?" This question was rhetorical in nature; however, there was pointed meaning behind it.

The inside researcher told the committee that they had the opportunity to fix any inequities that the committee deemed necessary. Further, the inside researcher asked for their help so the district could move forward into the new fiscal year with a budget that

reflected fairness and support from everyone in the room. This helped to defuse the

atmosphere of any antagonistic clouds and allowed the committee to move forward.

Discussion continued to center on the concern about elementary allocations. The

elementary building principals began to explain that at the elementary level they had

consumables, whereas at the middle and high school levels, students used books that

were not consumables. Secretaries from the middle and high school levels corrected that

statement. One secretary said, "I order workbooks for high school science, chemistry,

math, and communication arts classes all the time that are consumables."

After learning about consumable books at the secondary level, the elementary

principal that made the previous statement said, "Well, I never knew that. This is why

this committee is really a good idea because we can all hear what the other levels are

spending their money on and why." Another elementary principal spoke up and stated the

elementary buildings order more consumable materials than the high school do. This

principal then stated that consumables at the elementary level cost about thirty dollars per

student each year. At that time, one of the high school principals suggested, "Why

doesn't the district just raise the elementary buildings' per pupil allocation thirty dollars

and call it 'good', because I think I'm doing fine with my allocation. I don't need more

money." At that point, the inside researcher asked the other high school principal if he

thought the allocation he received was adequate. He said that he believed so.

The inside researcher then asked the two middle school principals the same

question. They both said that their allocations were sufficient, minus one principal who

asked for a capital allocation for band and orchestra equipment. Since Fund Four does not

change the operating budget, the middle school principals were told that the district

would allocate capital to their buildings in the next budget. This statement, made in front of the entire committee, showed the committee the transparency the inside researcher was trying to create for the district and the participants.

After further discussion, the committee decided they needed more time to investigate what the elementary per pupil allocation would be. Therefore, the committee set up another meeting for principals only. In the interim, the elementary principals were to meet and collaborate on what they thought would be sufficient and appropriate. During this discussion, there were some comments such as, "Why don't we get to see how much money the high school athletic departments get each year? Because I know they spend more per pupil than the elementary buildings do." While another participant (personal communication, December 9, 2009) stated:

> Yes, and the high schools also get to keep their 'Gate' receipts as revenue to use how they see fit and the elementary buildings don't have those kinds of activities to pull funds from. So, if we want to host a pizza party for our kids, we have to take it out of our supply accounts or what really happens is the teachers pay for it out of their own pockets. And I don't think that's right!

The majority of the elementary participants agreed with this comment. This meeting seemed to focus upon how the elementary principals did not feel or think they were treated fairly or equitably. The same high school principal spoke out again, "Well, if you get your [meaning elementary] per pupil allocation raised. . . . Would that help?" This was a question raised to the committee, and not directed at any one person. Elementary participants agreed it would be helpful.

The next agenda item for discussion was capital improvements. This was a hot topic and very contentious. A few principals in the district thought their buildings had been slighted or overlooked when capital improvements were allocated. Through interviews, the researcher found this topic to generate the most emotional and anger-filled discussions.

The inside researcher outlined the process the committee would utilize to ensure everyone's interests and concerns would be addressed. The inside researcher then explained the participants had homework to do before the next Budget Committee meeting. All building principals were to develop their capital improvement requests for the next year and annotate those requests onto an excel sheet provided via an earlier email to them, as shown in Table 12.

Table 12

Example of Capital Improvement Request Sheet Given to the Building Principals

Item #	Description	Estimated Cost	School	Priority
1	Replace roof	$ 100,000	Elementary A	1
2	Replace playground equipment	$ 50,000	Elementary A	2
3	New North entrance doors	$ 15,000	Elementary A	3

Note. Data was an example given to the targeted district administrators to develop a capital improvement list.

Principals' Budget Meeting

The Principals' budget meeting started at 11:00 a.m. on January 5, 2009. This meeting allowed elementary principals to discuss what their per-pupil allocation should potentially be. The inside researcher provided participants with an agenda containing the items they requested. Then the inside researcher told the elementary principals they would have about forty-five minutes to discuss this agenda with no central office

administrators present. This provided time alone for them to sort through any issues they

wanted to bring to the table or delete from potential discussions.

Allowing this time alone for elementary principals was extremely beneficial.

When the central office administrators returned to discuss what the elementary

principals' agenda was going to be, they had deleted the majority of their initial requests.

They reduced the agenda to mainly four items. They wanted to know how to spend

capital monies and discretionary monies. They asked if they could get $150 per pupil

allocation, and they asked if the athletic allocations could be published and transparent.

An improved atmosphere was apparent. The antagonistic comments and

environment experienced in the prior Budget Committee meeting had dissipated. The

entire elementary principal meeting was professional, cordial, and productive. At 1:00

p.m., the building principals from the middle schools and high schools arrived to

participate in an all school principal meeting about budget.

During the initial portion of the all principal meeting, the inside researcher shared

the latest information concerning: (a) fund balance, (b) assessed valuation, (c) projected

revenues, (d) projected expenditures, and (e) priorities for the next year. Since the Board

of Education requested the information be shared with the entire staff, the inside

researcher conducted a trial run on the building principals and then asked their input and

recommendations for the presentation. The goal was to get their feedback on the

presentation and determine what could be improved or changed. Additionally, the inside

researcher wanted to know their thoughts about how the faculty and community would

receive this information.

When the researcher posed these questions, there was a big laugh shared among the administrators. One administrator said, "They will hear that you are going to 'freeze' their salaries and cut staff." The inside researcher asked what could be done to ensure the faculty and staff those were not the intentions. Another building principal stated, "There's nothing you can say that will be 'right.' It will be perceived as negative." Then another building principal (personal communication, January 5, 2009) said:

> Well, I don't necessarily agree with that. If you continue to reassure them at the beginning and throughout your presentation that these are just projections and that no decision is made, then the majority of the faculty will appreciate the 'heads up' on the information.

There were several positive discussions at different tables. Principals participated in these discussions on different approaches to the all staff meetings. During these discussions, the inside researcher did not talk or control the meeting; instead he felt it was important for the building principals to formulate what approach might work best in their buildings. After some time, different building principals gave their ideas of what words to say during the all faculty meetings that might put the staff more at ease. Suggested words were (a) "just projected numbers and nothing is solid yet," (b) "These are not our recommendations to the Board, just numbers to help the district plan," and (c) "We wanted to inform you [meaning the staff] so you knew what we knew, so everything is transparent."

During this time, the inside researcher took notes on different slides of the presentation. Some comments were about wording on the slides, while other comments were about words to use during the presentation. All of the building principals seemed to

want to help and agreed that the information was good for the staff to hear. One principal

said he thought the staff would really appreciate the information and being included.

The meeting went well. The researcher saw it as a turning point from the building

principals being hostile and antagonistic, to them being supportive and collaborative. It

seemed as if their buy-in was increasing with each meeting, and the potential for trust

was growing after each meeting.

Building Budget Meeting One

A budget presentation was scheduled for each building in the district; two

additional presentations, which were open to the community, were also scheduled. A

small group of faculty, consisting of certificated and classified staff members, attended

the first building meeting. During this meeting, the inside researcher highlighted and

emphasized the key points learned from the building principals' meeting.

During the first building level meeting, some quality and intelligent questions

were posed about fund balances and AV of the county and their impact on the district's

budget. These were intuitive questions that the inside researcher was pleased the faculty

was comfortable enough to ask. Additionally, the researcher thought the faces of the

faculty seemed to communicate acceptance and understanding. This meeting was not

threatening or antagonistic at all.

At the conclusion of the first building level meeting, the faculty gave applause for

the presentation. This was certainly a positive sign. The inside researcher left the

presentation and traveled across town to get back to his office; when he arrived he had

already received an email from the principal (personal communication, January 8, 2009)

of that building that read:

I wanted to let you know that I heard some very positive comments about the

presentation. They felt it was upfront, clear, and easy to understand. My staff also

appreciated that they were included, since it keeps them informed. Great Job and

Good Luck on the next set of presentations.

The next day of work, the inside researcher received another email from a faculty

member (personal communication, January 8, 2009) in attendance at that meeting, it read:

Just a note to tell you that I appreciated your meeting with us. I thought you were

informative but more importantly I felt as though you were very honest. That and

the fact that you came to explain things means a lot to me. When I am left in the

dark is when I feel as though there may be something to hide even though it may

not be the case. We have a guy here that is radical, skeptical, and cynical as

anyone in the district and even he had nothing negative to say. That's pretty

telling. Nice Job!

Building Budget Meeting Two

The next building budget meeting happened the following day. The inside

researcher approached and spoke to the faculty and staff in manner similar to the

approach the day before. This was a larger building with more faculty. There seemed to

be some additional questions from this group. However, these questions were similar in

nature as the day before. Additionally, one comment was significantly different which

was, "I can tell that you are giving us the information that you know now, but obviously

things may change, so thank you for being forthcoming and letting us know." This was

important that it was stated from a faculty member and in front of the entire group. The

importance of this is that the comments are generated from stakeholders and not from top-down management.

Additionally, after the meeting the insider researcher was given a letter written by a participant (personal communication, January 18, 2009) who wrote a letter during the presentation that read

> I appreciate you sharing this information with us. I thank you for your honesty. When you said that you are meeting with the teachers' union on Saturday, it really struck a chord. I thought about what I plan on doing Saturday. I plan on going to the zoo with my husband and one-year-old daughter after waking up and lazily readying about for the day. When I think about your schedule, I realize how blessed I am to have you and the others at district office working with me. Thank you for your commitment to my welfare.

Building Budget Meeting Three

This meeting went very well. The same data was presented in this meeting as in the previous two meetings. However, due to two previous meetings, the inside researcher was able to anticipate questions and concerns from faculty and adjust his presentation accordingly. Therefore, there were fewer questions during this meeting. This proved to be beneficial because then the inside researcher could pull questions from the staff. The next day, the inside researcher received an email from a teacher (personal communication, January 20, 2009) in that building that read:

> I just want to take a minute to let you know how informative your presentation was yesterday. You did a very nice job presenting this information in a manner in which 'non-finance people' could understand. Not only did I learn about our

district's budget situation, I gained a better understanding of school finance in

general. Thanks!

Additionally, after that meeting, several faculty came up to the inside researcher

and shook his hand, and said "thank you." Another very interesting and fulfilling item of

interest was when the the faculty applauded after the meeting was completed. This was a

great feeling, and it was certainly unsolicited. The next day, the superintendent sent the

inside researcher an email that stated the he had spoken with the president of the school

board. In his email, he stated that the Board of Education had been hearing very positive

remarks from the faculty concerning the presentations.

Budget Committee Meeting Three

Capital improvements and per pupil allocations were on the agenda for the third

budget committee meeting. A few building principals needed some additional time to

consolidate their requests. Therefore, three building principals asked for another week to

turn in their capital requests. Nonetheless, the inside researcher handed out an excel sheet

that had the requested capital improvements for all the buildings that had been turned in

at that time. This allowed everyone to view the initial requests.

Allowing committee members to view this handout reinforced the researcher's

commitment of transparency in the process. It also allowed building principals to see the

requests from other buildings, which may have prompted them to consider other items to

add to their buildings' requests. This allowed for requisite variety during the process.

Discussion about per pupil allocation followed. Principals agreed to use the

September Enrollment count to calculate this allocation. These membership numbers are

annotated on Core Data Screens for MO DESE. September enrollment numbers are

potentially higher than those taken later in the year; this would benefit each building and give the district uniformity in the process.

Building Budget Meeting Four

Similar responses and concerns arose at the fourth building level meeting as in the previous Building Budget meetings. However, what was unique about this meeting was that this building was typically one of the most vocal about their feelings of discomfort or distrust with the central office administration. During this meeting, the inside researcher received as many positive comments and non-verbal feedback as in the other meetings. Therefore, the inside researcher was motivated and encouraged by the positive feedback.

After the presentation, there were at least three teachers who came to the inside researcher to say "thank you" for the presentation. Their general message was one of thankfulness for the honesty and straightforward information. One teacher said, "I really appreciate you presenting the information so that I could understand it. I never knew much about the finances of the school, but now I know more because how you presented the data, so thank you." This kind of feedback was beneficial to the whole district in terms of productivity and growth for a new culture.

Chapter Five: Discussion, Conclusions, Implications,

and Recommendations for Additional Research

Through the process of utilizing an AR methodology for the targeted budget

building process, the participants, administration, and Board members developed

relationships and changed their expectations. During the study, there were emerging

themes that arose such as (a) trust, (b) transparency, (c) equitability, (d) better

understanding and knowledge of the budget, (e) teamwork, (f) changing attitudes and

expectations, and (g) a potential Change Protocol for future change processes.

Emerging Themes

Trust

Through a process that allowed input, collaboration, and transparency, the

participants began to change their perception of the central office administration. Trust

was created by including the participants in decision-making, which helped them to

develop a sense of confidence in the district's budget and the intentions of the district

administration. Beatty and Wolf (1996) stated that trust is vital to the development and

change process for adult learners.

The emails, letters, and interview comments from participants after meetings were

positive and productive, as opposed to when the inside researcher had initially taken the

position. The building principals had transformed from a "me, me, me" to more of a "we,

we, we" attitude. The inside researcher believed that they had begun to trust what the

district was doing and the process worked to build relationships within the district. Yukl

(2002) stated, "Effective performance of a collective task required cooperation and

mutual trust, which are more likely when people understand each other, appreciate diversity, and are able to confront and resolve differences in a constructive way" (p. 439).

Additionally, sharing, honesty, and truthfulness from the central office administration contributed to improved levels of trust. Boone (1985) stated, "The element of trust . . . is essential to program planning . . . [and] is considered the most important in the planning subprocess-promoting collaboration" (p. 111). This had been achieved by allowing everyone to see what line items were in the budget, what allocations were for different buildings, and what information was needed. There was no reason why information about the budget could not be fully disclosed to all participants or the district in general. This act of full disclosure gave the perception of honesty from the administration, which began to build trust between the participants, administration, and the district. Morgan (1997) wrote, "Sharing of information can be a source of creativity, sharing understanding, *trust*, and commitment [italics added]" (p. 110).

Transparency

One of the emerging themes that helped to build the trust through this study was the transparency of knowledge. As the inside researcher met with participants and was forthcoming with answers, those acts allowed a free flow of communication and understanding. The transparency provided the participants a level of comfort; they knew that the central office administration was not hiding money, treating people disrespectfully, or showing bias. Honesty and respect was mutual among all participants; these feelings increased throughout the study.

Transparency was a request from day one during interviews and visits to the buildings. With this new transparency, participants who had adverse feelings and

knowledge of the differences and unequal budgets began to transform their mind-set into

satisfaction. The participants began to hold their heads up high, with the knowledge that

all aspects of the budget were being disclosed or made known. This transparency was the

cornerstone in building relationships, trust, and honesty with everyone in the district.

Morgan (1997) wrote that the art of managing change in an organization suggests that

> Transformational change ultimately involves the creation of 'new contexts' that
>
> can break the hold of dominant attractor patterns in favor of new ones. . . . The
>
> challenge here is to create a relatively stable space within which the surgical team
>
> can self-organize around contingencies and challenges being faced. (p. 267)

It is important to note that the Budget Committee was given the time, space, and

opportunity to dissect known and unknown concerns within the targeted district. This

allowed a variety of expertise and experiences known as requisite variety to approach

potential solutions (Morgan; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995).

Equitability

From the conclusions, one can see how trust and transparency has increased

positive feelings among the participants. One of the purposes of this study was to create a

product that was equitable across the district. The district's budget had been managed

from a top-down perspective during years prior to this study, and many believed favors

had been offered to some, but not others. However, allowing principals, teachers, staff

members, and district community members to provide direction and input into the

process assisted in formulating a budget that would ensure equitability and fairness across

the district. Through the budget committee meetings, highlighting the priorities and needs

of the buildings, the budget building process ensured all allocations were fair and with

the best interests of the students were in mind. There will always be needs within any

district; however, buy-in, support, and collaboration improved dramatically because there

was a sincere effort to treat everyone in an equitable manner.

Understanding and Knowledge of Budget

Through this whole process, learning took place that resulted in a better

understanding of the targeted district's budget. Employees have become more informed

about the district's finances, revenues, and expenditures. It was beneficial for the

participants to learn about the origins of the district's revenue, the potential decrease in

assessed valuation, and how those items ultimately affect potential lost revenue.

Additionally, the increased understanding and knowledge of the district's budget

was created by the sharing of information and honesty from all participants involved in

the study. The increased knowledge was not only related to the budget, building

principals gained additional understanding and knowledge about other buildings, their

needs, and other allocations in the district. Organizational learning has been a positive

caveat that was unintended; however, the researcher welcomed double-loop learning

(Morgan, 1997; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995).

Teamwork

As the budget committee began to meet and discuss the needs of the district,

organizational learning and compromising took place. This process created a sense of

belonging and togetherness, which was a development of teamwork. Witnessing

participants willing to take less of an allocation so one building could get their needed

supplies or other needs met was a fulfilling and humbling experience.

The inside researcher has read about teamwork in books and research; however, witnessing it was a much more satisfying experience. The ability of the participants to compromise was a direct direct result of trust, honesty, equitability, and understanding of the district's budget and needs. The whole process built relationships across the district and not just with the central office administration. As individual members of the district grew in understanding, trust, and teamwork, the relationships among participants increased their respect and treatment of others, to include the senior administration.

Attitudes and Expectations

During the course of this study, the inside researcher noticed a change in the typical attitude from the beginning to what has become the current modus operandi of the targeted district. Previously, negative comments had been made about past administration and questions were asked why one building was allocated a line item, while another building was not. The researcher witnessed a transition and changing of participants' attitudes as a result of meeting, transparency, and sharing of knowledge.

The expectations of participants also changed. The emails, letters, and phone calls after meetings provided evidence of this transition. Before the study, there was a definitive expectation resembling what might be explained as an "owed to me" mentality. After these meetings and shared experiences, the participants were more likely to share in understanding and compromise. Specifically, the actions was noticed in the understanding of why one building needed more per pupil allocations, while another building's per pupil allocation remained the same.

As the participants were more involved in decision-making and were provided the ability to create change within their organization, they were able to see how the potential

change would benefit them and their peers. Morgan (1997) wrote, "Creating a context

where they can exercise more autonomy and influence, there is a chance that new forms

of empowered decision making will emerge" (p. 292). The environment and attitudes of

participants enabled the committee and targeted district to create a movement of change.

Change Protocol

The emerging themes provided a foundation on which the change protocol was

built. The AR methodology allowed input and produced positive results. The AR

methodology resulted in a protocol for future change agents to follow. The protocol from

AR in conjunction with the findings from this study could be utilized in other

organizations. A potential protocol for change includes (a) pre-step: context and purpose,

(b) diagnosing, (c) planning action, (d) taking action, and (e) evaluating action.

Pre-Step: Context and Purpose

Set potential timelines. A timeline was set for progression. This was important

because participants wanted to know there was structure to the process. As stakeholders

moved forward, they did not want to believe there were pre-determined conclusions to

potential problems. However, they did want direction, follow-through, and an end in

sight. If these features were not present, then potential existed for a lack of trust or

participation. No person in any organization wants to spend time on a project that has no

end or finished product. Therefore, there was a need for the participants to understand the

generic structure throughout the process and it gave them an amount of security.

Garner participation. The next important goal was to garner the participation of

stakeholders in the organization. One can argue effectively that garnering the power

players was important also. The support of the power players improved the likelihood of

success and/or progress. Although they may deviate from an initial plan, power players

are able to send a message throughout the organization. There is strength in numbers, so

it was important to choose the numbers that could best send a message throughout the

organization. This supported learner self-concept; adults want to be responsible and

capable of self-direction.

Any leader can create a memo, directive, procedure, or protocol. However, if

these new procedures are created, supported, and guided by people within the

organization, it has a better chance of success within the organization. Therefore,

requisite variety was vital in garnering support throughout the organization. Yukl (2002)

stated, "Effective leaders foster mutual respect, trust, and cooperation" within an

organization to create participation (p. 439).

Diagnosing

Ensure transparency. Regardless of the potential change that needed to occur, it

was vital that leaders were forthcoming with honesty and transparent with all aspects of

the issues being scrutinized or discussed. Transparency in budget development promoted

trust and respect between participants and central office administrators. Transparency

ensured all stakeholders had information related to what had actually happened in the

past, which increased understanding about other topics. Transparency enabled the

committee to better diagnose what the targeted district's potential problems were and

how they affected the faculty.

Garner Input. It was also vital to garner the input of others. Any decision made in

a vacuum was questioned and was not supported by the stakeholders of the district.

Therefore, if there was a variety of input provided, then there was a better chance to look

at potential issues through differing perspectives and ideologies. Having different views enabled the entire organization requisite variety, which built support from people within the targeted district. Boone (1985) stated

> In planning, the adult educator, as change agent and programmer, is viewed as a facilitator whose principal role is that of helping adult learners examine, evaluate, and perhaps adopt new or improved behaviors that will better equip them to adapt to and cope with change in their environment. (p. 82)

It was vital for adults to have appropriate input and autonomy through the learning and changing process; otherwise, their support would have been limited in effort. Andragogical principles were vital in diagnosing because adults learn best from having autonomy and receiving respect from their historical experiences (Knowles, 1990).

Planning Action

Share in decision making. This was not the same as asking for input, but rather, this concept was intended to actually share in the decision making process. After issues and potential problems had been discussed, it was important to ask for potential solutions to all issues. No decision was made alone or by leaders alone, but instead, solutions and decisions were shared across the organization when possible. It was beneficial to share decision-making responsibilities with stakeholders when appropriate.

For example, deciding on discipline issues for employees was not shared with other employees. However, when deciding how to best expend capital improvement monies within the district, it was prudent to garner the input and support and ultimately share in the decisions on how and where to expend those funds. This kind of sharing in decision-making prevented certain employees from negatively attempting to sabotage the

endeavors of the district. Yukl (2002) stated, "Participative leadership involves the use of various decision procedures that allow other people some influence over the leader's decisions," such as, "Consultation, joint decision making, power sharing, decentralization, and democratic management" (p. 81). Each of these concepts builds the teamwork and trust necessary to share in the decision making process. This ultimately produces an informed decision, one supported by the organization as a whole.

Taking Action

    Provide follow-through. Leaders must listen to recommendations and follow through with decision-making that the participants put forth. Follow-through can be accomplished by either allowing participants or the leadershop to create the change. Either way, allowing participants to identify the fruits of their labor helped change attitudes and ultimately the culture. The leadership initially stated that no pre-determined decisions had been made; follow-through during the course of this study demonstrated honesty and instilled trust. If the participants thought that their time was being wasted and their recommendations were not legitimately being considered, then leaders would have lost any future support for potential change. On the other hand, since participants could see their recommendations coming to fruition, they began to trust district leaders. The participants provided the best Public Relations strategy for the targeted district.

    This did not mean that the participants had to follow or be happy with all decisions. Instead, it meant that all recommendations were heard, allowed, encouraged, and considered. During this process, it was vital that the participants chose the ultimate recommendations, with priority of selection. This demonstrated a method of leadership.

Evaluate Action

     Evaluate and refine. After an issue had been brought to the attention of participants and solutions implemented, it was important to evaluate the progress of any new changes. During the evaluation process, some questions were asked: (a) How effective were the solutions? (b) Were there additional issues that had occurred since implementation of the new processes? (c) What benefits had the new processes created? and (d) Did it improve the initial problems or issues discussed? These were just a few of the questions asked after the process.

     During the evaluative stage, it was necessary to look for improvement. No one decision fixed all problems within the targeted district. Therefore, it was important for the district to continue to look and re-look at procedures to evaluate the effectiveness of procedures.

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Summary

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     Following the guidelines of AR and using participation throughout the entire process allowed the targeted district to discover distinct inequities within the district budget. During the process, a creation of new expectations and a sharing of meaning, knowledge, and norms emerged. These newly formed shared experiences created a venue for change. As long as the participants continued to feel involved, respected, appreciated, and valued, then the culture of the organization continued to create new norms.

The research question of this study was, "Will allowing the stakeholders more input, autonomy, and collaboration during a budget building process build a team environment, and ultimately ownership in managing their perspective budgets?" The targeted district, through sharing experience, created and recreated shared reality, which developed the

culture of the organization (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Morgan, 1997; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Patton, 1997). Burns (1978) stated that change in an organization was like freezing, unfreezing, and then refreezing concepts learned and shared. Organizational members took the opportunity to unfreeze learned concepts, then relearned, then refroze new learned and shared experiences to create a new culture/environment. The targeted district and inside researcher did something that was very important—they looked through the lens of the organization when analyzing the organization's culture to create shared time, meaning, beliefs, values, and understanding (Bolman & Deal; Morgan; Nonaka & Takeuchi). "As individuals and teams share their learning . . . it can be said that the organization learns" (Preskill & Torres, 1999, p. 41).

Experiences were shared in the targeted district; knowledge moved from tacit to explicit; a shared reality was created (Morgan, 1997; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995), along with a common culture of expectations and norms. Subcultures united within the targeted district to think of alternative methods to solve problems. Using requisite variety (Morgan; Nonaka & Takeuchi) and shared experiences fostered transformational learning, acculturation, and an improved climate within the district (Bruffee, 1999; Merriam, 2001; Morgan; Preskill & Torres, 1999; Scribner & Donaldson, 2001). These attributes in the targeted district cultivated a shared meaning, understanding, and culture/climate.

Although the six phases of organizational knowledge creation (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995) was presented as a linear design in chapter two, the actual process of knowledge creation was not so neatly defined. Rather than proceeding through the phases in a sequential and orderly manner in this study, the targeted district moved through

various stages of knowledge creation, fluctuating and sometimes obfuscating (Nonaka &

Takeuchi; Paavola, et al., 2004), much like life, certainly like working with children and

families.

To meet the challenges of educating children in a complicated world, school

leaders have a responsibility to foster organizational knowledge creation. To do so,

schools need to be staffed by people as diverse as the world outside the organization

(Morgan, 1997). Further, school leaders and the teams within them need to be committed

to goals that they want to accomplish together (Katzenbach & Smith, 1993). When the

team members were committed to a common goal, they developed a sense of belonging

that allowed them to have candid conversations needed to tackle difficult issues that

served the greater good.

The issues with change in the targeted district ranged from staff development to

knowledge sharing, input, climate/culture, and empowerment. Rebore (2001) stated,

"Adult learning usually consists of two processes, training and education. . . . Education

is the process of helping an individual understand and interpret knowledge" (p. 171). The

process of AR empowered participants with knowledge and helped create a

knowledgeable educational organization. Harris and Monk (1992) stated the "selection of

personnel requires that needed competencies be identified and that persons possessing

those competencies be recruited and chosen" (p. 68). This statement referred to

competencies such as work ethic, intelligence, promise, or potential.

Organizations are comprised of people with individually and collectively held

beliefs about the organizations; these beliefs create or help establish the culture (Harris &

Monk, 1992; Rebore, 2001; Webb & Norton, 1999). Morgan's (1997) metaphor,

"organizations as cultures," was a useful approach for effective leadership (p. 119).

People, as street-level bureaucrats, determined what the policies were and how to enforce

them (Weatherly & Lipsky, 1977). According to Bolman and Deal (1997) and Morgan,

people are the implementers and enactors of policy, change, shared experiences, and

meanings of the culture that shape the reality. Therefore, it was vital to view the targeted

district organizations as the culture of the people within the district. The inside researcher

did not think of policy from a vacuum, but rather through collaborative efforts of the

people who dealt with the products of that policy. The culture of any district is a

reflection of the individuals and subcultures from which the district is made.

   Bash (2005) summarized, "Knowing your institution goes beyond simply

knowing your mission. Articulating a mission is important, but mission statements are

place- and time-bound . . . [and] . . . . Being willing to adapt to changing circumstances is

always important" (p. 36). In organizational change, the actors, participants, and people

within the organization must be willing to accept change, learn new concepts, and adapt

to new processes before effective change can occur. Isenberg (2005) said, "Institutions

seeking changes in behavior that result from rational thought follow procedures for the

systematic diffusion of knowledge" (p. 18).

   Any change in the targeted district needed to be led by the participants, rather

than administration. AR promotes participative action, collaboration, and organizational

knowledge (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Stringer, 1996;

Somekh, 2006). Baumgartner (2001) stated that transformational learning takes place

when learners are empowered and take ownership of their learning and of the classroom

environment. Stakeholders had an important role in the process of change and

collaboration. In a contemporary educational operational tempo environment, a leader must be collaborative and inclusive.

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Vitae

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Ricky earned his bachelor's degree in mathematics from Southeast Missouri University (SEMO) in 1995. He earned his first master's degree in mathematics in 1999, and his second master's in administration in 2003, also from SEMO. Ricky earned his specialist degree from SEMO in 2006. Ricky earned his doctoral degree from Lindenwood University in Saint Charles, Missouri in 2009.