IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
Digital Repository

1987

A case study of the culture of a high achieving suburban midwestern junior high school

Harrison E. Cass Jr.
Iowa State University

Follow this and additional works at: https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/rtd

Part of the Educational Administration and Supervision Commons

INFORMATION TO USERS

8716746

Cass, Harrison E., Jr.

A CASE STUDY OF THE CULTURE OF A HIGH ACHIEVING SUBURBAN
MIDWESTERN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Iowa State University   PH.D.   1987

University
   Microfilms
International   300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106

PLEASE NOTE:

In all cases this material has been filmed in the best possible way from the available copy. Problems encountered with this document have been identified here with a check mark __√__ .

1. Glossy photographs or pages _____

2. Colored illustrations, paper or print _____

3. Photographs with dark background _____

4. Illustrations are poor copy _____

5. Pages with black marks, not original copy __✓__

6. Print shows through as there is text on both sides of page _____

7. Indistinct, broken or small print on several pages _____

8. Print exceeds margin requirements _____

9. Tightly bound copy with print lost in spine _____

10. Computer printout pages with indistinct print _____

11. Page(s) _____ lacking when material received, and not available from school or author.

12. Page(s) _____ seem to be missing in numbering only as text follows.

13. Two pages numbered _____. Text follows.

14. Curling and wrinkled pages _____

15. Dissertation contains pages with print at a slant, filmed as received _____

16. Other_____

_____

_____

A case study of the culture of a high achieving

suburban midwestern junior high school

by

Harrison E. Cass, Jr.

A Dissertation Submitted to the

Graduate Faculty in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department: Professional Studies in Education
Major: Education (Educational Administration)

Approved:

Signature was redacted for privacy.

In Charge of Major Work

Signature was redacted for privacy.

For the Major Department

Signature was redacted for privacy.

For the Graduate College

Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa

1987

Copyright © Harrison E. Cass, Jr., 1987.
All rights reserved.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

American businesses have been searching desperately for a magic formula to increase quality and productivity to enable them to compete in a global society. The search for improved effectiveness has stimulated many studies focusing on the culture necessary for a productive and successful company. For example, Ouchi (1981) developed the concept of a new Theory Z type of management patterned after the Japanese system of values and beliefs. Deal and Kennedy (1982) hypothesized that the major reason for the success of the Japanese has been their continuing ability to maintain a very strong and cohesive culture throughout the entire country. They also pointed out, "a strong culture has almost always been the driving force behind continuing success in American business" (p. 5). Peters and Waterman (1982) in their best selling book, In Search of Excellence, found that America's excellent companies have developed strong cultures incorporating the values and practices of their leaders. In their study they found that

virtually all of the better-performing companies had a relatively well-defined set of guiding beliefs. But how did these companies get to be the way they are? Peters and Waterman addressed this directly--"Because of a unique set of cultural attributes that distinguish them from the rest." They also added, "if we understood those attributes well enough, we could do more than just mutter 'leadership' in response to questions like 'Why is J & J so good?'" (p. 26).

The spotlight has switched from business to education as the American public looks for culprits in the nation's slide from the top of the heap in standard of living, productivity, and quality of goods and services. The scathing reports on our nation's schools led by the U.S. Department of Education's report, A Nation at Risk (1983), provided a challenge to educators throughout the country, not only to take action on exposed weaknesses but to identify exemplary programs and schools so that all may use them as models for improvement.

In striving for improvement of our schools, educators can learn from case studies completed using successful companies in the private sector. Perhaps many of the values and beliefs that energize success

in the private sector have an equally significant
impact on public schools. Deal and Kennedy (1982)
stated that, "Every business--in fact every
organization--has a culture" (p. 4) (emphasis mine).
They point out that whether the culture is weak or
strong, it has a powerful influence throughout the
organization.

There are many important questions for educators.
Does the search for excellence in American schools
require a detailed look at the culture of successful
schools? Can important insights into conditions
necessary for implementing change be gained from a
study of the values and beliefs pervading a high
achieving school? What kind of culture does a high
achieving school have? Does the culture of a high
achieving school have any significant impact on its
effectiveness? These are questions which need to be
answered. The present study was designed to examine
the culture of a high achieving school.

Purpose of the Study

There has been extensive reseach regarding
characteristics of effective schools. Much of the
research has resulted in lists of attributes found in

effective schools i.e., (a) a pervasive and broadly understood academic focus, (b) careful monitoring of student achievement as a basis of program evaluation, (c) teachers who hold high expectations for their students and believe that all students can learn, (d) a safe and orderly school climate conducive to learning, and (e) a principal who is an instructional leader (Edmonds, 1978; Joyce, Hersh, & McKibbin, 1983; Lezotte, 1981). The knowledge that these attributes exist in effective schools leads one to question why they exist and why some people do a better job with them than others. Perhaps it is the beliefs, values, and norms of people in effective schools which make the difference.

The major purpose of this study was to examine the culture, i.e., the values, beliefs, and norms, in a high achieving junior high school. The study was designed to paint a portrait of the school's culture. A junior high school, designated as an outstanding secondary school by the Department of Education, was selected for study. Given the time it takes to examine a culture in depth, it was necessary to delimit the study to one school. Specifically, the study was designed to answer the following questions:

1. What role does the principal play in shaping the school's culture?

2. What type of leadership forces, i.e., technical, human, educational, symbolic, and cultural, does the principal exert in a high achieving junior high school?

3. What values and beliefs are shared by staff members, students, and parents? How are these beliefs formed? Which values and beliefs are most important?

4. What are the group norms of the school and how were these norms "set"?

5. Do the group norms flow from the espoused values and beliefs?

6. Do staff members clearly understand and agree upon the school's mission and why or why not?

7. What key processes help the staff carry out the school's mission, i.e., goal setting, evaluation, training, planning, decision making, etc.?

8. What people and day-to-day events, i.e., rituals, ceremonies, ethics, heroes, networks, subcultures, taboos, etc., permeate organizational life and influence it?

9. How do people communicate in the school?

10. To what extent is the school's culture influenced by "staff leaders"?

11. What is the climate of the school as measured by a climate inventory?

12. What role do parents have in the school and what does the school staff do to facilitate that role?

13. What type of feedback do students and staff members receive in the school? Are both positive and negative reinforcement used?

14. Are students and staff aware of expected standards in the school? Are the standards high? Are there rewards for meeting or exceeding the standards? Are there punishments for failing to meet the standards?

15. What causes concern, anxiety, or lack of communication in the school?

16. What part does history and tradition play in the culture of the school?

Methodology

The methodology of this study can be described as an ethnographic case study. The ethnographic case study method was chosen because it is well suited for study of the culture of any society (Goodenough, 1976).

An ethnographic study is "an in-depth analytical description of an intact cultural scene" (Borg & Gall, 1983, p. 492). The in-depth analysis consisted of an on-site study which began in late August of 1985 and lasted until early June of 1986. The researcher spent one to three days each month at the school in blocks of time ranging from 30 minutes to 9 hours. A total of 128 hours on 16 days was spent in on-site analysis (Appendix J).

The study began with the administration of a survey instrument: The School Improvement Inventory (SII) developed by Sweeney (1983) (Appendix F). The SII consists of 27 items related to school climate and 12 which measure teacher expectations and building administrator effectiveness. The instrument was administered to all certified and classified staff members in the school except the principal in order to confirm that a positive climate existed. The results indicated that the school's climate was very positive, "above the average"--merely adding further weight to the case study. The decision was made to begin the observations, analysis of artifacts, and interviews which would reveal the school's culture and make some assumptions about how it developed.

In an ethnographic case study the researcher is one of the instruments used to collect data. "The ethnographic case study approach allows researchers to view the dynamic interplay of variables in an organization's entirety" (Brittenham, 1980, p. 163). Therefore the researcher began on-site analysis as a participant observer. Dobbert (1982) explained the value of utilizing the participant observation method in conducting ethnographic research.

> Another reason that anthropologists have for utilizing themselves as instruments of research is that human beings in everyday life are not objective. They act on the basis of their social positions, values, and preferences. One cannot understand subjective beings by means of detached, objective observations (p. 6).

Observations were conducted before, during, and after shool as well as in the evening. They took place in the teachers' lounge, in the student center and hallways, in the classrooms and study halls, in the lunchroom, and in the office. The observer attended staff meetings, committee meetings, Parent Advisory Council meetings, student assemblies, and Student Council meetings. Observations were also made at athletic events, evening parent programs, open house, and parent-teacher conferences. Observations included

informal on-the-spot interviews conducted with students, staff, parents, and administrators.

During the first few days of on-site observations artifacts were also being collected for analysis. Artifacts included faculty memos, calendars, handbooks, newsletters, correspondence, scrap books, announcements, publicity brochures, district and building reports, a North Central Association self-study report, student newspapers, schedules, newspaper clippings, teachers' plans and instructional handouts, school goal statements, and the agendas for various meetings.

As observations and analysis of artifacts progressed questions were being developed for in-depth interviews with one-third of the staff (Appendix G). The questions were field tested on a teacher from another school and revised. When the interviews began a tape recorder was used during the interview sessions. However, use of the tape recorder was discontinued when some staff members seemed leery of having everything they said recorded. It also seemed to the researcher that it was easier to retrieve information from notes taken on a specially designed answer sheet which corresponded to the interview questions. The reliance

upon note taking and writing out quotes during the interviews did slow down the interview process however.

Two other interview formats were also developed, one for the school administrator (Appendix H) and one to be used with 10% of the students (Appendix I). A tape recorder was used in all interviews with the principal because he didn't mind being recorded and because he had many important stories to relate about the school and its people. The students were interviewed in groups of two to seven due to time limitations. Specially designed answer sheets also were used to code and record administrator and student responses to interview questions.

After gathering a voluminous amount of data the researcher was ready to analyze it in an attempt to find some common themes which permeated the school's culture. When those common themes were sifted out of the myriad of notes and interview transcripts six occurred with enough frequency and intensity to be considered significant. Continued analysis of the data revealed some of the forces which developed those themes.

Format of the Study

The dissertation format used in the presentation of this research was approved by the Graduate Faculty at Iowa State University. The format is designed to allow presentation of the research in manuscript form suitable for publication in professional journals.

The chapter divisions are similar to that of a traditional dissertation style--introduction, review of literature, and discussion. The methods and findings sections are presented by three sections entitled Journal Article I, II, and III.

Journal Article I paints a portrait of the culture found at the junior high school. The article provides the reader with an overview of the six cultural themes existing at the school. It introduces the reader to the leadership role of the principal in shaping a culture where there is a keen emphasis on the importance of people. Other themes examined include: positive learning climate, sense of pride, staff autonomy and intrapreneurship, and loose/tight couplings.

Journal Article II is an in-depth examination of the principal's vital part in shaping the school's culture. The role of the principal as cultural leader

is explained through stories portraying five qualities which characterize his style.

Journal Article III conveys the importance placed on people at the school. The article describes how an atmosphere of cooperation was set among parents, students, and teachers when the school began. It explains the confidence, loyalty, friendship, and dependence the staff members of the school have for one another. It also discusses the mutual admiration students and teachers display for one another.

The final chapter of the dissertation provides a general discussion of the findings, implications for practice, and the limitations of the study. It presents six assumptions formulated as a result of the study and makes recommendations for further research. Additional information pertinent to the study is located in the appendices.

Definition of Terms

Words have different meanings depending on their context. The following definitions will be used in this investigation:

1. Beliefs--Faith or convictions that certain things are true.

2. <u>Climate</u>--The level of teacher satisfaction in the school as measured by their goal orientation, esprit, cohesiveness, expectations, and enthusiasm, as well as their perceptions of administrative effectiveness and student attitudes.

3. <u>Culture</u>--An historically developed, patterned way of life which includes beliefs and ideologies; formally and informally established interrelationships between persons and groups; and material goods and technologies, all of which are systematically related so as to form an integral whole. The culture will be manifested through the group's patterns, beliefs, values, and norms.

4. <u>Patterns</u>--The organization or structure behind behavior; not the behavior itself but what is inferred from the observation of behavior. It is inferred by recurrence.

5. <u>Norms</u>--Shared understandings of a group. The standards, models, or patterns of a group. Behavior that is anticipated and expected by the group and its members.

6. <u>Values</u>--Acts, customs, institutions, etc., regarded in a particular, especially favorable way, by a group of people; what people think ought to be.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter reviews the relevant literature on
organizational culture which is pertinent to schools.
It has been divided into four major sections. The
first, The Culture Factor in Organizational Success,
reviews the current literature on the culture of
organizations in general. The second, The Importance
of Culture in School Effectiveness, examines the
research which has focused attention in recent years
upon the importance of culture in successful schools.
The third, The Use of Qualitative Research to Unlock
Cultural Secrets, describes the role of qualitative or
ethnographic research in cultural studies. The fourth,
The Study of Schools Through Ethnography and Other
Qualitative Methods, explores various qualitative
studies which have been conducted in schools.

The Culture Factor in Organizational Success

"Every business--in fact every organization--has a
culture." That statement from Deal and Kennedy's book
Corporate Cultures (1982, p. 4) set the stage for this
case study of the culture of an American junior high
school.

A culture is an historically developed patterned way of life which includes beliefs and ideologies; formally and informally established interrelationships between persons and groups; and material goods and technologies, all of which are systematically related so as to form an integral whole. The culture of a group of people will be manifested through its patterns, beliefs, values, and norms. A culture is considered to be strong or tight when the beliefs and values of the group are shared by a majority of the people resulting in norms of behavior which are closely adhered to by that vast majority. Deal and Kennedy addressed the importance of culture in a business when they stated:

> Whether weak or strong, culture has a powerful influence throughout an organization; it affects practically everything----from who gets promoted and what decisions are made, to how employees dress and what sports they play. Because of this impact, we think that culture also has a major effect on the success of the business (p. 4).

Peters and Waterman (1982), in studying the management techniques of 62 highly successful American companies, found that "The excellent companies seem to have developed cultures that have incorporated practices of the great leaders and thus those shared values can be seen to survive for decades after the

passing of the original guru" (p. 26). The culture's effect on the success of American businesses was also explored by Ouchi (1981) in formulating a new management concept, Theory Z. In the Theory Z approach to management workers who are involved in decision making become the key to increased productivity. Ouchi noted that, "Z organizations have achieved a high state of consistency in their internal culture. They are most aptly described as clans in that they are intimate associations of people engaged in economic activity but tied together through a variety of bonds" (1981, p. 83). Ouchi suggested a culture for success in business similar to that which he found in his studies of Japanese industry.

Koprowski (1983) agreed that Japanese style management could help American business become more successful. However, he tempered his remarks with suggestions that American managers approach the importation of Japanese practices with caution. Koprowski stated "if human nature, as revealed through myths, is the same the world over, the management theories and practices from one culture should work reasonably well in another" (p. 44). He did not however, view human nature as the same the world over.

As a result of his study of mythology in relation to

current Japanese and American management he concluded:

> Japanese management is firmly based on the
> Oriental world view that stresses organic unity
> of all things--in which individuality is an
> illusion in the endless cycle of life. On the
> other hand, American management is firmly based
> on the Occidental world view that stresses
> perfection of the individual personality in
> the quest for salvation (p. 46).

Koprowski (1983) concluded that certain Japanese

management practices would work better than others in

American culture, that modification would be needed to

make some of the Japanese practices acceptable to our

American "cowboy mentality," and finally, that

industries or businesses employing large numbers of

women and engaged in helping or nurturing activities

were the organizations where Japanese management had

the best chance for success.

The notion that an effective culture provides a

model for American business was also addressed by Sathe

(1983). Sathe discussed the strength of culture in

organizations, encouraged study of culture, and

described the pitfalls of ignoring it:

> As we have seen, culture has a powerful influence
> on organizational behavior because the shared
> beliefs and values represent basic assumptions
> and preferences that guide such behavior.
> Further, the influence is subtle because many of

these underlying premises have a taken-for-
granted quality and tend to remain outside
people's awareness. Thus the irony of culture
(and the reason it can be so treacherous) is
that, like the air people breathe, its powerful
effects normally escape the attention of those it
most affects (p. 12).

Sathe (1983) cautioned that the maintenance of the

right kind of culture is very important to the success

of a business. He warned, "If culture guides behavior

in inappropriate ways, we have efficiency but not

effectiveness. Culture is a liability when the shared

beliefs and values are not in keeping with the needs of

the organization, its members, and its constituencies"

(p. 10).

The importance of the right kind of values and

beliefs in American business was also addressed by

Peters and Waterman (1982) who studied excellent

companies:

Every excellent company we studied is clear on
what it stands for, and takes the process of
value shaping seriously. In fact, we wonder if
it is possible to be an excellent company without
clarity on values and without having the right
set of values" (p. 280).

In their opinion the right set of values--quick action,

service to customers, and practical innovation--require

a commitment on the part of virtually everyone in the

organization if the company is to become an excellent

company (p. 17). Deal and Kennedy (1982) agreed with
Peters and Waterman as to the importance of values in
providing a foundation for success in corporate
America. They described values as the "bedrock of any
corporate culture [and they] provide a sense of common
direction for all employees" (p. 21).

The Importance of Culture in

School Effectiveness

Recent research has tended to focus upon several
rather narrow characteristics of effective schools
(Purkey & Smith, 1985). The research generally
overlooks the role of school culture, making simplistic
suggestions for school improvement. However, there is
also persuasive research which suggests that academic
success is heavily influenced by the school's climate
or culture (Brookover, Beady, Flood, Schweitzer, &
Wisenbaker, 1979; Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, & Ouston,
1979).

In the research conducted by Brookover et al.,
data from 68 Michigan elementary schools showed
significantly higher achievement in mathematics and
reading occurred in schools with a more positive
climate. The schools ranged from inner-city schools

with a majcrity of black students to rural and small

town schools which were almost all white. The study

refuted the conclusion of some scholars (Coleman

et al., 1966; Jencks et al., 1972) that schools do not

and (or) cannot make a difference in student

achievement outcomes. Brookover et al. found that

social composition and personnel inputs such as student

socio-economic status, racial composition of the

students, teacher salaries, teacher qualifications and

average daily attendance explained only part of the

wide variation in the level of achievement in reading

and mathematics at the schools. School social

structure and school social climate accounted for much

of the variance. Social structure included such

measures as the extent of differentiated student

grouping, the degree of openness in school

organization, the extent of parent involvement, the use

of instructional time, and teacher satisfaction with

the students, their peers, and the principal. School

social climate was described as the best measure of the

school's culture and included students' and teachers'

perceptions of their ability to successfully function

in the classroom, their perception of others'

expectations and evaluations of them, and the norms of

the school social system. The social climate also included the principal's perception of others and his behavior with regard to student expectations, norms, and efforts to improve.

Brookover et al. concluded that achievement would be higher in school social systems where it is assumed that all children can and are expected to learn; where common norms apply to all children so that a high level of performance is expected by all students; where learning behavior is reinforced immediately with positive feedback, when deserved, and with reinstruction when a student fails. They also concluded that studies indicating that schools do not make a difference result from research that does not identify the characteristics of the school which determine behavioral outcomes.

Rutter et al. (1979) examined the effects of a number of variables on student achievement in 12 London, England high schools over a period of seven years. The investigation revealed that the schools varied greatly with respect to student attendance, behavior, and achievement. The variations were found to be strongly associated with the characteristics of the schools as social institutions. Factors such as

the degree of academic emphasis, teacher actions in lessons, the availability of incentives and rewards, good conditions for pupils, and the extent to which pupils were able to take responsibility were all associated with the differences in outcomes between the schools.

The patterns of the findings indicated that the association reflected a causal relationship. All of the factors were considered to be characteristics the schools' staffs could modify rather than external factors over which a staff would have no control. Finally, it was found that the combined effect of the factors was much more powerful than the effect of any one factor considered on its own. That combined effect resulted from what the researcher labeled "ethos" or the culture of the school as a social institution.

The work of Brookover et al. (1979) and Rutter et al. (1979) lends credence to the concept of culture as an important factor in the success of a school. Whether it is called social climate, ethos, or culture, the concept is that of a dynamic social system involving people who have beliefs and values that are translated into norms which either drive the organization to success or drag it toward mediocrity or

worse. Even those critical of school effectiveness research agree that climate is important. Purkey and Smith (1985) stated, "An academically effective school is distinguished by its culture, which channels staff and students in the direction of successful teaching and learning" (p. 182).

The search for excellence in education has come more and more to focus on the culture of the school. In a discussion of leadership and excellence, Sergiovanni (1984) describes excellent schools as having "central zones composed of values and beliefs that take on sacred or cultural characteristics" (p. 10). He stressed the importance of leadership in developing a culture for excellence in schools by suggesting that there is a hierarchy of leadership forces topped by cultural leadership.

Metz's (1982) study of three magnet middle schools, established as part of a desegregation plan, found that the faculty was a dominant force in the culture of the school. Her findings tend to question Sergiovanni's (1984) emphasis on cultural leadership. Metz found that in reality the principal who takes over a school with an existing faculty will not only find attempts to change faculty culture difficult but may in

fact find his or her own role determined by the culture.

Others in the field have focused on the combined efforts of the faculty and principal as being necessary ingredients for an excellent school. In The Structure of School Improvement, Joyce et al. (1983) discussed the problem of creating a reasonable level of stability in schools while at the same time providing for an environment that is constantly open to change so that schools may improve. They concluded that the answer to this seemingly paradoxical situation is found in "a certain type of school culture, i.e., a set of organizational norms, expectations, beliefs, and behaviors which allow the activities fundamental to school improvement" (p. 6). That culture would be possible only if there were "shared agreements on norms and purposes" (p. 24). They concluded that those shared agreements would result in a sense of community which would provide a constant emotional and intellectual disposition toward school improvement and called the condition "homeostasis of improvement" (p. 6).

The importance of culture is supported by organizational theory and the research on the

implementation of education innovation. Much of this
is related to the type of work and organizational
structure of the school. As Joyce et al. (1983) found,
schools tend to be made up of relatively autonomous
workers in classrooms who are not always responsive to
rational hierarchical top down command structures.
Weick (1976) spoke of schools as "loosely coupled
systems" with weak linkages between administration
levels and teachers. Therefore, studies of effective
schools may produce rather different cultural portraits
than those found in studies of effective private sector
businesses.

The Use of Qualitative Research to

Unlock Cultural Secrets

The most innovative and best read books on
American business culture in recent years have been
those with a case study approach. In the best seller
In Search of Excellence, written by Peters and Waterman
(1982), eight attributes of excellent companies were
discovered through case studies conducted by the
authors. Those attributes are: a bias for action,
close to the customer, autonomy and entrepreneurship,
productivity through people, hands-on and value driven,

stick to the knitting, simple form and lean staff, and simultaneous loose-tight properties. The book may be largely responsible for a revolution in American management focusing on improving the culture of a company in order to improve the bottom line. In yet a second best seller, entitled A Passion for Excellence, Peters and Austin (1985) used hundreds of concrete examples, derived from case studies, to describe in great detail the three key competencies they found in all the successful organizations they studied. They painted a vivid picture of those three concepts (superior service to customers, constant innovation, and day-to-day acts of leadership at every management level) through colorful stories that could only have been uncovered through an ethnographic case study.

Why then is the ethnographic method so well suited for cultural studies? "The main aim of ethnographic research is to discover and describe the culture of a people or an organization" (Dobbert, 1982, p. 39). For years ethnography has been the research method used by anthropologists in cultural studies. Goodenough (1976) stressed the place of ethnography in cultural studies when he wrote: "The culture of any society is made up of the concepts, beliefs, and principles of action and

organization that an ethnographer has found could be attributed successfully to the members of that society in the context of his dealings with them (p. 5).

The ethnographic method is sometimes called the anthropological field-study approach, the case-study approach, or simply qualitative research; but regardless of the terminology it is becoming more widely used in the study of organizations. Borg and Gall (1983) described the ethnographic study as "an in-depth analytical description of an intact cultural scene" (p. 492). "Description" is a key word in Borg and Gall's definition because it reveals the primary trait of all studies encompassed under any of the above labels. Ethnographic studies differ from quantitative studies in that there are no hypotheses when an ethnographic study begins. Hypotheses are generated by the study so that they can later be tested using further observation or other methods such as correlational or experimental research (Overholt & Stallings, 1976).

Both the strength and potential weakness of the ethnographic study is the ethnographer himself. The strength of the method lies in the ability of the ethnographer to observe the players in a culture and to

interact with them. "The ethnographic case study

approach allows researchers to view the dynamic

interplay of variables in an organization's entirety"

(Brittenham, 1980, p. 163). Dobbert (1982) presented

another strength of the ethnographer as a research

instrument:

> Another reason that anthropologists have for
> utilizing themselves as instruments of research
> is that human beings in everyday life are not
> objective. They act on the basis of their social
> positions, values, and preferences. One cannct
> understand subjective beings by means of
> detached, objective observation" (p. 6).

Spradley (1980) reminds students conducting the

study of a culture that three important elements must

be examined when conducting research. He writes:

> When ethnographers study other cultures, they
> must deal with three fundamental aspects of human
> experience: what people do, what people know,
> and the things people make and use. When each of
> these are learned and shared by members of some
> group, we speak of them as cultural behavior,
> cultural knowledge, and cultural artifacts.
> Whenever you do ethnographic fieldwork you
> will want to distinguish among these three,
> although in most situations they are usually
> mixed together (p. 5).

It is difficult to uncover the values and beliefs

that prevail in a culture because as one goes about the

task of studying the mixture of patterns observed in

behavior, knowledge, and artifacts, described by

Spradley, one can more easily see the overt manifestations (behaviors like how often people talk to one another and who talks to whom) and therefore may not dig deep enough to uncover the underlying inferences or assumptions. The difficulty in discovering underlying cultural assumptions has led many toward a tendency "to focus on overt manifestations rather than on trying to understand their underlying meaning" (Wilkins, 1983, p. 26). Pascale and Athos (1981) have observed in their studies of Japanese management that most quantitative studies focusing on overt manifestations find very little difference between organizations in the United States and Japan. However, they found most studies that have a case study format and examine beliefs, values, and assumptions find significant differences.

It therefore becomes apparent that the study of patterns of behavior through studying overt manifestations is inadequate in cultural analysis. Wilkins (1983) found that, "the same or similar behaviors may mean very different things and have very different consequences, then, depending on what they mean to people in a particular culture" (p. 26). While suggesting that American corporations perform a

"cultural audit" to determine the values and beliefs of their employees he warned that organizations conducting such audits would have difficulty discovering the underlying assumptions of their people through traditional quantitative research methods. He described the difficulties as threefold:

1. People don't speak of assumptions directly, but rather imply them through diverse concrete examples.

2. Some assumptions contradict overtly stated norms, so people are reluctant to admit them.

3. The diversity and size of many organizations require us to consider how representative a culture audit's findings are (pp. 27-28).

Dobbert (1982) explained that an ethnographic case study must be more than just a description of patterns. "In ethnography the interest is directed toward the cause of patterns, or toward the meaning and reasoning behind them. It is this interest in the organization behind patterns that makes ethnography more than a descriptive undertaking" (1982, p. 40).

The art of digging deep enough into a culture to make sense out of the mixture of aspects of the human experience, to discover the underlying and unstated assumptions, or to find the meaning behind the patterns

is indeed difficult and may seem never ending. Those

who embark upon an ethnographic case study may feel

inadequate to handle the intricacies of cultural

analysis. Yet novice ethnographers need not feel that

there is some concrete sequential system that they are

simply not understanding. Geertz (1973) beautifully

summarizes the problem facing all ethnographers:

> Cultural analysis is intrinsically incomplete.
> And, worse than that, the more deeply it goes the
> less complete it is. It is a strange science
> whose most telling assertions are its most
> tremulously based, in which to get somewhere with
> the matter at hand is to intensify the suspicion,
> both your own and that of others, that you are
> not quite getting it right (p. 29).

The Study of Schools Through Ethnography

and Other Qualitative Methods

Qualitative research using observation,

interviews, questionnaires, and analysis of artifacts

has become an acceptable and effective method for

educational research. Ethnography has become more and

more useful to educational researchers as they have

attempted to learn about the culture found in schools

and its effect upon student achievement. Ethnography,

in its unabridged anthropological form, tends to be an

extensive, carefully documented, longitudinal study.

However modified ethnographies called case studies,

field studies, or most recently "portraiture" (Lightfoot, 1983) also have value in vividly describing the patterns of behavior, values, and beliefs that make up the culture of a school. These more abbreviated qualitative studies may be well suited for research projects where on-site time is limited.

Regardless of the approach or the terminology qualitative research methods have given educators an effective means to study the overt and covert patterns which comprise the culture of a school. In order to understand the role researchers have played in uncovering the meaning and reasoning behind cultural patterns in schools, it is essential to examine some of the studies which have utilized qualitative method.

A classic example of ethnographic research in schools is Lortie's book Schoolteacher (1975). Lortie investigated teachers' perceptions of their jobs, the patterns of behavior they followed, and their values. In short he studied the culture of teachers. He found that American teachers tend to be isolated individuals who he felt needed more contact with other adults in their daily activities. Yet he found that a good day for a teacher, as described by the teacher, frequently occurred when no one intruded on classroom events. The

picture Lortie described was one of a cellular model of school organization in which the teacher is very powerful in the classroom but has little effect on the school as a whole.

In another ethnographic study of the classroom teacher Spindler and Spindler (1982) examined the professional life of a fifth grade teacher. The perceptions of the teacher, his students, and his supervisors were recorded. The study was a fine example of a traditional ethnography in that triangulation methodology was used. Triangulation refers to the strategy of using several different kinds of data, such as questionnaires and interviews, observations, and analysis of artifacts.

Not all qualitative research uses triangulation methodology. Rist (1975) used observation to study the culture encountered by black children during the first year of integration in a school. Through observation he was able to record the reactions of the students, parents, teachers, and the principal. Rist found that black children were relegated to positions of low worth within the white upper-middle class elementary school because of the disparity in levels of academic achievement between black and white children. The

tremendous value placed on high academic performance in that school thwarted the intent of integration. Rist's study included a discussion of the negative consequences for minority children of selecting a tokenist approach to integration.

Rist's research is an example of how one qualitative study may be a reflection of what is happening in a wider sociological situation. Whether concentrating on the behavior, perception, and activities of many people or one person in a cultural setting, ethnography is valuable because of the wider implications that one cultural setting holds for many similar settings. Wolcott's (1973) study of the hour-to-hour and day-to-day acivities of one principal enables his readers to understand thousands of elementary principals across the nation. The study also has value in training prospective elementary principals regarding what to expect in their new role. It might also help teachers to better understand what principals do and the demands to which they must respond. Most importantly the study is a landmark in showing that education is a cultural process and that every act of teaching and learning as well as their management is a cultural event. Wolcott's book gave

the ethnographic case study approach credence as a
justifiable and respectable method of studying the
culture of a school and the behavior of its personnel.

McPhee (1966) also studied the leader of a school
and his part in shaping the culture of that school. In
his book, The Headmaster, McPhee vividly describes an
86-year-old workaholic principal whose intense
dedication and leadership provided the guidance and
molded the culture at a private boarding school for
over 60 years. McPhee uses detailed incidents related
by people who knew and worked with the headmaster to
describe how he devoted his life to developing the
character of the school. McPhee's book is a fine
example of the art of using ethnography to paint a
portrait of a cultural scene. His humorous and
enthralling stories of the day-to-day life of the
sometimes rather eccentric headmaster help make the
book a delight to read.

Although many of the studies described thus far
focus on a single individual, classroom, or school
(McPhee, 1966; Rist, 1975; Spindler & Spindler, 1982;
Wolcott, 1973) ethnography can be used to contrast and
compare two or more cultural settings. Wilcox (1982)
analyzed certain aspects of teacher behavior in two

classes in two elementary schools on the West Coast. One classroom drew children from a working-class neighborhood while the other was made up of children from a professional, executive-level neighborhood. The focus of the study was on teacher behavior which tended to prepare children for their future work role in society. The research design was one used in many ethnographic studies--controlled comparison.

Wilcox's study differed from typical ethnographic studies in that she started out to test specific hypotheses. She was looking for and found disparity in socialization of children in two different socio-economic settings. However, most ethnographic studies which focus on more than one cultural setting are undertaken without pre-conceived hypotheses. They are undertaken with the idea that there may be significant similarities or differences found among the various groups which provide some clue as to why things in such cultural settings happen the way they do. Three such studies are those by Metz (1982), Boyer (1983), and Lightfoot (1983).

Metz studied three magnet schools which were established as part of a voluntary desegregation plan in a large American city. She found a faculty culture

at each school which "had a significant impact on the faculty's arrangement of the school program, their efforts in the classroom, their relationships with students, and their relationships with the principal. It had, in other words, a major impact on the character of the school" (p. 45). Metz further contended that the power of a principal, especially a new principal, to set the premises for faculty culture was somewhat limited by the power of an established faculty. She concluded, "Principals with a charge to implement an innovation who wish to change the definitions of reality in an existing faculty culture, as well as the actions which flow from them, will have a difficult task" (p. 260).

Metz's (1982) study of the culture of three schools is very similar to this study which examined the culture of a junior high school. Her findings can be verified by any new principal who has tried to have an impact upon the culture of an existing faculty. This study should also provide helpful information for educators as to the role of the principal in dealing with faculty culture. The principal as leader and his/her effect on the success of the school has long been a topic for study in educational research.

However recent qualitative studies have attempted to look at the culture of the school as a whole, in an effort to determine what makes it work, rather than focusing on one classroom or individual. Lightfoot's (1983) study of six high schools is such a study.

Lightfoot joined the search for excellence in education, during the early eighties, with a qualitative study of two urban, two suburban, and two private high schools. Each had some claim to "goodness" as described by the author in her book, The Good High School (1983). Unfortunately the most talked about aspect of the book may be the controversial methodology used by the author in conducting the research. Lightfoot admits that she and her associates were not doing the "carefully documented, longitudinal work of ethnographers" (p. 12). However her quick hitting but detailed studies of the culture of the schools, which she calls portraiture and others have called "blitzkrieg ethnography," are ripe for criticism because they included only three or four days of on-site observation.

In another qualitative study of the culture of the American high school Boyer (1983), with the support of the Carnegie Foundation, examined 15 high schools. As

was the case in Lightfoot's study, Boyer admitted that
the amount of time spent at each institution was not
enough for a rigorous ethnographic study. However, he
did feel that the 20 days spent by an experienced team
of educators at each institution did allow sufficient
time to learn a lot about the schools. The study
became one of over a dozen major reports on the state
of schooling in America during the early 1980s. The
primary focus of the study was to draw conclusions
about the state of the typical American high school
from data collected in observations conducted at 15
high schools. The report also utilized statistical
information gathered from other sources. A good share
of the report was devoted to making recommendations for
improvement in organization and management of the
American high school.

<center>Summary</center>

This review of the literature has shown that
recent qualitative studies of businesses and other
organizations indicate certain cultural attributes
contribute to the success of an organization much more
than others. As Deal and Kennedy (1982) put it, "a

strong culture has almost always been the driving force
behind continuing success in American businesses"
(p. 5).

An examination of the effective schools research
was undertaken as part of the review and it was found
that while most studies made reference to climate they
did not sufficiently analyze the culture of the
effective schools. The review also discussed the value
of ethnographic or qualitative research in studying the
culture of organizations. The literature suggested
that there were strengths and weaknesses to be
considered in using ethnography but clearly established
that the weaknesses were an acceptable and necessary
risk in the business of subjective cultural analysis.
Finally, the review examined some of the qualitative
research which has been done in the field of education.
It was apparent, from the review, that ethnography has
been used to examine a myriad of issues in education.
The literature also revealed that the methodology used
in conducting qualitative research in schools has
covered as wide a spectrum as the number of topics
studied.

JOURNAL ARTICLE I:

THE CULTURE OF A HIGH ACHIEVING SCHOOL

What makes for a great school? After hours of observation, completion of surveys, crunching of numbers, and data analysis, researchers keep coming to the same conclusion--the most distinguishing characteristic of an academically effective school is its culture (Brookover, Beady, Flood, Schweitzer, & Wisenbaker, 1979; Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, & Ouston, 1979). Brookover et al. (1979) concluded from a study of 68 Michigan elementary schools that significantly higher achievement in mathematics and reading occurred in schools with a more positive social climate. Rutter et al. (1979) examined the effects of a number of variables on student achievement in 12 London high schools over a period of seven years. They concluded that a combined effect, resulting from what they called the "ethos" or culture of the school, was much more powerful than any single factor.

The effects of culture in private sector organizations have also been studied. Two case studies received tremendous attention from managers in

organizations across the country. Deal and Kennedy (1982), after a six-month study of nearly 80 companies, underscored the importance of an organization's culture in their book Corporate Cultures:

> Whether weak or strong, culture has a powerful influence throughout an organization; it affects practically everything--from who gets promoted and what decisions are made, to how employees dress and what sports they play. Because of this impact, we think that culture also has a major effect on the success of the business (p. 4).

Peters and Waterman (1982) in their best selling book, In Search of Excellence, described how the excellent companies they studied had developed a unique set of cultural attributes which distinguished them from the rest. The authors did case studies of over 60 successful American companies to determine what differentiated them from those not as productive. They found that a powerful set of beliefs and values which formed the foundation for a strong culture made the difference in those companies. Deal and Kennedy as well as Peters and Waterman pointed out that one must understand the culture of an organization to understand why it is successful or unsuccessful. However, before comprehending the intricacies of organizational culture one must first have a firm grasp on the term "culture."

A culture is an historically developed patterned way of life which includes beliefs and ideologies; formally and informally established interrelationships between persons and groups; and material goods and technologies, all of which are systematically related so as to form an integral whole. The culture of a group of people is manifested through its patterns, beliefs, values, and norms which become the dominant themes driving behavior in the organization.

In an organization the culture is strong when attitudes and beliefs form a rich system of values shared by the employees or group members. These shared values typically result in norms of behavior which are closely adhered to by the majority. While these beliefs and values often revolve around life in the organization such as pride, esprit, and cohesiveness, they ultimately impact upon the staff's commitment to fulfilling its mission: the purpose for which it exists. A weak organizational culture is often characterized by no clear values or beliefs; or when there are such beliefs people cannot agree on which are most important; or different parts of the organization have fundamentally different beliefs. Weak cultures lack togetherness and pride making it difficult for

group members to feel a strong commitment to the organization's mission.

The research points out that an organization's culture, strong or weak, has a powerful influence on its productivity. But how does this apply to successful schools? What are the predominant beliefs, values, and norms which form the culture of a high achieving school? These questions were addressed in a recent study conducted at Iowa State University. The study utilized an ethnographic case study approach to examine the culture of a high achieving suburban midwestern junior high school. An understanding of the school's setting is important in visualizing a clear picture of the school's culture.

The school chosen for the study was Indian Hills Junior High School, located in West Des Moines (Iowa) Community School District. Indian Hills Junior High is a very modern, clean, and well-equipped building in an upper middle class residential neighborhood. The school has a full-time principal, assistant principal, counselor, and media specialist to provide support to its teaching staff. Students live in four different suburbs on the west side of the Des Moines metropolitan area. Parents place a high value on obtaining a

quality education and tend to be well educated themselves (slightly over half have a bachelor's degree and about 20% have obtained an advanced degree). They tend to be employed in professional and white collar jobs or as homemakers. Only 17 of the 400 students attending Indian Hills come from homes whose net income is low enough to qualify them (under Federal guidelines) for free or reduced price lunches.

Over 95% of the students are white with Asians, Blacks, Hispanics, and American Indians making up the remaining 5% of the enrollment. They are high achievers as evidenced by their high national ranking (above the 90th percentile) on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. Their high achievement corresponds with their high potential as the average IQ is 114. They have been nationally recognized for "Excellence in Education" as a banner just inside the main entrance proclaims. The award was given to the school by the United States Department of Education in its first national recognition program for outstanding schools.

High student achievement and an Excellence in Education award made the school an attractive target for study. Furthermore, the principal was very receptive to a year-long, on-site, cultural study. An

ethnographic case study approach, well suited for
cultural analysis, was used to gather the data. The
researcher spent a total of 128 hours, equivalent to 16
eight-hour days, on-site over a nine-month period
during the 1985-86 school year. The study was begun by
administering a climate survey, the School Improvement
Inventory (SII) (Sweeney, 1983), to the teachers,
counselor, support staff, and assistant principal. The
results provided the researcher with data on which to
make decisions about the climate of the school and
guidance as to what to look for in observations. The
climate was extremely positive and the staff perceived
their principal's dedication and enthusiasm to be very
high (See Table 1). The positive climate provided
justification for an in-depth examination of the
culture.

Ethnographers typically use one or more of three
methods to draw inferences about the beliefs, values,
and norms of a group. One is by observing their
behavior. These observations are usually very general
at the beginning of a study and focus on specific
events later in the study. Observations were conducted
before school in the teachers' lounge, in the student
center and hallways, in the classrooms and study halls,

Table 1

<u>School Climate Measures for Indian Hills Junior High and National Sample of</u>

<u>Junior High School Teachers</u>

Climate Measures	Indian Hills Junior High School (N = 1)[a]	National Sample (N = 38)	Standard Deviation (N = 38)
Goal Orientation	6.20	5.54	.55
Esprit	6.01	5.09	.78
Cohesiveness	5.92	4.95	.73
Teacher Expectations	6.38	5.86	.40
Administrator Dedication and Enthusiasm	7.06	5.48	1.27
Student Attitudes	6.68	4.51	1.31

Note: Scale = 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8

       Very   Some   Consid-   Very

       Little   erable   Great

[a] 34 Indian Hills staff members completed the survey.

in the lunchroom, and in the office. The observer
attended staff meetings, committee meetings, Parent
Advisory Council meetings, student assemblies, and
Student Council meetings. Observations were also made
at athletic events, evening parent programs, open
house, and parent-teacher conferences.

A second method is the analysis of artifacts or
things people make and use. It is valuable to examine
artifacts because they tend to transmit some of the
beliefs, values, and norms of the people being studied.
Artifacts examined included faculty memos, calendars,
handbooks, newsletters, correspondence, scrap books,
announcements, publicity brochures, district and
building reports, a North Central Association
self-study report, student newspapers, schedules,
newspaper clippings, teachers' plans and instructional
handouts, school goal statements, and the agendas for
various meetings.

A third method is the interview which allows the
ethnographer to make inferences based on what people
say. Informal on-the-spot interviews were conducted
with students, staff, parents, and administrators.
Lengthy formal interviews lasting two to three hours

were conducted with one-third of the 40 professional
and support staff. Ten percent of the student body was
formally interviewed in small groups of two to seven
people at a time. The principal was also formally
interviewed. This consumed about five hours after
school and on a day when students and staff were on
vacation. After gathering a voluminous amount of
information from observations, artifacts, and
interviews the researcher analyzed it searching for
some common themes permeating the school's culture.

An analysis of the data revealed six dominant
themes which blended to form this rather elusive
concept, culture: (a) leadership, (b) importance of
people, (c) positive learning climate, (d) sense of
pride, (e) staff autonomy and intrapreneurship, and
(f) loose/tight couplings. At the top of the list,
however, was leadership because of its impact on the
other five. It will be addressed first.

Leadership

The climate survey also measured principal
effectiveness in six administrative functions.
Teachers reported that the principal, who will be
referred to as Tom, was highly effective in all six

with an extremely high rating in school-community
relations. Observations, interviews, and artifacts
supported survey results. Tom appeared to be a
powerful force influencing teachers, students and
parents and a catalyst in shaping the school's culture.
Five characteristics or qualities associated with
leadership were most prominent: (a) highly visible,
(b) caring, (c) encouraging, (d) facilitating, and (e)
promoting customer relations. A brief description of
each follows.

Highly Visible

Tom participates in almost everything that goes on
in the school. He is highly visible and spends most of
his time in the hallways, the student center, the
classrooms, and the teachers' lounge talking with
teachers and students, taking part in classes and
activities, or just observing. He gets involved in
almost all extracurricular activities. As one staff
member summarized, "Tom gives his time unselfishly. He
participates enthusiastically in building events, and I
mean participates; he doesn't just stand by the door
and show people where to hang their coats."

Caring

Tom cares about people. His interest in his staff goes beyond their professional lives and into their personal lives. He attends their weddings and their children's weddings. He visits them in the hospital when they are sick and goes to the hospital to comfort them when their children are sick. When their parents die he goes to the funeral home and spends time with the family. One of the most important things he does is listen to his staff and to the students. His door is literally always open but he doesn't wait for staff and students to come to him. He shows them he cares by going to meet them on their own turf.

Encouraging

Tom is seen by his staff as a "super encourager." "He never really says no to a reasonable idea," said one staff member and added, "He shows support for everyone and encourages people to try things. His positive attitude rubs off on you." The faculty sees him as one who promotes and encourages new ideas. He sees himself as a facilitator who encourages people to take risks. Risks at Indian Hills, however, never end

in failure. Tom can't stand failure so he just won't allow it to happen. Any idea that doesn't work well is an opportunity for improvement. He encourages, praises, and thanks students, staff, and parents in front of their peers. He could easily be labeled "head cheerleader."

Facilitating

Tom facilitates the every-day operations of the school as well as the ceremonial functions. He stimulates change not only by encouraging people but by removing obstacles from their path and making their jobs easier. He realizes that facilitating means being well organized and starts the year emphasizing organization in the first faculty meeting. At that meeting faculty members receive detailed handbooks which clearly spell out procedures and other information pertinent to the successful operation of the school. All meetings have typed agendas and follow a pre-set time schedule. Tom is a member of almost all committees but his position on most is one of ceremonial leader and facilitator. Talented staff members chair the committees. Staff members identify Tom as the straw that stirs the drink, the person who

makes everyone pull together to get the job done. In the words of one staff member, "He gets people to work together for the good of the students and for the good of the building. He expects people to work hard and he lets them know if they aren't living up to expectations. However, he's a diplomat and he maintains good feelings among everybody on this staff."

Promoting Customer Relations

On the SII the staff at Indian Hills gave Tom 4.78 of a possible 5.00 in School-Community Relations. They clearly perceived that function to be Tom's strongest suit and the observations and interviews conducted during the study lent credence to that rating. One of the vehicles Tom uses to effect excellent customer relations is a Parent Advisory Council (PAC) which meets on a monthly basis. Tom uses the PAC for a sounding board where he can test the level of acceptance on new ideas, projects, and procedures at the school as well as for a forum in which parents can air their concerns. Tom also uses PAC members as key communicators in the community, calling them with the facts on a controversial issue

before rumors send things out of control. Other customer relations efforts include a tremendous emphasis on getting parents into the school as volunteers and for after-school and weekend programs. Parents are frequently asked to participate with their children in some phase of the school program. Perhaps one of Tom's greatest personal contributions to customer relations comes during the summer when he gives personal tours to each incoming seventh grader and his parents.

The leadership qualities revealed by the study help Tom shape the culture of Indian Hills Junior High School. Perhaps his effective style is most appropriately called symbolic leadership. According to Sergiovanni (1984), "A symbolic leader assumes the role of 'chief' and by emphasizing selective attention (the modeling of important goals and behaviors) signals to others what is of importance and value" (p. 7). Tom is definitely the "chief" at Indian Hills Junior High School. He is wise enough to realize he cannot build a strong culture by attempting to manage all behaviors which take place at the school. Instead he selects those values which he considers to be most important and models them. Symbolic leaders sometimes work

below the surface to make things happen but they also
have a feel for the dramatic. They are able to
communicate their sense of vision by words and
examples. Their objective is to stir human
consciousness, to enhance meaning and articulate key
cultural strands that identify the substance of the
school and link the persons involved in the school's
activities to them (Sergiovanni, 1984). Through
symbolic leadership Tom is able to have a significant
impact upon the other five interactive themes pervading
the school's culture.

Importance of People

It became apparent early in the study that "people
are important" at Indian Hills Junior High. Four
stories or viewpoints illustrate this powerful theme.

In the Beginning . . .

Perhaps the best illustration of the important
role played by key people in the everyday life of the
school emerged in an event which took place before the
new school opened its doors for the first day of
classes. The final phases of construction on the new
Indian Hills Junior High School building had been

delayed because of a labor strike. School began in the
fall of 1977 in an old building which was slated for
the wrecking ball. Teachers had packed books and
supplies into cardboard boxes in anticipation of the
move to the new building and they were pulling them
back out of the boxes only as needed because they knew
the order to move would come any day. When moving day
finally arrived hundreds of students, parents, and
teachers worked together over an entire weekend to
complete the job. A bond was formed between all who
pulled together that weekend as they bent their backs
in unison to lift desks and tables, as they sat side by
side on unpacked boxes during a break for coffee and
doughnuts, and as they handed one another books to be
placed on their new shelves. The school's Parent
Advisory Council grew out of the parent committee that
organized the move. According to the staff members the
move set the stage for a family feeling which pervades
the school to this day. The school will celebrate the
tenth anniversary of that move with a party honoring
all who participated (they still have a list of the
names) by inviting them to the school's tenth birthday
party as honored guests in October of 1987.

Through Thick and Thin

Another story that illustrates the importance of people at Indian Hills also underlines the caring atmosphere which pervades the school. A faculty member had become terminally ill with cancer. Her treatment necessitated a move to another part of the state and frequent stays at a hospital in another state. Yet staff members made trips to visit her, wrote her letters, and sent her a monthly picture album with comical pictures of the staff and funny stories in it. When the teacher died, her husband brought the school a check for over $3,000 that the teacher left to the school. The money she left the school was an expression of her gratitude to the staff for caring above and beyond the call of duty. When people are important in an organization caring is pervasive, not only in good times but through thick and thin.

A Bird's-Eye View

From their unique perch, students can provide some very candid insights into the beliefs, values, and norms of an organization--a sort of bird's-eye view of the culture. Interviews with 10% of the student body were conducted as part of the study. During the

interviews it became apparent that the school's
teachers had a large impact upon student attitudes.
Students said their teachers "are good at their jobs,"
"care about us," and "go out of their way to help us
succeed." Extra help sessions were the norm at the
school and students felt that any student who wanted to
get help from a teacher could easily get it. Students
also felt that their teachers had high expectations for
them. Characteristics that students tended to admire
most in their teachers were "easy-going style," "sense
of humor," and "willingness to listen to and talk with
us." It is interesting to note that staff members
showed a reciprocal affection toward students. Staff
interviews revealed that most of the teachers obtained
the greatest reward in their work from "the kids."
Working with the students, helping them to improve
their self-concepts, exposing them to a variety of
experiences, and getting them ready for high school
were usually among those things mentioned as most
important to them in their work.

Fun, Zest, Enthusiasm

One of the themes that emerged virtually every
time people were discussed at Indian Hills was that

they had fun together. Whether it was a student
commenting that the teaching staff had a good sense of
humor or a staff member saying how much he enjoyed
getting together with a group of teachers and their
spouses on Saturdays to watch the Iowa Hawkeyes play
football, having fun together consistently surfaced.
The student talent show held on the last day of school
is a good example. Not only did the students cheer
loudly for all the student acts, regardless of how bad,
but they reserved their loudest cheers for the staff
act at the end. Almost all staff members were part of
an Indian Hills rendition of the "Super Bowl Shuffle"
with names and lyrics changed to fit the local scene.
It was very obvious that watching their teachers and
their principal let their hair down on the last day of
classes was great fun; they really whooped it up. For
the staff to get up in front of the entire student body
and risk looking foolish took a lot of confidence in
themselves and a feeling of assurance that the students
would laugh with them and not at them. It has become
one of the rituals in the culture of this high
achieving junior high school which puts a prime amount
of importance on people.

In summary, one of the study's bottom lines
emanates from responses by students and teachers when
asked, "What will you remember most about Indian Hills
Junior High School?" Most replied "the staff" or "the
kids." This is hardly surprising in light of the
latest research on organizational culture. The
emphasis on people in a strong culture stands out
regardless of the type of organization being studied.

Positive Learning Climate

When entering Indian Hills School at 7:15 a.m. on
a school day the researcher was surprised to see a
student in the student center a full hour and ten
minutes before classes started. At 7:40 a.m., with
classes still 45 minutes away, 30-40 students were
there and by 8:00 a.m. there were 75-100 students
milling about the student center. Some were putting
things in or taking things out of their lockers, some
appeared to be studying at the tables, but most were
just standing around talking in small groups. These
were students who did not ride the bus and who could
presumably control their own arrival time since they
were within walking distance of the school. That as
many as 100 of them chose to arrive from one hour and

ten minutes to 25 minutes before classes started was an
indication that the students enjoyed coming to school.
Several mentioned that they came to see their friends
and a few said they came early to get their homework
done. In any case, the message that school is not a
bad place to be came through clearly.

The 75 to 100 students who came prior to 8:00 a.m.
were unsupervised while they milled about in the
student center. However, there was no roughhousing,
running, or yelling. At 8:00 the principal, assistant
principal and counselor walked into the student center.
The principal took a seat at a table in the corner and
wrote on a yellow pad. The assistant principal and
counselor walked through the student center stopping to
talk and laugh with students. Three hundred more
students came through the doors during the next 20
minutes as bus after bus pulled up and unloaded.
Although the student center got much noisier there was
still no sign of rowdiness or unruly behavior.

The students wore casual clothing on a warm early
fall day. Shorts, blue jeans, knit shirts or t-shirts,
and tennis shoes were the most common apparel. Several
girls in the center of the room who had styled hair
wore fancier looking clothing with designer labels.

Some of those girls wore dresses or skirts which made
them stand out since most girls wore slacks or jeans.
Clothes were neat and clean without tears or holes.
Students were clean with neatly trimmed hair. The
student's attire seemed to reflect the comfortable and
casual environment.

At 8:23 a.m. they began leaving for their
classrooms as if someone had given an unheard signal
audible only to their ears. There were no bells.
People needed no bell or buzzer to tell them when to
leave or report.

This orderly morning ritual was not unusual; it
was repeated daily. Other rituals were apparent.
Students in the study hall automatically took out
books, papers, and pencils and began reading or
writing. Students in classrooms listened and took
notes. The hallways were empty except for two girls
passing out the daily bulletin. The school was quiet,
the climate conducive to learning.

At lunch time students came to the student center
and lined up without pushing and shoving. Sam, the
custodian, was there to meet and talk with them as they
passed through the line and took their seats. Sam,
according to many teachers, was a big factor in keeping

the building neat and clean, not only because he was
the "main cleaner" but because students knew he liked
them and they wanted to keep it clean for Sam. Two
ladies supervising the lunchroom didn't appear to
display any wondrous skill keeping 150 to 200
junior-high-age students in line; yet the students
behaved themselves.

Students moved about the room after lunch to talk
with each other. As in the morning, students were
orderly and although the aides seemed to feel that some
were smart-alecks there was no rowdy behavior. Once
again at some predestined time and without any apparent
signal they all got up and left the lunchroom, books in
hand, bound for classrooms, passing the next lunch
group in the hallways without yelling, shoving, or
running.

The end of the day proceeded with the same calm
routine that had been seen in previous all-student
evolutions. Although the student center seemed alive
with noise and pent-up physical energy, there was no
unruly behavior in the locker area. A tour of the
building after the students left revealed no trash on
the floors or grounds and no graffiti on the walls.

Later, through student interviews, it became obvious that students felt one thing that made their school unique was the modern, clean, and well-maintained building. When asked why the school deserved the U.S. Department of Education recognition as an exemplary school the second most common answer after "good teachers" reflected a modern clean building. The other unique factor mentioned most often by students was "the students themselves." Students saw themselves as being cooperative with teachers and each other. Students transferring in from other schools typically mentioned that there was much less fighting between students at Indian Hills than at their old school.

It would be unbelievable to think of a junior high school without some disorderly students and Indian Hills had some. The learning environment, however, was a top priority. When there were discipline problems staff members stepped in and took action rather than looking the other way. Students and staff apparently realized the need to maintain a positive learning climate and made sure it happened.

Sense of Pride

Throughout the study it became apparent that staff
and students saw pride as very important to the
school's success, some common sources of pride.
Everyone, both staff and students, thought the school
deserved the national award they had received as an
exemplary school. When asked why, the responses varied
but the staff seemed most proud not of their
credentials, degrees, or number of years of experience,
but of the way they worked together and their
willingness to give time to kids. They were
exceptionally proud of how they got along together and
how they helped each other out. They were also proud
of the types of opportunities they provided students
through their programs. At first the staff's humanist
viewpoint with a narrow focus on the rather mundane
accomplishment of being able to get along and work
together seemed rather plain, if not provincial.
However, student interviews brought things into
perspective.

The students also saw the staff, specifically the
teachers, as being the main reason the school deserved
the national award. They said their teachers were good
because they used good teaching methods, because they

were willing to spend extra time with them, and because
they had a sense of humor. Perhaps this sense of
student pride in their teachers can be best summarized
by listing some of the things students said their
teachers had done to help them. Among other things
students mentioned that the staff had: "improved my
attitude about life in general," "helped me learn to
work with different kinds of people," "prepared me for
high school and later life," "built up my ego," "helped
me feel more relaxed," "recognized my accomplishments
by putting my name in the school newspaper," "got me in
shape," and "improved my study skills." Everyone asked
could list something and most were in line with the
humanist point of view rather than a goal-oriented high
academic achievement viewpoint that one might expect in
a high achieving school.

Students and staff were proud of high student
academic achievements but other things were mentioned
more often, including: a nice building and facilities;
the many activities, special programs, and
extra-curricular activities available and the work
ethic and high expectations for both students and
staff. Additionally, the school's "fine principal,"
its positive learning climate, and recent awards the

school had received were all cited as things to be
proud of. Awards included the Excellence in Education
award from the United States Department of Education in
1983 and recognition by the National Council of
Teachers of English as a Center of Excellence for a
program called Writing Across the Curriculum in 1985.

One artifact collected during the study epitomized
the pride Indian Hills people had for their school.
The staff put together a glossy, six-page, newspaper
size marketing brochure. The brochure extolled the
school's qualities from programs to parent support. It
came as no surprise that it, too, won a national award.
The National School Public Relations Association
recently presented the school its Golden Achievement
Award for their excellent marketing brochure.

Staff Autonomy and Intrapreneurship

In looking for common values at Indian Hills it
was easy to see that one which was universally held by
the staff was autonomy--"being able to run my own
classroom." They felt their principal, Tom, was there
to support them, encourage them, and organize them; but
not to tell them how to teach or when to teach it.
They said they followed the prescribed district

curriculum but they maintained that there were many ways to get the job done and that they were free to choose their own methods as competent professionals. That type of atmosphere seemed to result in a rather loose network of cubbyholes populated by innovative teachers who, although still responsible to Tom, had a great deal of autonomy.

Although autonomous, teachers were not totally unaccountable as most said they checked new ideas out with Tom; they added that he almost always gave his permission and support. One of the five themes which characterized Tom's leadership style was "encouraging" people. As part of that style Tom "never really says no," according to one staff member, "he encourages practical risk taking and supports good tries." This supporting of good tries promotes the concept of intrapreneurship.

Intrapreneurship is a new term coined by management gurus--"taking risks to promote profit within the organization"--thus distinguishing it from entrepreneurship--"taking risks to promote profit in one's own business." Peters and Waterman (1982) classify intrapreneurs as champions. Deal and Kennedy (1982) call them heroes. No matter what they are

called they need support. Peters and Waterman describe

the importance of support for intrapreneurs,

heroes, and champions very succinctly:

> Champions are pioneers, and pioneers get shot at.
> The companies that get the most from champions,
> therefore, are those that have rich support
> networks so their pioneers will flourish. This
> point is so important it's hard to overstress.
> No support system, no champions. No champions,
> no innovations (p. 211).

Indian Hills is replete with intrapreneurs,

heroes, heroines,and champions. They thrive on

innovation. Some, like Writing Across the Curriculum,

resulted in national recognition. Innovation also

played a part in the school receiving the Excellence in

Education award from the Department of Education.

There were many other innovations which had received no

awards but were seen as having significant impact on

the ability of the school to meet the needs of the

students. All of those innovations were brought about

by intrapreneurs who were seen as being anywhere from

five to nine in number and were characterized at times

as being leaders, drivers, obnoxious, impatient, and

egotistical. However, they were always seen as the

people who made things happen.

Loose/Tight Couplings

The research on effective schools indicates that they are rather strictly managed places where there is strong instructional leadership, a clear sense of purpose with a focus on instruction, and frequent monitoring of student progress. This suggests a structure which some might say is tightly coupled. Schools, as units or workplaces, however, seem to be much more loosely structured. Weick (1976) described schools as loosely coupled systems with slack time (excessive resources relative to demands), occasions when any one of several means will produce the same end, networks where influence is slow to spread, a relative lack of coordination, a relative lack of regulations, infrequent inspection, planned unresponsiveness, and those occasions when no matter what you do things always come out the same.

In unscrambling the mix at Indian Hills Junior High School the researcher found both loose and tight properties. Expectations for staff members were fairly loose but those for students were more tightly coupled. What follows are some examples of this.

The staff was given a great deal of staff autonomy--basically teachers were free to "do their own

thing." Tom made few observations for the purpose of
monitoring teaching effectiveness and many teachers
said that the teacher evaluation system was not very
helpful to them. It seems they thought they were so
good that they didn't need much help. Tom apparently
agreed. Although there was a lot of communication
between Tom and the teachers, little of it appeared to
be instruction oriented. There were no memos and no
presentations on effective teaching. There was no
required teaching model and in fact little awareness of
models. Teachers' plans and monitoring of student
progress received little attention. While one had the
feeling that Tom was monitoring continuously, as he
walked the halls, stopped to talk with students and
teachers, and visited classrooms for presentations and
ceremonies, it was informal and he was generally not
seen as a "snoopervisor."

A scene illustrating the fuzziness between what
was said and what was done and once again depicting
loose couplings was the mass exit of teachers from the
school at 4:00. While teachers told the researcher
they were professionals who were committed to working
hard for kids, most left the school right at 4:00
(official quitting time) as if some whistle had blown

releasing a shift of hourly laborers from their mill.
(Key people, the intrapreneurs, did not join the 4:00
rush to the parking lot.) The same held true for
meetings. Most meetings ended right at 4:00 even if
important items on the agenda were not attended to.
The time or two that meetings ran 10-15 minutes past
4:00 Tom apologized for keeping people so late.

There was a wide range of working arrangements.
Some teachers worked independently without consulting
others in their department. Others worked in team
teaching situations, combining two classes in one large
room. The choice on working relationships seemed to be
up to the teachers, allowing them to find an
arrangement which best fit their personality and
teaching style. Autonomy also allowed the
intrapreneurs to have an effect on teachers, programs,
and students throughout the school. For example, the
Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) program was
spearheaded by the seventh-grade English teachers. As
might be expected in a loosely coupled system the
program spread slowly and sporadically. Eventually it
became widely accepted and successful enough to receive
a national award for excellence from the National

Council of Teachers of English. The point is, it might

not have occurred at all in a tightly coupled system.

While the data provided many examples of loose

couplings with regard to staff, student activities were

tightly coupled. Students were given an explicit

handbook at the beginning of the year detailing rules,

regulations, and guidelines for attendance, conduct,

homework, and personal appearance. Teachers usually

handed out additional lists of rules pertaining to

their classrooms.

In class students were expected to follow some

fairly rigid procedures for note taking, record

keeping, and turning in homework. Although procedures

varied widely from one classroom to the next it was

clear that teachers regulated and monitored student

work and gave lots of homework. Procedures for

homework were strict and teachers didn't appear to bend

the rules. There wasn't much flexibility in regard to

academic matters.

Apparently staff at Indian Hills felt that a

tightly coupled system for students was important for

creating the learning climate which students need in a

junior high school. Although teachers saw themselves

as professionals who needed and deserved a loose and

autonomous environment, they saw their 12 and 13 year old students in need of tight structure and an orderly routine. Perhaps, the tight couplings for students were developed not only to allow students to mature properly but to allow staff members to do what must be done (and perhaps to maintain their sanity).

Final Thoughts

The stuff of which a school's culture is made is not easy to quantify. The beliefs, values, and norms which make up that culture cannot be easily measured and may even be hard for the staff and students to articulate. Some things are just done without thinking much about them. At Indian Hills Junior High School, leadership, people, learning climate, pride, staff autonomy and intrapreneurship, and loose/tight couplings blend to form a powerful culture which gets things done and done well. The portrait of the school does not look like those painted by effective schools researchers who published lists of characteristics that should be present in such schools.

Champions of school improvement at Indian Hills need not worry, however, for as Barth (1986) stated in

educational change seems simple, straightforward, and
compelling. Its only flaw is that it doesn't seem to
work very well" (p. 294). The "list" at Indian Hills
is not classic. Its culture is one which results from
a funny mix that is neither simple nor straightforward
but rather rich and complex. The best thing about it
is that it works and reinforces administration's golden
rule, "whatever works, works."

References

Barth, R. S. (1986). On sheep and goats and school reform. Phi Delta Kappan, 68(4), 293-296.

Brookover, W. B., Beady, C., Flood, P., Schweitzer, J., & Wisenbaker, J. (1979). School social systems and student achievement: Schools can make a difference. New York: Praeger.

Deal, T. E., & Kennedy, A. A. (1982). Corporate cultures: The rites and rituals of corporate life. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Peters, T. J., & Waterman, R. H. (1982). In search of excellence: Lessons from America's best-run companies. New York: Harper & Row.

Rutter, M., Maughan, B., Mortimore, P., & Ouston, J. (1979). Fifteen thousand hours: Secondary schools and their effects on children. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Sergiovanni, T. J. (1984). Leadership and excellence in schooling. Education Leadership, 41, 5-13.

Sweeney, J. (1983). School improvement inventory. Ames, IA: Iowa State University.

Weick, K. E. (1976). Educational organizations as loosely coupled systems. Administrative Science Quarterly, 21, 1-19.

JOURNAL ARTICLE II:

LEADERSHIP: THE SPARK THAT IGNITES THE

FIRE IN THE SCHOOL'S CULTURE

The mystique of a cultural leader in molding an

effective organization is legend. Stories about Thomas

Watson, the builder of IBM, Ray Kroc, the man who

turned McDonalds into an empire, and Lee Iacocca, who

brought Chrysler back from the dead, are shared with

great zest and awe by employees of those companies

(Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Peters & Waterman, 1982).

Watson, Kroc, and Iacocca are perceived as champions or

heroes because of their vision, persistence, and

success in building their companies into productive,

lucrative organizations. They are models that others

who wish to be successful chief executive officers

strive to emulate. However, as Peters and Waterman and

Deal and Kennedy make very clear, champions and heroes

can be found in all levels of leadership in any type of

organization. A recent study conducted at Iowa State

University has examined the culture of a high achieving

junior high school. A major objective of the study was

to examine the role of this school's chief executive

officer (the principal), in the hope that it may

provide direction to those who aspire to be champions
and heroes in school administration. An understanding
of the school's setting is important as it provides a
picture of the culture in which the principal leads.

The setting for the study was Indian Hills Junior
High School, a school of just over 400 seventh and
eighth grade students situated in an upper middle class
suburban community located on the west edge of Des
Moines, Iowa. The school serves students from parts of
four towns which comprise the West Des Moines Community
School District. The students' parents are well
educated, professional and white collar workers who are
very supportive of education. Student achievement may
reflect the support and emphasis placed on education by
their parents. Students at the school consistently
score above the 90th percentile nationally on the Iowa
Tests of Basic Skills. Expectations at the school are
high, and rightfully so; the average IQ of the student
body is 114. In 1983 the school was recognized by the
United States Department of Education in its first
national recognition program as an outstanding
secondary school.

To verify the efficacy of the principal at Indian
Hills Junior High School a survey instrument, the

School Improvement Inventory (SII) developed by Sweeney
(1983), was used prior to the study. The SII measured
principal effectiveness in six administrative functions
on a scale of (1) very low to (5) very high. The
results of the survey revealed that the leadership of
the principal was perceived as highly effective. When
compared to a national sample, the principal at Indian
Hills Junior High School was clearly seen as more
effective than a national group norm in all six
functions. Table 2 shows his ratings are more than one
standard deviation above the mean in three of the
functions and more than two standard deviations above
the mean in the other three. His rating in
School-Community Relations was extremely high.

In addition to administrator effectiveness the SII
measured the school's climate and found it to be very
positive. The survey provided considerable
justification for examining the culture which produced
such a positive climate and for making a detailed study
of the leadership style used by the principal in that
culture. An ethnographic case study was used for
cultural analysis. The ethnographic method makes
extensive use of observation, interviews, and artifact
analysis to examine the beliefs, values, and norms

Table 2

Principal Effectiveness in Performing Administrative Functions as Perceived

by 34 Indian Hills Junior High School Staff Members

Functions	Indian Hills Junior High School (N = 1)	National Sample (N = 38)	Standard Deviation (N = 38
Human Resource Management	3.94	3.19	.53
Instructional Leadership	4.00	3.23	.50
Learning Environment Management	4.03	3.11	.71
Non-instructional Management	4.19	3.27	.44
Pupil Personnel	4.00	3.03	.45
School Community Relations	4.78	3.39	.54

Note: Scale Values = 1--very low, 2--low, 3--moderate, 4--high, 5--very high.

which make up an organization's culture. The
researcher spent approximately 130 hours in on-site
analysis over a nine-month period during the 1985-86
school year. Countless hours were spent reviewing and
analyzing observation and interview notes as well as
artifacts which are simply things people make and use.
Artifacts included faculty memos, calendars, handbooks,
newsletters, correspondence, scrap books,
announcements, publicity brochures, district and
building reports, a North Central Association
self-study report, student newspapers, schedules,
newspaper clippings, teachers' plans and instructional
handouts, school goal statements, and the agendas for
various meetings.

While the analysis revealed six common themes
which appeared to describe the school's culture, at the
top of the list was leadership because of its impact on
the other five. The principal at Indian Hills truly
was the spark that ignited the fire in the school's
culture. What follows is a summary of what caused the
researcher to reach that conclusion.

The nearly idyllic descriptions of the Indian
Hills School community with its supportive parents,
high achieving students, happy staff, and Excellence in

Education banner may appear to be a principal's dream. It is not, however, an illusion; it is real. While admittedly it is a great situation and it is hard to determine cause and effect, one of the questions the study attempted to answer was how did they get to be "so good." The difference maker cited most frequently by staff members was their principal, "Tom."

What does a principal faced with the stark reality of a near utopian situation do to form and maintain a culture which induces students, staff members, and parents to see their school as "the best in the west?" Observations, interviews and artifacts revealed five qualities which spelled champion and made Tom a hero in their eyes. Those five qualities provided the spark.

1. Highly Visible. Participates in all school events; spends time in hallways, the student center, classrooms, and the teachers' lounge; is enthusiastic and energetic in relating to people.

2. Caring. Cares about, listens to, and takes time for people. Has empathy for students and staff. Calls on the sick and attends funerals of staff members and their families.

3. <u>Encouraging</u>. Openly praises and supports the school staff, students, and parents; promotes risk taking; shows appreciation for good effort.

4. <u>Facilitating</u>. Is in charge of both every-day operations and ceremonial functions; sets expectations; is well organized; does a good job of r.anaging the school.

5. <u>Promoting Customer Relations</u>. Communicates very well with people; promotes parent and student involvement; always presents the school, its staff, students, and programs in a favorable light.

One of the best ways to explain the contribution of a leader to an organization's culture is through stories told by its members. The stories which follow convey the essence of Tom's leadership style, a style that has made him a champion.

<u>Highly Visible</u>

It is 7:30 a.m. and several faculty members are gathered in the teachers' lounge discussing family affairs, college football, new clothes, and other

social matters. Tom has just made the first of three
trips he will make through the lounge area between 7:30
and 8:00. Each time through he stops to enter the
conversation. As faculty members come and go during
the half hour Tom is equally comfortable joking and
talking with each of them. His many trips through the
lounge are normal and not by accident. The lounge was
"located" by a principal who wanted to have high
visibility with his staff. Tom was in on the design
phase of Indian Hills Junior High School having been
selected as the principal of the new school before it
was built in 1977. The only door to his office opens
into the lounge which in turn is the main faculty
entrance to the office complex. The lounge is heavily
used as a corridor as well as a cloak room, lunch room,
work room, and break area.

Tom remains highly visible and accessible from
8:00 to 8:25. During that 25 minutes before classes
start, Tom sits at a table in the corner of the student
center and does paperwork. By 8:00 there are already
100 of the school's 400 students gathered in the
student center waiting for class to begin. They mill
about talking and laughing while others arrive. All
student lockers and lunch tables are located in the

large open room so students move back and forth from
the locker area to the table area. The school's
counselor and assistant principal walk around
supervising and talking with the students.
Occasionally a student or a faculty member will stop to
talk with him, but most of the time he sits and writes
on a yellow tablet, finishing some correspondence,
seemingly oblivious to what the students are doing.
His only purpose for being there rather than in the
more quiet confines of his office is to be visible and
accessible. He wants the students and the faculty to
know that even though he has other work to do he is
interested in them and available.

After school Tom again takes up a position in the
large student center. This time he stands close to the
main entrance as students put on their coats, throw
books into backpacks and slam locker doors. As the
students exit to board busses and meet waiting cars Tom
kids with them, laughing easily about some recent event
involving students and staff. Other staff members
stand close by and talk with students, help them free
stubborn lockers, and also kid with them
good-naturedly. The counselor is there, as well as the
custodian and assistant principal. Several teachers

pass through the congested area on the way to or from
the office. A few parents enter the building to pick
up children, do business in the office, or attend some
after-school event. Most of the teachers and parents
are greeted by Tom as they pass by or stop to chat with
students or others. The building is designed so that
most people coming and going pass through the main
entrance. Tom makes it a point to schedule meetings
around the 3:15 to 3:30 daily student dismissal time so
that he can be accessible and visible.

During student interviews, many students commented
that they didn't really know their principal very well
but that he seemed like a nice guy who cared about
them. When asked what made them feel that way a
typical response was that he was always around in the
hallways, student center, and sometimes even in the
classrooms. When he was with the students, they said,
he would talk with them, smile at them, and joke with
them. They said that sometimes he even shot baskets
with them in the gym at noon time. The students also
commented that he was always there for after-school
activities.

One faculty member summarized, "Tom gives his time
unselfishly. He participates enthusiastically in

building events, and I mean participates; he doesn't just stand by the door and show people where to hang their coats." Tom has purposely molded a culture where his high visibility and participation are desired and expected.

Caring

"You need to get to know your people. That's very important. They have to know that I care about them." Tom backs that statement up with action and his staff knows he means it. In the words of one staff member, "Tom is concerned about people. He knows people. He knows what is going on in their personal lives."

Another staff member stated, "Tom shows concern for the students. I marvel at his ability to talk with them. He cares about the school, the staff, and the students, and it shows. He pulls us all together as kind of one big family."

Still another put it this way, "Tom will be there when you need him. He always has time for you and he gets back to you right away if you needed to see him and he wasn't available. He has a lot of empathy toward the staff and helps them with personal things.

Let me put it another way. If my child was
hospitalized Tom would come and visit us."

Tom related an actual incident which bore out the
truth in the statement made by the teacher who felt Tom
would be there if her daughter were in the hospital.
Tom had been having a hard time with a teacher who just
wasn't cooperating. The teacher was having a negative
impact on students and Tom could not persuade him to
change his style. The man's father died and Tom went
to the funeral home prior to the funeral and spent some
time with the teacher and his family. According to
Tom, the teacher still has somewhat of an attitude
problem, but he cooperates more with Tom now and the
gesture of friendship greatly improved their working
relationship.

Tom clearly wants caring to permeate the culture
at Indian Hills. He knows that he sets the tone for
the cultural norms at the school. He makes it known
that care and concern for others are of the utmost
importance by modeling behaviors which convey his
ideals. One item pulled from the artifact file of this
study serves as an excellent example. It's a simple
handwritten letter from Tom to a student's parents
praising the student for making the honor roll. Tom

writes a similar letter to the parents of all students who make the honor roll, a statement that says very clearly, "I care about your child."

Encouraging

"Tom is number one. He creates an environment which makes it very positive to work here. He has let me know that his door is always open and that I am welcome to bring anything to him--positive or negative. I've taken in foolish ideas and he listened to them. He never really says no to anything reasonable. He shows support for everyone and encourages people to try things. His positive attitude can rub off on you and on his down days he is still very positive." Those words spoken by an Indian Hills staff member are a good indication of how staff members view Tom's efforts to encourage them and support them in their work. Tom is perceived as one who promotes and encourages new ideas, who stands behind teachers, and who relies on them to make things work well at the school.

Tom's role as a champion means that he encourages others to become champions too. "I don't like the word failure," he says and he means it so much he can't even think of any failures which have occurred in the

programs and activities undertaken by his staff. "I'm
sure we've had some," he states, "but I just can't
think of any right now. I prefer to look at the
lessons we learn from those programs and ideas which
are not as popular as some of our others. That way if
we try them again we'll know how we can improve them."

Tom demonstrates that to encourage people you must
praise them. He looks for ways to build teachers up in
front of their peers. When staff members show him a
positive note they've received from a parent, he may
take it and read it to the entire staff at a faculty
meeting and then post it on the bulletin board in the
teachers' lounge. He writes personal letters of praise
to students, parents, and faculty members. He takes
every opportunity to informally praise people in front
of others. For example, he routinely stops students in
the hallways and congratulates them on some
accomplishment. The praise may be for something as
minor as getting to school on time or something as
major as getting straight As on a report card.

Tom's practice of praising people in front of
others doesn't stop when he leaves the school building.
Heroes help others become heroes after hours too. One
night after a high school football game Tom was walking

out the gate at the stadium with his boss, the
Executive Director of Educational Services, and George,
one of the teachers from Indian Hills. Tom made a
point of telling his boss how important George was to
the success of a program at Indian Hills. The next day
George stopped by Tom's office and thanked him for
making the complimentary remarks to the Executive
Director. He added that even more importantly Tom had
complimented him in front of his daughter, Sue, who was
walking out the gate with them. When he and Sue
arrived home after the game she told the rest of the
family what a nice compliment her father's boss had
given him. Tom could tell that George was very moved
by his praise, especially because of the impact on his
daughter.

Tom works to encourage, motivate, and make heroes
out of students at Indian Hills too. One staff member
explained how Tom had turned a routine conversation
with a student into an opportunity to encourage the
student to do his best. The boy was one of the lower
achieving students in the school and had not been
involved in school activities. However, he had been
given a bit part in an upcoming play. "It's not a very
important part," the boy explained to Tom, "I only have

one line." "Oh, no!" Tom exclaimed, "Don't say that.
There are no unimportant parts in a play. Every actor
and every line is crucial in the success of a play."

Finally, and maybe most importantly, under the
heading of encourager comes the quality of knowing when
to say "thank you." The staff sees Tom as a person who
is very appreciative and as someone who praises people
privately and publicly. For example, one evening at a
program called "The Night of the Known," at which
students in the gifted and talented program portray
famous people in history, Tom, who stands about five
feet seven inches tall, jumped up on a chair in the
student center to announce his appreciation of the
efforts key people had made in putting on the
evening's program. The kudos went on for several
minutes as Tom pointed out each staff member or parent
who had helped with the program, asked them to stand,
explained what they had done, and then enthusiastically
led the applause for all of them from his precarious
perch. This flair for dramatics served Tom well as his
role of chief encourager began to look more like head
cheerleader. No matter what he is called Tom models
the role of encouraging, even urging, people to go

beyond the routine, to break out of the mold, to become champions.

Facilitating

Tom related a story which characterized his thinking on facilitating--stimulating change by encouraging and removing obstacles. When he was a social studies teacher in another school, during the years when team teaching was becoming popular, he and an English teacher were sitting in the teachers' lounge trying to think of a way they could combine classes for some team teaching. The school principal came into the lounge and overheard their conversation. After listening for a while he told them that they had an excellent idea and suggested a humanities unit which incorporated the music and art teachers. He told them he would be willing to support them in any way he could. Tom and the English teacher went ahead with the humanities unit which was a big success. After it was over and Tom and his co-worker were taking credit for the wonderful idea they had had, Tom suddenly realized that it had not been their idea at all. The whole unit had worked out pretty much as the principal had suggested to them months earlier in the lounge.

However, he had made them feel that it was their idea
and gave them credit for the program. Tom realized
that the principal had wanted to have some teachers
work together on a humanities unit and was simply
waiting for the right opportunity to come along. When
it did he simply planted a seed in the minds of some
teachers who would take the idea as their own and
follow through with it. Tom decided that when he
became a principal he would work as a facilitator of
innovation and let key staff members take leadership
roles.

Most of the staff members interviewed volunteered
that Tom encouraged risk taking and innovation. Tom
could be counted on to support good tries and so there
were a lot of good tries going on at Indian Hills with
Tom somehow involved in most of them. In talking about
utilizing the talents of his staff to make Indian Hills
a better school and the number of meetings he ended up
attending as a result, Tom said, "I have a creative
staff. They don't do anything half-heartedly. When
they decide to do a project they usually do it up very
big--a Cecil B. DeMille-type production. That's great
but it takes a lot of time."

Being a facilitator means removing road blocks as well as encouraging. When teachers needed time off from teaching to go to a workshop or organize a program Tom gave it to them. Many times Tom personally filled in for teachers so they could participate in a meeting or workshop. Leadership, for Tom, did not mean staying out of the trenches.

Being a leader in the trenches also meant coaching an extracurricular activity, something normally not taken on by principals of modern day suburban junior high schools. Tom coached the Future Problem Solving Team at Indian Hills. The team met once a week to learn higher level thinking skills and utilize them in developing creative solutions to problems which they might face as future leaders of the country. The team has been successful in school district, regional, and state competition held each year.

Tom's role as a facilitator has required him to develop a sense of trust with people. He has done that by listening to them, caring about them, being empathetic with them, relying on them, setting expectations with them, and being fair with them. The "people that work at Indian Hills" was the factor most often cited by the school staff as the thing which made

their school exemplary. Tom was cited as the one who made them all pull together. In the words of one staff member, "He gets people to work together for the good of the students and for the good of the building. He expects people to work and he lets them know if they aren't living up to expectations. However, he's a diplomat and he maintains good feelings among everybody on this staff."

Instructional leadership is the one area which some staff members said was not a strong point of Tom's. Teacher evaluations, for example, were viewed by some as being of little value. On the SII the staff rated instructional leadership as the second most important of six administrative functions. However, they rated Tom's effectiveness in that area as being somewhat lower than three other functions on the list; although the point total still indicated a high degree of effectiveness. It would seem that Tom's vision of himself as a facilitator of instructional and curricular change and his preference for encouraging key staff members to take leadership would account for some of the feeling staff members might have that instructional leadership was not his strong point. The effect of his willingness to take a low profile

position in this area might be construed by some to be a lack of leadership. Perhaps it would be more appropriate to say that Tom was exercising situational leadership. In a building where student achievement was very high he could afford to place his emphasis elsewhere.

Promoting Customer Relations

Staff members at Indian Hills gave Tom a 4.78 out of a possible 5.00 on the SII in School-Community Relations--an unbelievably high rating. Tom's effectiveness rating in the other five leadership functions ranged from 3.94 to 4.19. Why did the Indian Hills' staff consider the school-community or customer relations area to be by far Tom's greatest strength? An examination of his relationship with the Parent Advisory Council might lend some insight to this question.

The Parent Advisory Council (PAC) was made up of 15 parents, mainly mothers, who served two years on a board which was designed to foster open communications between the school staff and parents. The PAC members also enlisted other parents to help with open house, volunteer to help in the school and lend a hand with

some fund raisers, such as magazine sales. Tom met
with the PAC on a monthly basis but more importantly he
kept each and everyone of them informed when a major or
controversial issue arose at school. For example, if
drugs were found in a student's locker Tom called each
member of the PAC after he investigated the situation
and obtained the facts. He called before the students
were dismissed for the day, if at all possible, because
he wanted PAC members to hear the facts from him rather
than rumors from their children. The PAC members were
then expected to share the facts with other parents
throughout the community. Tom stated, "It is worth it
for me to take the time to make those 15 phone calls
when something controversial comes up. It takes a lot
of time but in the long run it saves a lot of headaches
because wild and distorted rumors get squelched quickly
by parents who have gotten the facts straight from me."

Tom realized that it was important to have a loyal
person he could count on heading up the PAC. While
most parents served two-year terms, the chairperson of
the PAC had served for eight years even though she
hadn't had any children at Indian Hills for several
years. She was a personal friend of Tom's who also
happened to be the study hall supervisor at the

school and was readily available to give Tom PAC input on school matters or take care of PAC business that Tom might otherwise end up handling. Keeping key people in the right positions seemed to be a real strong point of Tom's.

There were many other things that were important to Tom in the area of customer relations. The school had many evening programs for parents during the year. Programs were held to better inform parents about the writing program, the computer program, and the talented and gifted program. The school also held the usual open houses, plays, concerts, parent-teacher conferences, and athletic events. Tom participated in all of the events in some way or another; he wasn't just a spectator. However, his work was not finished when an event ended and everyone went home. Tom had a keen awareness that people like to be thanked for helping out with school events. For example, after a band festival that lasted all day on a Saturday and required a large number of volunteer helpers, Tom wrote 45 thank you notes to parents who had helped out.

One of the innovative methods of promoting customer relations at Indian Hills was a six-page glossy newspaper-size marketing brochure developed by

the staff at the school. Tom seemed very proud of the brochure, and with good reason. In the spring of 1987 the school received the National School Public Relations Association's Golden Achievement Award in recognition of the brochure.

Perhaps the best example of Tom's emphasis on customer relations is the summer tours program he conducted each summer. Tom felt that incoming seventh graders might be overwhelmed with the size of the building and the volume of information they receive during the traditional orientation and group tour held in the spring of their sixth grade year. He therefore invited all incoming seventh graders to call him at the school during the summer to arrange a personal tour of the school with Tom as their tour guide. Of course Tom wanted students to bring their parents along too. What better way to sell the new students and their parents on the merits of the school? During the summer of 1985, Tom conducted 75 personalized tours.

In their book, <u>In Search of Excellence</u>, Peters and Waterman (1982) identified eight attributes as being present in the cultures of excellent companies they studied. One attribute was that of being "close to the

customer." On that subject Tom Drake could have
written the book.

Final Thoughts

Champion? Hero? Cultural Leader? Does Tom fit
the mold which might be expected for any of these
roles? Yes, but a review of the five qualities which
characterize his leadership style seem to indicate that
it is molded somewhat by the situation. Maybe Tom
should be described as "situational leader."
Situational leaders are true champions because they
have the ability to be drivers in one situation and
facilitators in another. Situational leaders keep one
ear to the ground and use their flexible style to shape
peoples' beliefs and values in a variety of
circumstances.

There is yet another title which may best describe
Tom--"symbolic leader." According to Sergiovanni
(1984), "A symbolic leader assumes the role of 'chief'
and by emphasizing selective attention (the modeling of
important goals and behaviors) signals to others what
is of importance and value" (p. 7). Tom is definitely
the "chief" at Indian Hills Junior High School. He is
wise enough to realize he cannot build a strong culture

by attempting to manage all the behaviors which take place at the school. Instead he selects those which he considers to be most important and models them. Symbolic leaders sometimes work below the surface to make things happen but they also have a feel for the dramatic. They are able to communicate their sense of vision by words and examples. Their objective is to stir human consciousness, to enhance meaning, and articulate key cultural strands that identify the substance of the school and link the persons involved in the school's activities to them (Sergiovanni, 1984).

Champion? Hero? Situational Leader? Symbolic Leader? Tom may play any of these roles as he works to shape the beliefs, values, and norms of the people at Indian Hills Junior High School. It is difficult to determine which role Tom plays most as the spark that ignites his school's culture. Perhaps a new and unique term is needed to best describe his effort--Culture Shaper Extraordinaire!

References

Deal, T. E., & Kennedy, A. A. (1982). Corporate cultures: The rites and rituals of corporate life. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Peters, T. J., & Austin, N. K. (1985). A passion for excellence: The leadership difference. New York: Random House.

Peters, T. J., & Waterman, R. H. (1982). In search of excellence: Lessons from America's best-run companies. New York: Harper and Row.

Sergiovanni, T. J. (1984). Leadership and excellence. Educational Leadership, 41, 5-B.

Sweeney, J. (1983). School improvement inventory. Ames, IA: Iowa State University.

JOURNAL ARTICLE III:

ONE MORE TIME, THE DIFFERENCE--

PEOPLE! PEOPLE! PEOPLE!

Every day in a scene repeated in school after
school throughout the nation a principal walks down the
hall in the morning before the students arrive.
Greeting teachers in the hallway or watching them work
in their classrooms provides a warm glowing feeling
inside--her teachers are competent, caring, and
trustworthy. She's proud to be captain of a top-notch
team of professionals who can be counted on to use
effective teaching practices in accomplishing the
instructional tasks conscientiously planned for the
day. In some instances the feeling of admiration and
trust may be very strong, widespread, and mutual
resulting in a widely shared value that people here are
important. The value placed on people is shared by
teachers, students, and parents because respect begets
respect. Parents appreciate a school in which they
feel that the physical, social, and academic needs of
their children are being met. A shared value
emphasizing the importance of people brings all parties
together, working toward a common goal.

The antithesis of the scenario described is
depicted in another school. In this school the
principal greets at least a few of his teachers with a
less than satisfying feeling. He views some of his
teachers as incompetent, not caring, or untrustworthy
and may feel uneasy, even queasy, if there is a need to
confront one of them with a problem. The queasy
feeling sometimes spreads to those on the faculty and
camps of mistrust develop. Collegiality, a sense of
personal caring, and professional support among staff
members, takes a nose-dive. Students in the school
play second fiddle to petty staff concerns,
confrontations, and jealousies. They sense this and
the message goes home to parents. Occasionally parents
are even pulled into the middle of conflicts between
staff members. Instead of a feeling that people are
important a sense of discomfort, isolation, and even
anomie prevails. This article validates the importance
of people in public schools. The article is the result
of a one-year study of the culture of a high achieving
junior high school.

Understanding the school's setting is a
prerequisite to understanding its culture. Indian
Hills Junior High School is a school of just over 400

seventh and eighth grade students situated in an upper
middle class suburban community located on the west
edge of Des Moines, Iowa. The school serves students
from parts of four towns which comprise the West Des
Moines Community School District. Parents are
typically well educated professional and white collar
workers who tend to be very supportive of education.
Student achievement reflects the support and emphasis
placed on education by their parents. Students at the
school consistently score above the 90th percentile
nationally on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills.
Expectations at the school are high, and rightfully so;
the average IQ of the student body is 114.

The purpose of the study was to exmine the
culture, i.e., the beliefs, values, and norms, in a
high achieving junior high school. The study was
designed to paint a portrait of the school's culture.
An ethnographic case study approach which makes
extensive use of participant observation, interviews,
and analysis of information was used. The observer
spent approximately 130 hours on-site during the nine
month 1985-86 school year examining artifacts,
observing, and interviewing students and staff.
Countless hours were spent reviewing and analyzing

observation and interview notes and the artifacts collected from the school.

Analysis of the data uncovered a powerful and driving force which emanated from one common theme--At Indian Hills People Make a Difference. Those beliefs tended to coalesce into shared values that guided the norms or standards of behavior at the school. This theme is best illustrated by four stories which include: (a) In the Beginning . . . ; (b) Through Thick and Thin; (c) A Bird's-Eye View; and (d) Fun, Zest, Enthusiasm.

In the Beginning . . .

When asked what he would remember most about Indian Hills Junior High School, if it were his last day on the job, Tom, the school's principal responded, "the beginning." He explained that the new school building was supposed to have been completed in time to open on the first day of the school year. However, a labor strike had brought construction delays and it was two months into the school year before the building was ready for occupation. In the meantime, teachers and students were holding classes in an old high school building that was slated for the wrecking ball.

Teachers already had most materials, supplies, and
equipment packed away in boxes with the anticipation
that any day they would be moving into the new
building. At the time, frustration mounted as each
week brought another announcement that the moving date
was being set back. Looking back on it, however, Tom
felt that the delays and the actual move itself had
pulled the staff, students, and parents together and
begun a tradition of pride and a feeling that if all
would pull together as a team they could accomplish
great things.

The culminating event in "the beginning" was the
actual move from the old high school building to the
new Indian Hills building. The plan was to complete
the move over one long weekend, a task which was much
too large for the school district's maintenance
department. A moving committee composed of parents was
selected to organize volunteers for the move and
coordinate all phases of the move with the school's
staff. That committee later became the nucleus of the
school's Parent Advisory Council (PAC). The
chairperson of the moving committee became the
chairperson of the PAC and still chairs it nine years
later even though she no longer has children at Indian

Hills. Her position as a kind of matriarch of the PAC began with the move.

Moving started on Thursday and continued on Friday with students moving books simply by picking them up and then climbing aboard a bus that took them to Indian Hills. When they arrived, students were directed to the proper classroom or the media center to deposit their cargo in a designated position on the bookshelves. On Saturday and Sunday, students, teachers, and parents worked side by side to transport equipment from the old school to the new. Parents brought trucks and station wagons to be used for hauling. A large local grocery store donated coffee and doughnuts. Lunch and dinner were served to all workers by parents assigned to the kitchen. There was so much help that parents who showed up for the afternoon shift on Sunday found that there was no moving left to do. They were actually disappointed at not being able to help.

Tom recalls that the best thing about the weekend was that it layed the groundwork for a people-oriented philosophy in which everyone depended on everyone else to get things done. Teachers and students worked side by side toward the same goal. Parents and teachers got

to know each other over a cup of coffee and a doughnut.
Parents who might not ordinarily get a chance to know
each other worked together unloading trucks, moving
furniture, and preparing food for dinner. The event
provided a family feeling that has been maintained
through the years and in Tom's opinion wouldn't have
taken hold so strongly from the start if it had not
been for the delayed opening of the new building and
the push to move everything over one weekend.

The move will be commemorated at the school's
tenth year birthday party in October 1987. The PAC
Chairperson still has the names of all the parents she
helped recruit as head of the moving committee ten
years earlier. They will be asked to attend the
birthday party as honored guests.

Through Thick and Thin

A common characteristic of organizations with
strong cultures is their storehouse of stories to
illustrate the descriptions of their culture. Many
Indian Hills staff members recall a period in their
history which, although a sad occasion, brings back
great feelings of warmth and pride. One of the faculty
members became terminally ill with cancer. She and her

husband moved to a town in another part of the state
and indeed spent a great amount of time at a hospital
in another state. The staff at Indian Hills stuck with
her, however, to the end. Many of the faculty members
wrote her letters on a regular basis. Some made the
200-mile round trip to her home for visits when she was
back in the state. The principal even wrote her
husband a letter to comfort him during a difficult
time. In an effort to inject some humor into the dying
teacher's existence, the staff started sending her a
monthly picture album with comical photographs of the
staff. Staff members enjoyed sorting through the
pictures each month and writing humorous captions to be
included with the photos in the album. The monthly
albums quickly became a highlight in the life of the
dying woman.

After the teacher died her husband brought the
school a gift of $3,000. His wife had lived out her
final days knowing that her Indian Hills family cared
very much for her. She directed her husband to give
the school the entire amount of her retirement fund
which had accumulated over her four years of full and
part-time teaching. All memorial contributions made in
her name were also designated for the school. The

school used the money to pay for a link-up with a new
national library network which provides instant access,
via satellite, to the collections of a neighboring
state university and the Library of Congress.

The importance of people comes through loud and
clear in this story of caring and loyalty. The story
illustrates that at Indian Hills Junior High, as in any
organizational staff, there are rough times. However,
when staff members genuinely care for and support one
another those difficult events can bring them closer
together, become a source of strength and courage for
all, and end up providing unforeseen benefits for the
surviving members.

A Bird's-Eye View

From their unique perch students can provide some
very candid insights into the beliefs, values, and
norms of an organization--a sort of bird's-eye view.
As part of the study of the school's culture, 10% of
the student body was interviewed in small group
sessions lasting about an hour and one-half each.
During the interviews it became apparent that the key
to positive student attitudes at Indian Hills was the
students' perception of their teachers. When asked why

the school deserved the U.S. Department of Education award as an exemplary school the responses heard most often dealt with the high quality of the teaching staff. Students described their teachers as good, well-trained, using excellent methods, caring about their students, funny, easy going, working hard to help students, available, and easy to talk with. "Teachers" were most frequently listed as what the students liked most about the school, the most unique thing about the school, and the thing students would remember most about the school.

Students described their favorite teachers as having a sense of humor, being interested in us, and willing to give us extra help. They also appreciated a common characteristic which was attributable to most teachers in the school, high expectations. The students felt good about being asked to produce high quality work as long as teachers were willing to give extra help and encouragement when needed. They felt they normally got the help they needed because teachers were available during resource periods, planning periods, and before or after school. They singled out science special help sessions, held before school in the morning, as being particularly well attended. In

the words of many students "teachers here want us to
succeed and are willing to go out of their way to help
us."

To some degree, students noted that their school
was a good and successful place because of other
students. They saw their colleagues as friendly,
cooperative, and hard-working. Some things seemed to
help promote this: there were numerous opportunities
for students to talk with others during and after
school hours; students settled their differences
without fighting; and the common feeling that getting
good grades was important. The importance placed on
good grades and working hard to get them seemed to
promote the idea that "We're all in this together."

Students felt they had a friendly relationship
with the principal. They described him as a "nice guy"
who, "is fair, signs our year books, stands in for
teachers when they are gone, stands on the sidelines
and cheers for us at football games, plays basketball
with us at noon, holds conversations with anyone, can
be strict but is usually easy going, smiles a lot,
helps people do a good job, participates in all school
events, believes what we tell him, remembers things
about us, cares about us, and spends most of his time

outside his office." Many students commented that they didn't know the principal nearly as well as they knew their teachers. However, they all knew who he was and all had positive feelings about him.

The information gleaned from student interviews is not surprising in light of the research findings of Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, an Ouston (1979). They found that "pupils behaved better and achieved more when teachers treated them in ways which emphasized their success and good potential rather than those which focused on their failings and shortcomings" (p. 196). Rutter et al. found that joint activities involving students and teachers outside the classroom helped to break down barriers so that they could appreciate each other more. No better example of the breakdown of barriers exists in the observations and interviews than the end-of-the-year program described below.

Fun, Zest, Enthusiasm

Peters and Austin (1985), in their book A Passion for Excellence, dedicated a whole chapter to the need for fun, zest, and enthusiasm within organizations. Their research revealed that many of the successful

organizations they studied attach a great deal of
importance to finding things to celebrate and making
fun out of their work. When the authors found zest and
fun in organizational life they said it was unique
because, in their opinion, the instinct to have fun in
their work is driven out of people by their formal
education. In fact, they facetiously stated a "secret
hypothesis":

>   Over the entrance to Harvard Business School (or
>   the business/professional school of your choice),
>   there's a giant stone lintel. Deeply inscribed
>   in the granite are the following lines: 'All ye
>   who enter here shall never smile again. American
>   business/education/etc. is damned serious stuff!"
>   (p. 252).

Although said in jest, the hypothesis often brings
back unpleasant memories of stodgy professors and dull
courses from undergraduate or graduate school days.
After all, prospective teachers are trained not to
smile until Thanksgiving. However, the staff at Indian
Hills must not have paid attention if indeed the
inscription was in place physically or philosophically
at their teacher training institutions. They seem to
agree with the observation made by Peters and Austin
that "winners are people who have fun" (1985, p. 252).
Their activities on the last day of school provide an
excellent example.

Traditionally the last day of school at Indian Hills is dedicated to a celebration of the year's events, activities, and achievements. The final session of the day is an awards ceremony where outstanding students are given certificates extolling their accomplishments. Although the awards ceremony is evidence of a strong culture which celebrates excellence (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Peters & Austin, 1985; Peters & Waterman, 1982) it is the morning session which generates the most enthusiasm, zest, and downright fun on the part of both students and staff.

In 1986, the morning began with all students gathering in the gymnasium and two students dressed in funny clothes welcoming everyone to the student talent show. There were some acts with decent talent and the students showed their appreciation through clapping and cheering. One group of students posed as a rock group. They really weren't good enough to be a rock group; in fact they were absolutely awful. As they went through their gyrations the student body got into the act and played the role of an admiring crowd of rock fans, complete with screams and fainting. The noise was thunderous and it almost seemed too real, giving one the uncomfortable feeling that the crowd might actually

be getting out of hand. However, when the song was over the student emcees came back onto the floor, the crowd quieted down, and the next portion of the program began. Students were treated to a slide show recapping student events and activities which took place throughout the year. The students watched intently as the slides were flashed up on the giant screen to the tune of a popular song. The student portion of the program ended with jokes by the emcees and speeches by two graduating students, both of whom thanked their teachers and fellow students for helping them to have a memorable two years at Indian Hills.

At many schools that would have been the end of the talent show but not at Indian Hills. After the emcees had made their final remarks a song called "The Super Bowl Shuffle," made popular by the Chicago Bears' championship football team, boomed from the loud speaker system. Across the floor shuffled almost the entire faculty to the rhythm of the song. Two faculty leaders jerked and jived their way to the podium and recited lyrics which had been written to poke fun at the staff. Each staff member was introduced with a short humorous verse which went with the music. As faculty members were introduced they danced their way

to the center of the gym floor and signed in at a chalkboard. Throughout the song all staff members snapped their fingers and did a shuffle step as their colleagues were introduced. The students loved it, cheering on each faculty member as he/she shuffled onto center stage. The humorous lyrics brought loud laughs from the students. The program ended with some serious words from the principal and everyone went back to class. Not only does a staff member need a sense of humor to participate in an act like that but she must also have a feeling of confidence, a feeling that "it's all right to let your hair down in this group." That feeling comes readily when people within the group respect one another, when they appreciate each other's feelings and emotions, and when all understand that people are important.

Final Thoughts

A people-oriented philosophy is not developed easily in a school or any organization. It takes time to build rapport and trust which is a prerequisite. It's easier if the attitude that "everyone in this organization pulls together" is developed "in the beginning," as it was at Indian Hills. Pulling

together gets reinforced through trials and tribulations so that people in the organization know it holds true "through thick and thin." The school's customers, its students, must also be included under the heading of important people--after all, they have "a bird's-eye view." Finally, three keys to developing a people-oriented philosophy--"fun, zest, enthusiasm"--were all found at Indian Hills. The staff was able to laugh at themselves and was very aware that their ability to joke with students was crucial in establishing the rapport which makes teaching and learning more enjoyable and successful.

As we continue to strive for excellence it seems that we must continue to develop schools which are not only technically sound but schools which promote, and in fact exalt, in the belief that people, not things, make a difference.

References

Deal, T. E., & Kennedy, A. A. (1982). <u>Corporate cultures: The rites and rituals of corporate life</u>. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Joyce, B. R., Hersh, R. H., & McKebbin, M. (1983). <u>The structure of school improvement</u>. Foreward by J. I. Goodlad. New York: Longman.

Peters, T. J., & Austin, N. K. (1985). <u>A passion for excellence: The leadership difference</u>. New York: Random House.

Peters, T. J., & Waterman, R. H. (1982). <u>In search of excellence: Lessons from America's best-run companies</u>. New York: Harper & Row.

Rutter, M., Maughan, B., Mortimore, P., & Ouston, J. (1979). <u>Fifteen thousand hours: Secondary schools and their effects on children</u>. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

DISCUSSION

There has been extensive research focusing on characteristics of effective schools. Much of the research has resulted in lists of attributes found in those schools such as a safe and orderly climate, a clear and focused emphasis on instruction, strong instructional leadership, high expectations for students, and consistent monitoring of student progress. While we know much about the so-called correlates of effective schools, values, beliefs, and norms, cultural factors found to be important in the private sector have not been researched. We know little about the culture of schools. The purpose of this study was to examine the culture of a high achieving junior high school in an attempt to describe that culture and make some assumptions as to how it was formed. The study was designed to paint a portrait of the school's culture, i.e., the values, beliefs, and norms of the school's students and staff.

An ethnographic method was used to conduct the case study. The researcher spent three days a month at Indian Hills Junior High School in West Des Moines, Iowa during the 1985-86 school year. The 128 hours

(16 days) on site included observations and/or
interviews which took place before school, after
school, on teacher work days, during open house, at
athletic events, and at parent-teacher conferences as
well as during the regular school day. The researcher
utilized the participant-observer approach and formal
as well as informal interviews. After all data were
collected, observational notes, interview transcripts,
and artifacts were analyzed to determine if common
themes existed in the school's culture and to make some
assumptions as to how they developed.

Limitations

Certain limitations of the study must be pointed
out. Since only one school was studied one should not
attempt to generalize findings to other schools. Due
to time constraints the researcher spent 16 days
on-site. While that seems a reasonable time in which
to gain a good sense of the school's culture it is less
than 10% of the school year and obviously there are
some things which were not observed. It should be
pointed out that there was only one observer and
therefore views in this study are those of one
individual. There were no formal interviews with

parents in this study as the primary focus was on staff
and students.

Results

The purpose of this study was to examine the
culture, i.e., the values, beliefs, and norms in a high
achieving junior high school. A climate survey was
given to begin the study and it confirmed that a
positive climate existed at the school. Observations,
interviews, and analysis of artifacts uncovered six
dominant themes which permeated the school's culture.

As a result of the study the researcher formulated
six assumptions about strong positive school cultures
which may lead to further study:

1. The major force shaping the culture is the
leadership provided by the principal. The principal
worked to model beliefs, values, and behaviors that he
felt were most important. It was obvious from
observations and interviews that the tone he set
influenced beliefs, helped determine values, and set
the norms for the staff and students at the school.

2. A widely-shared value that people are
important has a powerful effect on the culture. The
principal continuously behaved in a fashion which

presented this; staff members demonstrated it through
their interaction with students; and students reflected
it by talking about the importance of their teachers.
It became a norm in the school and may have been
initiated when parents, students, and teachers all
labored side by side on a weekend when equipment was
moved into the new school.

3. A positive learning climate is important in
the culture. The atmosphere in the school was
business-like and task oriented but positive. Students
seemed to have an attitude that we are here to learn
and that comes first. Although expectations were for
high standards of behavior from students the climate
was in no way repressive. The mutual respect teachers
and students had for one another appeared casual and
natural. High expectations for academic achievement
seemed to make the positive climate a necessity.

4. A sense of pride is extremely important to
staff and students in developing the culture. Staff
members were proud of each other for providing
wonderful opportunities for students. Staff members
were also proud of their principal and the role he
played in setting a positive tone in the building.
Students were proud of their teachers and felt that

they were the reason that the school deserved the
national "Excellence in Education" award it had
received from the U.S. Department of Education.

5. <u>Staff autonomy and intrapreneurship seem to
have an uplifting effect on the culture</u>. Staff members
felt they were given the freedom to run their
classrooms as professionals "without someone telling
them every move to make." They were free to be
creative and innovative. The culture spawned
intrapreneurs or risk takers within the organization
whose efforts helped the school become more successful.

6. <u>The culture is a mixture of loosely coupled
and tightly coupled systems</u>. Procedures for
coordination, inspection, responsiveness, and
accountability of the school's professional staff were
linked together loosely. This looseness seemed to stem
from the nature of the organization and the principal's
recognition of that nature. The work and behavior of
students, however, was much more closely regulated and
monitored.

Implications

This study has painted a somewhat hazy portrait of
the culture of one high achieving junior high school.

The results of the study point toward several common themes in the development of the school's strong positive culture. Those themes: (a) leadership, (b) importance of people, (c) positive learning climate, (d) sense of pride, (e) staff autonomy and intrapreneurship, and (f) loose/tight couplings, reflect the beliefs, values, and norms of the people within the culture. It is important to note that those themes are somewhat at odds with the characteristics commonly associated with effective schools research.

For example, the leadership found at Indian Hills was not the strong instructional variety found in the Effective Schools Model. The leadership exerted by the principal at Indian Hills was symbolic leadership which included modeling, dramatizing and cheerleading in order to articulate key cultural strands. Possibly high achieving schools which are already effective don't need to place such a strong emphasis on test scores, monitoring student progress, and the classic definition of instructional leadership. High achieving schools with strong positive cultures may be beyond the more rigid characteristics needed in schools striving to meet minimum requirements of effectiveness.

The type of leadership required in such schools will vary from one situation to the next.

Recommendations for Further Research

While this study shed light on the important questions regarding common themes in a strong positive school culture, it may have raised more questions than it answered. To those considering research in this area, I would suggest that the following be considered for further study:

1. In this study several common themes were uncovered in the culture of one high achieving junior high school. Further study needs to be undertaken in other high achieving schools to determine if the same common themes exist. It seems to this researcher that the themes should be expected to vary from one cultural scene to the next because of all the situational factors involved. However, this researcher suspects that the importance of people will be a theme in any strong positive school culture.

2. This study found that leadership provided by the principal had a powerful impact upon the culture of the school. Further research might examine other strong positive school cultures to see if that holds

true. This researcher believes that since many schools are loosely coupled systems a symbolic leader must be present to promote a strong positive culture. That symbolic leader will help mold champions and heroes out of other staff members.

3. This study concentrated on the beliefs, values, and norms of staff and students. Further studies of strong positive school cultures need to include parents. Their role in providing support is obviously important but what effect do they have on the culture of a school?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Barth, R. S. (1986). On sheep and goats and school reform. Phi Delta Kappan, 68(4), 293-296.

Bidwell, C. E. (1975). Some causes of conflict and tension among teachers. Administration of Public Education. S. J. Knesvich (Ed.). New York: Harper & Row.

Borg, W. R., & Gall, M. D. (1983). Educational research: An introduction (4th ed.). New York: Longman.

Boyer, E. L. (1983). High school: A report on secondary education in America. New York: Harper & Row.

Brittenham, L. R. (1980). An ethnographic case study of the administrative organization, processes, and behavior in an innovative senior high school. Wisconsin University, Madison. Research and Development Center for Individualized Schooling. Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Education.

Brookover, W. B., Beady, C., Flood, P., Schweitzer, J., & Wisenbaker, J. (1979). School social systems and student achievement: Schools can make a difference. New York: Praeger.

Cohen, M. D. (1983). Instructional management and social conditions in effective schools. In A. Odden & D. Webb (Eds.), School finance and school improvement: Linkages in the 1980s. Yearbook of the American Educational Finance Association.

Coleman, J. S., Campbell, E., Hobson, C., McPartland, J., Mood, A., Weinfeld, F., & York, R. (1966). Equality of educational opportunity. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office.

Deal, T. E., & Kennedy, A. A. (1982). Corporate cultures: The rites and rituals of corporate life. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Dobbert, M. L. (1982). Ethnographic research: Theory and application for modern schools and societies. New York: Praeger.

Edmonds, R. (1978, October). Effective schools for the urban poor. Educational Leadership, 37, 15-27.

Geertz, C. (1973). The interpretation of cultures. New York: Basic Books.

Goodenough, W. H. (1976). Multiculturalism as the normal human experience. Anthropology and Education Quarterly, 8, 4-7.

Jencks, C. S., Smith, M. S. Ackland, H., Bane, M. J., Cohen, D., Gintis, H., Heyns, B., & Michelson, S. (1972). Inequality: A reassessment of the effect of family and schooling in America. New York: Basic Books.

Joyce, B. R., Hersh, R. H., & McKibbin, M. (1983). The structure of school improvement. Foreward by J. I. Goodlad. New York: Longman.

Koprowski, E. J. (1983, Autumn). Cultural myths: Clues to effective management. Organizational Dynamics, pp. 39-49.

Lezotte, L. W. (1981). Instructionally effective schools. IMPACT on Instructional Improvement. New York State Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development, 16, 26-31.

Lightfoot, S. L. (1983). The good high school: Portraits of character and culture. New York: Basic Books.

Lortie, D. C. (1975). Schoolteacher: A sociological study. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

McPhee, J. (1966). The headmaster. New York: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux.

Metz, M. H. (1982). Magnet schools in their organizational environment. Final report. Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Education, Department of Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 221 621).

Ouchi, W. G. (1981). Theory Z: How American business can meet the Japanese challenge. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Overholt, G. E., & Stallings, W. M. (1976). Ethnographic and experimental hypotheses in educational research. Educational Researcher, 5(8), 12-14.

Pascale, R., & Athos, A. (1981). The art of Japanese management. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Peters, T. J., & Austin, N. K. (1985). A passion for excellence: The leadership difference. New York: Random House.

Peters, T. J., & Waterman, R. H. (1982). In search of excellence: Lessons from America's best-run companies. New York: Harper & Row.

Purkey, S. C., & Smith, M. S. (1985). Educational policy and school effectiveness. In A. R. Gilbert & H. Garber (Eds.), Research on exemplary schools (pp. 181-200). Orlando, FL: Academic Press.

Rist, R. (1975). Ethnographic techniques and the study of the urban school. Urban Education, 10(1), 86-108.

Rutter, M., Maughan, B., Mortimore, P., & Ouston, J. (1979). Fifteen thousand hours: Secondary schools and their effects on children. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Sathe, V. (1983, Autumn). Implications of corporate culture: A managers guide to action. Organizational Dynamics, pp. 5-23.

Sergiovanni, T. J. (1984). Leadership and excellence in schooling. Educational Leadership, 41, 5-13.

Spindler, G., & Spindler, L. (1982). Roger Harker and Schonhausen: From the familiar to the strange and back again. In G. Spindler (Ed.), In doing the ethnography of schooling: Educational anthropology in action. New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston.

Spradley, J. P. (1979). The ethnographic interview. New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston.

Spradley, J. P. (1980). Participant observation. New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston.

Sweeney, J. (1983). School improvement inventory. Ames, IA: Iowa State University.

U.S. Department of Education (1983). National Commission on Excellence in Education. A nation at risk: The imperative for educational reform. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office.

Weick, K. E. (1982). Administering education in loosely coupled schools. Phi Delta Kappan, 27(2), 673-676.

Weick, K. E. (1976). Educational organizations as loosely coupled systems. Administrative Science Quarterly, 21, 1-19.

Wilcox, K. (1982). Ethnography as a methodology and its implications to the study of schooling: A review. In G. Spindler (Ed.), In doing the ethnography of schooling. New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston.

Wilkins, A. L. (Autumn, 1983). The culture audit: A tool for understanding organizations. Organizational Dynamics, pp. 24-38.

Wolcott, H. F. (1973). The man in the principal's office: An ethnography. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

APPENDIX A: LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION

TO CONDUCT THE STUDY

Iowa State University
College of Education
Educational Administration
N229 Quadrangle
Ames, Iowa 50011
July 27, 1985

Dr. Dale Grabinski, Superintendent
West Des Moines Community School District
1101 5th Street
West Des Moines, Iowa 50265

Dear Dr. Grabinski:
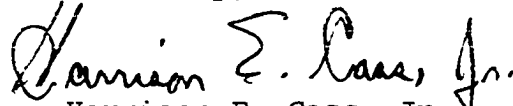
I am writing to request permission to conduct a
case study of the culture of Indian Hills Junior High
School during the 1985-86 school year. The results of
the research will be reported in a dissertation which I
am doing to fulfill requirements for my Ph.D. at Iowa
State University.

I have spoken with Dr. C. Douglas Buchanan and
Mr. Tom Drake about this case study and they have both
given their approval. However, I feel I need written
approval from you before I can begin the study this
fall.

I have enclosed a copy of the proposal for the
study. It has been approved by my graduate committee at
Iowa State.

I look forward to hearing from you regarding this
request.

Sincerely,

Harrison E. Cass, Jr.

Enclosure

APPENDIX B: LETTER GRANTING PERMISSION

TO CONDUCT THE STUDY

**West Des Moines
Community Schools**

1101 Fifth Street
West Des Moines
Iowa 50265
Phone (515) 223-1480

*Leaders in
Learning*

July 31, 1985

Harrison E. Cass, Jr.
Stedebharan Farm
Cumming, Iowa 50061

Dear Mr. Cass:

I have reviewed your dissertation proposal and your request
to use Indian Hills Junior High School as a case study during
the 1985-86 school year.

I believe your proposal is a worthy study and will contribute
to our knowledge base in the general area of school culture/
climate. As a result, I will approve the use of Indian Hills
Junior High School in your study.

Please review your project, requirements, and related areas
with Dr. Buchanan and Mr.   as you proceed with the study.

I wish you success in your efforts.

Sincerely yours,

Dale L. Grabinski, Ph.D.
Superintendent

DLG/mjd

cc: Dr. C. Douglas Buchanan, Exec. Director Educational Services
     Mr. Tom   , Principal, Indian Hills Junior High School

APPENDIX C: HUMAN SUBJECTS COMMITTEE CONSENT

INFORMATION ON THE USE OF HUMAN SUBJECTS IN RESEARCH
IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
(Please follow the accompanying instructions for completing this form.)

(1.) Title of project (please type): __A Case Study of the Culture of a High Achieving__

__Suburban Midwestern Junior High School__

(2.) I agree to provide the proper surveillance of this project to insure that the rights and welfare of the human subjects are properly protected. Additions to or changes in procedures affecting the subjects after the project has been approved will be submitted to the committee for review.

Harrison E. Cass, Jr.	7-29-85	
Typed Named of Principal Investigator	Date	Signature of Principal Investigator

Stedebharan Farm, Cumming, Iowa 50061	(515) 981-4803	WORK PHONE (515) 225-0217
Campus Address	Campus Telephone	

(3.) Signatures of others (if any)   Date   Relationship to Principal Investigator

_____   7/24/85   Major Professor

_____   _____   _____

(4.) ATTACH an additional page(s) (A) describing your proposed research and (B) the subjects to be used, (C) indicating any risks or discomforts to the subjects, and (D) covering any topics checked below. CHECK all boxes applicable.

- [ ] Medical clearance necessary before subjects can participate
- [ ] Samples (blood, tissue, etc.) from subjects
- [ ] Administration of substances (foods, drugs, etc.) to subjects
- [ ] Physical exercise or conditioning for subjects
- [ ] Deception of subjects
- [x] Subjects under 14 years of age and(or) [x] Subjects 14-17 years of age
- [x] Subjects in institutions
- [x] Research must be approved by another institution or agency

RECEIVED AUG 27 '85

(5.) ATTACH an example of the material to be used to obtain informed consent and CHECK which type will be used.

- [x] Signed informed consent will be obtained. (for students)
- [x] Modified informed consent will be obtained. (for adults)

(6.) Anticipated date on which subjects will be first contacted:

	Month	Day	Year
	9	3	85

Anticipated date for last contact with subjects: 5   31   86

(7.) If Applicable: Anticipated date on which audio or visual tapes will be erased and(or) identifiers will be removed from completed survey instruments:

9	1	86
Month	Day	Year

(8.) Signature of Head or Chairperson   Date   Department or Administrative Unit

_____   9/27/85   Prof Studies in Education

(9.) Decision of the University Committee on the Use of Human Subjects in Research:

- [x] Project Approved   [ ] Project not approved   [ ] No action required

George G. Karas	9\4\85	
Name of Committee Chairperson	Date	Signature of Committee Chairperson

APPENDIX D: MODIFIED CONSENT FORM FOR ADULTS

MODIFIED CONSENT FORM FOR ADULTS

I agree to be observed and interviewed during a period of nine months in September 1985 through May 1986, as part of a case study of the culture of a junior high school.

The nature and general purpose of this research procedure have been explained to me. It is my understanding that any inquiries pertaining to my participation in this study will be addressed.

I realize that my participation in this research is voluntary, and I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue participation at any time.

Finally, I understand that my personal identity will not be revealed in any publications, documents, recordings, or in any way which relates to this research at any time.

SIGNED_____

TITLE_____

DATE_____

APPENDIX E: PARENT CONSENT FOR CHILDREN

April 22, 1986

Dear Parent,

Your child's junior high school has agreed to participate in a research project I am conducting as part of my work toward a Ph.D. at Iowa State University. The research is essentially the study of the culture of a high achieving suburban mid-western junior high school. As part of the study I want to talk with students at the school to get their opinion about the school's culture.

There have been many studies in recent years which have concluded that a strong culture has almost always been the driving force behind continuing success in American business. Such books as In Search of Excellence by Peters and Waterman and Corporate Cultures by Deal and Kennedy have made the public very aware of the importance of an organization's culture in bringing about success. It is now time that we in the field of education begin to study the cultures of our excellent organizations. This study will be an attempt to do just that.

The study will include on-site observations of daily events, surveying staff opinion about the school, analyzing school operational procedures, and interviewing parents, staff, and students. I am writing you to request your permission for your child to take part in an interview session. His/her name was one of several selected randomly from a list of all students in the school.

The interview sessions with students will last about 30 minutes. They will include questions such as, "Do your teachers expect you to do well in this school?" and "What kind of rewards do students receive for doing well in school?" Conversations with the students will be tape recorded. The information from the tapes will be transcribed and summarized so that identification of any individual participant will not be possible. As soon as the information is transcribed from the tapes, they will be erased.

Please indicate whether you will permit your child to participate by signing this form and returning it to the school office. If you have any questions about your child's participation please phone me at my office at Western Hills Elementary School, 225-2802 or 225-0217. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Harrison E. Cass, Jr.
Graduate Student
Iowa State University

Parental Permission for Participation in Cass Research Project

I am (willing/not willing) to let my child, _____,
     (circle one)   (child's name)

participate in this study.

Signature_____Date:_____

APPENDIX F: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT INVENTORY

NCS Trans Optic M810 16435 321

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT INVENTORY

Dr. Jim Sweeney

Iowa State University

Copyright © 1983, Iowa State University

ORGANIZATION	BUILDING	GROUP

EXAMPLES	IMPORTANT DIRECTIONS FOR MARKING ANSWERS

○ Teacher
○ Administrator
○ Central Office
○ Other

- Use black lead pencil only (No. 2½ or softer)
- Do NOT use ink or ballpoint pens
- Make heavy black marks that fill the circle completely
- Erase cleanly any answer you wish to change
- Make no stray marks on the answer sheet

This inventory is designed to gather information which can be used for school improvement. In completing this inventory, it is important that you respond as thoughtfully and candidly as possible. Please read the directions carefully and respond to each item as it currently applies to conditions in your school. Described below are six major functions which are the responsibility of your building administrator. You are being asked to rate the relative importance of each for promoting effectiveness in your school.

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT — Assists teachers to motivate, challenge, and excite students to learn at the optimal level, and assists staff in obtaining maximum use of their human potential for reaching personal and organizational goals.

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP — Enhances student learning through updating of curriculum and instructional materials, evaluating staff for the purposes of improvement, and evaluating educational program and student progress.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT — Develops and maintains discipline standards which provide students with a clear understanding of expectations for behavior inside and outside the classroom and provides an educational atmosphere conducive to learning.

NON-INSTRUCTIONAL MANAGEMENT — Schedules all routine and special activities; supervises logistical matters and the school plant.

PUPIL PERSONNEL — Meets with students individually and in groups to address their problems and concerns, and promotes student involvement in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS — Communicates with parents and promotes the school through advisory committees, parent-teacher organization, needs assessment, and the media.

EXAMPLE: Relative Importance

In this example, the respondent decided that Human Resource Management and Learning Environment Management were both of "very high importance" thereby using 10 of the 20 points. The remaining 10 points were distributed among the other four functions. Ten points here given Instructional Leadership, Pupil Personnel, and School-Community Relations 5 points each and then distribute the remaining 5 points among the other 3 functions.

You have 20 points to distribute among the six functions (using the 1 to 5 scale provided). While you may think that all of the functions are very important, since you have only 20 points to work with, it will be necessary for you to make some decisions as to the relative importance of each function. You may assign the same rating to more than one function and must rate each of the six. Below is an example of how one respondent approached the task.

Relative Importance

Please indicate the relative importance of each of the six functions for promoting effectiveness in your school by rating each function from 1 to 5. (Keep in mind that the total must equal 20.)

	IMPORTANCE				
	Very low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Human Resource Management	○	●	○	○	○
Instructional Leadership	○	○	○	●	○
Learning Environment Management	○	○	○	○	●
Non-instructional Management	○	○	●	○	○
Pupil Personnel	○	○	○	●	○
School-Community Relations	○	○	○	○	○

20

	IMPORTANCE				
	Very low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Human Resource Management	○	○	○	○	○
Instructional Leadership	○	○	○	○	○
Learning Environment Management	○	○	○	○	○
Non-instructional Management	○	○	○	○	○
Pupil Personnel	○	○	○	○	○
School-Community Relations	○	○	○	○	○

20

LEVEL OF EFFECTIVENESS

In this section you are asked to indicate the level of effectiveness at which the six major functions described previously have been carried out by your building administrator. Please review each of the descriptions on the first page and indicate the level at which each function has been performed. If you are completing this inventory on or before February 1, consider performance during the previous school year. If the survey is completed after February 1, consider performance during only the current school year.

	Level of Effectiveness				
	Very low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Human Resource Management	①	②	③	④	⑤
Instructional Leadership	①	②	③	④	⑤
Learning Environment Management	①	②	③	④	⑤
Non-instructional Management	①	②	③	④	⑤
Pupil Personnel	①	②	③	④	⑤
School-Community Relations	①	②	③	④	⑤

PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL AND JOB

This section is designed to gather information about how you view your school and job. Please examine each item carefully and darken the circle which best represents your perception for each of the questions posed.

EXAMPLE:

To what extent are teachers in your school involved in major decisions related to their work?

Very little		Some		Considerable		Very great	
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧

If you think teachers have "considerable" involvement in decisions, fill in 5 or 6. Fill in a 5 if you feel the situation is closer to "some"; fill in a 6 if you feel the situation is closer to "very great". If you think there is "very little" you will have to decide whether it is closer to "some" (3) or "none" and mark either a 1 or a 2.

1. To what extent does your school strive for excellence?

Very little		Some		Considerable		Very great	
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧

2. In your school, to what extent do different grade levels, departments, and curriculum areas plan and coordinate their efforts together?

Very little		Some		Considerable		Very much	
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧

3. How many teachers in your school feel that all their students should be taught to read well and master other academic subjects even though some students may not appear to be interested?

Very few		Some		Many		Most	
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧

4. How likely are you to expend extra effort to raise student achievement?

Not very likely		Somewhat likely		Quite likely		Very likely	
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧

5. To what extent do teachers in your school convey to students that learning is important?

Very little		Some		Considerable		Very great	
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧

6. To what extent is the building administrator in your school viewed by teachers as being non-supportive?

Very little		Some		Considerable		Very great	
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧

7. In your school, do most teachers feel it is worthwhile or a waste of time to do their best?

Waste of time		Somewhat worthwhile		Worthwhile		Very worthwhile	
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧

8. To what extent do teachers in your school set challenging goals for students?

Very little		Some		Considerable		Very great	
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧

9. In your school is it every person for himself or do teachers work together as a team?

No teamwork		Some but not enough teamwork		Adequate but more is needed		Great amount of teamwork	
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧

10. How satisfying is teaching in your school?

Not satisfying		Somewhat satisfying		Quite satisfying		Very satisfying	
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧

11. To what extent do teachers in your school challenge low-ability students?

Very little		Some		Considerable		Very much	
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧

12. To what extent do teachers in your school give help to one another on important school matters?

Very little		Some		Considerable		Very great	
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧

13. To what extent do teachers look forward to teaching each day?

Very little		Some		Quite a bit		Very much	
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧

14. How would you describe the commitment of teachers to high performance goals in your school?

Very weak		Somewhat strong		Quite strong		Very strong	
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧

15. To what extent do teachers in your school work together as a smoothly functioning team?

Very little		Some		Quite a bit		Very much	
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧

16. In your school to what extent do most teachers agree on the major instructional objectives of your school?

Very little		Some		Considerable		Very much	
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧

17. To what extent do teachers in your school expect students to do their best?

Very little		Some		Considerable		Very great	
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧

18. How would you describe the sense of belonging in this school?

No sense of belonging		Some sense of belonging		Considerable sense of belonging		Great sense of belonging	
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧

19. To what extent do teachers in your school have a feeling that they can make a significant contribution to improving the classroom performance of students?

Very little		Some		Considerable		Very great	
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧

20. To what extent do you feel that what you do is not important?

Very little		Some		Considerable		Very great	
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧

21. To what extent does the principal evaluate pupil progress in your school?

Very little		Some		Considerable		Very great	
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧

22. To what extent do the teachers in your school work at improving the quality of the educational program?

Very little		Some		Considerable		Very great	
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧

23. How would you describe your building administrator's dedication and enthusiasm?

Very low		Somewhat low		Somewhat high		Very high	
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧

24. How would you describe the general attitude of students toward your school?

Poor		Fair		Good		Very good	
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧

25. In your school how often is there meaningful discussion of curriculum or instruction in faculty meetings?

Seldom		Occasionally		Often		Very often	
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧

26. To what extent does the principal coordinate curriculum and instruction in your school?

Very little		Some		Considerable		Very great	
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧

27. How would you describe the learning environment in your school?

Not at all positive		Somewhat positive		Quite positive		Very positive	
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧

APPENDIX G: STAFF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

STAFF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Describe for me your typical day at this school.
   I'd like to know what goes on and what you do when
   you first arrive. I'd like to know what you do
   all through the day until you walk out the door
   and leave the school.

2. Your school has been selected as an exemplary
   school by the Department of Education. (a) Do you
   think your school deserves this honor? (b) Why?
   (c) Is the high achievement due to the
   socio-economic class of your students or is it due
   to something the school does to the students?

3. (a) What are some things about this school that
   you think are exceptional? In other words, what
   important events, processes, or people make this
   place unique? (b) Are there some little things
   that happen which make this school a better or
   worse place to be?

4. What do you believe is the purpose of your school?
   In other words, what is this school trying to do
   for kids?

5. (a) As you see it, how are decisions made here at
   this school? (b) What kinds of decisions are

made? (c) Who makes them? (d) Who has input?
(e) How, where, and when are you involved?
(f) How and when do you find out when a decision
has been made?

6. (a) Are there some people who get things done
around here, some key people? (b) How many are
there?

(c) How did they get to be key people? (d) What
makes them key? (e) What do they do?

7. (a) Are there "blockers" or negative people?
(b) How many are there? (c) How much influence do
they have? (d) How do other teachers and the
principal deal with them?

8. (a) Are there opportunities for staff development
and growth in this school? (b) What kind of
opportunities have you had? (c) Are the staff
development programs worthwhile? (d) Is staff
development imprtant? (e) Why?

9. (a) Is teacher evaluation at this school helpful
to you or to other teachers? (b) Explain.

10. (a) Do you like teaching? (b) What are some of
the things you like about teaching here?
(c) What are some of the things you don't like
about teaching here?

11. (a) What motivates the teachers here? (b) Do teachers compete with each other? (c) How?

12. (a) As a teacher, are you able to run your own classroom (do your own thing)? (b) Tell me about it.

13. You talked about planning time, resource time, and before/after school time in your description of a typical day. (a) How do you use your out-of-class time? (b) How many hours do you have a day? (c) When are they? (d) Do you work with anyone else during planning time? (e) Where do you spend your planning time?

14. (a) What times of the day do you see other people who work here? (b) What kinds of things do you talk about when you see them? (May not need this if it has been answered in a previous response.)

15. (a) How would you describe your relationship with other teachers at this school? (b) How did you develop this relationship? (c) Do you do anything to keep this relationship alive and productive?

16. (a) As a teacher, do you get support from other teachers at this school? (b) Examples?

17. (a) As a teacher, do you get much praise or many
    rewards? (b) If so, how and from whom? (c) Is
    it important to you? What about <u>reprimands</u>?
    (d) <u>Have you gotten any</u>? From whom? What form
    do they take?

18. (a) How important is principal support? (b) What
    does your principal do that provides that support
    for you?

19. On the School Improvement Inventory you filled
    out at the beginning of the year teachers rated
    administrator dedication and enthusiasm very
    high. What do you see your principal doing that
    makes the staff believe he is dedicated and
    enthusiastic?

20. (a) How would you describe your relationship with
    the principal of the school? (b) Descibe how you
    operate with the principal and the way he/she
    operates with you? (c) How often is there
    interaction between you and your principal?
    (d) When?

21. What do you think is the most important thing
    that your principal does?

22. What are some of the classroom expectations you have for your students? In other words, what are the key things you continually expect from them?

23. (a) What motivates the students here--what makes them try hard? (b) What do you do to motivate your students?

24. (a) What are some of the events, activities, or methods used to reward and praise students? (b) What methods are used to rebuke, reprimand, or punish students?

25. What things do you see students doing here which contribute to high academic achievement? In other words, what are the extra things they do which make them better students?

26. (a) Does this school have many rules? (b) How many are there? (c) Are they written down? (d) Are they enforced? (e) What are some that work well? (f) Do you go by the book? (g) How about your classroom?

27. (a) How much influence do students have on what goes on in the school? (b) Tell me some of the ways they exert this influence.

28. (a) How much are parents and the community involved in this school? (b) What are some of the ways they are involved? (c) Does it make any difference? (d) Why?

29. (a) Are parents here supportive? (b) Describe how they are or are not.

30. Some people say that shared values help to make an organization really work well. Everyone at Hewlett-Packard knows that he or she is supposed to be innovative. Everyone at Proctor and Gamble knows that product quality is the indispensable thing. Is there any shared value at this school which you are aware of?

31. What do you think is the most important thing that gets done at this school?

32. Imagine that this is your last day here. What will you remember most about this place?

APPENDIX H: ADMINISTRATOR

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

ADMINISTRATOR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Describe for me your typical day at your school.
   What goes on and what do you do when you first
   arrive? What do you do all through the day until
   you walk out the door and leave the school?

2. (a) How much time do you spend in an average week
   observing in classrooms? (b) Teaching?
   (c) Working in some other capacity with teachers
   or students? (d) With parents? (e) At
   administrative meetings? (f) How long is your
   work week?

3. What do you think is the most important thing that
   you do?

4. Your school has been selected as an exemplary
   school by the Department of Education. (a) Do you
   think your school deserves this honor? (b) Why?
   (c) Is the high achievement due to the
   socio-economic class of your students or is it due
   to something the school does to the students?

5. What are some things about this school that you
   think are exceptional? In other words, what
   important events, processes, or people make this
   place unique?

6. What do you believe is the purpose of your school?
    In other words, what is this school trying to do
    for kids?

7. (a) As you see it, how are decisions made here at
    your school? (b) What kinds of decisions are
    made? (c) Who makes them? (d) Who has input?
    (e) Do you have an advisory committee? (f) If so,
    how are they involved? (g) How do you let the
    staff know when a decision has been made?

8. (a) What are some of the key expectations you have
    for teachers here? (b) Other staff members?

9. When hiring new staff what do you look for?

10. (a) How would you describe your relationship with
    the teachers at this school? (b) How did you
    develop this relationship? (c) Do you do anything
    to keep this relationship alive and productive?

11. (a) Are there some key people who get things done
    around here? (b) How many are there? (c) How did
    they get to be key people? (d) What do they do
    that makes them key people?

12. (a) Are there "blockers" or negative people?
    (b) How many are there? (c) How much influence do
    they have? (d) How do you and other teachers deal
    with them?

13. (a) Are there opportunities for staff development
    and growth in this school? (b) Tell me about
    them. (c) Building level? (d) District level?
    (e) Are the staff development programs worthwhile?
    (f) Is staff development important? (g) Why?

14. (a) To what extent do you encourage teachers to be
    innovative in developing new programs and methods
    of instruction? (b) How?

15. (a) How do you let teachers and other staff
    members know when you are pleased with something
    they have done? (b) Not pleased?

16. (a) Is teacher evaluation at this school helpful
    to teachers? (b) Explain.

17. (a) What times of the day do you see teachers who
    work here? (b) What kinds of things do you talk
    about when you see them?

18. (a) What motivates the teachers here? (b) Do
    teachers compete with each other? (c) How?

19. (a) What motivates you? (b) Do principals in this
    district compete with each other? (c) How?

20. (a) As a principal, are you able to run your own
    school (do your own thing)? (b) Tell me about it.

21. (a) As a principal, do you get support from
     teachers at this school? (b) Other principals?
     (c) Central office administrators? (d) Examples?

22. (a) As a principal, do you get much praise or many
     rewards? (b) If so, how and from whom? (c) Is it
     important to you? (d) What about reprimands?
     (e) Have you gotten any? (f) From whom? (g) What
     form do they take?

23. (a) Do you like being a school administrator?
     (b) What are some of the things you like about
     working here? (c) What are some of the things you
     don't like about working here? (d) Why did you
     take a job in this district?

24. (a) How would you describe your relationship with
     your supervisor? (b) Describe how you operate
     with him/her and the way he/she operates with you?
     (c) How often is there interaction between you and
     your supervisor? (d) When? (e) What kinds of
     things do you discuss?

25. (a) How do you evaluate your program? (b) How
     often?

26. What are some of the key expectations you have for
     students here?

27. What motivates the students here--What makes them try hard?

28. (a) What are some of the events, activities, or methods used to reward and praise students?

    (b) What methods are used to rebuke, reprimand, or punish students?

29. What things do you see students doing here which contribute to high academic achievement? In other words, what are the extra things they do which make them better students?

30. (a) Does this school have many rules? (b) How many are there? (c) Are they written down?

    (d) Are they enforced? (e) What are some that work well? (f) Do you go by the book?

31. (a) How much influence do students have on what goes on in the school? (b) Tell me some of the ways they exert this influence.

32. Do you know all the students in this school?

33. (a) How much are parents and the community involved in this school? (b) What are some of the ways they are involved? (c) Does it make any difference? (d) Why?

34. (a) Are parents here supportive? (b) Describe how they are or are not.

35. Some people say that shared values help to make an organization really work well. Everyone at Hewlett-Packard knows that he or she is supposed to be innovative. Everyone at Proctor and Gamble knows that product quality is the indispensable thing. Is there any shared value at this school which you are aware of?

36. What do you think is the most important thing that gets done at this school?

37. Imagine that this is your last day here. What will you remember most about this place?

APPENDIX I: STUDENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

STUDENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. This school has been selected by the U.S.
   Department of Education as an exemplary school.
   Does it deserve that recognition? Why?

2. What is unique or different about this school?

3. What has this school done for you?

4. (a) What do you like most about this school?

   (b) What do you like least?

5. (a) Would you say students work hard to do well in
   this school? (b) Explain.

6. Is it important to you to be a good student?

7. (a) How often do teachers in this school try to
   help students with their school work? (b) When do
   they help them?

8. Do you think you learn more in this school than
   students in other schools?

9. (a) Can you give some examples of the ways
   teachers make students work hard? (b) How do they
   encourage students to work hard?

10. (a) Do your teachers expect you to do well?

    (b) Do they tell you what they expect from you?

    (c) Examples?

11. (a) What type of awards, rewards, or praise do students receive at this school? (b) Have you ever received any?

12. (a) What type of reprimands or punishment do students receive at this school? (b) Have you ever received any? (c) Is punishment fair?

13. (a) Do students in this school make fun of or tease each other if they make good grades? (b) Poor grades?

14. (a) Do you think the teachers in this school care more or less than teachers in other schools about whether or not their students learn? (b) Explain.

15. What type of relationship do you have with your teachers?

16. Do you feel that you can talk to your teachers about anything (personal, school, work, etc.)?

17. (a) Do you have a favorite teacher? (b) If so, describe him/her telling why he/she is special? If not, why?

18. (a) What type of relationship do you have with the principal in this school? (b) Tell me about him/her.

19. Do you feel comfortable talking to the counselor(s) about your problems?

20. With whom do you share your problems?

21. (a) Do you have the opportunity to participate in any of the decisions that are made on school matters and/or activities? (b) In what type of decisions do students in this school participate?

22. (a) How much are parents involved in this school? (b) Is that good or bad? (c) Explain.

23. (a) Do you plan to attend college? (b) If so, who or what has influenced you most in making that decision? If not, what are your plans after completing school?

24. What do you think is the purpose of this school?

25. What do you think is the most important thing that gets done at this school?

26. Imagine that this is your last day here. What will you remember most about this place?

APPENDIX J: TIME SCHEDULE OF ON-SITE

ACTIVITIES FOR ETHNOGRAPHIC CASE

STUDY AT THE SCHOOL

TIME SCHEDULE OF CASE STUDY

<u>August 28, 1985</u>: Attend first staff meeting of the
        year to explain the study to the school staff.
        (30 minutes)

<u>September 4</u>: Attend faculty meeting to explain and
        administer School Improvement Inventory.
        Observed meeting. (30 minutes)

<u>September 10</u>: General observations. Informal
        interviews. (5 hours, 30 minutes)

<u>September 24</u>: General observations. Informal
        interviews. Sat in on NCTE evaluation meeting.
        (9 hours)

<u>September 25</u>: Attended evening open house. Followed
        schedule of one student through an abbreviated
        seven period day. (1 hour, 30 minutes)

<u>September 30</u>: General and classroom observations.
        Sat in on committee meeting studying possibility
        of reinstating homeroom period. (4 hours,
        30 minutes)

<u>October 9</u>: General and classroom observations.
        Informal interviews. (9 hours)

<u>October 10</u>: Attended evening Parent Advisory Council
        Meeting. (2 hours)

<u>October 29</u>: General and classroom observations.
        Informal interviews. Sat in on MCREL Effective
        Schools Committee meeting. (7 hours, 30 minutes)

<u>October 30</u>: Observed Student Council meeting.
        Participated in Home Economics class. (1 hour)

<u>November 8</u>: Attended parent-teacher conferences.
        Observed process in school gymnasium.
        (30 minutes)

December 13: Observed in classrooms and lounge.
         (2 hours)

December 17: Formal interviews with staff members.
         Observed pep rally and basketball game with
         another junior high. (8 hours, 30 minutes)

December 19: Formal interviews with staff members.
         (8 hours, 30 minutes)

January 8, 1986: Formal interviews with staff
         members. (7 hours, 30 minutes)

January 14: Formal interview with staff member.
         (1 hour)

January 16: Formal interviews with staff members.
         (2 hours, 30 minutes)

January 22: Formal interviews with staff members.
         (4 hours)

January 28: Formal interviews with staff members.
         (10 hours)

January 29: Formal interview with staff member.
         (1 hour, 30 minutes)

February 5: Formal interviews with staff members.
         (5 hours, 30 minutes)

February 10: Observe Night of the Known Performance.
         (2 hours)

February 13: Formal interviews with staff members.
         (5 hours)

February 18: Formal interviews with staff members.
         (5 hours)

February 27: Formal interviews with staff members.
         (4 hours, 30 minutes)

March 11: Formal interviews with staff members.
         (2 hours)

March 26: Formal interview with principal. (4 hours)

April 2: Formal interview with principal. (2 hours)

April 4: Formal interview with principal. (2 hours)

April 23: Meet with large group of students about upcoming student interviews. (1 hour)

May 6: Formal interviews with students. (7 hours, 30 minutes)

May 9: Formal interviews with students. Observe sixth grade orientation. (3 hours)

May 20: Formal interviews with students. (7 hours)

May 28: Formal interviews with students. (7 hours)

June 4: Meet with staff to go over survey, observation, and interview results. (1 hour)

June 6: Attend and participate in school talent show on last day of school. (1 hour, 30 minutes)