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Career and technical education faculty retention: a leadership study

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CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION FACULTY RETENTION:
A LEADERSHIP STUDY

by

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my loving husband, Scott Bates, my daughter Kathleen (Katie) Bates, and my son, Scott Bates Jr. I cherish every moment I share with them. Their expressions of love and care have allowed me to preserver and find true meaning from this journey.

I also dedicate this accomplishment to my parents. My father, David Alexander, has believed in me my entire life, even through tough times. His love and support set the foundations that define who I am. And finally, I dedicate this project to my mother, the late Kathleen (Urbaniak) Alexander, for instilling my values, exemplifying strength and courage, and teaching me to be the mother I am today. For this I will be forever grateful.

"Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away."

George Carlin

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Abstract

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Attracting and retaining qualified teachers is a necessary component for successful schools. Literature on faculty retention abounds (Ingersoll, 2001; Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, 2007; National Association of State Directors of Career and Technical Education Consortium, (NASDCTEc), 2010.), but literature specific to retention in career and technical education is limited. One New Jersey career and technical high school experienced high faculty mobility rates which was reason for concern. This qualitative action research study sought to identify environmental factors that contributed to the mobility rates. This study also focused on the leadership of the school principal and the components of leadership necessary to retain faculty. Findings revealed two reasons for faculty turnover, fear of job elimination and career change, however, these reasons cannot be generalized to the entire population of CTE faculty. The principal's leadership throughout this study resulted in a change in culture and improvements to the environment. These improvements to the culture were the result of open communication, allowing for teacher voice, and collaboration, all elements of caring leadership. These components, although not directly correlated with improved retention, did play a role in improving the environment of the school.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

x

List of Tables

Chapter 1

Problem Statement

Introduction

Career and technical education (CTE), traditionally known as vocational education, prepares students at various ability levels for careers within a global economy. It offers rigorous content aligned with academic standards and technical skill proficiencies. The purpose of CTE is to provide students with competency-based applied learning through a coherent sequence of courses (U. S. Department of Education, [USDOE], 2006). Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act (USDOE, 2006) supports state and local efforts to provide opportunities for learners to gain the knowledge and skills necessary for "high skill, high wage, or high demand occupations in current or emerging professions" (p. 2).

New Jersey currently delivers career and technical education (CTE) through comprehensive high schools, county wide vocational-technical schools, and its 19 community colleges (N. J. Department of Education, [NJDOE], 2010). County wide school districts host career and technical programs for high school students and post secondary adult learners. High quality CTE programs are aligned with national standards integrating rigorous academics and technical competencies while providing students with workplace readiness skills (NJDOE, 2010).

High quality programs need knowledgeable instructors to guide learning. Faculty within CTE traditionally consists of academic teachers who focus on core content areas such as English, math, and science, and trade teachers who focus on skilled occupations such as welding, culinary arts, machinery, and healthcare. Both academic and trade

1

teachers serve to educate CTE students but are often viewed as separate groups. The National Association of State Directors of Career and Technical Education Consortium (NASDCTEc) notes that

> The dichotomous silos of academics verse [trades] must be eliminated and their supporting infrastructures must be re-imagined to meet the needs of the economy. As the lines of economies blur, so too must the lines that currently separate [trade] from academic education. (2010, p. 4)

Academic teachers and trade teachers make up CTE faculty, and as Threeton (2007) discusses, work together to prepare students for current and future workforce trends.

This study will examine CTE faculty and the environment they experience at a New Jersey county wide vocational high school referred to in this study as NJCTE. NJCTE operates as a vocational high school serving students in grades nine through twelve. Students residing within the county apply to a chosen program of study. The school offers trade programs as well as highly specialized academic programs, providing students with unique learning experiences not offered at traditionally structured high schools. Students may apply as full-time students and attend NJCTE for the entire day receiving both academic and trade instruction. Students also have the option of a share-time program where they only receive their trade instruction at NJCTE, and their academic instruction occurs at their resident high school. Once students successfully complete the admissions process, they are placed in an appropriate program of study.

Context

NJCTE is located in a rural area of New Jersey. During the 2009-10 school year, NJCTE offered 16 program options and employed 36 faculty members (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2007). NJCTE faculty was comprised of 16 academic teachers and 20 trade teachers. A total of 25 teachers obtained their certification through the New

2

Jersey Alternate Route Provisional Teacher Program, and eleven completed a four-year degree program in education. Faculty's median years of experience in the district, according to the New Jersey School Report Card (N. J. Department of Education, NJDOE, 2003-2012), was four years. Three years earlier, during the 2006-2007 school year, when I first became an administrator at NJCTE, almost 30% of the faculty was new to the district.

In July 2006, I entered NJCTE as an assistant principal. That summer I was responsible for hiring 13 new teachers. My entire first year was spent mentoring and acclimating new faculty not only to the school and district but, for many, to the field of CTE. At the same time, I was acclimating myself my role as school administrator after being a middle school English teacher at a comprehensive kindergarten through twelfth grade school district.

Within my first year of employment, I experienced stigmas and stereotypes associated with career and technical education. I experienced faculty's daily attitudes which included the use of sarcasm and a lack of collegiality; I witnessed divides between academic teachers and trade teachers; I coped with mid-year resignations, vacant positions, and even substituted for absent teachers when needed. Over the next year and a half, it was hard for me to gain trust and build relationships when faculty turned over so quickly. I soon realized that the culture of NJCTE was not one of consistency. In 2008, I was promoted to building principal, and I wanted to delve deeper into the experiences of NJCTE faculty. I felt there was a lack of caring relationships, collaboration, and a supportive culture, which concerned me.

During the following year, 2007-2008, faculty professional development included professional learning communities (PLCs). PLCs are groups of individuals collaborating for the purpose of change. Faculty attended monthly PLC meetings. I requested teachers to discuss topics such as student learning, school improvement, and curriculum, but I provided no formal agendas. PLC groups were strategically assigned by the Director of Curriculum to include members who had not had the opportunity to communicate with each other prior to that point. Initially, these meetings were used for complaint sessions, but over time faculty began to identify their own questions and develop ideas for school improvement and student success. Faculty started by discussing common student concerns and progressed into information sharing. Interactions opened lines of communication between faculty and provided outlets for dialogue resulting in, as Fullan (2007) discusses, "Purposeful interaction[s]" (p. 139), a necessary component of successful organizations. By June of 2008, increased faculty communication led to suggestions for improved instruction and professional development. Based on these suggestions and my concern with faculty turnover rates, I embarked on an action research study to understand NJCTE's faculty experiences, their environment, and the reasons for high faculty turnover.

Problem Statement

As a NJCTE administrator, I was compelled to understand the faculty turnover issues and sought to retain high quality teachers. According to the New Jersey School Report Card (2003-2012), NJCTE had high faculty mobility rates from 2003-2007 averaging 39.4% over the four-year period with highest levels at 46.4% as seen in Table 1.

4

Table 1

Summary of NJCTE Faculty Mobility Rates 2003-2007

	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
NJCTE Average	46.4	46.2	26.5	28.6
State Average	NA	7.0	6.7	6.2

Note: Denotes average mobility rate each year.

New Jersey average faculty mobility rates range from 4.0% to 7.0% for the same years (N.J. Department of Education [NJDOE], 2003-2007).

During my first year, I witnessed faculty divides where academic teachers only associated with academic teachers and trade teachers only communicated with trade teachers. Little or no interaction occurred between academic teachers and trade teachers; they were isolated in their hallways or classroom areas. Conversations among professionals were limited to the 25-minute lunch break. Trade faculty ate at one time, and academic faculty ate at a different time. The last 30 minutes of the school day was used for faculty members to flock to the main office and sign out. Academic faculty remained in their classrooms before leaving through a separate entrance. Teachers' communication was limited to brief discussions about a memo left in their mail box, the lack of supplies within their classrooms, or the extra duty assignments they were asked to fill. I noted these conversations did not center on students or instruction. Veteran faculty modeled this behavior, and new faculty mirrored this common practice.

I understood the organizational structure of NJCTE as a closed system. Within a closed system, members have little interaction with each other, and members become

5

self-reliant and isolated (Bolman & Deal, 2003). Implementing PLCs was my initial attempt to open communication and facilitate collaboration, thereby reducing isolation and self-reliance, but I was aware that more needed to be done to improve the work and learning environment.

Purpose of the Study

As a person who values conversations, collaboration, continuous self learning, and caring relationships, I was concerned with the lack of such elements at NJCTE. Over time, I began journaling, gathering artifacts, and having regular conversations with faculty, staff, parents, and students, which is how this research began. This study had two purposes; one was to understand how CTE faculty experienced NJCTE in order to identify environmental elements that contributed to faculty's decisions to leave NJCTE; the second was to understand my leadership, my growth as a leader, and the effect, if any, my leadership had on retaining faculty at NJCTE.

Significance of the Study

Identifying the retention issues at NJCTE was the first step in sustaining quality teachers. Threeton (2007) implored society to take a "hard look at how our workforce is prepared" if the United States wants to be globally competitive (p. 2). One way to do this is by having qualified faculty who can provide instruction that responds to workforce changes, different learning styles, and innovation (Threeton, 2007). The New Jersey 5-Year Career and Technical Education State Plan's mission requires quality teachers to drive CTE as experts in their fields (U. S. Department of Education, [USDOE], 2007). Career and technical education is to "[P]rovide leadership to prepare all students for their role as citizens and for the career opportunities of the 21st century" (USDOE, 2007, p. 3).

To reach this mission, the plan outlines CTE priorities. One priority is teacher preparation and recruitment. This priority acknowledges the need for a "sustainable supply of high quality teachers" (p. 3). This action research study examined teacher retention at NJCTE, where it had been difficult to retain faculty since 2003, as seen in Table 1 on page eight (N. J. Department of Education, [NJDOE], 2003-2012).

An additional significance of this study was to understand my own leadership and its development during my tenure at NJCTE. As faculty inconsistency was noted, administrative changes occurred as well. I held four different leadership positions over the course of six years. These positions included assistant principal, guidance director, high school principal, and currently principal of adult education. I view NJCTE through a variety of lenses, and these perspectives have guided who I am as a leader. I have learned to identify my own strengths and weaknesses, building my awareness of my leadership.

Research Questions

Soon after assuming an administrative role at NJCTE, I became concerned about the culture and faculty divide. I embarked on this action research study to better understand the faculty experiences and the root causes of retention issues. This research was designed to answer the following questions.

1. How are NJCTE faculty experiencing the school environment?
2. How do the experiences of academic teachers and trade teachers compare at NJCTE?
3. What factors contributed to faculty members' decisions to resign from NJCTE?
4. In what ways, if any, did my leadership influence NJCTE's faculty retention rates?

7

5. How did my leadership develop during my tenure at NJCTE?

Cycles of Action Research

This study sought to answer the research questions using a qualitative action research design. Glesne (2006) defines participant action research as examining a current situation in order to change and improve upon it. This action research study consisted of four cycles. Prior to the implementation of cycle one, reflective practice was used to analyze my experiences and observations from July 2006 through August 2008. My reflections and desire to improve faculty retention and environment at NJCTE, led to this action research project.

Cycle one (September 2008-June 2009) was used to identify the organizational structure and culture of NJCTE by comparing and contrasting district data, district artifacts, faculty credentials, and faculty demographic backgrounds. Observations of faculty meetings and faculty non-instructional times were conducted to gauge the organization's culture and faculty's level of communication with other faculty and administration. The resulting data guided the actions in cycle two.

Cycle two (October 2009-December 2009) had two goals: one to understand personal experiences of NJCTE faculty; two to understand NJCTE's methods of faculty professional development. Interviews were conducted to learn about the lived experiences of NJCTE faculty. I interviewed four faculty members: two trade teachers and two academic teachers. One veteran trade teacher and one trade teacher with less than four years at NJCTE participated. The interview protocol (see Appendix A) was designed to learn faculty perceptions of the environment at NJCTE and their role in the environment.

8

To address the second goal, I reviewed NJCTE's professional development plan. This plan consisted of the faculty's goals, objectives, and training activities designed to improve instructional strategies and foster professional growth. An analysis of the professional development sessions' survey results was completed. Observations of faculty meetings and non-instructional times continued to trace changes, if any, over time and inform cycle three.

Cycle three took place from February 2010 through May 2010. The data from cycle two indicated a need to look deeper into the retention issues at NJCTE. To understand why former faculty left, I interviewed two former faculty members. Each faculty member was employed under my leadership and resigned under my leadership. The interview protocol (see Appendix B), similar to cycle one, was designed to understand faculty experiences and perceptions of the NJCTE environment, their role in this environment, and reasons for resigning. Cycle three data was useful in planning further interventions.

During the time between cycles three and four, which was June through August 2010, my administrative role officially changed, and I was no longer NJCTE building principal. My new role was principal of community and adult education. This position change caused interesting reflection about my leadership, my new role, and how it would impact my research.

Cycle four (September 2010-April 2011) allowed me, as the researcher, to observe faculty as an outsider, due to the fact that I was no longer their direct supervisor. Observations of faculty meetings and non-instructional times continued. An additional

9

interview with the Director of Curriculum was completed to provide insight into faculty's responses to professional development and to my leadership actions.

Leadership

As a leader at NJCTE, I assumed numerous leadership roles from 2006 through 2011 including assistant principal, director of guidance, high school principal, and principal of community and adult education. Through these numerous leadership changes I was able to identify the leader I am and become fully aware of my own developing leadership qualities. Through the lens of an ethic of care, demonstrating to others that they matter and are valued was one of my top priorities. I believed then, and still believe now, that building relationships where collaboration, reciprocity, and trust are valued, was vital to the health of an organization. I was beginning to realize that the leadership of a school, the culture it creates, and the faculty's perceptions of both can play a role in faculty mobility.

As I reflect on my leadership when I began my tenure at NJCTE in 2006, I recognize now that I wanted to understand what NJCTE was all about. I felt that I could not lead the organization without having firsthand knowledge of its inner workings. I needed to listen to the faculty, hear their successes, and discuss their concerns before I could really take on a leadership role. My first realization was that relationships were central to my leadership.

As I began writing about my leadership, I realized three things: I was molded by strong professional women leaders, my strengths and weaknesses were formed and continue to be formed through my experiences, and my challenges were based on my beliefs and balancing my beliefs with my responsibilities.

I am a leader, I have taken on leadership roles, and I wish to better myself as a leader. When I look at my role models and childhood experiences, they have influenced the leader and the person I am today. I was inspired by strong female figures; so I choose to be a strong female leader. At a young age, I had to care for my family; similarly I care for my organization and take ownership of it. Through it all, I learned to use my strengths to manage my circumstances and rise to every occasion. I believe leaders should provide opportunities for others to find their strengths and leadership qualities and become empowered leaders themselves.

Definition of Terms

Terms related to educational studies can sometimes have multiple meanings. The following items are defined to assist the reader in understanding the terminology in this study.

- *Faculty*: Used to refer to certified teachers and support specialists working in a public school.

- *Staff*: Used to refer to all members employed by a school including faculty, administrators, counselors, and secretaries.

- *Trade Teacher:* This is a certified teacher who instructs technical education such as carpentry, welding, drafting, cosmetology, or culinary.

- *Academic Teacher:* This is a certified teacher who instructs New Jersey high school graduation requirements such as English, science, and math.

- *Turnover*: Used to refer to faculty members leaving a school district within the first three years. This term can include those leaving the education field and pursuing

11

other career opportunities or those leaving a school district to gain employment in another school district.

- *Faculty Mobility Rates*: Used by the New Jersey Department of Education to refer to faculty entering and/or leaving a school district for any reason from October 15, to June 30 in a given school year.

- *Faculty Retention*: For this study, faculty retention will refer to faculty remaining in a school district for at least three years.

Conclusion

This research sought to understand the experiences of NJCTE faculty and their relationship to faculty retention. Additionally, it was designed to understand the effect my leadership had on faculty retention, if any, and identify my leadership development over the course of this research project. The purpose was to identify environmental factors that may have contributed to faculty's decision to resign from NJCTE.

Subsequent chapters will provide a review of literature, an understanding of the research design and data collection tools used in this study, a summary of data analysis and findings, and my leadership development. The leadership chapter will trace my growth as a leader. My leadership platform will focus on my personal experiences which led to who I am as a leader.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

Introduction

Attracting and retaining qualified teachers is a conversation that has occurred for decades. In the early 1980's, national focus was placed on teacher shortages due to changing demographics, where the increase of students and teacher retirements resulted in teacher shortages (Ingersoll, 2001). Ingersoll (2001) concluded however, that common assumptions of teacher turnover were not so common. In fact, his study suggested that,

> School staffing problems are primarily due to excess demand resulting from a 'revolving door' –where large numbers of teachers depart their jobs for reasons other than retirement. This study also suggests that popular education initiatives, such as teacher recruitment programs, will not solve the staffing problems of such schools if they do not also address the organizational sources of low teacher retention. (p. 3)

Research on teacher turnover is extensive and has examined issues from many perspectives (Ingersoll, 2001), however limited research exists as to the reasons CTE teachers leave the profession or seek out new positions in other schools. This action research project seeks to understand the reasons for faculty turnover at NJCTE. Within this review of literature, I provide an overview of the career and technical education history, CTE certification and training, and research identifying key reasons for faculty turnover, not specific to CTE.

Historical Perspective of CTE

Career and technical education, historically known as vocational education, is not new to the field of education. CTE is designed to prepare students to become productive members of society. Throughout history CTE has evolved with federal and state legislation influencing the role of career and technical education in society.

13

From a historical standpoint, at the turn of the 20th century, it is noted that education was boring, focusing on rote memorization (Elliot, 2007). People did not typically complete grade school before entering into the family business. However, agriculture was on the rise and training people in new agricultural techniques became necessary. Leaders marked vocational education as a way to improve the economy through training the workforce (Elliot, 2007).

The Smith Hughes Act of 1917 first placed vocational education on the map (Threeton, 2007). This Act clarified the federal role in vocational and technical education, designating federal funds for training purposes (Hayward, 1993). Hayward (1993) concludes that this clarification, however, led to the initial segregation of vocational education and academics. Several components of the act segregated the vocational curriculum from comprehensive high school curriculum. From this Act, separate state boards and funding sources were created. "The end result, however, [segregated] academic teachers and students from vocational teachers and students and [strengthened] the social alienation that early critics of these steps had feared" (Hayward, 1993, p. 8).

From 1917 through 1963, federal involvement remained stagnant until new legislation was approved during the John F. Kennedy administration (Hayward, 1993). January 30, 1961, John F. Kennedy's first State of the Union Address as the 35th President of the United States included his concerns and plans for education.

> Our classrooms contain 2 million more children than they can properly have room for, taught by 90,000 teachers not properly qualified to teach. One-third of our most promising high school graduates are financially unable to continue the development of their talents… and our colleges are ill prepared. We lack the scientists, the engineers and the teachers our world obligations require. . . . Federal grants for both higher and public

14

school education can no longer be delayed. (Center for Legislative Archives, 1961, para. 25)

Over the next few years, under the President's direction, a panel was created to investigate vocational training which resulted in a report titled "Education for a Changing World of Work" (Hayward, 1993). This report expressed the need to expand vocational training, update courses, and provide access to programs for all students. The following year, largely as a result of the 1962 report, the Vocational Education Act of 1963 was passed (Hayward, 1993). This act created more federal oversight of state funding for vocational programs. It required each state to address training needs of high school graduates and drop outs, by allocating funds for vocational programs. It required vocational facility enhancements and the creation of modified vocational education programs for students not capable of meeting regular vocational standards (Hayward, 1993).

Further amendments to the Vocational Act of 1963 were made in 1968 and 1976. A national assessment of state and local compliance with federal guidelines was conducted (Hayward, 1993). Hayward (1993) concluded the results provided a "gloomy picture" where "the distribution formulas had failed to send the funds where intended, efforts to help disadvantaged students had served to segregate such persons into training for dead-end occupations…." (p. 13). Elliot (2007) further describes the 60s, 70s, and 80s when segregation was enhanced, as marking vocational education as a "dumping ground" for students who would not be successful in academic areas (p. 5).

The government responded by creating the Carl D. Perkins Act of 1984, known currently as Perkins I (Imel,1991). This act set two main goals. One was to modernize vocational education to meet the nation's needs, promoting economic growth; the second

goal was to provide equal access for disadvantaged populations (Hayward, 1993). Perkins funds were issued to states through a grant and were required to be used for program improvement and meeting the needs of disadvantaged persons.

In the 90s it was clear vocational education needed to change or the United States would be left behind (Elliot, 2007). The Carl D. Perkins Act was reapproved twice in the 1990s. In 1990 the focus was placed on strengthening the work force by incorporating academics and vocational courses together (Threeton, 2007). By 1998, the Carl D. Perkins Act was reapproved requiring states to create accountability systems to promote academic and technical success. Threeton (2007) concludes that this was a major shift in vocational school policy attempting to shift to an inclusive model, and eliminate the segregation that existed for many years.

Most recently in 2006, the Carl D. Perkins Act was reauthorized. This is the first piece of legislation to formally define and use the term career and technical education (CTE) even though it existed for many years (Threeton, 2007). Under this reauthorization, vocational standards aligned with No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation (Threeton, 2007).

Elliot (2007) has questioned the NCLB legislation claiming school districts have been forced to change their instructional methods. Hands-on career and technical courses have been replaced with remedial courses to improve academics. Elliot (2007) further proposes that CTE is the best delivery method of education because it combines all methods of instruction. Elliot (2007) posits, "Good and effective vocational education programs… [reinforce] academics through applied and relevant activities" (p. 5). Few would argue with Elliot's (2007) claims that the best instructional strategies reach all

16

students at all times and promote student learning through quality learning experiences. However, maintaining a quality group of educators to accomplish these goals is not easy.

While major changes to federal legislation have allowed for CTE to become more rigorous and provide students with real world experiences, recruiting and retaining qualified faculty to instruct the areas of CTE remains a challenge (National Association of State Directors of CTE, November 2010). With CTE teacher shortages being a national concern, Conneely & Uy (2009) discuss shortages being a result of higher CTE student enrollment, teachers' retirements, and changes to teacher education programs. These results, however, do not address the reasons for CTE faculty mobility rates. Twenty years ago, Camp and Heath-Camp (1992) concluded that about 15% of CTE teachers left teaching within six years, but there is a lack of literature focusing specifically on why CTE teachers' are not retained. Retention literature discusses teacher training, professional development, and leadership, but connections to CTE faculty's experiences and factors for mobility are limited. This research seeks to shed light on CTE experiences seeking to understand NJCTE retention issues.

Teachers of Career and Technical Education

Most CTE teachers' credentials include over 17 years of industry experience with limited college credits and no professional preparation (Camp & Heath-Camp, 1992). CTE teachers' decisions to enter the teaching profession were often made as second career options with possibly higher job satisfaction in mind. Holland (1973) suggests people choose teaching as a career change because of changes in personal characteristics, environment, or their perception of the teaching profession. Chapman (1983) theorizes that choosing to enter into the teaching profession, as well as leaving the profession,

17

relies on a number of factors. These factors create a longitudal model where personal characteristics, training, integration, satisfaction, and external environmental factors affect one's decision to remain in teaching (Chapman, 1983). Using this model as a guide, after a person chooses to become a CTE teacher, the process of entering the field of education begins with appropriate certification and training. In today's global society, many states provide certification and training programs that offer individuals a way to enter the teaching profession based on their industry experience and content specific education (Suell & Piotrowski, 2007).

New Jersey teaching certification.

New Jersey teachers obtain appropriate certification in order to work in public schools. New Jersey teacher credentials can be earned through two means. One option is through a traditional four-year college degree program in education. When obtaining this degree, candidates complete a student teaching experience and pass required state exams, thereby meeting all certification requirements. A second option is through an alternate route provisional teacher program for persons with industry experience or a college degree, not specific to education. This allows persons seeking certification to complete a one-year, fast track program in educational pedagogy and pass required state exams to satisfy certification requirements.

Justice, Greiner, and Anderson (2003) found certification programs prepared prospective teachers in different ways. Alternate route programs and traditional route programs require people meet different standards prior to becoming a classroom teacher. Justice et al. (2003) also found that under traditional teacher preparation programs, a person enters a four-year college degree program with the end goal of entering the

18

teaching profession and leaving with a credential. Traditional route teachers complete, and benefit from, pedagogy courses and a full time student teaching experience. Alternate route teachers, however, teach in public school classrooms with limited teacher training. Suell & Piotrowski (2007) discuss alternate route teachers finish pedagogy courses while completing their first year of teaching. Participants profit from alternate route's fast track method of educational training (Johnson, Birkeland, & Peske, 2005; Suell & Piotrowski, 2007), and teaching positions often vacated in low performing, low income, and minority filled school districts are filled quickly (Easley, 2006; Justice et al., 2003). CTE teaching positions require high skilled content areas and industry experience and are often filled with alternate route candidates.

New Jersey alternate route training.

Many states establish programs where educators complete their first year of teaching concurrently with an alternate route program. The incentives of such a program include low cost, less time, and easy access to the field of education. These incentives provide the opportunity for individuals who are changing careers to do so without losing four years of time and income in pursuing a teaching degree.

Persons in New Jersey who enter the teaching profession through the alternate route can begin working as a teacher with only 24 hours of pedagogy training. This training consists of an overview of ten educational topics and is designed to prepare persons to work within a school and its culture. During teachers' first years of employment, they concurrently complete 200 to 290 hours of pedagogy training and a formal mentorship. Final certification is issued upon successful completion.

19

The New Jersey Alternate Route Training program is not just for CTE teachers. Anyone with content specific knowledge may be eligible for the program. However, CTE focuses on high skilled industry knowledge, so CTE teachers most often enter education through an alternate route program. At NJCTE when I started in 2006, faculty completing the alternate route program was common, amounting to 77% of the faculty. All trade teachers completed, or were completing, an alternate route program.

Justice et al. (2003) note that many alternate route teachers find themselves employed in schools where many other alternate route teachers are also employed. Furthermore, these teachers exhibit less confidence and less preparedness than traditionally trained teachers (Justice et al., 2003). No student teaching experience occurs prior to entering the classroom, which was identified as the biggest downfall. Research reveals many alternate route teachers who were not prepared well enough in the areas of classroom management, effective teaching strategies, and diagnosing student needs left the profession (Johnson et al., 2005; Justice et al., 2003). Johnson et al. (2005) found that alternate route program participants claimed satisfaction with the training, yet, they desired more knowledge and experience prior to beginning a new career and entering the classroom (Johnson, et al., 2005).

Teacher Turnover

Marvel, Lyter, Peltola, Strizek, and Morton (2007) found the National Center for Educational Statistics conducted a variety of surveys to understand reasons for faculty turnover, mobility, and attrition from a national perspective. The School and Staffing Survey (SASS) which conducted five surveys since 1988, is used to collect data on the characteristics of schools across the nation that include faculty qualifications,

20

professional development, class size, and hiring practices among other factors. From the SASS, the Teacher Follow-up Survey (TFS) was created. This survey used a sample from the SASS and focused specifically on teachers who enter the profession, leave the profession, and/or change school districts (Marvel et al., 2007). Marvel et al. (2007) found in the 2004-05 TFS that 25% of teachers left their school district for a new teaching position where they had more control over their own job. Of those individuals who left teaching for other careers, 65% noted the responsibilities of teaching to be unmanageable. Such results allowed for further research to be conducted on faculty turnover.

Literature on public education, kindergarten through twelfth grade faculty retention is extensive, but CTE faculty retention literature is limited. Studies on K-12 faculty retention reveal common themes for high teacher turnover rates within the United States and around the world. Understanding root causes for teacher mobility rates is essential for school improvement. The Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement (2007) reported that teacher retention is a "persistent issue for school improvement" (p.1). Studies have revealed leading factors for turnover rates include new teacher induction, mentoring and professional development, and administrative support (Barmby, 2006; Easley, 2006; Hahs-Vaughn & Scherff, 2008; Justice, et al., 2003; McLeskey & Billingsly, 2008; Rhodes, Nevill, & Allen, 2004; Smethem, 2007; Weiqi, 2007).

New teacher induction.

No matter which form of educational training a candidate completes, new teachers need assistance navigating through their first year of teaching. New teachers are

21

inevitably socialized into their surroundings, yet Gehrke and McCoy (2007) found that teacher turnover exists when this socialization is negative. Three key factors to avoid turnover include colleague interactions, availability of resources, and professional growth opportunities (Gehrke & McCoy, 2007). Colleagues who welcome teachers into a school system allow for new teachers to acclimate themselves into the culture and benefit from veteran teacher support. Many new teachers receive a mentor who assists in providing feedback, answering questions, and discussing experiences regularly with new teachers.

Smethem (2007) defines the current generation of teachers as having unique needs that include new methods of learning. Supportive induction programs can decrease faculty retention if they support these needs (Smethem, 2007). An induction program is defined as professional development and support provided to new teachers prior and throughout the first year of teaching. Induction programs that have a negative impact provide too much information at once and are overwhelming for new teachers (Smethem, 2007). According to Clayton and Schoonmaker (2007), new teachers' inductions in the first year of teaching are a predictor of teacher turnover. Smethem (2007) elaborates that a key component of an effective induction program is a beginning orientation that provides reference materials, policy review, and community information, and discusses local and cultural norms.

Clayton and Schoonmaker (2007) found that teachers who remained employed were provided support during the first years of employment allowing teachers to feel comfortable in the profession, engage in their own leadership, and be supported throughout the process. This can be accomplished through supportive induction programs and decrease mobility rates (Clayton & Schoonmaker, 2007).

22

Mentoring and professional development.

Positive teacher mentoring programs allow teachers to take ownership of their own professional growth and to participate in worthwhile learning experiences (Cherubini, 2007). Cherubini (2007) finds that valuable support increases the likelihood of teachers remaining in the school. Support includes materials and supplies as well as workshops and professional growth opportunities necessary to meet teachers' responsibilities (Gehrke & McCoy, 2007). A study by Gehrke and McCoy (2007) found teachers remained where professional development was valued, not only by the teachers but administration as well.

Professional development and mentoring of new teachers affects teachers' attitudes and job commitment levels resulting in high or low teacher turnover rates (Hahs-Vaughn & Scherff, 2008; Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004). Induction programs that offer mentoring, support, training and professional development result in lower turnover rates, yet Hahs-Vaughn and Scherff (2008) found no connection between mentoring and commitment. Teachers who are well trained prior to entering the classroom already possess tools to be successful within their first year of teaching and need guidance using those tools. Teachers with no educational training need professional development to develop the repertoire of skills and additional support to use those skills.

Administrative support.

Administrative support plays a role in teacher turnover rates (Justice et al., 2003; Weiqi, 2007). Administrative support can be defined as superiors providing necessary guidance, professional growth opportunities, resources, and encouragement to their faculty (Justice et al., 2003). Teacher success, or lack thereof, has been connected to

23

administrative support (Weiqi, 2007). Allowing teachers to have voice within the decision making process, models that teachers are valued members of the school community. According to Weigi (2007), faculty members should be included in the decision making process of the school such as policy changes, professional development planning, and school improvement initiatives. By including faculty in the decision making process, faculty members can take ownership of their ideas offering up suggestions for improvement. Administrators appear unapproachable when they isolate faculty members, not allowing them to be part of the decision making process. This creates a culture or work environment in which teachers must fend for themselves and find assistance on their own without supervisor support. Positive leadership can promote positive school cultures, school improvement for the 21st century, and collaboration among its stakeholders (Clayton & Schoonmaker, 2007; Easley, 2006; Gehrke, & McCoy, 2007; Halawah, 2005; Rhodes et al., 2004; Tye & O'Brien, 2002).

Studies by Gehrke and McCoy (2007) and Rhodes et al. (2004) reveal two key factors that minimize new teacher turnover. The first is an inviting environment where faculty is valued, as it promotes a positive climate. Such schools are conducive to learning and faculty members work together toward the same common goals. The second is collaboration with other colleagues. When teachers observe other teachers, conduct regular meetings, and speak openly about concerns and success, schools have low teacher turnover rates.

Conclusion

Literature reveals that vocational education, known today as career and technical education (CTE), evolved from a way to improve the economy through employment

24

training to an academically rigorous inclusive model of education. This evolvement resulted in segregation of academic content and trade content as well as the public's perception of the two. As people become CTE teachers their induction, training, and administrative support become vital to their success or failure and ultimately play a role in their decision to leave a position.

The literature related directly to the mobility of CTE teachers is scarce. It is intended that this study will contribute to the existing literature. The next chapter in this action research study will explain the study's methodology including its qualitative approach, data collection plans, and analysis techniques.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter outlines the research design, data collection strategies, and action research cycles of this study. Qualitative action research was used to understand faculty retention issues that faced NJCTE and my leadership development. My leadership was studied to define my leadership theory and trace its growth during this project, ultimately seeking to identify its effect, if any, on faculty retention.

The New Jersey 5-Year Career and Technical Education State Plan (USDOE , 2007) identifies recruiting and training quality teachers as a priority. As an administrator at NJCTE, faculty retention was an ongoing concern. With CTE programs increasing rigor, retaining high quality teachers is necessary for student success. This study examined NJCTE faculty's experiences and my leadership to understand faculty retention issues through an action research design.

Research Design

Action research (AR) is a cyclical process where the researcher gathers data, analyzes the data, reflects on findings, and prepares an action plan, which leads to another cycle (Hinchey, 2008). AR seeks to gain a better understanding of an identified situation and improve it. The researcher must be an insider to the community where the research is conducted. Once data is gathered and analyzed, the goal is to create an action plan to be implemented and then evaluated, creating a cyclical process of continuous reevaluation. The cyclical research model used in this study was Stringer's (2007) model

26

of "looking, thinking, and acting." To follow Stringer's AR model, I collected both statistical and subjective data. To do so I employed a qualitative method research design.

Qualitative research explores how individuals or groups make meaning of social and human experiences and problems (Creswell, 2009). This inductive style of data collection focuses on individual meaning and builds from emerging questions and procedures. Collecting data using a qualitative action research approach allowed me to use a variety of collection tools, strengthening the validity of the study.

As I looked at my school environment and the faculty's daily interactions, I found elements of first order change taking precedence. First order change initiatives revolve around isolation, stagnation, status quo, and authoritative leadership (Evans, 1996; Fullan, 2001; Kotter, 1996). A lack of second order change was present. Second order change relies on building relationships, empowering community members, and shifting cultural beliefs to take ownership of the change (Evans, 1996; Fullan, 2001; Kotter, 1996). I hypothesized that because faculty mobility was high, second order change was not capable of occurring. The culture maintained what was familiar to itself, fearing the anxiety and confusion that came along with change (Evans, 1996).

I was in an environment where the culture was stagnant and further understanding of the culture was required to inform my study. I espouse a social constructivist worldview as defined by Creswell (2009). Within this worldview meaning is found in an individual's perceptions knowing that meaning is social and historical in nature. Knowledge is socially constructed and perceptions will depend greatly on one's background experience and values. This paradigm believes everything is filtered through our senses and therefore the participants' realities will vary (Cresswell, 2009). This

27

paradigm listens to individuals in order to understand how participants engage and make sense of their experiences based on how they perceive events. This view does not attempt to narrow the meaning into limited categories but seeks to see the complexity that is involved in the meaning humans place on their experiences. For these reasons I chose an action research study using qualitative data collection strategies.

Additionally, using humans as my subjects in this research, I sought and was granted Rowan University International Review Board (IRB) approval in the spring of 2008 by completing the required application to interview, observe, and survey my participants. Upon changes to my research, I modified my IRB information in the spring of 2010 and the changes were approved.

Data Collection Strategies

Qualitative data collection techniques consisted of artifact analyses, observations, semi-structured interviews, and journaling during each cycle of action research. Artifacts, as defined by Hinchey (2008), are objects created by a person. In educational settings, artifacts are the documents generated by a school such as curricula, meeting minutes, student work, personnel records, policies, and news articles (Hinchey, 2008). Artifact analyses can provide useful insight into how the school is organized, led, and viewed by public opinion. Artifacts can reveal the history of an organization, expressing what was valued, discouraged, and experienced at a given time (Hinchey, 2008). The importance of document review is to provide insight to observation that may have been overlooked (Stage & Manning, 2003).

28

Observations.

Observations were used to make connections between what participants said and what participants did (Glense, 2008). Two types of observations were conducted including participant observations and middle of the ground observations (Creswell, 2009). Participant observations were completed during faculty meetings where I was involved in conducting the meeting. Prior to cycle four, my role as researcher changed, therefore, middle of the ground observations occurred during faculty meetings in cycle four, when I was no longer a participant in such meetings. I considered myself a middle of the ground observer because, even though I was not a participant, I was connected to the faculty as their former supervisor as well as a consistent administrative figure. Additionally, field notes, defined by Hinchey (2008) as the written record of observations, were written after all observations.

Interviews.

Semi-structured interviews contained predetermined questions, (see Appendices A , B, and C) but allowed for opportunities to explore additional areas of relevance (Hinchey, 2008). Interviews speak to individuals who have direct experience with the research topic at hand. Through speaking with the individuals who had firsthand knowledge of NJCTE, I sought to understand their experiences and backgrounds. I conducted life history interviews, which focused on the participants' life experiences within the field of education (Creswell, 2009). The goal was to gather data about what could not be seen and gain additional explanations that may have contributed to faculty leaving NJCTE.

29

Interviewees in cycles two, three, and four, were contacted via email and upon receiving responses, they were given interview protocol (see Appendices A, B, and C). Interviews occurred in a private office and were tape recorded. Transcripts were created and presented to the participants for member checking. Participants had the opportunity to review transcripts and clarify or add any additional information. Toma (2006) discusses the use of an audit trail. This ensures the data and the process in which it was collected, are validated through member checking of those involved in the study. Qualitative research has been questioned for its rigor; however, Toma (2006) suggests member checking ensures credibility of the research.

Journaling.

Journaling was used for critical reflection. Journaling is defined by Creswell (2009) as a tool used by the researcher to reflect, question, and hypothesize about what has happened and why it has happened. I began journaling informally when I first began my journey through NJCTE, and as the researcher I continued to journal my perceptions, values, biases, and experiences. Additionally, my previous journaling techniques such as personal notes from meetings, recollections of conversations, and calendars of events from three years prior to the start of the study were used to inform the need for the study.

Each AR cycle consisted of an action, data collection and analysis, reflection, and plans for the next cycle following the "look, think, act" components of action research (Stringer, 2007). Data collection strategies were used concurrently to triangulate data. Triangulation occurs when the researcher uses at least three forms of data to answer the same research questions providing reliability to the findings (Hinchey, 2008). After each cycle of research, data was analyzed to inform the next cycle.

Electronic data and analytical notes such as journals and transcripts were stored using a password required log in. Interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed. Tapes were stored in a locked filing cabinet and transcriptions were filed within the same space. Documents used to analyze the school's culture were organized in binders and stored in a separate draw of the locked cabinet.

Data Analysis

The raw data were gathered and used to identify common categories (Hinchey, 2008). Common categories are patterns that can unfold to assist the researcher in making sense of the data. The categories were color coded and used to define the categories. These definitions were used to code the data for common themes. Multiple sources of data were collected and triangulated to answer the same question to make findings more reliable (Hinchey, 2008).

Action Research Cycles

My project consisted of four cycles of action research from September 2008 through June 2011. Each cycle informed the next, building on knowledge and creating new actions. Prior to cycle one, my own personal reflections identified that little or no conversations among faculty members occurred. It was as if each teacher was teaching in a one-room school house and isolated to his/her shop area or classroom. Faculty didn't have relationships with each other and leadership provided little opportunities for this type of communication. Fullan (2001) points out successful organizations are created through their members and the relationships they have with each other. Purposeful interaction and problem solving among faculty foster positive relationships. The relationships at NJCTE needed to change, and it was my responsibility to provide

31

opportunities for such change. As a first step, professional learning communities (PLCs) were implemented prior to this research and were used to inform cycle one.

Cycle one (September 2008-June 2009) sought to identify elements of the organization's structure and culture through artifact review, faculty observations, and my research journal. Analyzed documents included New Jersey School Report Card data (NJDOE, 2003-2012) and the teacher's union contract (NJCTE, 2007). Observations of monthly faculty meetings, bi-weekly administrative meetings, and weekly teacher non-instructional periods were conducted. My research journal consisted of field notes and reflections on my communications with teachers. Data was collected and analyzed for common themes and used to guide cycle two.

Cycle two (October 2009-December 2009) was conducted by interviewing a purposeful sample of four teachers to understand faculty perceptions of NJCTE and its leadership. Four current faculty members were interviewed using a semi-structured model (see Appendix A). Two of the most veteran teachers, one academic teacher, and one trade teacher were interviewed. Two new teachers, one academic teacher and one trade teacher were also interviewed. Using the same protocol, faculty were asked to discuss a time when a new program or procedure was implemented into the school, their role in the process, and the results of the initiative. Responses were analyzed for common themes and used to prepare new modes for faculty to communicate and additional training opportunities.

Also in this cycle, I sought to understand how faculty utilized and responded to the professional growth opportunities provided to them. I reviewed the district professional development plan, new teacher mentoring plan, agendas for professional

32

development sessions offered, and professional development survey data submitted by faculty.

Cycle three (February –May 2010) consisted of interviews with faculty who left NJCTE. I interviewed two faculty members, one academic and one trade teacher, who chose not to remain at NJCTE (see Appendix B). I sought to understand their experiences at NJCTE, and identify their motivational factors for resigning. Observations and journaling continued to inform my study.

Cycle four (September 2010-April 2011) allowed me to conduct observations, not as a participant but as a true observer. Observations of faculty meetings, administrator meetings, and non-instructional times continued. An additional interview with the Director of Curriculum (see Appendix C) who oversees all professional development and mentoring at NJCTE was conducted to provide insight into faculty's responses to my leadership actions.

I continued to journal during all four cycles of this project. Journaling allowed for me to continuously reflect on my experiences and the data. I used this information to continue the cyclical process of action research.

Conclusion

In this chapter, focus was placed on the methodology of my research project. Four cycles of action research were conducted using Stringer's (2007) model of "looking, thinking, and acting." The next chapter will focus on the organizational structure and culture of NJCTE, and overviews and findings of cycles one through four.

Chapter Four

Findings by Cycle

Cycle One

Introduction.

Cycle one occurred from September 2008 through June 2009. I wanted to understand the culture of NJCTE and sought to become more familiar with the organizational structure. I used this cycle to identify environments where faculty interacted and to gauge the level of communication that occurred between faculty. The cycle was intended to assess the organizational structure that was put into place by the leadership of NJCTE and how the faculty responded to this structure.

Data Collection.

This cycle consisted of observations and artifact review. Observations consisted of participant observations as discussed by Glense (2006) that were used to make connections between what participants said and what participants did. Artifacts were reviewed to provide information about what was encouraged and discouraged at the school (Hinchey, 2008). Artifact review consisted of NJCTE teachers' union contract and the NJCTE strategic vision plan. The teachers' union contract was effective from July 2007 through June 2010 and included faculty, secretaries, and maintenance staff. The NJCTE Strategic Vision Plan was in effect from 2006 through 2008. Throughout cycle one I kept a research journal. I used it to record my observational notes and personal leadership reflections. I journaled events as they unfolded, and I maintained field notes throughout my research (Hinchey, 2008).

34

Observations focused on two areas. One area was to observe faculty outside of their instructional periods, and the second was to understand the environment of NJCTE and how the faculty interacted in a group setting. During this time I conducted regular observations of non-instructional times and faculty meetings. Non-instructional times included faculty interactions in the lunch room, before and after school in common areas such as the main office or hallways, and during teacher preparation periods. Faculty meetings were held monthly in a media center after school and on an as-needed basis.

Analysis and findings.

Findings were documented with descriptive narratives and a visual representation. Data were analyzed by identifying common categories and coding them into common themes. As I interrogated the data, two themes emerged, isolation and lack of communication (Hinchey, 2008). According to Hinchey (2008), emergent themes are common ideas that appear during the data analysis process. Teachers did not understand the roles and responsibilities other teachers had in the organizational structure and student learning. Additionally, the classroom locations physically isolated teachers providing limited opportunities to communicate, unless the teachers sought the interaction. These themes were used to inform my actions for cycle two.

Data collection from observations reflected faculty forming their own groups or clicks. Academic faculty members and trade faculty members had limited interaction during non-instructional times such as in the lunch room. Before and after school, faculty stayed within their classroom locations or geographic hallways, not venturing into other areas of the campus. All academic teachers' classrooms were located in one hallway where trade classrooms were located in three different hallways or possibly another

35

building entirely. If teachers were seen in the main office area, it was only briefly, and it was usually those who used the parking lot near the main office.

During faculty meetings, teachers were physically divided with trade teachers sitting on one side of the room and academic teachers on the opposite side of the room. As the agenda was being discussed, comments from faculty further confirmed a separation between academic and trade teachers. Teachers did not have an understanding of each others' content areas, the importance of academics in trade courses, and the content or rigor of areas that were not their responsibility.

During a faculty meeting where math content standards were discussed, a trade teacher commented, "I'm not a math teacher; why do I need to know this stuff." This revealed a lack of understanding and connection between math content and trade content. This concerned me because math is used as application regularly in all trade contents, yet the connection between the areas was not present.

As the faculty meeting discussion continued, another trade teacher stated, "We don't get a prep so how am I supposed to get this done?" revealing that trade teachers did not have adequate time to prepare, possibly resulting in less quality lessons. This was a fact; trade teachers' schedules had no preparation time during the school day. A follow-up comment by one academic teacher stated that, "Shop classes are not graduation requirements so [academic teachers] need more time to prepare our lessons." This implied a higher importance placed on academic classes due to their status as requirements for successful high school completion. This observation reveals differences between trade teachers and academic teachers' responsibilities and perceptions of their roles in student learning. There were two distinct groups and understandings.

36

Faculty isolation was both physical, in terms of the placement of academic classrooms and trade classrooms, and intellectual, in terms of limited understanding of how the subject areas collectively played of role in student learning. As an emergent theme, I was concerned with this isolation and how it affected the culture of the building and ultimately student learning.

To further understand these findings, a review of NJCTE's teachers' union contract (NJCTE, 2007) revealed separate definitions for teachers. These definitions consisted of academic or trade. Academic teachers instructed core graduation requirements such as English, math, and science. Trade teachers instructed career and technical electives such as welding, culinary, or construction. Within the contract, these two groups were assigned different teaching loads and paid differently.

> Academic teachers, including Language Arts, history, mathematics and science shall teach three (3) blocks per day each semester or six (6) periods per day with a half block or one (1) period per day for planning…. A fourth teaching block may be assigned at the discretion of the administration for an additional $1,500 per semester.

> Career and technical education and career orientation teachers shall teach four (4) blocks per semester or a total of eight (8) periods per day per annum. (NJCTE, 2007)

The terms of the teacher's union contract created a clearly defined separation between the teachers' responsibilities and time needed to meet those responsibilities. This implied academic teachers' time was more valuable and of higher importance than that of trade teachers. This contract further advanced the isolation by defining two groups of teachers, even providing a financial advantage to those in one group. Noting the organizational structure put in place by the teachers' union contract (NJCTE, 2007)

37

contract, I further examined the district's Board of Education approved vision plan (NJCTE, 2006).

NJCTE's Strategic Vision Plan (2006) was created immediately following a year where faculty mobility rates were over 46%. A review of this plan revealed five initiatives identified by the Board of Education for the improvement of NJCTE's culture including:

1. Professional development and mentoring
2. Recruitment
3. Retention
4. Six characteristics of successful teachers
5. Leading beyond the status quo. (NJCTE, 2006, p. 15)

The Board of Education used a committee of key stakeholders such as administrators, teachers, parents, community members, and students to identify the current strengths and weaknesses of the district and prepare the strategic vision plan's goals. A noted weakness was the current culture of NJCTE and the above five initiatives were presented to help improve the culture. Professional development and mentoring was designated as the first step to help retain quality teachers and move the school beyond the status quo. I questioned how the Board of Education would enact such initiatives as there was no action plan included or available. This showed that the Board of Education was aware of the culture and was concerned about it, but lacked clear direction of how to address it. As the researcher and leader, I realized I needed more information regarding how the administration fostered teachers' professional growth.

My leadership.

Within this cycle, I reflected on collected data and my previous decision to implement PLCs. When I created the PLCs, I took a major risk and made an authoritative

decision, which is out of the realm of my typical leadership theory-in-use. Normally, I would have collaborated with teachers, administrators, and counselors to identify ways to improve the common concern we were facing, however in this situation, I did not feel the faculty was ready to have the conversations we needed to improve student learning. I felt in order to encourage dialogue I needed to force the teachers into a situation where conversations, even if it was only to complain about my decision to start PLCs, would be beneficial. This decision presented conflict between my leadership theory and theory-in-use, but I was willing to go against my norms to open conversation.

As I looked at my emergent themes, there was a clear lack of opportunity for academic and trade teachers to communicate and collaborate to improve instruction. Faculty didn't have relationships with each other, and leadership provided little opportunity for communication. PLCs were a way to foster communication and collaboration among faculty, even though this was not the current norm. As a leader, I understand that change does not occur overnight, and I trusted that I could provide outlets for these two populations to communicate and interact. I believed the previous formation of a PLCs could help, but findings in cycle one revealed it was not enough.

Conclusion.

Cycle one focused on my concern for the lack of communication and interaction occurring between faculty. Prior to this research, the implementation of professional learning communities (PLC) was the first step to opening communication. However, in cycle one, I found that isolation and limited communication between faculty were still the norm. This resulted in a lack of understanding between the two defined cohorts of teachers, academic and trade. As a result of these findings, further action to open

communication between faculty was designed and implemented in cycle two. An additional result included the need to further examine the district's professional development and mentoring plans.

Cycle Two

Introduction.

Cycle two occurred from October through December 2009. This cycle was intended to foster increased communication between teachers and allow for teachers to learn from and collaborate with each other. Additionally, I wanted to further understand how faculty felt about the actions that I and other leaders were taking and how they perceived these actions. I conducted semi-structured interviews with academic and trade teachers and continued to observe non-instructional times and faculty meetings. Furthermore, in order to gauge the level of professional development opportunities and mentoring, I reviewed NJCTE's Professional Development Plan (2009) and New Faculty Mentoring Plan (2008).

Overview of Actions.

Actions preceding cycle two, included the addition of peer coaching for all faculty. Peer coaching provided faculty members the opportunity to observe another teacher's classroom lessons-in-action and discuss the lesson before and after the observation. To support this effort, I provided classroom coverage by substitute teachers. This occurred on a volunteer basis but offered to all faculty. During cycle one, faculty expressed limited understanding of academic and trade content connections. Peer coaching allowed for teachers to observe another colleague's instruction in order to gain more knowledge about content areas, allowing for connections to be made.

Also for cycle two, the high school master schedule was changed prior to the 2009-2010 school year. This schedule change affected math and ELA classes. Previously, the math and ELA programs consisted of students receiving 45 minutes of additional math and ELA instruction per week specifically designed to reinforce the students' chosen trade programs. These courses occurred as a pull-out program where students left their trade classrooms and went to the math and ELA classroom. A concern presented by two teachers providing this instruction was noted within my research journal. The teachers were concerned because students "hated" being pulled out of their trade class to have "more" math or English, however they loved being in their trade class. This resulted in piloting a change in the master schedule. The schedule was changed so math, ELA, and trade teachers collaborated to provide subject matter instruction in the trade classroom. My intention was to allow for teachers to be able to not only observe another teacher in action but to allow opportunities for teachers to co-teach across two content areas.

Additionally, in this cycle the agendas for faculty meetings were changed to allow for more discussion points and less presenting of information by me as the leader. I encouraged dialogue and requested information from teachers rather than always providing information.

Data Collection.

Data collection for cycle two was comprised of journaling about my leadership, observing faculty meetings and common non-instructional times, reviewing of the professional development and new teacher mentoring plans, and conducting faculty interviews (see Appendix A). The NJCTE professional development plan is an annually

41

Board of Education approved plan that outlines the faculty's needs for further training and serves as a guide for professional growth opportunities afforded to teachers. In reviewing this plan, I first looked at the 2006-07 plan. This plan consisted of a thorough needs assessment in three areas: district information, technology, and effective teacher qualities. A survey was given to faculty at the end of the school year to identify their needs. The responses were used to design the professional development plan, outlining monthly training topics to be offered.

The mentoring plan was also Board approved annually, and it outlined the vision and goals for new faculty, responsibilities for new faculty and new faculty mentors, and components to ensure integration into the school. An action plan and list of resources appeared. Specific curriculum and training events were included for new faculty and their mentors and included classes every other month instructed by a designated administrator. The plan concluded with an evaluation tool used to assess the mentoring process and to inform the following year's mentoring plan.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with four faculty members: two trade teachers and two academic teachers. Semi-structured interviews have predetermined questions but allow for participants to add additional information (Hinchey, 2008). The interviews were conducted in a conference room next to my office and lasted 30 to 45 minutes. Data were tape recorded and transcribed.

The first faculty member was the most veteran trade teacher with seven years in the district. His certification was through alternate route. The second interview was with a trade teacher who was recently hired and began employment at NJCTE in September 2009. This interviewee also had alternate route certification. The third interview was with

42

the most veteran academic teacher of seven years. He had obtained certification through traditional means. The final interview was with an academic teacher who was recently hired for September 2009 and was currently in the process of completing alternate route certification.

Analysis and findings.

Data for this cycle were recorded using a coded matrix. Descriptive narratives were analyzed for common categories. From these common categories several themes emerged. The themes included inconsistency, voice, and moderately improved communication.

Observations of non-instructional times and faculty meetings revealed a minor change in dynamics where faculty were discussing their students. Although the discussion centered on complaining about students or their parents, at least the faculty were communicating. Math and ELA teachers scheduled into the trade classrooms for student support, were seen planning lessons with trade teachers for the following week. Faculty meetings allowed for more faculty interaction through open-ended agendas and questions provided by me as the leader. When faculty was asked to respond to an item on the agenda, instead of being provided information, more participation occurred. It was also noted that after the faculty meetings, teachers talked among themselves, instead of immediately leaving. I was also stopped and asked follow-up questions that had not been asked during the meeting. On more than one occasion, I even used these post faculty meeting discussions to create a follow-up email to the entire faculty as the information was important to the group.

43

Faculty, during interviews, were asked to discuss a time when a new procedure or program was implemented into the school. Interviews revealed some faculty members felt they were part of the decision making process, were afforded an opportunity to be involved in the change process, and viewed new procedures or programs as successful. Those who were not provided an opportunity to be involved in the decisions or change process viewed their involvement negatively and the change unsuccessful. When they were involved and provided avenues to take ownership and leadership in the change, satisfaction was noted.

One interviewee discussed the student code of conduct and her reactions to inconsistency on the part of administration. Each year the written student code of conduct is revised and approved, but this year changes in the implementation of the written policy occurred. She expressed confusion because what was verbally requested of her by an administrator was not consistent with what was requested of her in writing, and she was unsure how this translated to the students. She commented that this could be improved, "if we had had an opportunity to express our concerns about the implementation of this new policy… that may have been helpful versus just being told that this is what we have to do." She further commented, "I felt excluded and that my opinion, as the person in contact with the students on a daily basis, didn't matter."

Another interviewee discussed the implementation of the PLCs that occurred prior to this study. He spoke of this new program's success because "[administration] provides a leadership role to the people who want to be leaders." He was positive about this process because he and other teachers were afforded the opportunity to take a leadership role.

44

It was additionally noted that three of the teachers interviewed had no recommendations for improvement and were satisfied with just moving on to the next initiative. Only one teacher interviewee made suggestions for improvement. Of the three satisfied with moving on, one made a comment that "it's not up to me; I'm just a shop teacher who has a few more years left." This implied feelings of inadequacy and complacency. It also implied that either no leadership opportunity was provided to this teacher, or that he chose not to take the leadership role provided. This information led me to examine the professional development plan to understand how professional learning was designed.

A review of the NJCTE professional development plan (2009) included a look at the assessment tool, previous year's results, an outline of programs to be offered, and faculty required professional development hours. This plan revealed inconsistency in the needs assessment of faculty and the trainings to be offered during the school year. Faculty's self-identified needs were in the areas of district information such as explanation of policies and procedures where 60% felt it was needed. Additionally, 63% wanted more time to communicate with administration about these policies. Surprisingly, 74% of the faculty requested technology and software training in order to be able to meet their responsibilities for budgeting and student grading, and to understand administrator expectations in these areas. However, professional development provided to faculty during the school year did not focus on these areas and was designed in the areas of effective teaching and learning. This concerned me because the trainings were not what the faculty identified on the needs survey.

The NJCTE mentoring plan was a thorough plan for new faculty integration. It outlined a vision, expectations, process, opportunities, resources, action plan, and an evaluation method to ensure the plan was effective. However, I reviewed the 2006-07 plan where data were dated 2004, and discovered the names of administrators who were no longer employed, course offerings that were never offered, and an outdated action plan. This revealed a discrepancy with what was approved in writing and what was being carried out by administration. It also revealed a lack of communication among administrations, since I, as a building administrator, was not aware of such a formal plan, nor was I involved in seeing this plan through. It appeared as if this plan was created in 2004 and simply re-dated and re-approved each year.

The findings in cycle two were encouraging signs that some initiatives to foster communication were reaping benefits, although the progress was in small increments. It revealed inconsistency in written documents and actions by administration and the importance of faculty voice and leadership. These findings were used to further understand the motives of faculty who left employment at NJCTE, the focus of cycle three.

My leadership.

At this point in my research I began to see the school's culture as one of confusion. Teachers were unsure of school policies and administrator expectations. This confusion was causing anxiety in teachers. Teachers were focusing their attention on ensuring the school rules were followed and not focusing on improving student instruction. Schein (2004) notes that an organization's culture is built around norms, beliefs, assumptions, and procedures. He posits that culture is reflected through the

46

organizations' ability to learn and cope during times of change. Evans (1996) explains that cultures seek to maintain what is familiar to them and any movement away from the familiar, can cause anxiety, fear, and confusion. Nothing was familiar at NJCTE because of the constant turnover, not only in teachers but in administrative staff. Elements of first order change were revealed when procedures and policies were altered (Evans, 1996; Fullan, 2001). NJCTE could not experience second order change because of constant faculty turnover.

To successfully accomplish meaningful change, Deal and Peterson (1999) express the need to understand what exactly is to be changed, noting that understanding your surroundings is the key to success. As the leader, I needed to create an atmosphere of consistency where faculty were willing to be part of the professional growth of the school. I felt that creating opportunities for faculty to collaborate and dialogue, as well as gain knowledge of each other's content areas, was a positive first step. Fullan (2001) points out successful organizations are created through their members and the relationships they have with each other. Purposeful interactions and problem solving among faculty foster positive relationships. Further steps needed to be taken in cycle three to build a common vision while enhancing these relationships.

Conclusion.

Cycle two was designed to provide opportunities for faculty to communicate and begin to learn and grow collectively. It was also intended to further understand NJCTE's culture. Findings in this cycle reveal that faculty were having conversations and beginning to benefit by asking questions and learning from each other, but it also

47

revealed a lack of administrative consistency which created anxiety and confusion among teachers. These findings were used to design actions for cycle three.

Cycle Three

Introduction.

Cycle three occurred from February through May 2010. This cycle was used to understand why faculty members chose to leave their employment at NJCTE. It was also intended to further understand NJCTE faculty's reactions to new initiatives designed to open communication and collaboration.

Overview of actions.

Data from cycle two revealed improved communication between faculty as a result of the PLCs. Because of this, NJCTE contracted Rowan University to provide professional development training related to using PLCs to create a common vision for learning. Senge (2006) discussed the need for a common vision to foster an environment of sustainable change. Vision and purpose cannot be discussed in isolation (Senge, 2006). The PLC training was designed to explain the vision of PLCs, inform teachers of best practices using PLCs, and provide alternative methods using PLCs to inform instruction and improve student success. Increased faculty communication was the goal.

In addition to the PLCs, the Director of Curriculum provided more peer coaching professional development. I built more time into the monthly calendar for teachers to participate in peer coaching and to observe other teachers' classrooms with the intent to further open communication.

A final method to increase faculty communication was to allow for teachers to prepare and implement cross curricular activities. Professional development on the

48

concept of cross curricular activities was presented. All faculty were invited to attend, but it was not made mandatory. Cross curricular activities were defined as lessons conducted by two or more teachers in different content areas, linking two different content areas of instruction. For example, a construction teacher would work collaboratively with a computer design teacher to create a project to design a house. Another example included a cosmetology teacher and a science teacher discussing chemical reactions related to hair coloring. Cross curriculum activities allowed teachers to prepare and implement the lessons collaboratively for the benefit of student learning.

At this point in the research it was important to speak with former faculty members of NJCTE. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with two former NJCTE faculty members (see Appendix B). One was an academic teacher and the other a trade teacher. My goal was to gain an understanding of their experiences and why they left NJCTE.

Noting lack of communication amongst administrators and inconsistency in what the leadership team was communicating, I found it necessary to conduct weekly leadership team meetings. These meetings included me, two assistant principals, and the Director of Curriculum. These meetings were held at the end of the week and used to discuss the weeks' activities, observations, and plans for the next week. These meetings began in February as a way to discuss the week's events and to dialogue about success and concerns, planning for the proceeding week.

Data Collection.

Cycle three consisted of interviews of former faculty who had resigned from NJCTE. Each faculty member whom I interviewed was employed during the start of this

49

research and resigned prior to this cycle beginning. Interview protocol was designed to allow for the interviewee to discuss his/her reasons for entering into education, specifically CTE, his/her experiences at NJCTE, and items that ultimately led to his/her decision to leave NJCTE. Observations of faculty during non-instructional times and faculty meetings continued. My research journal continued as well, being used to further identify the levels of faculty communication and faculty's reactions to new initiatives. Additional data from professional development sessions were gathered to understand the faculty's perceptions of related training and assistance in new initiatives.

Analysis and findings.

A similar process occurred for this cycle as in cycle two where a coded matrix was created to record data. Common themes emerged from common categories and included collaboration, dialogue, and confirmation of a faculty divide.

Interviews revealed that the reasons for leaving NJCTE included a career goal change and fear that a teaching position would be eliminated. The academic teacher noted a career change and the trade teacher was fearful that due to program enrollment or curriculum changes, his job would be eliminated.

The first interview was an academic teacher who was a NJCTE employee from September 2006-December 2009. She explained that she was an English major in college with a master's degree in writing. Her decision to enter teaching was due to limited employment in other areas. She noted, "I wanted to work with kids, and I was interested in the security of benefits. I know that sounds awful, but that's being honest. At the time that I was graduating there weren't a lot of jobs, but if you could get one, I was interested in the security of the jobs in the State system." Her career path started as an adjunct at a

50

local county college. Her first public school position was NJCTE. She discussed that her ultimate decision to leave NJCTE was due to a career change. She wanted to pursue further education leading to helping students with speech difficulties, removing herself from the classroom setting. She explained, "While I enjoy working with students, my personal interests are to work with students in the field of speech language pathology, less within the traditional classroom with language arts."

The teacher described her experiences at NJCTE, noting the differences between academic teachers and trade teachers. She saw "apples and oranges" when it came to instruction, classroom management, and ultimately the philosophical beliefs of the two entities. As an English teacher with traditional training, she was surprised at the "overwhelming challenge to figure out how to get the students to focus on their academics." She described the challenges she faced as being very different from the trade teachers' challenges. "Students are motivated to be in the [trade] classroom." She noted limited motivation to be in her ELA classroom. Further discussion on professional development occurred. She expressed a desire for two separate sets of training workshops; one for academic and one for trade. She believed the two content areas needed to be separated. "There is such a disconnect... and we would just get into a shouting match... because we are talking about two different things." The yelling implied a lack of respect and understanding of each other's content area and collaboration was not the norm. She further expressed her knowledge of the perceptions of trade teachers by saying, "It doesn't mean that they are not both teachers but we are not talking the same language... [We] are not going to [use] the exact same strategies." This interview described a disconnect between academic and trade teachers.

51

In my research journal it was noted that she was not an English teacher who was scheduled into a trade classroom during cycle two nor did she participate in peer coaching or cross curriculum activities. She was not regularly seen in common areas, but remained in her local classroom hallway or her classroom. During faculty meetings, she kept to herself, not commenting or asking questions. She only associated with a few teachers whose classrooms were physically located near her classroom.

The second interviewee was employed at NJCTE for four years when he resigned in November 2008 to take another position in a northern CTE school. His reason for entering teaching was "to help the new generation of [students] learn from his experiences." His career path did not include a college degree, but he had over 20 years of industry experience. He completed the New Jersey alternate route teacher training program. His first teaching job was at NJCTE. When asked about why he chose to leave, he discussed his fear that the program would be eliminated. His only reason for leaving was because "I saw what happened to [another trade program]. The curriculum changed and the teacher was no longer able to teach the program and [was] let go. What if that happened to me?" He accepted another position at a northern career and technical school, teaching the same program.

As he described his experiences at NJCTE he noted the lack of time he had to prepare for the day. "We only have fifteen minutes in the morning and thirty minutes in the afternoon to plan, organize, and enter grades. I wish we had a prep period like the academic teachers." He further noted "I have a lot to do, just like [the academic teachers]." He felt as if the academic teachers were valued more because they were given

52

extra preparation time. He also implied academic teachers did not value what he taught stating the academic teachers feel "…all we did was play all day long."

Further conversation about his teaching preparation and continued professional development included a need for more training in instructional strategies in order to meet the needs of all students and understanding students with special needs. "I began teaching without any training other than a few hours of meetings with the principal." As he continued, "[Individualized Education Plans] can be so confusing. When I was in school we all learned the same stuff. There was no modifying the lessons." Furthermore, he spoke of the academic teachers being "trained to teach math and English and stuff. I teach [my trade] not math."

This interview revealed the culture of fear that was in place during this teacher's tenure. His fear of losing his job forced him to search for another position and ultimately leave NJCTE. It revealed a need for more training prior to entering the classroom. It showed his lack of understanding between the academic and trade content areas and how they were connected. It reflects a lack of commitment to student learning, as the teacher required assistance, yet the need either went unnoticed or unmet. These interviews increased my understanding of the divide between academic teachers and trade teachers further justifying the need to provide avenues for communication and professional learning.

Observations of faculty meetings during this cycle were encouraging as they revealed more interaction between faculty and administration. Meetings were held as a forum where agenda items were created by the faculty. Required informational items by administration were sent prior to the meeting and used to answer questions or clarify

53

information. Meetings were completed prior to the end of the teachers' contract day and left time for interactions between faculty. It was additionally noted that faculty tended to remain past 3:00 pm, which was the contracted time, because they were engaged in conversations with other teachers. These conversations included information about the day or week and of a personal nature, but on numerous occasions more than one teacher collectively was speaking to a guidance counselor about a student or teachers approached me about a concern. Teachers were more involved as mini units instead of isolated persons. This was encouraging as faculty were communicating and dialoguing about student learning.

Another encouraging element was that professional development surveys used by the Director of Curriculum revealed faculty making suggestions for improvement. During cycle two, my interviews revealed limited suggestions for improvement. Faculty now engaged in conversations providing suggestions. One stated, "what if we knew who to ask if we had a specific problem that needed to be addressed?" This teacher suggested a central source for gaining needed knowledge. A new teacher asked for "more time to talk to those who have been through [the new teacher mentoring program] before." Negative comments were received as well such as "[We need] less PLCs since we already do this at lunch." Although this was a negative comment, it revealed that faculty were aware of the new modes of communication that were in place, whether they embraced them or not. It also showed that faculty were talking at lunch which during cycle one was not the norm. The culture was beginning to shift from one of isolation where faculty did not even know who their colleagues were, to one of awareness where dialogue was present.

Teachers were willing to share ideas and seek out others to gather information and improve teaching.

My leadership.

As I reflected on this cycle, the use of a weekly administrators' meeting was helpful because it allowed time for all administrators to become familiar with the weekly occurrences, discuss noted positive events, and express concerns. This was the first step in improving communication at the administrator's level and allowed for us to build trust with each other. As noted in my research journal, one positive aspect of these meetings was faculty observations and classroom walk throughs. When one administrator noted what he/she observed in a classroom, another administrator had the opportunity to express what they saw and compare the two perspectives. It allowed more than one administrator to observe classroom and student behavior and compare notes. Administrators were beginning to support each others' efforts to improve learning and share a common vision for school improvement.

During one weekly meeting, I brought up the idea of the administrative team being on the same page when implementing written policy, as noted in one interview. I brought up the idea of teacher confusion when I as principal applied the policy in one way and an assistant principal applied it in a different way and how this would and could confuse our teachers. The conversation resulted in a decision to form a committee that would involve teachers, students, and parents to revise the student code of conduct. One assistant principal agreed to head up the committee and report results to me over the next few months. This showed me that opening dialogue and presenting areas of concern

55

could result in the formation of new ideas and move the change process forward to improve a situation.

The environment of top down leadership was not the norm with this administrative team. We worked collaboratively to involve the stakeholders in the change process and sought others' expertise when working towards improvement. This was a democratic approach to change and confirms Dewey's (1916) reliance on a shared common interest for change. Fullan (2001) further confirms the need for a shared vision in order to reach second order change. At this stage of the research, elements of second order change were starting to be observed.

Conclusion.

Cycle three was intended to understand why faculty chose to leave NJCTE and further understand how these teachers experienced their environment during new initiatives designed to improve communication. Interviews revealed that one NJCTE faculty member left for fear of losing his job due to program changes and another to make a career change. Interviews also revealed limited understanding between academic teachers and trade teachers. Although these results cannot generalized to the retention issues at NJCTE, factors revealed a lack of common vision, limited professional understanding, and fear within the environment.

I found data confirmed that the organizational structure isolated teachers and confusion, anxiety, and limited opportunities to interact played a role in the limited communication at NJCTE. I also found that the new communication methods and opportunities I put in place for teachers were noted by teachers showing awareness of change and moving in a positive direction.

56

A limitation to this study included the use of only two interviews of resigned faculty members. This resulted from limited availability and the inability to reach resigned faculty. Additionally, only those faculty who were employed at some point during my tenure were contacted, as I sought information about my leadership. It is recommended that future studies interview a larger pool of faculty. A longitudinal study over a more extended period of time is also recommended.

Cycle Four

Introduction.

Cycle four occurred from September 2010 through June 2011 and was designed to further understand my leadership and its role, if any, in faculty retention at NJCTE. Observations continued to follow progress from previous cycles. I interviewed the Director of Curriculum in order to gain her perspectives of NJCTE and to further triangulate data.

Overview of Actions.

Prior to the start of this cycle, my role as NJCTE principal changed. In my new role I was responsible for community and adult career and technical education. As such, I no longer supervised NJCTE, and my perspective in this research project changed from participant observer to observer (Glense, 2006). Therefore, my actions during this cycle focused on my observations from my new role. I did not implement any new actions during this cycle, but events occurred that impacted NJCTE teachers within the district.

The NJCTE teachers' union received a new three-year contract effective from July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2013 (NJCTE, 2010). Changes from the previous three-year contract were noted. Changes to the NJCTE master schedule were also noted as the

57

Board of Education approved the addition of a special education teacher to the faculty to provide students with support. This cycle was used to observe NJCTE and its responses to the contract, faculty changes, and the research initiatives that were put in place over the preceding three years.

Data Collection.

The final cycle consisted of artifacts, observations, and interviews. Artifact analysis was conducted on the new teacher contract. Observation and leadership notes were recorded in my research journal and coded for analysis. A semi-structured interview with the Director of Curriculum was conducted in April of 2011 to gain her perspectives (see appendix C). The purpose of this interview was to understand NJCTE's environmental changes, if any, and gain the Director's understanding of why NJCTE's teachers chose to leave the school. This interview was conducted in my office, tape recorded, and lasted two hours. The interview was transcribed and used to identify common categories and emergent themes. The interview results were further used to understand my role as a leader in the environment and ultimately retention.

Analysis and findings.

The teachers' union contract for 2010-2013 was reviewed and revealed a change in job responsibilities for teachers (NJCTE, 2010). In the previous contract, trade teachers were required to teach four blocks and academic teachers only three with a financial incentive for the fourth block. Now trade teachers would also receive the financial incentive for teaching the fourth block. It is noteworthy that, although trade teachers were still not given the option to teach only three blocks, they now received compensation. This implied teacher unity as the teachers union joined forces to provide equity for all

58

faculty and not separation. Although, I cannot suggest equality was created, progress was made towards it.

It is additionally noted that available stipends for school sponsored clubs were increased to add two new clubs. These clubs were created by teachers to provide students with additional extracurricular activities. Teachers were actively involved in creating new opportunities for students without being directed to do so. This implies teachers taking ownership of the new opportunities for students to engage in learning and growth as well as the Board of Education's recognition of such leadership; an attribute that was not present at the start of this study.

Data were collected from my observations as principal of community and adult education, no longer someone embedded in the faculty environment. Observations revealed faculty members engaged in cross curriculum activities and arriving to school early and leaving late. The faculty dining room was full and very noisy. Faculty was heard discussing some of the changes, and even though at times they were complaining, they had an opinion about what was going on in the school. Observations revealed teachers regularly team teaching and implementing lessons collaboratively. This concept further enhanced the initiatives of peer coaching from cycle two and cross curricular activities from cycle three.

The interview with the Director of Curriculum was insightful as she reflected on the changes that occurred from 2007 to 2011 and commented, "[The teachers] seem to be more comfortable in their own skin. They think that [administration] is here to help them now." She described a mutual respect where even if faculty didn't like the answer they received from administration, they still felt respected. The previous culture felt as if

59

"someone was out to get them." She mentioned, "I don't think they felt appreciated or that they mattered; they never spoke up or gave their opinion."

Over time, teachers were proposing their own ideas for change within curriculum frameworks or to improve standard operating procedures. Teachers created new student organizations and proposed new activities to enhance learning now that they thought administration would support it. Teachers taking initiative and leadership roles without direction are important progress. Fullan (2007) posits, "Leaders developing other leadership is at the heart of sustainability" (p. 59). I was seeing change in attitude and culture.

This interview confirmed faculty responded to change in different ways. The individual leading the change made a difference in the faculty's response to change. If it came from business office staff or a certain assistant principal, for example, the change was viewed unfavorably, but if it was facilitated by me, the Director of Curriculum, or one assistant principal, more teachers were willing to be involved. When faculty understood the reason for the change, whether they were directed to do it or were involved in the change process, they were willing to complete the task accordingly. When faculty was asked to be part of the process or served on a committee to discuss the process, teachers took the lead to implement the new change.

When the Director of Curriculum discussed the changes in the teachers' approaches to teaching, she noted a difference in teacher attitude and the interactions that were occurring among teachers. She described her first professional development session in 2007 when the teachers "did not care" about what was being presented. In fact, the Director stated, "It was as if my presentation had no connection to them at all." She

60

mentioned that they were forced to attend professional development sessions, but she explained, "they did not use the knowledge gained in the classroom." When the Director was conducting classroom and shop walk throughs she found, "It was like [the teachers] were afraid of me and that I was going to write them up and get them fired." When asked why she thought this was occurring she commented, "The teachers felt as if they were replaceable and that they didn't matter." This further attests to the culture of fear present at NJCTE

I asked her to describe the difference, if any, between academic teachers and trade teachers in terms of their responses to the new initiatives from 2007-2011. She noted that when it came to professional development there were "clear differences in needs and perceptions." She continued to describe trade teachers as wanting to

> …do things their way like they were at work. They didn't understand that just because they may use certain language at work that it wasn't appropriate in a school setting. Sometimes it was as if they were oblivious to the fact that [they] were in education and held to certain standards.

Academic teachers were described as "understanding how to implement lessons and meet standards, but were not always flexible when it came to seeing how students learn outside of the classroom, like in a shop." There was a disconnect between their concepts of teaching, teaching methods, and pedagogy.

As the director of curriculum described the current state of the school she noted "that the disconnect [between academic and trade teachers] had moved from resentment to mutual respect." She mentioned that the teachers now were not only willing to work with other teachers, but they were asking questions and seeking knowledge of the others' content areas without being required. She couldn't pinpoint the reason for faculty retention rates improving, but she did say that

61

> …when making the decision to resign from a job and seek out a new job, you have to consider all the factors and weigh the pros and cons. I think when I started there were many more pros for leaving, however, now the cons [for leaving] outweigh the pros

This interview confirmed the former culture of isolation and fear was changing, and further clarified the increased communication and collaboration foster at NJCTE.

I was questioned by teachers during my first year as administrator as to how long "I would be staying." It was not normal for administrators to remain longer than a few years as well, but I found that I quickly became committed to the organization and saw such potential for greatness in the educational system. Even after my position change, I was still committed to the vision of the school. My research perspectives may have changed, but my beliefs as a leader did not.

Leadership.

As this cycle concluded, I realized that fostering dialogue and allowing faculty to communicate and discuss what is happening around them builds personal and professional relationships. As a leader, I sought to create "purposeful interactions," a concept Fullan (2007) describes as an essential part of improvement. NJCTE had major communication issues upon my entry where faculty did not even know what another teacher taught, and at the end of this cycle, although not all communication was for instructional purposes', faculty were talking and working together regularly. My goal as leader of NJCTE was to create an environment where faculty would begin to change and grow collaboratively, no matter what subject area they taught.

As a leader, my goal included fostering leadership growth in those I supervised. As Fullan (2007) states, "leaders developing leaders" creates the framework for a healthy,

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sustainable organization (p. 59). It is through this task that an organization can navigate positively through change, yet this task is no easy feat. It requires leadership, trust, and commitment.

My observations and an interview in this cycle, affirmed that the initiatives I was instrumental in putting in place in cycles one through three, were continuing. The master schedule continued to have math and ELA teachers going into the trade classrooms and even added an additional special education teacher into this schedule. Teachers were conducting cross curricular activities and continued to provide lessons where curriculum content crossed over. One project that occurred involved six teachers, both trade and academic, to utilize a piece of steel from the World Trade Center in New York and design, build, and present a memorial structure honoring those affected by 9-11. Peer coaching continued as part of the mentoring plan for new teachers and administration continued to provide coverage and time for teachers to observe each other in action. PLCs lived on and were thriving.

I was pleased that although I was no longer leading NJCTE, purposeful interactions were continuing. Faculty interacted regularly with each other and administration. They worked collaboratively to create new student learning experiences. The overall environment was student learning oriented, and a culture shift was present. Evans (1996) discusses second order change as being a result of cultural changes in the attitudes, actions, and values, and although more growth was needed, second order change was visible as communication was the new norm, not isolation.

When my research started, faculty retention rates were noted in Table 1. At the conclusion of this research, faculty retention rates for the 2010-2011 school year were

63

2.3%. as seen in Table 2, a remarkable reduction in turnover at NJCTE. Table 2 shows

retention rates ranging from 28.6% to 2.3% at the end of this research

Table 2

Summary of NJCTE Faculty Mobility Rates 2006-2011

	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
School Year					
NJCTE Average	28.6	21.9	10.7	5.1	2.3
State Average	6.2	5.7	4.0	5.4	5.0

Note: Denotes average mobility rate each year.

Even though my initiatives and leadership are not the only contributing factors to

improving retention rates at NJCTE, I believe my leadership contributed to the change of

environment from a very closed system to one where communication, collaboration, and

care were present.

Conclusion.

The four cycles of my action research study used Stringer's (2007) "look, think,

act" components of action research as I observed, reflected, and prepared new actions.

Cycle one revealed a glimpse of NJCTE's isolation of teachers and limited

communication and interaction. Cycle two further revealed inconsistency and saw slight

improvement of communication. Cycle three clarified the trade and academic divide and

a culture of fear, yet collaboration and dialogue were occurring. By cycle four the faculty

64

became more unified and collaboration was a normal occurrence. My review of the four

cycles of this action research project, led to the final analysis and conclusions presented

in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Analysis

Introduction

This research was created to understand NJCTE's mobility rates and define my leadership as it related to this study. When my leadership of NJCTE began, retaining high quality teachers at NJCTE was a challenge, with mobility rates averaging over 26%. This chapter will recap the purpose of my research and research questions, provide a synopsis of my conclusions for research questions one, two, and three, and offer recommendations for further research. Chapter 6 will address the last two research questions about my leadership development.

Research Questions

This qualitative action research project was designed to identify NJCTE's faculty retention issues. I sought to understand how faculty experienced NJCTE and environmental factors that contributed to their decisions to leave NJCTE. I wanted to learn about the school environment, similarities and differences between academic and trade teachers, and the factors that played a role in retention issues. This study was designed to address the following questions:

1. How are NJCTE faculty experiencing the school environment?

2. How do the experiences of academic teachers and trade teachers compare at NJCTE?

3. What factors contributed to faculty members' decisions to resign from NJCTE?

4. In what ways, if any, did my leadership influence NJCTE's faculty retention rates?

5. How did my leadership develop during my tenure at NJCTE?

Action Research Cycles Overview

My action research cycles sought to gain a better understanding of the NJCTE environment and how the faculty experienced this environment. Prior to my research, faculty retention was difficult and during my first year as leader, new hires, including teachers, counselors, administrators, and secretaries were the majority as seen in Table 3. Additionally, it was noted that only five total employees had remained in district for more than three years. The most veteran of those employees was seven years.

Table 3

Summary of Employees at the Beginning of the 2006-2007 School Year

Job Title	Total	New	Returning	Not Filled	Retained 3+ Years
Trade teacher	20	6	13	1	4
Academic teacher	10	7	3	0	1
Counselor	3	3	0	0	0
Administrator	4	2	2	0	0
Secretaries	3	2	1	0	0
TOTAL	*40*	*20*	*19*	*1*	*5*

Cycle one took place from September 2008 through June 2009 and gathered data on the environment, culture, and communication levels of faculty. Resulting data were used to design cycle two which took place from October to December of 2009. This cycle looked at how faculty were interacting within the NJCTE environment and how they responded to the new communication initiatives I implemented. Cycle three took place from February to May of 2010 and focused on why faculty left NJCTE and the continual study of faculty's experiences. Cycle four, the final cycle, occurred from September 2010

67

through April 2011 and was used to collect final data and to understand my leadership of

the action research project. Data from this cycle were used to compare faculty

experiences from earlier cycles and trace the changes, if any, by the conclusion of the

research.

Conclusions

My first three research questions focused on understanding NJCTE faculty's

experiences and identifying environmental factors that contributed to faculty mobility

rates.

Research question 1: How are NJCTE faculty experiencing the school

environment?

Question one sought the experiences of NJCTE faculty. It was important to the

purpose of this study to evaluate factors that might have contributed to the faculty's

choices to leave NJCTE. I observed and gathered data about the environment and

discovered that three categories emerged related to how faculty experienced the

environment at NJCTE, including organizational structure, communication, and culture.

Faculty experiences in these three areas in 2008 were very different when compared to

faculty experiences in 2011. Table 4 shows three categories that emerged from data and

changes from 2008 through 2011. These categories will be explained in more detail.

Table 4

Comparison of Categories from 2008 to 2011

Category	2008 Elements	2011 Elements
Organizational Structure	One room school house	Open door policy
	Isolated courses	Cross curricular activities
	Isolation of Academic and Trade Teachers	Collective Voice of all teachers
Communication	Closed System	Open System
	Limited communication between teachers	Regular communication
	Unknown Voice	Confident Voice
Culture	Toxic	Cohesiveness
	Fear of	Power with
	Worked only contracted day	Worked past contracted day

Organizational Structure.

Data revealed key differences in the way faculty experienced the environment in cycles one, two, three, and four. This research was born out of a concern for the limited faculty interactions that occurred. Teachers arrived at school, went to their classroom areas, taught, and left at the end of the day. NJCTE had over 30 one-room school houses where faculty kept to themselves and were isolated from each other. Over the course of this research, interventions were implemented to increase interaction, communication, and shared experiences of faculty. By cycle four, faculty were seen interacting with each other before and after school, as well as in the hallways and during lunch. Teachers were even seen inviting other teachers into their classrooms to observe or team teach.

69

When this research began, the organizational structure of NJCTE formed two separate environments and did not provide opportunities for trade and academic faculty to share classroom experiences and student progress. However, due to the implementation of PLCs and creating an initiative for faculty to observe one another and plan cross curricular activities, the culture began to show differences. Teachers worked to implement lessons collaboratively through cross curricular activities. Math and English course content was infused into all trade programs. I changed the master schedule so trade and academic content areas were no longer segregated, and teachers were supporting each others' efforts to enhance student learning. Teachers who were once alone and divided, were becoming a collective unit.

The organizational structure during cycle one was further divided by definitions in the teachers' union contract. Within this contract, academic teachers and trade teachers were defined differently, laying the ground work for separation. The different definitions contributed to two separate cultures and limited faculty's understandings of each others' roles in the educational process. This situation was improved when the teachers' union contract was changed in 2010 to eliminate the two separate definitions and provide equal reimbursement for teachers' level of education and experience. Although many factors contributed to the change, one cannot rule out that the Board of Education recognized a collective voice from all teachers. The teachers' union was seen as a collective unit that sought to have academic and trade content teachers treated equally.

Communication.

Early in this research I identified NJCTE as a closed system. Closed systems do not allow for interaction between its members and communication is limited or

70

nonexistent according to Bolman and Deal (2003). Did not occur at NJCTE, and in some cases, teachers did not know who the other teachers were. These concerns led to the implementation of PLCs, peer coaching, cross curricular activities, and a change in the master schedule. By cycle four, faculty were communicating regularly for both professional and personal reasons and community was developing. The feeling in the building was friendly and welcoming. During my daily building walk throughs, faculty, who were not teaching, were seen in the hallways, lunch room, and classrooms speaking with other teachers. Teachers used their time before and after school to engage in conversations.

Professional learning communities, implemented prior to this research, were slow forming but soon became the standard. DuFour (2004) defines PLCs as a "powerful new way of working together that profoundly affects the practices of schooling" (p. 1). PLCs foster communication by creating opportunities for teachers to work collaboratively on learning, rather than a focus on teaching (DuFour, 2004). Teachers at NJCTE were now provided with an avenue to communicate, and did so regularly. Communicating became the norm. As the administrator, I supported and encouraged this type of communication and listened to teachers' ideas, concerns, and experiences.

During cycle one, teachers did not have a voice. Teachers felt as if their opinions didn't matter or that if they spoke up, they would become "a target." One teacher early in the research came to me to discuss a student discipline issue. He started the conversation with, "Hypothetically, if I had a student who..." As we continued the conversation, he was afraid to tell me he was having a student issue in fear he would be disciplined for not "knowing how to handle the situation." This implied a culture of fear where teachers

71

were afraid to ask for help. Teachers did not express ideas or opinions and most of the time did not question the decisions made by administration. Their voice was stifled.

Data collected indicated that the culture was changing at NJCTE. Although there is not a definite correlation between the initiatives I implemented and changes observed, it is believed that they contributed. As reported by the Director of Curriculum,

> [Faculty] felt good about asking questions and were willing to bring up a controversial topic. This was not the norm with previous administration… Teachers wanted to write their own curriculum and provide their input, even if it was because they felt they needed to be right.

This implies faculty becoming invested in the learning process and wanting to take ownership of student learning.

By cycle four, teachers were asking questions and were providing their own opinions about situations. At a faculty meeting I observed a conversation that took place about newly revised, New Jersey Common Core Standards. Faculty wanted to be involved in the curriculum development and were willing to work together to ensure their content met all standards. Teachers took ownership of their ideas and were open to try new things. Faculty found a voice and was conformable having their voice be heard. At this point, being an outside observer to the research, it was great to see a culture of joint collaboration where teachers and administrators were working together and sought out opportunities to do so. This collaboration and communication became institutionalized since it was continuing without my leadership or guidance, moving toward second order change (Fullan, 2007).

72

Culture.

In 2008, a culture of fear and isolation was the norm. Bolman and Deal (2003) discuss "toxic culture" where the organization experiences a lack of cohesiveness and individuals are isolated. "People form into opposing camps" (Bolman & Deal, 2003, p. 118). This was the foundations of NJCTE at this time; however, by 2011, this toxic culture changed. An overall change in attitude was seen and confirmed by the Director of Curriculum. Faculty were not only working together but were invested in NJCTE and sought out new ways to help students.

When I began this research, trust was not present. Yet, over time trust was building, as attested to by a teacher during a post observation conference with me. "Thanks for your help. I used to hate observations because I was always doing something wrong, but I'll try this [in the classroom]." This implies a new respect and trust between myself, as the leader, and the teacher. This teacher became more invested in her lessons and personal improvement, using my suggestions not just because she had to, but because she wanted to try something new.

Two other teachers worked collaboratively with one administrator and a group of students to create two new student organizations. Because teachers now had a voice, they were willing to communicate to create new opportunities for students. Their ideas were accepted and valued. This was done in addition to their daily responsibilities and implies a new dedication to NJCTE and its students. They worked beyond contracted hours and extended their contracted work day to help students or talk with fellow faculty members. Faculty demonstrated a new commitment to the organization and student learning.

Research Question 2: How do the experiences of academic teachers and trade teachers compare at NJCTE?

This research question sought to uncover any differences between NJCTE academic teachers and trade teachers. Because the focus of CTE is centered on industry preparation and highly rigorous content specific courses, teachers certifications are earned through different means including traditional and alternate route programs. Each teacher training program provides different methods of preparing teachers but a deeper difference was discovered.

I discovered differences in background experiences as well as pedagogical preparation. There was a clear divide in training, understanding, and even in responsibilities of the trade teachers and academic teachers. Trade teachers must have at least four years of industry experience in their content area but most had over 20 years in industry prior to entering education. For all trade teachers, teaching was a second career choice. These teachers all came from a previous industry experience. For academic teachers, all had a college degree and entered NJCTE with a strong sense of core content and pedagogy. All teachers had their own views of how to educate students and the best way to prepare students for employment, education leading to employment, or higher education. Teachers, upon entering the culture of NJCTE, needed to learn NJCTE's policies, procedures, and beliefs, and New Jersey's educational processes, noting their differences in backgrounds.

NJCTE had mentoring and professional development training designed for new teachers, as written in the NJCTE mentoring plan; however, this plan was found to be outdated and not implemented as intended. This study discovered that the academic and

74

trade teachers' needs were different when it came to professional development and mentoring because of their personal beliefs and experiences.

The research study helped me realize that I needed to adjust how I interacted with faculty. I needed to be aware of how I could account for teachers' individual needs. The conversations I had with the teachers needed to be different. I had to pose different questions, support alternative teaching styles, and recognize that learning in trade classes looks different than in academic classes. For example, success in a math classroom may be students demonstrating understanding of Pythagorean's Theorem but in automotive class it is successfully demonstrating the proper way to change a vehicle's oil. I needed to be aware that my faculty would be assessing student learning based on content specific criteria. I also needed to facilitate faculty learning so all teachers had the ability to experience each others' method of assessment and assist in faculty learning from each others. Recognizing that knowledge is demonstrated differently in academic classes and trade classes is important for leaders and teachers to understand. It is my responsibility to provide this awareness for my faculty.

Academic and trade teachers had different understandings of teaching and learning and as previously discussed, these groups of teachers had a very limited understanding of each other's role in the educational process. Limited connections were made about how content fit together. Early in the research a divide between faculty was observed. One teacher's analogy of academic and trade teachers being "apples and oranges" shows that teachers saw differences but did not have the opportunity to learn from their differences.

75

By cycle four, academic teachers and trade teachers were learning from each others' differences. Through my initiatives in cycles one through three, academic and trade faculty were provided opportunities to increase awareness of similarities and differences. The improved communication fostered dialogue, and the academic and trade divide was decreasing and moving to a more cohesive faculty model. It was comfortable for teachers to work together. This was attested to by a math teacher's comment when he went into construction class and said, "What a concept, students can add fractions. They just need a ruler to do so." This implies that a math teacher, although sarcastically, identified that students were learning the same concept through two different methods of instruction. Faculty awareness of differences and their ability to work collaboratively showed a change in culture.

Research question 3: What factors contributed to faculty members' decisions to resign or remain at NJCTE?

This qualitative action research study revolved around the reasons faculty resigned from NJCTE. Data revealed two reasons for resignations that included fear of job elimination and career change. These reasons, however, cannot be generalized to the entire population. A longituadal study with non-retained faculty may produce more reliable results and will be addressed in the limitations section of this research report. As data unfolded, disappointedly, a conclusive answer could not be drawn for this question.

Although this study did not provide definitive answers to research question three, literature links the school environment, faculty voice, and administrative support to faculty retention (Clayton & Schoonmaker, 2007; Easley, 2006; Gehrke & McCoy, 2007; Halawah, 2005; Justice et al., 2003; Rhodes et al., 2004; Tye & O'Brien, 2002; Weiqi,

2007). Administrative support plays a role in teacher turnover rates (Justice et al., 2003; Weiqi, 2007). Administrative support can be defined as superiors providing necessary guidance, professional growth opportunities, resources, and encouragement to its faculty (Justice et al., 2003). Elements that improve faculty retention include faculty voice in the decision making process, professional development planning, and school improvement initiatives (Weiqi, 2007). Data from this action research study revealed improvement in these elements at NJCTE.

Although I cannot prove a direct correlation between my leadership and retention at NJCTE, I can say wholeheartedly that I played a role in changing the culture and environment where faculty interacted and fostered positive relationship. When reviewing the faculty mobility rates at NJCTE as reported by the New Jersey Department of Education from 2003 through 2011 (see Table 5), the reduction in mobility, particularly from 2008 through 2011, is noteworthy.

Table 5

Summary of NJCTE Faculty Mobility Rates 2003-2011

School Year	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
NJCTE Average	46.4	46.2	26.5	28.6	21.9	10.7	5.1	2.3
State Average	NA	7.0	6.7	6.2	5.7	4.0	5.4	5.0

Note: Denotes average mobility rate each year.

77

As noted, data reflected changes in the NJCTE environment. Faculty felt more comfortable voicing their opinions and receiving feedback. Lack of communication was identified as a stumbling block in cycle one, but was improved by the conclusion of this research. This improvement included a noted difference in trust between faculty to collaborate to improve learning. As seen through peer coaching, teachers acted as mentors to other teachers, improving new faculty's transition into NJCTE. Additionally, data reflect that faculty felt supported throughout the study.

Although question three cannot be answered conclusively, data revealed changes to the NJCTE environment and culture. These changes included increased communication, collaboration, and faculty voice being heard. These elements have been linked in previous literature (Barmby, 2006; Easley, 2006; Hahs-Vaughn & Scherff, 2008; Justice, et al., 2003; McLeskey & Billingsly, 2008; Rhodes, Nevill, & Allen, 2004; Smethem, 2007; Weiqi, 2007) to improve faculty retention rates and, as seen in Table 5, significant changes in faculty retention were noted.

Limitations

Upon final analysis of this research study, several limitations were noted. Interview data revealed career change and fear of job elimination as two reasons for individuals choosing to leave, but these data resulted from only two interviews of former NJCTE faculty. Although these data were helpful, they could not be generalized to all faculty who resigned from NJCTE. Any future studies should include a much larger interview sample of faculty who leave NJCTE.

Additionally, interview protocol of faculty who were still employed at NJCTE did not include questions regarding why a teacher chose to remain at NJCTE. Instead it

78

sought to identify the environment and culture of NJCTE and how the teacher was experiencing NJCTE. This was a limitation and it is recommended that this question be asked in future research studies.

When considering the substantial decrease in mobility rates of NJCTE faculty from 2003-2011, it should be noted that a change in New Jersey's educational funding occurred in 2010, resulting in numerous school districts across the state eliminating faculty positions. This decrease in positions resulted in many people losing jobs, and therefore, limited available teacher positions. This may have contributed to the increased retention rates, only because other options for employment were not existent, so teachers kept their current jobs.

Recommendations for Future Research

This research resulted in multiple topics for further study that could provide additional insight into career and technical faculty retention. Although data reinforced the current body of literature on faculty retention, it is recommended that future studies of CTE faculty include a much larger number of interviews, as previously noted. A larger sample would gain more insight into why faculty resign and the factors that lead to resignation. It is recommended that future studies be conducted with CTE faculty to assess the role culture plays in retention. Exit interviews with all faculty who resign is recommended as part of data collection. Additional studies could also be conducted on the effect of professional development designed specifically for teachers within a CTE school and how training needs of the CTE faculty are best met. A longitudinal study into the new NJ alternate route model for CTE teachers may be helpful in understanding how to best assist CTE teachers' transitions into education. The data showed that CTE

79

teachers may require a different type of orientation and preparation related to pedagogy and classroom management. Future studies could seek to identify necessary training for CTE faculty to be successful and remain in education.

Introduction

I am a person who believes that things happen for a reason. I may not understand the reason at the time; I may not agree with the reason; and I may not like the reason, but as doors open and close, it is up to me to find meaning in the situation. Throughout my leadership journey I continually revisited Jaworski's (1996) *Synchronicity*. Synchronicity is defined as the "meaning behind extraordinary moments in time" (Jaworski, 1996, p. x). I am a leader who seeks to find meaning in every experience and every relationship I have, accepting the meaning and using it to learn something new.

I learned to embrace change. I experienced change since the start of this journey, both in my personal and professional life, and I am aware of the lessons I learned. This knowledge makes me the leader and person I am. Senge (1996) reminds me that leadership is more than just the theory I apply to a situation.

> Because of our obsession with how leaders behave and with the interactions of leaders and followers, we forget that in its essence, **leadership is about learning how to shape the future**. Leadership exists when people are no longer victims of circumstances but participate in creating new circumstances. (p. 3)

Leadership is about learning how to navigate through life. It is about gaining new perspectives, experiencing growth, and building relationships.

This chapter is designed to accomplish three goals. One is to revert back to my early experiences, identifying my core values and beliefs. The second is to define my espoused leadership theory, and third, I seek to answer the two leadership research questions. These questions include:

81

4. In what ways, if any, did my leadership influence NJCTE's faculty retention rates?

5. How did my leadership develop during my tenure at NJCTE?

Early Influences

I describe my childhood as typical. I was raised by my mother and father, had a brother, and spent holidays with my grandparents, aunts and uncles, and cousins. I attended the local elementary school and played at the playground, but my most memorable moments center around the role models that I now know helped shape who I am.

I recall people who I admired and the experiences I had with them. The earliest memory from my academic childhood traces back to fifth grade. My fifth grade teacher enamored me with her poise, spoke in a kind tone, and presented herself with a sense of confidence. Not realizing it as a child, she engaged in caring encounters described by Noddings (2004) as building relationships of trust and care. She spoke to the students, at the time I thought, as friends. Now looking back, she listened to us, helped us make our own decisions, and communicated in such a way, I knew she cared. This effortless approach is one that Noddings (1984) argues is care in its most basic form. I remember how she made me feel. I felt confident, valued, and cared for which resulted in my desire to work hard, knowing someday I would be a teacher myself.

As I continued my education into high school, in my eyes, I was still a typical student, earning A's and B's and participating in numerous extracurricular activities. Yet, when I was a 17 year old high school junior, an illness disabled my father and my mother became terminally ill. I was placed in a position that I not only needed to take care of

myself, but I needed to take care of my entire family, both physically and financially. Through this, my parents taught me what it meant to be a family. A family works together to support each other, enjoy each other, laugh together, cry together, and ultimately grow and learn with each other. I placed family first, ensuring they were cared and provided for.

As I began working full time while completing high school, my supervisor became an important female role model for me. She was independent, hardworking, and a positive force for her company. She built her business from the ground up.

Her beliefs revolved around self motivation, and she believed strongly in the role of mental attitude in success. She had a family with two daughters and balanced her career and family well. I admired her ability to be a successful business woman, a mother, wife, and mentor. I was in awe of her strength, resilience, and positive attitude she always displayed.

As I continued to work with her through college, she became more than a boss, she became a trusted friend. She encouraged me to find my strengths and use them in a positive way. She saw the qualities I possessed and helped me recognize those qualities and challenge my weaknesses, but the most valuable lesson was from her ability to maintain both personal and professional relationships, not jeopardizing one for the other. As a young adult, I struggled to balance work and family, not leaving much time for myself. Her support and encouragement helped me move to the next phase of my life and career as I entered my first teaching position.

Looking back, my leadership qualities arose because of circumstance, but it was my choice to use them in a positive way that has made me the person I am. Jaworski

83

(1996) speaks of being a "victim of circumstances" and based on my experiences I could have become the victim, yet I never thought of myself as victim. I learned from my circumstances, and they shaped my core values.

My relationships and role models shaped my beliefs. I realized that these relationships all had meaning for me and my experiences helped to form my beliefs. I realize that as a young adult, I didn't think about being a leader. I was a scared little girl trying to please everyone and taking care of the family because there was no one else who could. As I matured, instead of being scared, I became dependable and responsible; I became organized and resourceful; I learned what it means to care for and to care about (Noddings, 1984). Today, as an adult, I value honesty and choose to follow a straight and narrow path. These six qualities, care, dependability, organization, honesty, resourcefulness, and responsibility, continually inform my leadership and influence my daily practice. These leadership qualities create the shell in which my beliefs are rooted as seen in Figure One.

Figure 1: My leadership qualities

Leadership Theory

My core qualities and experiences gave me the knowledge and the ability to look at situations from unique perspectives. This ability has allowed me to build caring and trusting relationships, and these relationships provide the foundation of my leadership theory. My theory encompasses servant, democratic, transformational, and situational leadership traits, and will be explained in the following paragraphs.

Servant Leadership.

Cunningham and Cordeiro (2000) identify servant leaders those who recognize their role in the organization as serving their members. These members, also referred to as followers, play a vital role in the organization and its growth (Cunningham & Cordeiro, 2000). As a school leader, my purpose is to foster an environment where all followers' ideas and concerns are heard and used to gain new knowledge and improve student learning. Greenleaf (1995) concludes "if one is servant, either leader or follower, one is always searching, listening, and expecting that a better [process] is in the making" (p. 20). I model this behavior to my followers and believe continuous learning makes me a better person.

Leadership is largely about modeling and being a successful follower. In this way I serve those I lead, and develop and foster leadership in others. A successful follower is not an all knowing power. Effective followers share a number of essential qualities according to Kelley (1995) as follows:

1. They manage themselves well.
2. They are committed to the organization and to a purpose, principle, or person outside of themselves.
3. They build their competence and focus their efforts for maximum impact.
4. They are courageous, honest, and credible. (p. 196)

85

I am a follower who exemplifies these qualities, and as a leader, I seek to foster these qualities at NJCTE. My servant leadership allows me to be both a strong leader and a good follower. I recognize my role is to guide, assist, and dialogue with my followers to improve the school. I model this behavior and gain new knowledge with every experience. Sergiovanni (1992) discusses the important role every leader plans and learner. I am a leader who learns from every experience and at every opportunity.

Followers must be able to manage themselves and their classrooms but also understand their role in school. They should be committed to the school and to the school's mission. They build knowledge and focus their efforts for improving student learning, all the while maintaining credibility. As an NJCTE leader, I encouraged faculty to take on leadership roles through the initiatives I implemented. These initiatives resulted in teachers creating, sharing, and taking ownership of their own ideas and professional growth. I encouraged faculty to be involved in the decision making process, which fostered dialogue. These traits lend themselves to democratic principles of leadership.

Democratic Leadership.

Cunningham and Cordeiro (2000) discuss democratic leadership as being collaborative, sharing power, and looking for the greatest possible good for the organization. Democratic leadership encourages fair decision making based on the needs of the organization and promotes dialogue to gain knowledge of its members (Cunningham & Cordeiro, 2000). As Dewey (1916) encourages, the first step involves all members sharing a common cause. Dewey (1916) believes all members must share a common interest and recognize the importance of believing in this vision. Communities

that have a common goal or interest are more likely to prosper (Dewey, 1916). These characteristics relate to Fullan's (2001, 2007) theory of leadership and change and resonate with me.

Fullan (2007) believes commitment of the majority is needed to motivate faculty members and lead to sustainable and successful change. Fullan (2001) discusses five leadership components which include moral purpose, understanding change, relationship building, knowledge creating and sharing, and coherence making. All five components work together to lead successful change and can ultimately produce second order change, yet change is not easy. Change is multilayered, it is complicated, it is emotionally charged, and it is constantly around us. Within my change framework, leadership is a central figure. Fullan's (2001, 2007) concepts of relationships and leading change have servant and democratic characteristics. These democratic principles thread through my understanding of how a community is built or torn apart.

Democratic leadership, in my opinion, must include trust on two levels. As leader I must trust my followers; the followers must trust me. "School leaders need to build trust with teachers because… they depend upon trust" (Tschannen-Moran, 2003, p. 99). Trust is a basic principle that, no matter what cultural background or personal experiences one has, people cannot argue against it being a common virtue. Trust builds relationships.

Democratic leadership seeks to build relationships, just as dialogue builds relationships. Dialogue assists a leader and one's followers in understanding and communicating the values and motivations of the organization. Once the leader and followers understand each other's values and motivations, they can, using democratic principles, build trusting relationships and begin the process of change.

87

Democratic leadership, as well as transformational leadership, must understand the groups' beliefs and motivations. Burns (1978) believes leadership emerges from, and always returns to, the "wants and needs, the aspirations and expectations - of both leaders and followers" (p. 100). Burns understands leadership as a mutual interaction and relationship between leaders and followers. By necessity, this relationship involves critical and unavoidable questions about beliefs.

As a leader in a democratic structure, I must be willing to understand the members and how they would answer questions of morality, in order for the whole community to work together. I believe that leadership must be morally based because life is morally based, and dialogue within an organization allows all members of the community to understand the underlying morals and beliefs of the group. The diverse nature of society creates subjective understandings of organizations and those organizations must build connections. Sergiovanni (1992) states that "The leadership that counts, in the end, is the kind that touches people differently. It taps their emotions, appeals to their values, and responds to their connections with other people" (p. 76). I have demonstrated democratic leadership in encouraging and providing opportunities for faculty to be involved in the change process. Through alterations of my approaches to faculty meetings, my inclusion of faculty in the decision making process, and fostering an atmosphere where faculty are collaborating for the collective good of the students, I demonstrate my democratic leadership.

Situational.

"Charismatic leaders are guided by situational factors, and these individuals are capable of accurate modification of their behavior to correspond to social situations"

88

(Densten & Gray, 2001, p. 121). Cunningham and Cordeiro (2000) explain situational leadership as incorporating multiple leadership approaches and recognizing that no one approach fits all situations. Situational leadership is based upon the available knowledge the leader has of the situation and using that knowledge to determine the best course of action (Cunninghamd & Cordeiro, 2000). I feel this type of leadership is impossible to avoid since life and situations are unpredictable, so I adapt and apply my knowledge to meet the needs of the situation.

Transformational.

Transformational leadership brings servant, democratic, and situational principles together and encompasses who I desire to be as an educational leader. Burns (1978) claims transformational leaders "engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality… Their purposes, which might have started out as separate but related,…become fused" (p. 101). Transformational leaders strive for the betterment of all members.

Cunningham and Cordeiro (2000) suggest that transformational school leaders focus on three goals.

1. Helping staff members develop and maintain a collaborative, professional school culture,
2. Fostering teacher development, and
3. Helping teachers solve problems together more effectively. (p.185)

Transformational leadership requires the leader to understand and support the needs of followers, but more importantly requires collaboration, flexibility, dialogue, and trust in order to progress. Allowing each member, including teachers, school officials, students, and parents to fulfill his potential is something I value as a leader. Leithwood (2007)

presents a view that "all transformational approaches to leadership emphasize emotions and values and share in common the fundamental aim of fostering capacity development and higher levels of personal commitment to organizational goals on the part of the leaders' colleagues" (pp. 191-192). If each member of the community aimed to meet his true potential, one unified organization could result. Students and parents depend on the school to provide quality education, and it is the leader's responsibility to ensure the organization will produce outcomes.

Couto (1993) claims that the "test for transformational leadership…comes from management goals. 'Performance beyond expectations' entails the creation of an environment that enables followers to recognize and realize an organizational goal that exceeds past accomplishments" (p. 107). The leader's interactions with his followers can transform the followers into motivated members of the organization and achieve change.

"Transformational leaders transform followers" (Couto, 1993, p. 104). Leading NJCTE, I initiated numerous actions to improve communication, collaboration, and ultimately create a culture that fosters dialogue and self improvement. My leadership centers on the relationships I build with my followers and encompasses my core beliefs and values. As seen in Figure two, relationships are central to my leadership. I value the elements of care, trust, dialogue, and collaboration, and they are vital to the relationships I build. Transformational, servant, democratic and situational leadership theories continuously inform the way I build and maintain relationships.
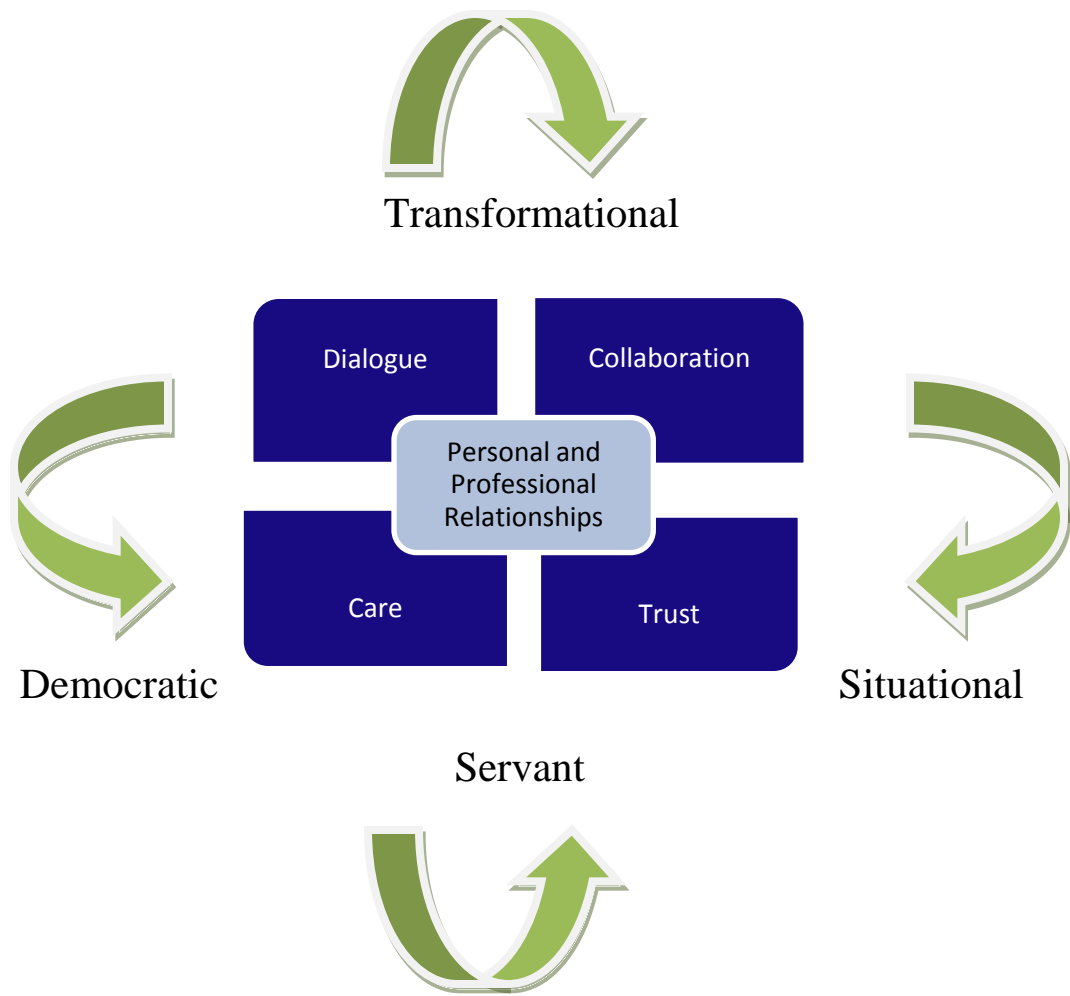
Transformational

Democratic

Situational

Servant

Figure 2. Relationships are central to my leadership. I value the elements of care, trust, dialogue, and collaboration, and they are vital to the relationships I build. Four leadership theories continuously inform the way I build and maintain relationships.

Referring back to Figure one, my leadership qualities stem from elements of care, honesty, responsibility, resourcefulness, organization, and dependability. I use these qualities to build and maintain my personal and professional relationships. As I reflect on my leadership, those relationships are central to my theory. My use of care, dialogue, trust, and collaboration lend themselves to the four leadership theories I use in practice each day.

91

Challenges to my leadership.

My personal and professional lives have changed greatly through this research and numerous challenges to my leadership were revealed. My leadership role changed, resulting in a new view of my research and my professional career. Additionally, I had two children between cycle one and cycle four. These family changes required me to look at my priorities differently. Challenges to my leadership included balancing both my professional and personal lives, and maintaining an awareness of the importance of trust in the relationships I have.

After reading Giuliani's *Leadership* (2002) I decided to let some goals go and focus my priorities differently. I have always been a career driven individual allowing my professional career to occupy a large portion of each day. My entire day is now filled with very different priorities and finding a balance is a constant struggle. It has been difficult creating new routines and prioritizing goals. I cannot do everything, and this has been a difficult concept for me to accept.

One challenge was my decision to remain home with my newborn child for the first three months of her life. This time fell during a pivotal time during the school year, September. This was a difficult choice to make because of the way I view responsibility. I struggled with letting my faculty down since I would not be present for the opening of school, but my priority became my child. I needed to trust that my professional responsibilities would be handled in my absence by the individuals I empowered to take their own leadership role.

This challenge was further complicated by a leadership decision made in my absence. My role change that occurred between cycle three and four was not my choice

and occurred while I was on maternity leave; it was delegated, and I was required to change responsibilities. This forced me to question my decision to remain home; I questioned my ability to balance both personal and professional lives. But my choice was not to become a "victim of my circumstances" (Jaworski, 1996). Instead I believed that this happened for a reason, and I began building a new future. As I stepped into a new role, I began building trust with a new set of followers.

As NJCTE principal, building trust with one assistant principal was challenging. Lenciono (2002) defines trust to be the confidence team members have in one another that each member's intentions are good. Lencioni (2002) explains that the leader must be able to trust that high quality work will be done. Yet, I experienced the lack of high quality work being completed by this assistant principal. Building trust while I acknowledged deficiencies and provided opportunities for improvement was a challenge to our relationship.

I took numerous steps to improve our relationship yet nothing aided in this relationship. In fact each step I took seemed to build a higher wall. He was in a position where he made daily decisions that affected students and teachers. Because I needed to be informed, I requested we meet each day to discuss the day so I knew what he had decided, yet this seemed to be viewed as checking up on him or that I didn't trust him. We discussed on many occasions that my intentions were for us to understand each other's viewpoints ensuring we consistently communicated with the teachers. When we did discuss situations behind closed doors, I felt as if he wanted to make problems go away without getting to the root cause of the problem, a necessary component to avoid the same situation again. In fact, the same type of situations occurred regularly with no

93

improvement. I provided suggestions for him to assist in his growth, such as professional development and working with other administrators, yet again our relationship was at a standstill.

As I reflected on this relationship I came to terms with the communication breakdowns but realized that it may not have been about my leadership. I stayed consistent with my expectations, beliefs, and requests, and never strayed from my methods to reach him. I attempted numerous ways to open the communication but fell short every time. However, the effort to improve the relationship was not reciprocated. It was at this point that I chose to accept that my view and methods of leadership did not mirror his leadership. I learned to accept his leadership as a professional, but I still remained consistent to my leadership, maintained my expectations, and continued to seek avenues to improve our relationship.

As an educational leader and mother, change has become my norm. I experienced profound and life altering changes, leaving me with a new sense of self. As changes occurred around me I learned to listen, reflect, and question my role in the change process and embrace its uncertainty. Experiencing change, because of choice and because of circumstances, allowed me to grow professionally and personally, gathering knowledge, revealing biases, and gaining a deeper understanding of who I am.

A challenge that faced me at the beginning of this study was that of responsibility. I organize my tasks thoroughly to ensure all of my responsibilities are met. This is an area where I fall into the trap of taking on too many responsibilities. Jaworski (1996) speaks of the "traps of responsibility" and that at one point he felt "responsible for all the people involved, and that everyone was depending on [him]" (p. 122). I have felt this way

94

and do not want to let my followers down. But I learned that by giving in to this trap, I was not bettering myself or school. I learned to trust my colleagues and allow them to lead change. I have recognized my growth as a leader.

Leadership Research Questions and Growth

> **Research question 4: In what ways, if any, did my leadership influence NJCTE's faculty retention rates?**

As this action research study unfolded, unfortunately, data did not reveal a direct connection between my leadership and NJCTE faculty retention. However, changes within NJCTE's culture and norms did occur which can be indirectly linked to changes that I facilitated. These changes relate to findings in the literature about teacher retention. Studies reveal two key factors that minimize new teacher turnover (Gerhke & McCoy, 2007; Rhodes et al., 2004). The first is collaboration with other colleagues. When teachers observe other teachers, conduct regular meetings, and speak openly about concerns and success, schools have low teacher turnover rates. The second is an inviting environment where faculty are valued and a positive culture is created. Schools then can be conducive to learning and faculty members want to work together toward the same common goals (Rhodes et. al., 2004). These factors played a key role in this research study as explained in the next few paragraphs.

When I entered NJCTE in 2006 I quickly observed a "toxic culture" (Bolman & Deal, 2003). Bolman and Deal (2003) discuss "toxic culture" where the organization experiences a lack of cohesiveness and individuals are isolated. "People form into opposing camps" (Bolman & Deal, 2003, p. 118). Within my school, teachers had formed opposing camps, dividing academic teachers from trade teachers. Teachers formed clicks

95

with others who had similar experiences. I believe it was due to the organizational structure of the district, where teachers were defined and valued differently. Since 2006, the organizational structure has changed to define teachers equally. Teachers have started to become one unit and the lines between academic and trades are not as strong. Although I cannot take full responsibility, I played an important role in creating an environment and building relationships to facilitate this.

Reflecting on the tenets of democratic leadership, I recognized that one of the principles of democratic leadership that was not present at NJCTE was shared common interests where teachers worked together for the greater good. Faculty did not share a common vision even though the school mission had been in place since the 1970's. John Dewey (1916) discussed the importance of a shared common interest among all group members and the constant change required to progress. This was not present because faculty did not communicate with each other, nor were there avenues to do so. It was almost as if teachers were afraid to communicate with each other. With that fear being gone, the faculty appear vested in the students' success and the school unit, not just their own classrooms. This can be seen with teachers working collaboratively to create new student clubs and volunteering throughout the school. Staff recognized my role in observed changes as documented by one NJCTE main office secretary in a reference letter, "[My] leadership and organizational skills coupled with [my] enthusiasm creates a positive and productive environment" (personal communication, June 2011).

As the leader, I provided opportunities for teachers to communicate, and I provided professional development to improve communication using PLCs, peer coaching, and cross curricular activities. When I started at NJCTE a culture of fear

96

existed and isolation was the norm, now collaboration and care were the norm. Cunningham and Cordeiro (2000) discuss the role of an ethic of care in creating relationships; my caring leadership played a role in the new relationships formed at NJCTE.

This realization caused me to consider my dedication to servant leadership. NJCTE faculty learned to be effective followers as defined by Kelley (1995). Effective followers are committed to the organization, manage themselves well, continuously seek self improvement all the while maintaining credibility (Kelley, 1995). My servant leadership remained consistent throughout my administrative role changes; I am still committed to the organization.

NJCTE's culture shifted from teacher isolation to faculty collaboration, communication, and student learning. NJCTE faculty did not have the confidence to do this when my research began, but now they are confident and committed to working collaboratively and focusing their individual skills together for student learning.

Analyzing the data helped me conclude that my influence at NJCTE played a role in the changing culture. This is confirmed by conversations with faculty. It is also affirmed in writing an email I received from a teacher on June 23, 2011 that stated, "You had the most positive influence on this school and on me personally with my career...They were by far the happiest and most fulfilling few years that I had here at SCVTS" (personal communication, June 13, 2011). I am thankful that I built this relationship and made an impact on this teacher's career. As I reflect on encounters like this, I realize the opportunities I put in place for faculty to collaborate and learn collectively are still in place and occurring, even after I moved to another role. I believe

this is an indication of second order change since the teachers are taking ownership of their own learning and continuing without my guidance or encouragement. My leadership affected NJCTE and the literature suggests that faculty turnover rates are connected to the leadership of an organization (Barmby, 2006; Clayton & Schoonmaker, 2007; Easley, 2006; Gehrke, & McCoy, 2007; Halawah, 2005; McLeskey & Billingsly, 2008; Rhodes et al., 2004; Tye & O'Brien, 2002).

In my current role at NJCTE, I plan to continue promoting and fostering open communication, dialogue, and growth. As my staff and new programs grow, these same qualities will be encouraged in my new faculty to use their own leadership. I will apply these leadership characteristics to any position I obtain in the future.

Research question 5: How did my leadership develop during my tenure at NJCTE?

This research sought to identify my leadership theory and trace my leadership development throughout the project. Findings and my reflections have helped me recognize that my leadership is the central focus of my study. I am very aware of my beliefs and their origins, and I recognize the challenges I have faced. My theories include servant, situational, democratic and transformational. Each of my theories has been challenged, but I have learned that I am consistent to my beliefs no matter what the consequences or results. This consistency and positive outlook on my life's experiences have opened new opportunities and continue to shape who I am as a leader.

My initial approach to leadership as a new leader at NJCTE was that of participant in the organization. When I began as a new leader in educational administration in July 2006, I knew that I needed to become familiar with the current

98

systems of the school to prepare myself to support these systems upon the arrival of teachers and students in September. I wanted to build a positive rapport with the teachers showing them that I was a leader on their side with the shared vision of improving student learning. As Tschannen-Moran (2004) commented "School leaders need to build trust with teachers because… they depend upon trust" (p. 99). This was where I needed to start, by building trustworthy relationships. I participated in the teachers' classroom lessons, became familiar with the inner workings of their programs, and attended professional development sessions that the teachers were required to attend. In my administrative role, I worked very hard to create a joint effort.

I am a servant leader at NJCTE. I am a good follower who knows when to follow and when to lead, lending itself to my situational leadership traits. When I decided to assume a CTE school leadership role, a colleague gave me Lang's book, *Life Maps* (2006). In the front cover she wrote, "Check out page 80. Follow this and the rest will come easily" (personal communication, June 2006). The quote stated the following, "Don't try to always be in charge but take charge when no one else will" (Lang, 2006, p. 80). Until now, my understanding of this quote was only superficial.

My servant leadership has been enhanced and broadened to apply beyond the setting of this study. I actively worked with other organizations in and out of county lines to improve community and adult education services. I am servant to the adult community I provide career and technical education services to. Although my role change was not requested, I found ways to serve others outside of my organization and foster the types of relationships I value in a different setting. My ability to build relationships expanded my network of colleagues. I use my knowledge of career and technical education to reach

further into adult basic education, career and technical educational training, and maximize government resources to help the community and its members. My leadership development has allowed me to realize my own worth and use my skills to improve a new environment. According to my supervisor in my 2012 evaluation, I "{[am] commended for [my] attitude and [my] commitment to the "team" and district…. Her attitude and work ethic are exemplary" (personal communication, January 2012). These traits attest to the development of my democratic and transformational leadership approaches and my commitment to personal growth.

The journey I have taken throughout this doctoral program and through my research has truly allowed me to define my theory and identify my core beliefs. I have learned that every aspect of my life, personal and professional, involves my leadership. When I graduated with my master's degree in school administration, I had an understanding of leadership styles, the principalship and school law, but the journey I would find myself on could not be learned from a book, class lecture, or even a professor; I had to experience situations, make tough decisions, make mistakes, and reflect on the lessons along the way. My leadership theory is a work in progress, and I will continue to further my knowledge so that my theory can be shaped as society changes. Theory drives practice, and as my theory grows and matures, the practices will as well.

Conclusion

I have learned three things from my research. One is that my espoused theory and my theory-in-use have great consistency. I believe in dialogue and the benefits that come with conversations which I model and engage in daily. I believe in serving others and helping others grow, which I foster within my faculty through positive reinforcement. My

100

words and my actions are consistent. Evans (1996) discusses this consistency as "integrity" (p. 137). "Integrity is a fundamental consistency between one's values, goals, and actions" (Evans, 1996, p. 137). I have learned through this process that I have integrity and my values are observable through my actions.

My second learning experience is that I am a leader driven by the relationships I build in both my personal and professional life. Through these relationships and experiences, I seek to find meaning in every experience and relate it to my own personal growth. This is confirmed by my former principal when I transitioned from teacher to administrator when he said "Jenn knew when she didn't know something and sought answers or guidance. And no advice, information, or guidance, was ever wasted on her– she's a quick study" (personal communication, June 2011). I seek new relationships and learn from every encounter.

The third and final concept I learned is that I am a leader who has been influenced by my parents, role models, and experiences. They helped me to become the leader I am today and to recognize my use of servant, democratic, and transformational leadership beliefs. I am committed to my leadership approaches and continual development. It is also my intention to continue to influence the development of other leaders, as my mentors have influenced me. Individuals have vested their time to lead me, and it is my duty to afford future leaders these same opportunities. I will continue to serve as role model, both at work and in life.

101

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105

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Appendix A

Thank you or agreeing to participate. So you are aware, interview questions will be asked aloud, will be audio-taped, and I will take additional notes. A copy of the transcript will be provided for your review, at which time you will be able to provide additional comments or clarification to the data.

1. I would like you to tell me about your educational experiences growing up and

    what led you to choose education as a profession.

2. How were you raised to think about education?

3. Why are you in education, today?

4. Why did you choose this school to be employed?

5. What, if anything, would you change about your current position?

6. Describe the environment of the school.

7. Can you tell me about a time when a new procedure or program was implemented into the school?

8. What contributed to your success or failure in implementing the new procedure or program?

Demographics

Gender:
□ Female □ Male

Training:
□ Traditional Route □ Alternate Route

Certification:
□ Provisional □ Standard

Department:
□ Academic □ Trade

Age Range:
□ 20 – 30 □ 30 – 40 □ 40 – 50 □ 50 – 60 □ 60 or above

Appendix B

Thank you or agreeing to participate. So you are aware, interview questions will be asked aloud, will be audio-taped, and I will take additional notes. A copy of the transcript will be provided for your review, at which time you will be able to provide additional comments or clarification to the data.

1. I would like you to tell me about your educational experiences growing up and

    what led you to choose education as a profession.

2. How were you raised to think about education?

3. Why did you choose this school to be employed?

4. Describe the environment of the school when you were employed here.

5. Are you in education, today? Why or why not?

6. Why did you choose to leave this school?

<u>Demographics</u>

<u>Gender:</u>   <u>Training:</u>
□ Female □ Male   □ Traditional Route □ Alternate Route

<u>Certification:</u>   <u>Department:</u>
□ Provisional □ Standard   □ Academic □ Trade

<u>Age Range:</u>
□ 20 – 30 □ 30 – 40 □ 40 – 50 □ 50 – 60 □ 60 or above

109

Appendix C

Thank you or agreeing to participate. So you are aware, interview questions will be asked aloud, will be audio-taped, and I will take additional notes. A copy of the transcript will be provided for your review, at which time you will be able to provide additional comments or clarification to the data.

1. What is your role as an educator, now?

2. What are your current job responsibilities?

3. Why did you choose this school to be employed?

4. Describe the environment of the school when you started here.

5. What is the current environment?

6. Describe the professional development at NJCTE.

7. Why do you believe faculty retention has been a challenge for NJCTE?