

3

What the Learner-Centered Model Means for Practice

Ethos, understood as a metaphor for change, indicates that transforming the past by developing principals' [leaders', in our terminology] capacities for risk and imagination as they reshape their identities and reconstruct schools in tune with 21st-century needs is a challenge to principals in general as they navigate between past, present, and future.

...However, if ethos is understood as a metaphor for change, where beliefs, attitudes, and values are core components of the moral enterprise of schooling, then creating real-time learning opportunities for principals that are sustained over time is an essential dimension of their professional learning so that change and continuity are embraced as a secure and sure-footed means of risk-taking in the process of imagining alternative teaching and learning for themselves, their colleagues, and pupils.

—C. Sugrue & C. Furlong (2004, pp. 189 and 204)

Sugrue and Furlong (2004) go on to say that a major challenge in leadership is to fundamentally change the organization of schooling. Ongoing learning and inquiry into teaching and learning in the context of the common good needs to be the top priority against which concerns about a delivery system are secondary. A balance and harmony must be achieved between the past, present, and future iterations of schooling. This is particularly true in times when good leaders are hard to find. For example, Guterman (2007) provides an inside look at why there is a current shortage of qualified school principals. He reports that, in a national poll by the National Association of Elementary School Principals,

the top factors that discourage teachers from pursuing the principal's job are that (1) the compensation is insufficient for the responsibilities (fifty-eight percent), (2) too much time is required for the job (twenty-five percent), and (3) the job is too stressful (twenty-three percent).

What will it take to attract and inspire fresh leaders for a different role in learning and leading the process of schooling? We believe it will take someone who feels called to make a difference in an emerging new model of schooling. We also believe it will take potential leaders having a true understanding of what it means to "learn" and "lead" in these new times. Further, as we argued in Chapter 2, it will take leaders who thoroughly understand what the scientific evidence base now has confirmed about the nature of learning and leading in ecologically interdependent systems of networks and relationships. In short, it will take people authentically committed to putting learners and learning at the core of schooling and designing delivery systems that stem naturally from that core. It will also take people with trust in the natural learning capacities and the ability of all stakeholders, including students, to join together in developing systems that nourish all learners. These systems will be sustained because of the meaningful relationships and networks of support that are created by the resulting community of learners.

Before we further our discussion of what it means to be a learner-centered leader, we invite you to continue your investigation into your own preferences and habits as a learner by responding to the items in Box 3.1. Take a moment to jot down your responses, again ignoring the letters in parentheses following each response choice.

As we indicated in Chapter 2, we'll continue to expand on the exercises in each chapter so you can build a detailed description of yourself as a learner and leader. In the final chapter, you'll have an opportunity to apply what you've learned about yourself and about leadership as we describe it in this book.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A LEARNER-CENTERED LEADER

We began to explore this question in Chapter 2 and now want to examine this question in further depth. Our review and synthesis of the research and our decades of combined experience in working with preK–12 systems and colleges have convinced us that a learner-centered leader has very special qualities not found in all school administrators (cf. McCombs & Miller, 2007). We have found that the best leaders share the set of qualities Art Combs (1974, 1986) identified in the best teachers, who

- are highly reflective;
- believe they can make a difference with all kinds of learners;
- see teaching and learning as a partnership between teachers and their students;

Box 3.1 How Do I Prefer to Learn: 3

29. To decide what I want to do on my day off, I:
 - a. think about what I like to do. (ra)
 - b. ask other people what they want to do. (er)
 - c. make a list of things to do. (lo)
 - d. see what my body feels like doing. (p)
 - e. read about available activities. (li)
30. When going places I have never been before, I want:
 - a. a map. (s)
 - b. written directions in sequential order. (lo)
 - c. verbal directions. (li)
 - d. to have someone else help me. (er)
 - e. a mileage chart. (qu)
31. The first thing I notice in a movie is:
 - a. music. (mu)
 - b. dialogue. (li)
 - c. cinematography. (s)
 - d. relationships among characters. (er)
 - e. the comfort of the seats. (p)
32. I decide which movie theater to go to based on:
 - a. its sound system (i.e., THX, Lucas Sound, etc.). (mu)
 - b. proximity to other errands or events. (lo)
 - c. price. (qu)
 - d. quality and choice of the concessions. (p)
 - e. the quietness of the crowd. (ra)
33. I choose my haircutting salon or barber because:
 - a. I can make an appointment in advance. (lo)
 - b. no one bothers me. (ra)
 - c. I like how they massage my head. (p)
 - d. they play music I like. (mu)
 - e. the surroundings are pleasing to look at. (s)
34. I exercise because:
 - a. I need to move my body. (p)
 - b. I like to interact with others. (er)
 - c. it gives me time to contemplate. (ra)
 - d. I can listen to music. (mu)
 - e. it is a part of my daily routine. (lo)
35. For the holidays that I celebrate, I most enjoy:
 - a. the decorations. (s)
 - b. the music. (mu)
 - c. the spirituality of the event. (ra)
 - d. planning the activities. (lo)
 - e. getting together with my family and friends. (er)

(Continued)

Box 3.1 (Continued)

36. I choose the music I listen to because:
 - a. I personally like it. (ra)
 - b. it is cool. (er)
 - c. I like the lyrics. (li)
 - d. it makes me want to dance. (p)
 - e. I enjoy the complexity of the piece. (mu)
37. I like to figure out the sale price of an item by:
 - a. asking a sales associate. (er)
 - b. calculating it in my head. (qu)
 - c. using a calculator. (lo)
 - d. talking myself through the "problem." (li)
 - e. visualizing the "problem." (s)
38. If I could choose a job, I would want one that:
 - a. makes me feel good about myself. (ra)
 - b. allows me to work with others. (er)
 - c. doesn't keep me stuck at a desk. (p)
 - d. lets me listen to music. (mu)
 - e. lets me work with numbers. (qu)
39. I want friends who:
 - a. respect my privacy. (ra)
 - b. share their feelings. (er)
 - c. enjoy talking. (li)
 - d. engage in physical activities. (p)
 - e. share an interest in music. (mu)
40. I select jewelry because:
 - a. other people admire it. (er)
 - b. it has sentimental value. (ra)
 - c. it is visually attractive. (s)
 - d. it is a good investment. (qu)
 - e. it feels good on my skin. (p)
41. The first thing I notice about a book is:
 - a. its cover. (s)
 - b. how much it costs. (qu)
 - c. the writing. (li)
 - d. what it helps me discover about myself. (ra)
 - e. the review or recommendation of the book. (er)
42. I get my primary information through:
 - a. editorial cartoons or comics. (s)
 - b. studying a subject by myself. (ra)
 - c. newspapers, books, or radio. (li)
 - d. internet blogs. (er)
 - e. MTV or other music channels. (mu)

43. If I could buy any car I wanted, I would choose it because:
- it is functional and practical. (lo)
 - it looks attractive. (s)
 - it has a great sound system. (mu)
 - it is physically comfortable. (p)
 - it's a good value for the price. (qu)
44. When looking at vacation photos, I notice:
- how I can organize them. (lo)
 - the quality of the photograph. (s)
 - myself and how I look. (ra)
 - the proportion of acceptable pictures. (qu)
 - the people in the photos. (er)
45. What would influence my choice in buying a new sofa:
- others' opinions. (er)
 - its comfort. (p)
 - how well it looks with the rest of my furniture. (s)
 - how well the dimensions fit in my home. (qu)
 - its warranty and value. (lo)
46. If I were to plan a job change, I would first:
- make a list of pros and cons. (lo)
 - take time to think about it. (ra)
 - compare the salary and benefits to those of my current job. (qu)
 - exercise to relieve stress. (p)
 - consult with family and/or friends. (er)
47. I pick a rental movie:
- with another person. (er)
 - by myself. (ra)
 - because it is classified in a certain section, such as new releases or comedy. (lo)
 - because I like the music. (mu)
 - because I like the cover. (s)
48. If I were to buy computer software for relaxation or play, I would buy:
- image editing software. (s)
 - game(s) I can play with other players. (er)
 - spreadsheet software. (qu)
 - chess. (lo)
 - Scrabble®. (li)
49. If I were to learn a foreign language, I would choose to because:
- I like learning grammar. (lo)
 - it might help me understand another culture. (er)
 - I enjoy learning. (ra)
 - I am attracted to how it sounds. (mu)
 - I love language. (li)

Note: The meanings of the abbreviations can be found in Chapter 5, pp. 142–143.

- believe students should have choices and be responsible for their own learning;
- care about students and making a difference in their learning process and progress;
- are passionate about the work they are doing; and
- are experts in their fields of study.

In addition, we have learned that the best leaders also understand how all people, including children, learn, and know that leading often includes providing support for others to lead the way. Reeves (2006) contends that the most important thing school leaders need to know is how to create a team with complementary strengths. A diverse team makes decision making less risky and distributes the leadership among different talents and strengths. Reeves says (p. 28), "Distributed leadership is based on trust, as well as the certain knowledge that no single leader possesses the knowledge, skills, and talent to lead an organization..."

The Issue of Sustainable Leadership

In discussing the qualities of leadership that result in a sustainable, learner-centered model, Lambert (2005) reported on her study of fifteen schools across this country and one in Canada. Each school included a system of shared governance and distributed leadership. Their culture was vision-driven, student-focused, and concerned with improvements in inquiry-based student performance. Lambert reported that the shared characteristics of principals at these schools included

- an understanding of self and clarity of values;
- a strong belief in equity and the democratic process;
- strategic thought about the evolution of school improvement;
- a vulnerable persona;
- knowledge of the work of teaching and learning; and
- the ability to develop capacity in colleagues and in the organization (p. 63).

Sustainability, at its heart, is about trust among all the stakeholders in the school. Blankstein (2007) believes that the central issue for sustainability is courageous leadership in which the leader gets to the core issues by asking deeper questions about moral purpose and by organizing people around a shared common purpose. In his view, courageous leaders are inclusive and committed to creating opportunities for communication and for sharing their realities and dreams, which produces the emotional connections and shared responsibility that lead to desired learning outcomes.

Further, Blankstein (2007) believes that the work of everyone in the school is a problem-solving endeavor focused on sustaining success for all students. To achieve this ongoing success, everyone involved needs to develop and

maintain the relationships necessary to engage all learners—students, teachers, administrators, and parents—through

- building caring connections;
- defining personal relevance;
- empowering learners through choices;
- increasing opportunities for success;
- providing immediate and accurate feedback; and
- providing multiple ways to recognize and celebrate successes.

Schools as Moral Communities

A second issue new school leaders will need to address is changing how they—and others—perceive the way schools are organized. For instance, Sergiovanni (2007) believes leaders need to see schools as social organizations and moral communities rather than formal organizations. In viewing schools as social organizations, leaders focus on shared orientations, shared beliefs, and networks of social relations. Leaders who see schools as moral communities focus not on bureaucratic and personal authority but on moral authority. They see schools as learning and caring communities with cultures of traditions, rituals, and norms that define their character and competence. These leaders protect and promote the institutional values that arise because, out of these values, a shared commitment, connection, and moral authority emerge. In schools that are moral communities, the leader helps facilitate moral connections among all learners and helps them all to become self-managing. According to Sergiovanni, this type of leadership communicates that all teachers and staff are respected, autonomous, committed, and capable, as well as morally responsible for making the school work better for its students.

Because this moral view of leadership is based on cultural norms rather than on individual psychological needs (e.g., intrinsic and extrinsic rewards), the result is a different kind of leadership—one that aims for stewardship, service, and ideas. Ideas—such as sustainability—becomes an active leadership approach that can be continued and maintained through commitment, relationships, and trust. And, because ideas can endure beyond specific people in any leadership roles or positions, they can be continued for a long period of time.

One of the most important aspects of moral leadership is passion, which Sugrue (2005) sees as the individual and collective emotional commitment to learning that can focus on continuity and purpose rather than the complex choices and demands of the position. Sugrue believes that passion is the fuel that can help leaders reshape schools to provide what is needed in developing potential in all learners. He further argues that leaders need to understand that nothing important happens quickly and that school leaders need to adopt a personality of change that is passionately committed to knowing oneself, the context, the ideas from the wider community, and the skills that are important at different points in the lifecycle of change. As in any changing system, it will become more and more important that all leaders continually create learning opportunities designed to develop and sustain future leaders in a flexible manner.

Navigating the Political and Policy Environment

Many researchers and scholars acknowledge that the new leadership models may be difficult to implement within the current educational paradigm, and they are urging educators to move beyond prescriptive standards, subject-centered coverage, and high-stakes testing to achieve enhanced and sustained levels of student learning. For example, Hargreaves, Earl, Moore, and Manning (2001) describe the difficulties of making needed changes within an opposing policy environment and stress that leaders need to take these difficulties into account as they try to effect changes. Hargreaves et al (2001). point out that, even when teachers are empowered to embark on needed changes, to be effective, leaders will need to (1) support and sometimes push teachers to implement those changes that matter, (2) take the steps necessary to ensure that teacher changes will be sustained over time, and (3) generalize the changes beyond a few teachers such that they affect the whole system. Table 3.1 lists some of the most essential changes that need to be made, along with some of the most effective support strategies. It is also important to understand that Hargreaves et al. also found that heavy-handed and imposed strategies do not work and actually cause teachers to withdraw their interest and investments in change and learning.

Table 3.1 Essential Changes and Support Strategies

<i>Essential Changes</i>	<i>Essential Support Strategies</i>
Involve students and parents in specifying the outcomes and competencies desired through the schooling process.	Build capacity to help teachers gain the knowledge, skills, dispositions, and views of self that help sustain continuous change and improvement.
Find ways to assess these outcomes and competencies.	Create professional communities that can learn together and support each other over time.
Build the integrated curriculum that will accomplish these goals in meaningful and useful ways.	Create cross-department, multi-disciplinary teacher teams that work together to achieve the desired outcomes and competencies.

Hargreaves et al. (2001) found that, in addition to providing teachers with the support necessary for them to grapple with the changes needed to change their school in ways that result in success for all learners, effective leaders give teachers the professional discretion to design their lessons and curricula in ways they think are best. For transformational and empowering leaders, it is a moral imperative to encourage professionals to be professional and to design for themselves rather than having others impose designs on them. In their research, Hargreaves et al. reported that the kinds of leadership support most desired by teachers were

- *intellectual leadership*—help in interpreting, translating, and articulating policy directions that would support their own intellectual work of change;
- *cultural and emotional leadership*—support to build collaborative work cultures, make the necessary structural changes in scheduling, and take risks by trying new things; and
- *strategic leadership*—providing the human and material resources necessary for their change efforts, including in-service workshops and conferences. In other words, providing teachers the time to plan and see other kinds of exemplary practices that energize and empower them to go beyond standards and standardization.

Hargreaves et al.'s (2001) study of teachers also concluded that effective leaders understand that teaching involves more than technical expertise; it also involves the social mission of education and the emotional bonds that teachers have with their students that gives meaning to their work. Good teachers develop students as learners, future workers, and developing citizens; they cultivate their emotional development as well as their intellectual and social development. Good leaders support and encourage teachers in all these aspects of their work, not just the technical.

Being an Exceptional Leader

A major characteristic of exceptional school leadership is preparing teacher-leaders. Gabriel (2005) describes the charge of teacher-leaders as

- influencing school culture;
- building and maintaining a successful team;
- equipping other potential teacher leaders; and
- enhancing or improving student achievement.

To accomplish these tasks, teacher-leaders need to be skillful communicators, know how to create a positive climate, and know how to develop a sense of community. It is also important that teacher-leaders know how to let go of control and to trust in the self-organizing principles of humans as they create a community of relationships. Effective leaders at all levels know that they are teachers as well as learners (Gabriel).

Wheatley and Frieze (2007) describe how the “Culture of High Stakes Testing” that emerged from NCLB was largely the old paradigm, which was based on creating a culture of achievement for all students using traditional change theory. In the old paradigm and traditional change theory, change is top down, happens step-by-step, can be mandated, and uses rewards and punishments to motivate people to change. As a result, the opposite of what was intended has occurred. The authors contend this is because change always happens through emergence and cannot be mandated in plans or strategies from on high. When small local actions begin to have powerful effects, known as emergent phenomena, new levels of capacity are built that have more power

and influence than are present in separate, isolated efforts. Because they are constantly changing, emergent phenomena can't be predetermined, and system-wide change must begin by working locally.

Wheatley and Frieze (2007) suggest that leaders encourage local experiments, watch for and nourish supportive beliefs and community-building efforts, and encourage building connections with those who tend to work in isolation. Strengthening connections is one of the main roles of leaders—something to which they need to bring institutional resources, opportunities for staff to think together and reflect on what they are learning, and ways to expand the web with new and different people.

Moving Into the Unknown

The Berkana Institute (2007), using the work of Margaret Wheatley and others, describes emergence as the process through which life creates radical change and systems of great power and influence, in contrast to more outdated approaches that are based on planned, incremental change. Berkana has studied how emergence moves from people connecting as interdependent networks, to more intentionally working together in communities of practice, to more powerful systems of influence that result in large-scale change. That, they see, is the work of the new leader: helping to set the process of emergence in motion and nurturing its growth. From Margaret Wheatley's work over the years, Berkana has learned there are important and powerful questions that leaders can use to focus intention and energy. On their Web site, *The Art of Hosting* lists some potential questions, contributed in part by The Berkana Institute, on how to convene conversations:

- What gnaws at you?
- What do you care about deeply?
- How do you bring out the paradox without creating a polarity?
- How do you live with it over time?
- How do I slay the dragon of my fear?
- How do I practice what I feel?
- If I were born with a question, what would it be?
- What is sacred to you? (www.artofhosting.org/thepractice/goodquestions/ Retrieved July 25, 2007)

What is exciting to us is the recent announcement in Britain that the government is unveiling a new 21st-century curriculum where teachers will be given greater freedom to depart from the national subject-based curriculum (Garner, 2007). For students eleven to sixteen years old, teachers will now be able to facilitate the introduction of topics that prepare these students for adult life in the 21st century. Students will be able to learn relevant topics, making their own choices from a list of topics, and proceeding at their own speed. There will be an emphasis on creative writing and the development of teacher leadership to differentiate instruction and provide catch-up lessons in English

and math, with the new time being made available through the reduction in traditional prescriptives “covering the curriculum.”

Understanding How Change Really Happens in Living Systems

We understand that some (or maybe many) of you reading this book are already leaders in systems that are badly in need of major changes in order to become consistent with what we know about human nature and learning. We also know that, if this is the case, you will have to do the best you can, armed with information such as the work described in the previous section, to make the changes necessary to offset the damages of the current educational paradigm. Our major focus, however, is to help you dream big and to help those who feel called to be leaders of a major change in that paradigm to join with us and others who have already begun to define what this paradigm change looks like. So, before we begin to delve more deeply into what the Learner-Centered Model means for practice—and leadership practices in particular—we invite you to consider more thoroughly new evidence about the paradigm we need and how change actually happens in individuals and in systems.

Failures and Crises as Learning Opportunities

In an era when educational leaders must help transform an outdated paradigm, Farson (2007) makes the important point that leaders must recognize that failure is a necessary part of the process because it leads to innovation. The new leader must encourage risk-taking and failure that can lead to the kind of creative and authentic learning we care about—without punishing or penalizing failure. For Farson, the new education paradigm must make people different and not alike. It must marry each person’s experience to important concepts and avoid standardization and evaluation in favor of engagement. Leaders in the new paradigm will be able to understand the natural coexistence of opposites and go in seemingly opposite directions at once in order to innovate and find even better solutions.

In understanding the need for a transformed educational paradigm, Houston (2007) describes the problem as one in which dissatisfaction with schools centers around the fact that only incremental progress has been made in reforming them despite the fact that all other things around them are exponentially changing. We need new leaders to build bridges for people to cross from where they are to where they need to be. Houston sees us moving from not only an industrial age to an information age, but also from a fast-ending information age to a conceptual age. Left-brain, logical, sequential solutions will no longer suffice in a conceptual age. We will need to add the right-brain creative, holistic skills and the kind of teachers who can help students create meanings that are relevant and necessary to solve the problems posed by living in a conceptual age. Education will need to be more about discovering and solving the mysteries of the universe, as well as understanding ourselves and the human condition. Houston believes that teachers need to be designers and storytellers; leaders need to understand and be mindful of what it will take to

achieve the new kinds of asset (versus deficit) outcomes needed to accomplish goals of creativity and innovation.

The Time Has Come for New Educational Paradigms

New paradigms for education and schooling have become a topic of international concern. For example, Cheng (2007) describes three waves of paradigm shifts in the Asia-Pacific region in the past three or more decades. The first wave he calls the Effective Education Movement; the second wave, the Quality/Competitive Education Movement; and the third wave, the World Class Education Movement. In these shifts, the focus has moved from effectiveness to quality to future relevance (Cheng). The movement of paradigms was also a shift from the focus on the internal effectiveness of institutions to a broader notion of an institution's accountability to the wider community, and now to a concern with the relevance of current systems to meet the future—an era of globalization, increased technological capabilities, and a knowledge-based economy. Cheng points out that the shifts in the Asia-Pacific region are similar to those here in the United States. That is, there is a recognition in the United States that the new paradigms will need to be dynamic, ecological, decentralized, networked, and focused on diversification rather than standardization.

In an earlier section, we referred to the work of the Berkana Institute, which is one of the virtual organizations making a difference in the preparation of new leaders. Berkana, founded by Margaret Wheatley in 1992 (The Berkana Institute, 2007), is committed to developing new leadership that can restore hope. As the board states in their 2006 Annual Report:

The need for new leaders is urgent. We need people who can work together to resolve pressing issues of health, poverty, hunger, illiteracy, justice, environment, democracy. We need leaders who know how to nourish and rely on the innate creativity, freedom, generosity, and caring of people. We need leaders who are life-affirming rather than life-destroying. Unless we quickly figure out how to nurture and support this new leadership, we can't hope for peaceful change. We will, instead, be confronted by increasing anarchy and social and ecological meltdowns. (The Berkana Institute, 2007, p. 3)

New Views of Learning and Schooling

One of the true pioneers and leaders in the reconception and redesign of schooling is Stephanie Pace Marshall, whom we mentioned in the previous chapter. In her latest book, *The Power to Transform* (2006), she invites leaders of all types to think differently about learning and schooling. She offers a new language, new design principles, and a new framework for schooling redesign that integrate dynamic properties of living systems with generative principles of learning. Marshall (2006) argues that the new design of schooling must be life-affirming, invitational, engaging, nurturing, and potential fulfilling. She sees the current system as incapable of encouraging children to experience their rich inner lives,

understand their connections to the world and one another, and embrace and celebrate their capacity to be involved in creating an emergent future.

Marshall (2006) defines the fundamental purpose of education as one of liberating the goodness and genius of children through learning and schooling that is in harmony with life and the human spirit. To do this, students need the tools to become fearless and self-directed learners who engage in holistic, systemic learning across their lifetime. Leaders of schooling systems need to help reconnect all of those involved, including the community, in ways that evoke intellectual, emotional, and spiritual potential. Leaders need to design programs, experiences, and opportunities that help all engage in this new work in ways that build capacity for authentic learning to flourish, e.g., through processes such as reflection, exploration, imagination, and connectedness. According to Marshall, the real job of leadership is to evoke and liberate rather than to prescribe—to intentionally create the generative conditions for learning that embody the creative processes for learning and life. From the very young to the very old, the human spirit is one of wanting to learn; it is also one of wanting to find meaning, purpose, connection, and contribution to the larger world.

Marshall (2006), along with other visionaries and futurists that we have mentioned, describes how science now sees the natural world as interdependent, relational, and part of a living web of connections that are holistic, abundant, creative, and self-organizing. At the heart of life is learning, a natural and creative human endeavor. Marshall argues that schooling and learning systems and the environments in which these systems reside must be models of natural creativity that nurture the joy of life itself through finding answers to the powerful questions of life and experience. Marshall's call is a call to reconnect learning to life. Both are about freedom, interdependence, creativity, novelty, relationships, exploration, and discovery.

New Views of Change

As globalization begins to shape not only what we do here in the United States but also what we do internationally, we are seeing an upsurge of creative thinking about what it takes to change systems. This new thinking is informed by recent advances in quantum physics and other natural sciences that are beginning to better understand and articulate the dynamics of change in living things. For example, scientists now see networking as a major new strategy for change (e.g., Senge, Scharmer, Jaworksi, & Flowers, 2004a).

Schools are social networks of people, where the larger network consists of connections between subgroups, such as grade or subject-matter teacher groups, student groups, and other collections of people that share expertise, information, and resources from person to person or subgroup to subgroup within various social structures (Penuel & Riel, 2007). In discussing how teacher networks can facilitate school change, Penuel and Riel summarize findings from their study of twenty-three California schools engaged in school-wide reform:

1. It's not just how many people you talk to, but whom you talk to. *"It was ties that teachers had to 'experts'—whom we defined in our study as people with more experience in implementing their school's reform—that made the biggest difference"* (p. 612).
2. Getting help from outside one's immediate circle is valuable for obtaining new information and expertise. *"We found that teachers who took advantage of the knowledge of the teachers in other subgroups had access to more resources, to more 'social capital,' to use to make changes in their own practice"* (p. 613).
3. The goal of trying to make everyone an expert all at once does not strengthen the network; making effective expertise visible to all does work. *"Making expertise visible is partly a function of having structures that allow people to talk about their teaching practice, share their successes and struggles, and share and discuss instructional resources. It is also about publicly recognizing success and achievement in a way that encourages teachers to seek out their colleagues as resources and sources of help. To be useful, expertise has to be explicit and elaborated"* (p. 613).
4. Neither establishing a clear "chain of command" nor using the strategy of "let a hundred flowers bloom" works well to make expertise visible; success comes from "matrixing." ...*"individuals participate in multiple meetings in which their school's reform is discussed. The types of meetings cross different functions in the school"* (p. 614).
5. Freeing up the time of experts to help others is particularly important, especially if professional development dollars are scarce. *"Identifying the true experts and enabling them to help others may be especially critical when dollars for formal professional development are scarce, as they are in many schools. Therefore, the informal network and the informal leaders within it may be the most important resources for facilitating implementation of a reform"* (p. 615).

Penuel and Riel (2007) believe that building trust through collegial relationships is also crucial, as it can help reduce the risk associated with making needed changes. When trust becomes a characteristic of the network as a whole, it expands the number of people resources that can be called upon in a collaborative learning and leading process.

Several decades ago, Beisser (1970), a follower of Gestalt therapy, wrote an article that still provides useful insights today about the nature of change and the role of the change agent. Called the paradoxical theory of change, this theory states:

"...change occurs when one becomes what he is, not when he tries to become what he is not. Change does not take place through a coercive attempt by the individual or by another person to change him, but it does take place if one takes the time and effort to be what he is—to be fully invested in his current positions. By rejecting the role of change agent, we make meaningful and orderly change possible." (p. 1)

Box 3.2 Margaret Mead's Axioms of Change

1. When changing a complex system, it is less about planning and more about creating the conditions for change in people and contexts.
2. Risk-taking is required to be prepared for surprises as well as being well-educated in the nature of living systems, learning, and change.
3. When the system gets stuck, it is the product of human processes and what people are choosing not to see, feel, or do.
4. To move forth toward change, a power move may be required by someone who sees that he or she has the capacity to change a system.
5. The collective group or community of practice has to be able to act with a single intelligence or will that arises out of diversity of views and individuals.
6. When we have weak clusters of relationships, we create a "small world" in which every member of the network is connected to every other member through a small number of connections, usually not more than six.
7. When there is a minimum threshold of connections which include some tight clusters of relationships, there is the possibility that a movement or an idea will reach the tipping point.

One of the assumptions of Gestalt theory is that the natural human state is to be a single whole being (the self) that is in a dynamic transaction with the environment. That is, for change to happen, it is necessary to have the firm footing of being where one is now (Beisser, 1970). To change, the individual must have the ability to be flexible and adaptive in order to move with the times, while at the same time retaining individual stability and character.

One of Margaret Mead's enduring legacies is her belief in and commitment to the power of people to bring about significant changes through their collective and collaborative efforts, summarized by Hassan (2005) as a series of axioms, shown in Box 3.2.

Mead believed that:

For a small group of thoughtful and committed people to change the world, they must believe that change is possible. They must be ready to act the moment a stuck system becomes liquid. They will only be effective if they display collective intelligence. Finally, they must live in a small world. (Hassan, 2005, p. 5)

Such groups are rapidly forming, both here in the United States and internationally. In the Department of Planning at the University College London, a group of researchers and educators has already begun the task of creating international networks based on trust deriving from the relationships of diverse people committed to shared values that are revisited and rearticulated over time (Church et al., 2003). Effective networks include processes for encouraging participation, relationship-building and trust, facilitative leadership, minimum

levels of structure and control, diversity and dynamism, and decentralization and democracy. According to Church et al. the network fosters coordinated, reciprocal action that can be replicated in a number of countries.

Closer to home at the Berkana Institute, Margaret Wheatley and her colleagues (Jain & Stilger, 2007; Stilger, 2005; Wheatley, 2001b) describe a leader as anyone who wants to help at this time because they have a deep passion or desire to change some aspect of their world. In 2001, they articulated a new initiative, which they call Now Activism, to create learning circles around the world that could give rise to good human dialogue. They envisioned the circles as communities of practice in which leaders would emerge with greater skills for changing what needs to be changed. Their vision was to create a global voice that had the practices and values that could nourish and sustain the human spirit. Based on research of living systems, they posited that change happens from within, with many local actions occurring simultaneously such that as local groups networked together, a sudden and surprising global force could emerge. These global forces would occur as the result of emergence and have greater power than the sum of the parts (Wheatley, 2001b), and the leaders that emerge will be able to look at the surrounding web of relationships and system and see the whole picture (Stilger, 2005). Moving into their spiritual center allows them to hear and trust their inner voices so they become able to follow their callings. As of May 2007, this movement has involved people from over fourteen countries (Jain & Stilger).

This seems a good point at which to stop for a bit to digest what you've been reading and to reflect a bit on what all this means for you. Take a few moments to consider and respond to the activities in Box 3.3.

WHAT THE RESEARCH SHOWS ABOUT THE EFFECTIVENESS OF LEARNER-CENTERED MODELS

Now that you have had a chance to reflect on and consider the possibilities for beginning to create that new educational paradigm, we want to share some important evidence for you to consider. We believe that the new leader(s) will need to be armed with this evidence to build their confidence and courage as they make needed changes in their own thinking and leading practices. We start with a major study that analyzed the accumulated evidence of the benefits of learner- or person-centered educational models.

Large Scale Research Findings

Cornelius-White (2007) reviewed 119 studies that investigated the efficacy and associations of learner-centered instructional relationships with comprehensive student success. The studies synthesized were published between 1948 and 2004, written in English or German, and conducted in most areas of the United States, the Philippines, Brazil, Germany, Austria, the United Kingdom, and Canada. The studies involved over 350,000 students, nearly 15,000 teachers,

Box 3.3 Considering Change

1. List the major barriers you see to bringing about change in your school/district.
2. List three ways you can remove the barriers you listed above.
3. List the people in your school and/or district you believe possess the qualities we've been describing as necessary to bringing about major change.
4. List five steps you could take tomorrow to begin the process of change in your school/district.

and 1,450 separate findings from pre-school to graduate school. In this meta-analysis of person-centered education models, Cornelius-White (2007) found that person- and learner-centered education is associated with large increases in student participation/initiation ($r = .55$), satisfaction ($r = .44$), and motivation to learn ($r = .32$), all of which indicated high levels of engagement in learner-centered classrooms (p. 128). There were also positive effects on self-esteem ($r = .35$) and social connections and skills ($r = .32$), and reductions in dropout ($r = .35$), disruptive behavior ($r = .25$), and absences ($r = .25$) (p. 128). This meta-analysis also found support for the importance of student perspectives as better predictors of their own academic success than teacher perspectives on the frequency with which they performed learner-centered practices.

The major teacher variables associated with positive student outcomes include positive relationships, nondirectivity, empathy, warmth, and encouraging thinking and learning skills. Cornelius-White (2007) also found that learner-centered practices may work better with minority teachers and learners, suggesting that these universal variables are particularly important for students who traditionally do not receive this level of support. In general, the results showed that learner-centered instruction (LCI) had an overall corrected correlation average of $r = .31$ (Cornelius-White, p. 127). Cornelius-White concluded that the overall findings show that LCI is highly associated with student success.

Cornelius-White (2007) concludes that the synthesis of the research also found that what is observable is most potent in another way. Considering the 1,450 separate findings from the meta-analysis together, observers and students' perspectives yield higher associations to student success than teachers' views. In other words, the genuine, warm empathy that is central to learner-centered practices has to be perceived by, experienced, and relevant for the student, not just superficial niceness, for it to really be effective. The meta-analysis forms a

solid foundation to support using learner-centered instruction in schools and classrooms. This type of instruction is part of a bigger model that focuses on the core principles of encouragement, challenge, and adaptation.

Other Substantial Results Relating to Democracy in Our Schools

The role of the new leaders needed to transform our educational paradigm moves from moral, ethical, and spiritual dimensions to an appreciation of what the future will hold for all of us. As we have mentioned, the new leaders must not only know what to do; they must know who they are and what is possible in the schooling process.

Schools as Models of Social Responsibility and Democracy

McQuillan (2005) argues that, although U.S. schools may express a commitment to preparing students for the responsibilities of being democratic citizens, most institutions define their students as passive and subordinate and treat them in undemocratic ways. He presents results of case studies of two high schools' efforts to promote learner-centered practices through student empowerment in an effort to extend research showing that empowerment strategies promote greater student participation, engagement, and responsibility in their education. The ultimate benefit would be an understanding of how to create schools that "educate for democracy" but also show where they give students the opportunities to participate in a pluralistic community and become "crucibles of democracy."

McQuillan (2005) defines student empowerment as involving the academic, political, and social dimensions where students have a say in how to understand the economic, political, and social realities that affect their lives in curricular, institutional leadership, and institutional structures and policies such that they create a social environment that supports and nurtures the safety of expressing diverse views in a context where all voices are respected. From our perspective, this is the type of approach that creates schools that model both what and who we want students to be in the world.

In his research, McQuillan (2005) found that the academic, political, and social dimensions were synergistic and mutually reinforcing, and as students and teachers become more empowered, they were more likely to empower others. Thus, all people in the system are seen as agents with appropriate distribution of power. McQuillan also found that a sense of disequilibrium is necessary (e.g., feeling that goals of schooling are not as they could be) for student empowerment to occur in schools. Change will require all people in the system to step out of their comfort zone and confront traditional structures and practices, including beliefs and values. McQuillan argues that student empowerment—a basic concept in learner-centered practices—is a promising strategy for reducing the achievement gap and should become our top educational priority in establishing a more democratic educational process. It also needs to be the basis for new paradigms of schooling.

Re-Engaging Students in Schooling and Learning

Darling-Hammond and Ifill-Lynch (2006) report that by 9th grade, forty percent of urban students fail multiple classes and that fifty percent or more students leave school without graduating. Of those who enter high school, many lack the learning and study skills they need to be good students (e.g., knowing how to take notes, study on their own, engage in classwork, and finish their homework). Consistent with research by motivation researchers (e.g., Covington & Teel, 1996; Dweck, 1999; Meece, Herman, & McCombs, 2003), to protect their self-esteem, many adolescents maintain they don't care about school and the boring or "stupid" work they have to do. Darling-Hammond and Ifill-Lynch contend that an effective approach to engaging students with their schoolwork is to create a strong academic culture that changes students' beliefs and behaviors. A big part of this culture is work that students find relevant, meaningful, and authentic, such as inquiry- and project-based learning that is part of successful approaches such as those reported by Deborah Meier (2002) at Central Park East. Involving students and making them part of the solution are also effective, along with meeting with students, alone or in teams, to emphasize their strengths and areas where they have been successful. Collaboration is a primary strategy where students and their teachers can work together, as well as helping those students who work to get credit with work-based learning plans. In short, Darling-Hammond and Ifill-Lynch propose learner-centered approaches that recognize the learning and life needs of struggling students.

In national studies conducted by the Just for the Kids organization, the number one indicator of student success is to focus on the student, followed by high-quality teaching and research-based instructional practices. Another correlate of student success is that teachers are given the materials, training, and support they need and the time to plan together, discuss student progress, and reflect on best practices (Just for the Kids, 2003). In one such high-performance school in Los Angeles, teachers work together to help students take risks so that they develop character and the skills to succeed in life (Mathews, 2004a). As with Deborah Meier who formed Central Park East School in East Harlem in 1974, the key to the success of that school and its students was the strong and educative relationships between students and adults (Mathews, 2004b). Students were taught to develop their minds by weighing evidence, seeing other ways of looking at the same data or situation, comparing and contrasting, seeking patterns, conjecturing and arguing—skills to use their minds powerfully (Meier, 2002). Current policies that do not ask students to engage in intellectual rigor and instead use their minds for factual recall will only add to the already growing dropout rate, particularly among disadvantaged and minority students (Wagner, 2003).

Addressing the Holistic Development of Learners

In a study of 120 elementary schools that engage in some form of character education, Benninga, Berkowitz, Kuehn, and Smith (2006) report that there are common qualities that support both high academic achievement and positive

development of virtues related to character and citizenship. Their list of what good schools do is highly similar to those qualities of schools that can be defined as "learner-centered:"

1. They ensure a clean and secure physical environment;
2. They promote and model fairness, equity, caring, and respect;
3. They allow students to contribute to their school and community in meaningful ways;
4. They promote a caring community and positive social relationships. (Benninga et al., 2006)

Further, the adults in these schools understand their role in preparing students for future citizenship in a democratic and diverse society. Benninga et al. (2006) argue that their results support maintaining a rich curriculum that supports all aspects of student development and growth rather than narrowing the curricula to concentrate on skills measured by standardized tests.

A fundamental focus in learner-centered schools is on quality relationships. In looking at more than 1,360 pieces of data from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) on children from birth through sixth grade, O'Connor and McCartney (2007) found that, even beyond factors such as individual characteristics, mother-child relationships, family environment, school relationships, classroom environment, and culture, children's achievement was increased by high-quality teacher-child relationships. This study also cited the impressive research literature showing the beneficial effects on both achievement and behavior of child-teacher relationships that are characterized as affectionate, warm, close, low conflict, and open communication. Overall, these relationships are secure versus insecure and conform to an ecological model of development that takes into account multiple interrelated components and factors and their impact on development at given time periods and over time.

O'Connor and McCartney (2007) conclude that their findings provide strong implications for changes in teacher education programs. Whereas early childhood teachers often get instruction on how to foster high-quality child-teacher relationships, elementary teachers usually are trained to promote effective instructional interactions rather than relationships with students. Expanding this preparation may well prevent the risk factors and harmful behaviors of children whose other ecological factors can be offset by quality teacher-child relationships.

Martin (2002), in a review of alternative educational models, examined learner-centered, progressive, and holistic education. A growing number of alternative schools fit within this broad category and include democratic and free schools, folk education, Quaker schools, Krishnamurti schools, Montessori education, open schools, homeschooling/unschooling/deschooling, and Waldorf schools. This diversity of alternatives to mainstream or traditional education is in keeping with social values that include pluralism and diversity, a more sustainable world, and just democracy. The alternative models tend NOT to be rooted in an overly rational or objective way of knowing but instead

emphasize interdependencies and values—and include the emotional, ecological, spiritual, physical, social, and intellectual aspects of living that are reflected in schooling.

These models address the needs of the whole child in balance with the needs of the community and society at large. They hold in common a respect for diversity and different philosophical beliefs about what it means to live, learn, love, and grow in today's society (Forbes, 1999). They are all, however, "person-centered" approaches expressed in a diversity of ways. What makes "learner-centered" transformative (holistic) is its recognition that meaning is co-constructed, self-regulation occurs through interdependence, with a focus on being, and becoming fully functioning.

Results From Our Research

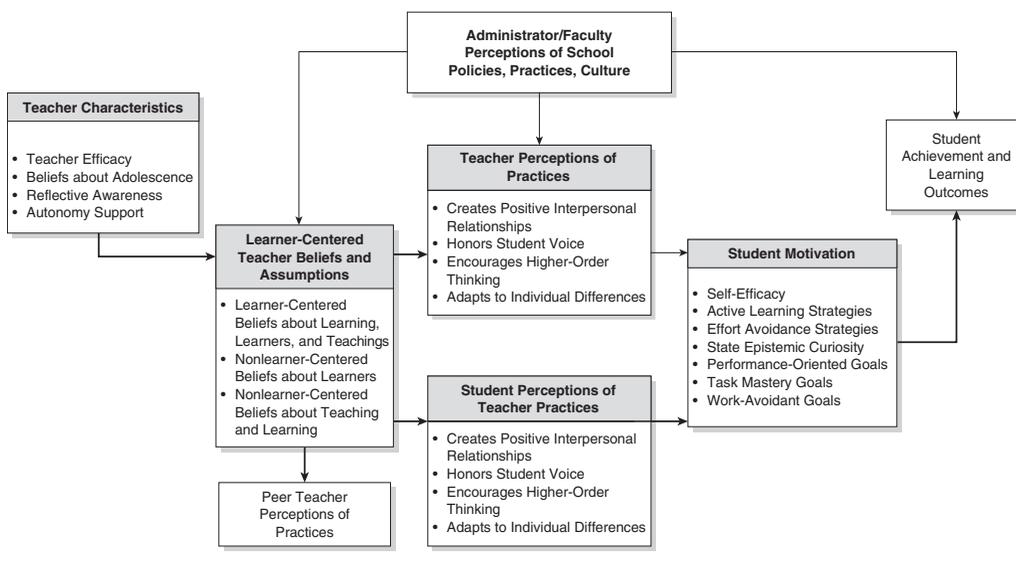
In our own research with the Learner-Centered Model (LCM), which we introduced in Chapter 1, we have worked with schools in systemic change projects that begin with a school-level assessment of what all staff report as the alignment of their basic beliefs and perceptions of actual practice in the eight areas of school functioning (McCombs, 2003b, 2005; McCombs & Quiat, 2002) shown in Table 3.2. This research has confirmed the relationships shown in Figure 3.1. That is, at the school leadership level, it is essential that all staff be included in a process of self-assessing the discrepancies between (1) what they believe should be happening in their schools and classrooms and (2) what they perceive is the actual degree to which these practices are taking place.

Table 3.2 Eight Areas of Learner-Centered School Functioning¹

-
- Expectations for Students
 - Instruction and Management Practices
 - Curriculum Structures
 - Assessment and Grading Practices
 - Professional Development Practices
 - Parent and Community Involvement Strategies
 - Leadership Style and Practices
 - Policies and Regulations
-

¹From the Assessment of Learner-Centered Practices (ALCP) School-Level Survey (McCombs, 1999b).

With the permission of all staff and agreements as to how to aggregate the data (e.g., by various staff positions, grade levels, departments, etc.), these results are shared and become the basis for dialogue about the best ways to resolve personal and group discrepancies. This dialogue process is one similar to that described in the preceding section. It invites and allows all staff, students, parents, and other community stakeholders to ask the probing questions, listen respectfully to all divergent views, and learn with and from each other about

Figure 3.1 A Learner-Centered Model of Relations Between Teacher Beliefs, Teacher Practices, and Student Outcomes

what needs to change. The result is a unique school or district-based plan that focuses staff development and ongoing learning on ways to create new learning communities and learner-centered support groups. Through individual and group networks, these groups become the communities of practice and influence that empower, support, and spread the emergence of new forms and structures to support the evolving and continuously changing new educational paradigm in practice.

The work of becoming “learner-centered” starts with the connecting of people and the honest and open exchange of values, beliefs, and perceptions through a dialogue model. Margaret Wheatley’s work (2002, 2006a, 2006b), which we will talk more about in Chapter 4, provides the basis for this process. For now, look at Box 3.4, which describes an urban middle school we worked with in Texas. As you read the description, ask yourself whether you have experienced anything similar during your own career. If so, take a moment to reflect on how you handled your experience(s).

When you have finished reading the description and reflecting on your own experiences, take a moment to consider whether you agree or disagree with the process we described (or whether you agree with some aspects and not others). Write your thoughts down in your journal, and, if possible, share them with another person who is also engaged in the process of educational change. Take a few minutes to dialogue with yourself or your partner about any areas of agreement and/or disagreement. Note any unanswered questions you have at this point so you can revisit them as you continue your journey through this book.

(Text continues on page 70)

Box 3.4 A Middle School on the “Hit List”

From 1999 through 2002, we worked with a middle school in a major urban area in Texas identified as a failing school. The school district had based its definition of failing schools on student performance in reading and mathematics on the state test, the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (the TAKS). School districts whose scores in either reading or mathematics were below the 80th percentile made this “hit list,” as it was called by employees in the district. Schools designated as failing, at any level elementary through high school, had the option of working with outside consultants who had a comprehensive school reform model to bring up students’ test scores in a three-year period. If test scores were not up to the 80th percentile by the end of the third year, the schools would be privatized and most, if not all, of the school staff dismissed or sent to other schools. This Texas model was the precursor to the policies codified in the current No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation.

Our Learner-Centered Model (LCM), and its associated tools, was chosen by one of the middle schools whose reading and mathematics scores were both in the 20th percentile. We met first with the district administration and school principal to discuss the change strategies, assessment tools, and instructional practices associated with the LCM. It was agreed that this middle school, which sat in one of the most impoverished and gang-ridden areas of the city, would work with us to implement the LCM over the next three years.

In the middle school itself, we met initially with faculty and administrators to introduce them to the LCM, the underlying Learner-Centered Psychological Principles (LCPs), and the various professional development tools and strategies for improving student motivation and achievement. At the same time, all staff members were invited to participate in the school-level Assessment of Learner-Centered Practices (ALCP) survey. The school principal and other members of the leadership team had agreed that school or classroom level ALCP surveys would not be mandated if any staff person (or student in the case of the classroom level surveys) were unwilling to participate. It was emphasized that change happens because of critical relationships, and, consequently, they were not to worry about those who chose to wait to become involved. We took this step because many of them had become fearful in the punitive testing and accountability environment that surrounded Texas schools.

As it turned out, all but two nonfaculty staff people participated in the first administration of the School-Level ALCP surveys. The results were analyzed and broken into categories by grade levels (6, 7, 8) and by reading and math subject areas. Administrator and leadership team results were also compared to faculty and paraprofessional staff categories. Their findings were tabulated (see Table 3.3) and graphed (see Figures 3.2 through 3.6). School personnel were able to see value areas they agreed and disagreed upon and what they wanted to see in place at the school level. They could then see areas of consensus in perceptions of the degree to which these practices were actually occurring.

During the first semester, a series of meetings and dialogues about the findings took place. These meetings were held after school or on Saturdays, with an atmosphere of fun and socialization. Food was brought in and shared, games were played, and efforts were made for people to get to know each other at a deeper level. Even though many of these faculty and other school personnel had worked together for ten or more years—and many of them had taught the parents of the children now in the middle school—they realized that they really didn’t know each other at a personal level. They found out they shared many of the same interests, hobbies, and personal values.

Once this atmosphere of fun and trust was developed during the fall of that first school year, we tackled the hard questions raised by the School-Level ALCP survey results. Although some of the

(Continued)

Box 3.4 (Continued)

discussions at times became fairly “heated,” the time spent involving everyone in setting ground rules for the dialogue resulted in a group that listened respectfully to each other’s views. This led to the formation of various administrator-leadership-faculty-other school staff work groups. These groups were organized around their high interest and passion areas in the ALCP domains of school functioning showing the largest discrepancies in practice goals and perceptions of actual practices existed. The groups identified areas needing further staff development, and leaders emerged who were willing to take responsibility. A sense of excitement, tempered by cautious optimism, began to build.

One of the more serious issues identified early on was the feelings of fear, abandonment, and low morale being experienced by all due to the district’s mandates to teach to a new curriculum, filled with “drill and kill” and ongoing testing of students. Students who were normally well-behaved had begun to act out and teachers, as well as administrators, were frustrated by increased absenteeism, student fighting, and in some cases, open rebellion to the new curriculum and testing procedures. We asked staff if they had been open with students and had explained to them why the situation had changed and how serious the consequences would be if they didn’t raise their reading and mathematics scores on the state test in three years. When we were told “no,” we made the suggestion that teachers go into their classrooms and explain, in their own style and wording, what was going on. Most importantly, we suggested that teachers ask students for their help in coming up with ideas for how they could make what they had to do more fun, interesting, and relevant for themselves. We asked teachers to listen carefully to what students suggested, write these ideas down, and act on them.

Students became involved in taking ownership over their ideas—good ideas such as pairing with each other and doing drills with each other, engaging in “spelling bee” type formats to learn what they would be tested on. Teachers acted on these ideas. In combination with the LCM classroom-level ALCP student and teacher assessments and reflective feedback sessions, by mid-year, the atmosphere of the school began to change from one of fear and pessimism to one of hope and optimism. By testing time that first year, everyone was ready and excited to show what they had accomplished. Miraculously, state test scores in reading and mathematics had risen to over the 40th percentile!

We continued to work with the ALCP assessments, specialized professional development opportunities, strong administrative support, and learner-centered support groups. The support groups were a venue in which to share expertise in areas of practice critical to student motivation and learning. Ongoing learning and inquiry groups were formed, and significant changes in practice began to occur in spite of the mandated use of the Texas curriculum and testing policies. By the end of the second year, test scores in both reading and mathematics were in the 60th percentile. Most exciting for all of us, the students were highly engaged and viewing themselves as partners in preventing the closure of their school. Throughout, all successes were opportunities for celebration by students, parents, teachers, and school leaders alike.

As our third school year began, it was clear that the philosophy, change model, and strategies embedded in the LCM were taking hold. All teachers were voluntarily involved in assessing their classroom practices with their students, making needed changes, and working with “expert teachers” identified by the ALCP assessment process in those areas of practice where they were struggling. At the middle school level, the areas of practice—in the order of importance in predicting student motivation, learning outcomes, and disruptive behaviors—unfolded as: (1) creating

positive student relationships and a positive climate for learning; (2) honoring student voice and creating challenging learning opportunities; (3) supporting students' higher-order thinking and learning skills; and (4) adapting to individual developmental differences. In this, as in any school system, the best experts in each of these areas are the teachers who work in that system. By the third year, we knew who the experts were, and they were paired with struggling teachers who welcomed the help. They welcomed the help because a true community of practice had been created.

There's a good news, bad news, and then good news end to this story. The good news was that test scores at the end of the third year were 72nd percentile in reading and 76th percentile in mathematics. The bad news was that the then-superintendent said that wasn't good enough and to close the school down. The good news was that the superintendent was sent to Washington to be Secretary of Education, and the acting superintendent reversed the decision, stating that there was that much margin of error in measurement in the Texas test. Any school making that much progress—and having fun doing it—shouldn't be shut down. So we all rejoiced at that final good news!!

Figure 3.2 Goals of Texas Middle School

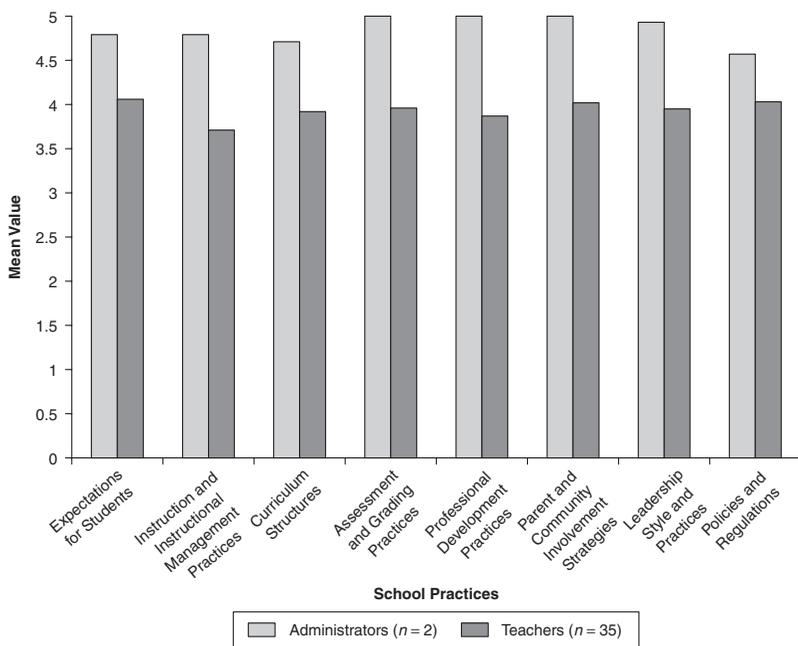


Figure 3.3 Actual Practices of Texas Middle School

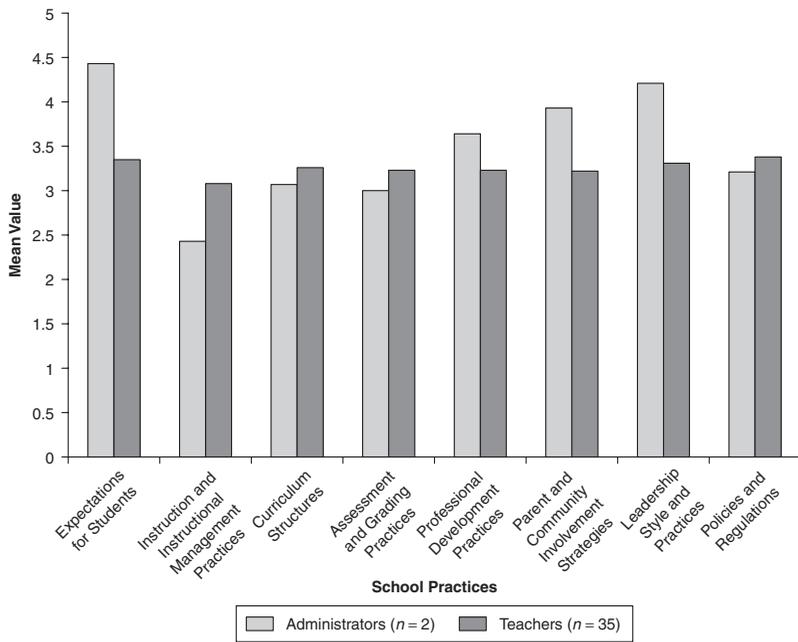


Figure 3.4 Grades 6–8: Goals

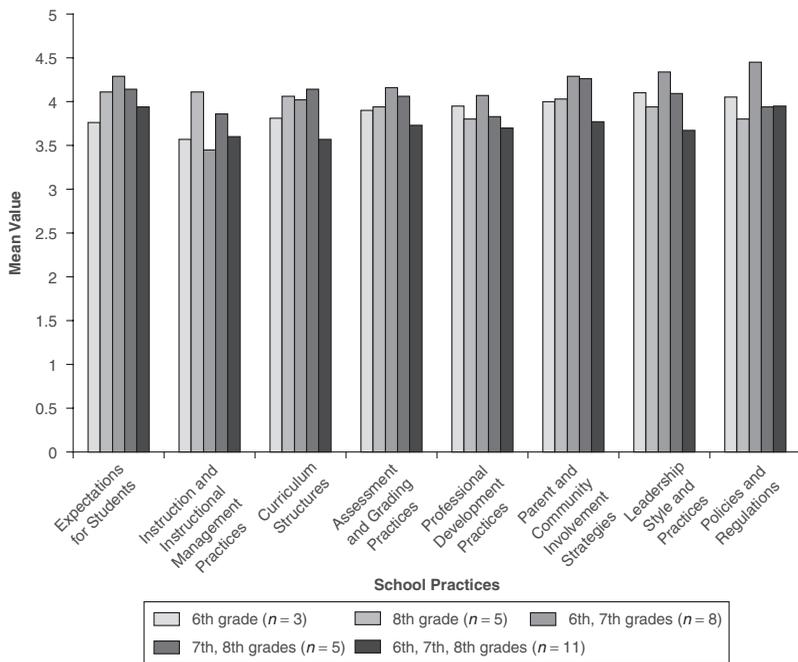


Figure 3.5 Grades 6–8: Actuals

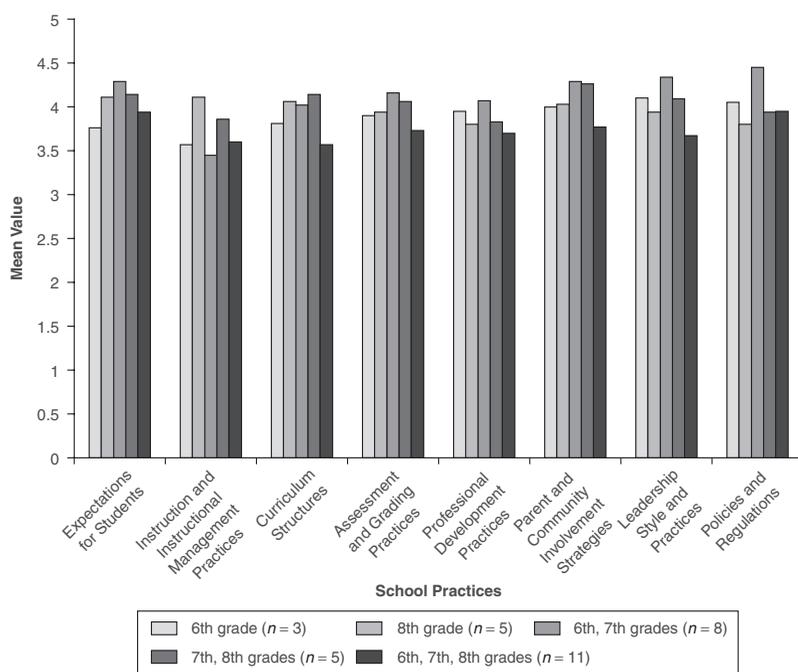


Figure 3.6 “All Grades” and Administrator Categories

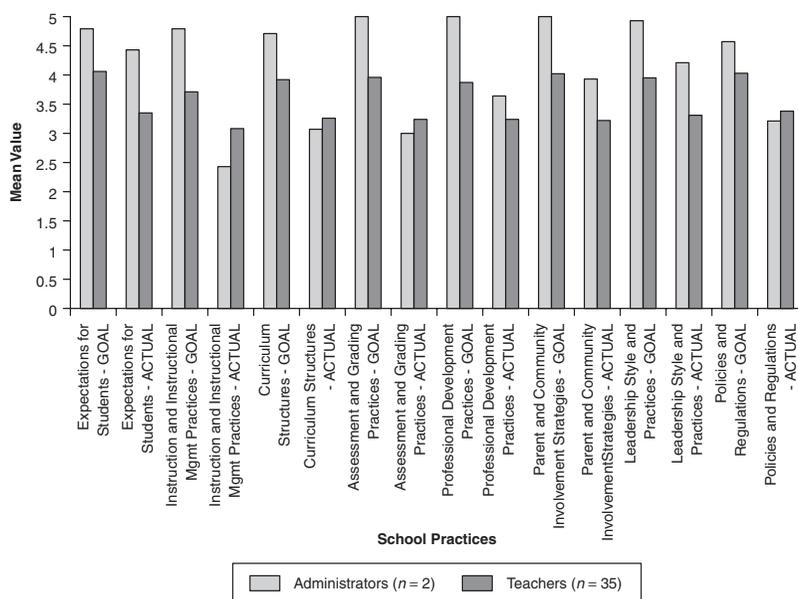


Table 3.3 School-Level Assessment of Learner-Centered Principles and Practices: ALCP School Level Practices Survey Results

School Practice Area	Texas Middle School: 2000–2001				Texas Middle School: 1998–1999				Colorado Sample					
	Administrators		Teachers (N= 35)		Total		Administrators		Teachers		Total			
	Mean n=2	SD	Mean n=35	SD	Mean	SD	Mean n=5	SD	Mean n=33	SD	Mean	SD		
Expectations for Students														
Expectations for Students—Goal	4.79	0.10	4.06	0.74	4.10	0.74	4.06	1.08	4.33	0.59	4.30	0.66	4.83	0.25
Expectations for Students—Actual	4.43	0.00	3.35	0.80	3.41	0.81	3.06	1.43	3.33	0.86	3.29	0.93	3.37	0.68
Instruction and Instructional Management Practices														
Instruction and Instructional Mgmt Practices—Goal	4.79	0.10	3.71	0.77	3.77	0.79	3.54	0.91	3.92	0.72	3.87	0.74	4.55	0.43
Instruction and Instructional Mgmt Practices—Actual	2.43	0.40	3.08	0.70	3.04	0.70	2.71	0.75	2.94	0.75	2.91	0.74	2.75	0.62
Curriculum Structures														
Curriculum Structures—Goal	4.71	0.40	3.92	0.93	3.96	0.92	3.80	1.10	4.09	0.93	4.05	0.95	4.60	0.44
Curriculum Structures—Actual	3.07	0.71	3.26	0.77	3.25	0.75	2.80	0.36	2.76	0.93	2.77	0.87	2.93	0.61
Assessment and Grading Practices														
Assessment and Grading Practices—Goal	5.00	0.00	3.96	0.82	4.02	0.84	3.51	1.09	4.04	0.95	3.97	0.97	4.38	0.60

Assessment and Grading Practices—Actual	3.00	0.61	3.24	0.87	3.22	0.85	3.09	0.46	2.92	1.02	2.95	0.96	2.56	0.80
Professional Development Practices														
Professional Development Practices—Goal	5.00	0.00	3.87	1.03	3.93	1.04	3.24	1.31	4.27	0.78	4.13	0.92	4.70	0.42
Professional Development Practices—Actual	3.64	0.10	3.24	0.88	3.24	0.86	2.80	0.63	3.16	0.93	3.12	0.90	2.88	0.78
Parent and Community Involvement Strategies														
Parent and Community Involvement Strategies—Goal	5.00	0.00	4.02	0.91	4.07	0.91	3.97	1.30	4.23	0.84	4.20	0.90	none	none
Parent and Community Involvement Strategies—Actual	3.93	0.30	3.22	0.85	3.25	0.84	2.91	0.71	3.19	0.88	3.16	0.86		
Leadership Style and Practices														
Leadership Style and Practices—Goal	4.93	0.10	3.95	1.02	4.00	1.01	3.89	1.47	4.44	0.63	4.36	0.78	none	none
Leadership Style and Practices—Actual	4.21	0.30	3.31	1.01	3.36	1.01	3.26	0.85	3.21	0.94	3.21	0.91		
Policies and Regulations														
Policies and Regulations—Goal	4.57	0.61	4.03	0.89	4.06	0.88	3.68	1.73	4.39	0.71	4.30	0.90	4.52	0.50
Policies and Regulation—Actual	3.21	0.51	3.38	0.89	3.37	0.87	2.90	0.73	3.15	1.01	3.12	0.98	2.96	0.76

HOW THE LEARNER-CENTERED PRINCIPLES TRANSLATE INTO PRACTICE AT THE SCHOOL LEVEL

As you have seen in your examination of the case study in Box 3.4, the School-Level Assessment of Learner-Centered Practices Surveys provide an important tool to begin the dialogue required for school change.

Introduction to How the Learner-Centered Principles Translate Into Different Areas of School Practice

The Assessment of Learner-Centered Practices School-Level Survey, based on *Learner-Centered Psychological Principles* (APA, 1993, 1997) (which we described in Chapter 2), addresses the comprehensive needs of the learner in ways that are consistent with the research on teaching and learning we've described in previous sections. The Assessment of Learner-Centered Practices School-Level Practices Survey is a 112-item self-assessment measure that asks administrators, faculty, involved parents, and other school and district personnel to indicate the degree to which various learner-centered practices, shown in Table 3.2, are held as Practice Goals (Beliefs and Values) and Perceptions of the Degree They Already Exist in their buildings (see Table 3.4 for how these categories appear on the survey).

Items on the Assessment of Learner-Centered Practices are rated on a five-point Likert-type scale for both the practice goals and perceived actual practice for each item in each of the eight categories. Mean ratings of goals versus practice for the eight school practice areas can be compared for different groups of respondents within a school and also with the validation sample of teachers and school administrators from diverse rural, suburban, and urban school districts. School-Level Practices Survey results indicate differences in beliefs about the value of different educational practices as well as differences in perceptions concerning the existence of these practices in respondents' current school settings. School leaders can use feedback from the School-Level Practices Survey to help plan for school restructuring and improvement and design staff development. Sample items from the School-Level Practices Survey are shown in Table 3.4.

Our findings from research with the Assessment of Learner-Centered Practices School-Level Practices Survey are that both are powerful tools for examining the sorts of discrepancies we described in our case study in Box 3.4. Our research also shows that effective dialogue and other tools and processes associated with the Learner-Centered Model work equally well in rural, suburban, and urban contexts (McCombs, 2004b). Although the degree to which the eight dimensions of school functioning in Table 3.2 are valued and observed in practice differ, in all cases the creation of communities of learners and practice can together create the system changes needed in identifying and articulating:

Table 3.4 The Assessment of Learner-Centered Practices (ALCP):
School-Level Survey (K–12)[®]

SAMPLE ITEMS

DIRECTIONS: Each item below has two parts: (1) what practices and policies you believe your school or district *should have* in six key areas of school operation; and (2) what practices and policies your school or district *already has in place*. For each item, please think about and respond to **both parts**. Indicate the degree to which you agree with each statement as a **practice goal** and the degree to which you think it **already exists**. Blacken the responses for each item on your answer sheet that best indicates your choice on **both parts** according to the following scale:

Strongly Disagree ----- Strongly Agree

A	B	C	D	E
<u>SD</u>				<u>SA</u>

Remember that each statement has two parts. Mark BOTH your parts for each item.

EXAMPLE ITEM:

<u>Practice Goal</u>					<u>Already Exists</u>					
A	B	C	D	E	Classrooms that are bright and cheery.	A	B	C	D	E
<u>SD</u>				<u>SA</u>		<u>SD</u>				<u>SA</u>

This survey asks you to assess your goals for school-level practices and your perceptions of what already exists in eight areas: Expectations for Students, Instruction and Instructional Management Practices, Curriculum Structures, Assessment and Grading Practices, Professional Development Practices, Parent and Community Involvement Strategies, Leadership Style and Practices, and Policies and Regulations.

YOU MAY NOW BEGIN!

PLEASE TURN THE PAGE

Table 3.4 (Continued)

Sample Items—Assessment of Learner-Centered Practices (School Level)	
<u>Practice Goal</u>	<u>Already Exists</u>
1. Expectations for Students	
1. A B C D E <u>SD</u> <u>SA</u> Students are expected to be responsible for their own learning.	2. A B C D E <u>SD</u> <u>SA</u>
2. Instruction and Instructional Management Practices	
15. A B C D E <u>SD</u> <u>SA</u> Students are given choices in how, when, and with whom they want to learn.	16. A B C D E <u>SD</u> <u>SA</u>
3. Curriculum Structures	
29. A B C D E <u>SD</u> <u>SA</u> Curricula is thematic and integrated across disciplines and content areas.	30. A B C D E <u>SD</u> <u>SA</u>
4. Assessment and Grading Practices	
43. A B C D E <u>SD</u> <u>SA</u> Assessment practices foster student responsibility for learning (e.g., self-evaluation.)	44. A B C D E <u>SD</u> <u>SA</u>
5. Professional Development Practices	
57. A B C D E <u>SD</u> <u>SA</u> Teachers are given training in adapting to individual differences in student learning needs.	58. A B C D E <u>SD</u> <u>SA</u>
6. Parent and Community Involvement Strategies	
71. A B C D E <u>SD</u> <u>SA</u> Mentoring programs are available for parents and community members to work with students.	72. A B C D E <u>SD</u> <u>SA</u>
7. Leadership Style and Practices	
85. A B C D E <u>SD</u> <u>SA</u> Leadership provides learning environments that allow students and individual or group learning.	86. A B C D E <u>SD</u> <u>SA</u>
8. Policies and Regulations	
99. A B C D E <u>SD</u> <u>SA</u> Policies promote the integration of technology into curriculum, instruction, and staff development.	100. A B C D E <u>SD</u> <u>SA</u>

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- *Expectations for Students*—the beliefs and perceptions of actual practices in terms of understanding how students learn;
- *Instruction and Management Practices*—the beliefs and perceptions of actual practices regarding how instruction is delivered and managed;
- *Curriculum Structures*—the beliefs and perceptions of actual practices about how curriculum is organized and delivered;
- *Assessment and Grading Practices*—the beliefs and perceptions of actual practices about the types of assessments used and how students are “graded” for their performances and achievement of desired outcomes;
- *Professional Development Practices*—the beliefs and perceptions of actual practices about how teachers are treated as learners and how they achieve professional development goals;
- *Parent and Community Involvement Strategies*—the beliefs and perceptions of actual practices about the role of parents and communities and how they are involved in school redesign;
- *Leadership Style and Practices*—the beliefs and perceptions of actual practices about what constitutes leadership, who the leaders are, and how leadership emerges;
- *Policies and Regulations*—the beliefs and perceptions of actual practices regarding navigating the policy environment and what changes can be made within the policy context.

The differences in goals and actual practices across a number of schools in a single district can be illustrated as shown in the results graphed in Figures 3.7 and 3.8, respectively. These figures show how the School-Level Assessment of Learner-Centered Practices Surveys can be used at a district level to guide school leadership—at all levels—toward respectful dialogue and the formation of communities of learning and practice. You will have a chance to learn more about this process in subsequent chapters.

What the Learner-Centered Model and Learner-Centered Approaches Add

With a learner-centered approach to educational reform, the focus is on the psychological, emotional, and social needs of learners and interventions that maximize healthy development and functioning such that motivation, learning, and achievement are promoted for *all* learners. The Learner-Centered Principles, validated over several years (APA, 1993, 1997), provide a knowledge base for understanding that learning and motivation are natural processes that occur when the *conditions and context* of learning are supportive of individual learner needs, capacities, experiences, and interests.

As we indicated in Chapter 1, all living systems include three domains: personal, technical, and organizational (see Figure 1.1 on page 4). As we mentioned in our discussion there, for schools to achieve the richness and power of living systems, we believe it is essential to focus attention on the personal domain, which has been largely ignored in recent years. Attention to the knowledge base about learners and learning is critical in order to define the personal domain of

Figure 3.7 Goals of All Schools

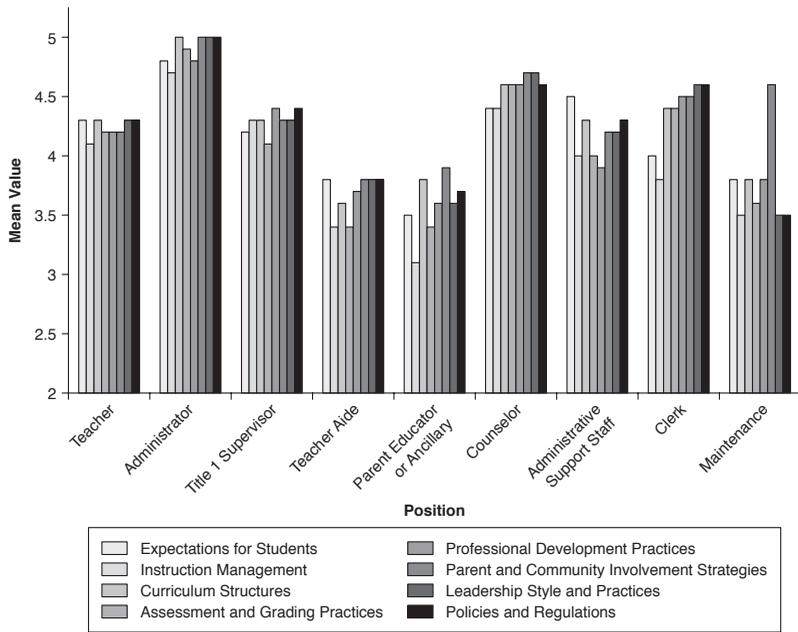
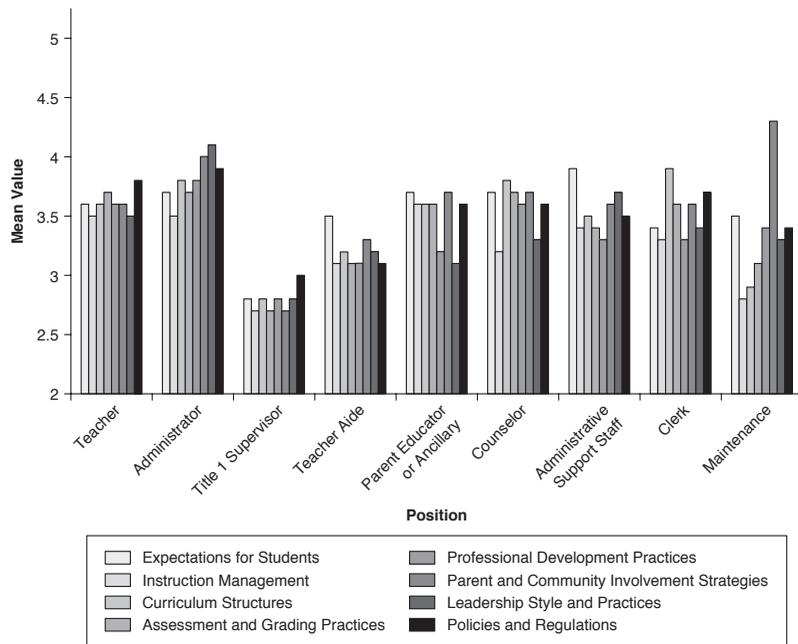


Figure 3.8 Actual for All Schools



educational systems. In contrast to the technical domain that focuses on content, standards, methods for organizing/delivering instruction, and strategies for assessing the attainment of the subject matter of education, the personal domain focuses on the *human processes* that operate on and/or are supported by the standards, curriculum, instruction, and assessment components in the technical domain. In addition, in contrast to the organizational domain, which is concerned with the management structure, decision making processes, policies that support the people, and content requirements of education, the personal domain centers on personal and interpersonal *relationships, beliefs, and perceptions* that are affected by and/or supported by the organization and educational system as a whole.

Current reform efforts are concerned primarily with technical issues (e.g., high academic standards, increased student achievement, alignment of curricula and assessment) that emphasize accountability (e.g., high stakes testing, teacher responsibility for student achievement) and punitive consequences for teachers, students, and administrators when standards are not met. To bring the system into balance, as well as bring some of the joy of learning back into the educational process, we argue that the focus must also be on personal issues and the needs of all people in the system, including students and the adults who serve them in the teaching and learning process (cf. McCombs, 2003d, 2007; McCombs & Miller, 2007). We see this as a basic component of schooling, learning, and leading.

IMPLICATIONS FOR LEADERSHIP AND BUILDING COMMUNITIES OF LEARNERS

It has long been recognized that humans have a need and tendency to form social connections. According to Cacioppo, Hawkley, Rickett, and Masi (2005), humans also share common qualities such as empathy, kindness, compassion, love, friendship, and hope, all of which represent human spirituality. Because humans are social creatures, the social relationships they form serve as the basis from which these spiritual qualities emerge and/or are developed. As organizational structures—such as schools, educational agencies, or districts, among others—are themselves social structures, the people in them make meaning from the relationships they create, thus leading to the further development of spirituality.

What We Know About the Value of Networks and Communities of Learning

Increasing numbers of researchers are arguing for more complex metaphors, such as living systems, networks, and communities of learners, to describe the human mind and behavior. These more complex metaphors help us move away from the mechanical or artificial intelligence (AI) computer metaphors that have failed to adequately describe and explain the interconnectivity of

human functions in creative, flexible, and innovative ways (e.g., Cacioppo et al., 2005; Caine & Caine, 2006). For instance, Summers, Beretvas, Svinicki, and Gorin (2005) argue that the benefits of faculty and students sharing academic goals and working together is clear at all educational levels. Such practices lead to the development of a sense of community, which has been shown to have a number of positive benefits, including increased student attendance at the K–12 level and student retention at the college level. The major factor underlying the benefits of collaborative learning and the development of community is that collaborative learning meets our basic human need to be connected to and in relation to others.

The idea of communities within education is far from new. When ideas such as “schools as learning organizations” began to surface in the early 1990s, Kofman and Senge (1993) began proposing that organizations should undertake “dialogue projects” in order to develop deeper patterns of reflection and communication. They recognized that, to create learning organizations, it was necessary to make basic shifts in how we think and interact.

Such shifts require a personal transformation that can occur only within the safety of a learning community because, within the community, people are able to identify any faulty thinking habits and to commit to making the changes necessary for everyone to experience ongoing learning. Through recognizing that people need community in order to develop—i.e., learn—in positive ways, the members of the community develop a commitment to support the whole—the community.

In Kofman and Senge's (1993) view, a learning organization must base its culture on the values of love, wonder, humility, and compassion. From there, practices must be instituted that provide for dialogue, generative conversation, and coordinated action. Finally, those in the organization must be supported to develop a capacity to see and work with the flow of life as a system. Concepts such as servant leadership, which we described in Chapter 2, remind us that the most basic and essential learning is learning about who we are.

From a related perspective, Niesz (2007) makes a strong case for communities of practice that interweave learning and teaching in social networks. She believes that such communities hold the promise of restoring thoughtful, professional expertise in schooling as teachers are organized into networks with the purpose of learning through inquiry. These communities of practice have been applauded by many as a social constructivist and constructivist orientation to teacher learning and professional development. As Niesz explains, these networks assume that teacher learning should endure over time, build on the experiences and knowledge of teachers, and promote opportunities for inquiry and critical dialogue through public sharing of practice and understandings. The concept of communities of practice, which we mentioned briefly in Chapter 2, was developed by Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger (1998) as four interconnected components of social learning theory:

1. *community*: where learning is belonging;
2. *identity*: where learning is becoming

3. *practice*: where learning is doing; and
4. *meaning*: where learning is experience.

Creating the Context for the Emergence of Teacher Leaders

Networks provide the social context for learning and school improvement, as well as professional development. They foster the willingness of teachers and other school staff to commit time, energy, and part of themselves to the personal and social learning process. Interpersonal relationships and experiences are shared, and, in the process, trust and respect—critical components of change—develop. Networks can function as a bridge between the two cultures of schooling and professional development (Lieberman & Miller, 2001). Furthermore, because networks are outside the bureaucratic structures of schools—i.e., they are decentralized and distributed—and because they are voluntary—i.e., they are self-initiated and self-organizing—the goals of teachers in the schooling system fall into alignment with those of the network as a consequence of shared experiences, resulting in positive school change.

Bartholomew (2007) makes a good case for the fact that most educators do not yet fully understand the importance of intrinsic motivation for academic excellence and the voluntary emergence of learning communities. Too often, educators rely on external motivators or fear-based approaches that may yield compliance and control, but clearly, from a research standpoint, do not lead to inspired, creative, and authentic learning.

Contrary to their intended result, many of these classroom management tactics quickly evolve into disincentives to learning and engagement. Bartholomew (2007) argues that teachers need to study educational motivation from the body of knowledge in psychology, sociology, linguistics, speech, and organizational management. This knowledge base yields a number of general principles about what increases motivation and engagement, including

- providing developmentally appropriate learning challenges and choices;
- establishing consistent expectations and routines;
- collaborating with students to establish their own learning goals, strategies, and achievement plans;
- setting the tone of trusting students to learn independently through coaching and feedback;
- using attentive listening to monitor student performance and engagement;
- building and expanding on the positives to encourage optimistic thinking patterns and emotions such as joy, pride, and contentment with learning potential; and
- creating climates in which students feel their input is important, they can engage in curricular and instructional choices, and they feel valued and respected.

There are few who would not agree that the quality of teaching is the most powerful influence on students' learning. Where opinions differ markedly is

what defines the quality of teaching and how best to prepare quality teachers. Our research and our combined experience have led us to believe that what defines effective learning opportunities for teachers are the same principles that underlie effective learning opportunities for students—i.e., professional development based on learner-centered principles (Hawley & Valli, 2000). Although their design principles were based in part on the APA Learner-Centered Principles, Hawley & Valli also incorporate work from other researchers involved in the study of learning and effective teaching. Most important, these design principles center on involving teachers in their own identification of what they need to learn and how best to learn it. The process of professional development is seen as collaborative, continuous, and ongoing problem solving.

From our own research, we have learned that the learning that occurs in learner-centered professional development often leads to comprehensive change. That is, when teachers truly learn new information, their mental schemata and brain networks change (McCombs, 2003a, 2004b)—they literally “change their mind.” To the extent that teachers can view their professional development as an ongoing learning and change process, they embark on a lifelong journey that can inspire and renew them, at the same time increasing their professional competence. We have also learned that the change in teachers can happen quickly when they are reconnected to the moral purpose that brought them to education and the teaching role, as illustrated in this story:

During a one-day inservice workshop we were doing for a school district in Texas, one high school English teacher, close to retirement, was clearly not happy about being there. She made every effort to disrupt the training during the morning session. By acknowledging her and encouraging her to participate in exercises that revealed how to help struggling students, we were able to support her to contribute in positive ways in the afternoon session. By the end of the day, she was excited and announced that she now felt validated and reinvested in teaching. She said she knew she could still make a difference with her students and was not going to retire at the end of the year as originally planned.

Leadership Redefined

In this chapter we hope we have encouraged you to rethink what it means to lead in a time of rapid change in national and world conditions and events. We've discussed the need for values and vision, for courage and conceptual change, and for starting with a close look at ourselves as learners. We've also described some new theories of change and how they are connected to findings in a variety of scientific fields—all of which stress the value of relationships, networks, and collaborative partnerships that emerge as learning communities and communities of practice. All of these ideas and findings are embedded in our concept of a learner-centered form of schooling. As the exact shape, size, and specific practices emerge in each setting, leaders can rely on a set of evidence-based principles that provide the “nonnegotiables” they can use to stay the

course, maintaining the vision and sustaining the energy of an ever-changing array of learners from all levels of the system.

When our focus is on change from within, when we realize we are all learners for a lifetime, and when we design systems that focus on learners and learning, some exciting things can happen. For example, Fredrickson and Losada (2005) studied the ratio of positive to negative affect in an effort to quantify what it means to flourish—to live within the optimal range of human functioning that connotes superior functioning, generativity, growth, and resilience. Their research indicated that enhancing positive affect is critical because it is associated with enhanced attention, intuition, and creativity, as well as to other positive outcomes, such as increased motivation and learning.

Further, students who have been educated in systems that emphasize control rather than autonomy are not well prepared to function successfully in the global economy or to be effective, participating citizens in the global village (McLuhan, 1989; Tomlinson, 1999). Students schooled in settings that focus on firm control of students and rote memorization learn compliance to directives, inability and unwillingness to question authority, and dependence and fragility as lifelong learners. What we need are learner-centered models of schooling that promote autonomy, personal responsibility, and trust, as well as a broader base of knowledge and resource management that allows students to be more than low-level knowledge reproducers. When they are educated in a learner-centered community, they learn to be knowledge producers and critical thinkers—just the abilities needed to participate actively and productively in local and global societies. Within learner-centered communities, they experience schooling practices in which they have an active partnership role in governance, and they engage in learning activities with challenging and caring adults. They experience and help create social justice that begins in school; they learn ethical decision-making through youth-adult empowerment experiences.

In discussing why school reform efforts have often failed, Rich (2005) argues that they are based on mistaken and misleading assumptions, many of which are familiar to educators and researchers who base their reform ideas on sound scientific principles. The mistaken views include these assumptions:

- schools are the primary source of education;
- test scores are the best measures of student achievement;
- punishment works to help students learn;
- raising standards means students will meet them; and
- better teaching in schools can close the achievement gap.

Rich argues that the success of school reform initiatives depends on the positive attitudes, behaviors, and habits that students bring into the classroom, as well as the ones they learn in classrooms and schools. Rich believes that addressing these social and emotional factors in concert with the academic factors is critical for school reform efforts to be effective.

What Students Need and Want

Cushman's work on students' perceptions of school is directly applicable to how we should be designing change (2006). She presents the voices of students who speak out for a meaningful curriculum. Compared with students in suburban schools, urban students had far fewer opportunities to participate in challenging and interesting courses. They also had fewer opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities, and as a result, they found school to be boring. These students also "...chafe against a system that shuts them out rather than recognizing and developing their potential" (Cushman, p. 34). To help get them interested in school again, many urban students express that they would like schools to be places where they have

- a voice in determining what courses are offered;
- respect for their nonacademic interests;
- inspiring role models; and
- opportunities to connect with the community.

In Cushman's (2006) study, students were not trying to avoid academic challenge but were asking for schoolwork that builds on what they know and care about. They wanted schoolwork that stretched their thinking and related to their interests. They wanted teachers who respected them and their needs, related to them as partners and co-learners, and provided role models that fostered their interest in school and academic subjects. As motivation experts have long held, students need a sense of agency, purpose, and meaning that will help them with the major task of adolescence—forming a personal identity and sense of purpose.

At the 2005 ASCD Conference on Teaching and Learning, students were asked what kind of schools they want to go to and what are the most desirable teacher qualities. A diverse group of middle and high school students provided the responses shown in Box 3.5. The problems these students identified as ones they would remove from their schools and the qualities they wanted in their school are shown in Box 3.6.

Sroka (2006) sees these student responses as embodying a spirit of teaching and learning that puts learners at the center of instructional policy and practices that address the whole learner.

Taking Dewey's (1938) view that there should be a reciprocal and organic relationship between personal life experiences and education, Pugh and Bergin (2005) synthesized the research on the influence of school learning on students' out-of-school experiences. They found that not only has little research been done in this area, but of those existing studies, findings suggest that school learning does not have that much influence on out-of-school experience. In discussing what is needed, Pugh and Bergin argue for a transformative education model that focuses on radically changing the values, character, morals, attitudes, and outlooks of individuals rather than transmitting pre-determined content. This model provides transformative experiences in how

Box 3.5 Student Voices: What Schools Should Look Like and Qualities of Effective Teachers

What Kind of Schools Students Want To Go To	Qualities of Effective Teachers
Safe, healthy places	Nonjudgmental
Supportive teachers who know them and relate to their needs	Welcoming and respectful of student opinions
Where they can speak their minds and be respected	Outgoing and understanding
Where they can learn without internal or external threats	Could be confided in
	Care about their students and the content they teach

Box 3.6 Problems Students Would Remove From Their Schools and the Qualities Students Want In Their Schools

Problems Students Would Remove	Qualities Students Want In Their Schools
Bullying	Positive discipline
Discrimination	A clean, safe, welcoming environment
Dispassionate teachers and students	Teaching for understanding
Testing as a way of ranking students	An emotionally nurturing place
Grades	Quality teachers with senses of humor
Drugs	A place where creativity is valued and encouraged

students perceive and relate to objects of study (e.g., rocks, works of art). As a result students are more motivated to apply what they learn in out-of-school contexts, they expand their perception of the meaningfulness of learned concepts, and they begin to value the content for the experience it provides.

Boyle (2007) describes the dimensions needed for leaders of transformative schooling as embodied in compassion, which means putting empathy and caring into action through compassionate interventions. In this view, cultures must be created that manage and adapt to problems collectively and depend on the knowledge and leadership of the group. Leaders must be capable of a new kind of emotional intelligence, which Boyle relates to abilities to empower, heal, dialogue, inquire, self-respect, and deeply listen. Compassionate interventions apply to the total system and entail developing caring, professional learning communities that value collaboration, and capacity-building at all levels within and between buildings in the system. For Boyle, compassionate interventions lead to renewal in mind, body, heart, and spirit.

Box 3.7 What Kind of Leader Are You: 3

1. Of the qualities of effective leaders we described on pp. 20-24, which would you say you exhibit? List each, along with an example that illustrates how you exhibit that quality.
2. Devise a simple instrument you can use to ask your teachers what kinds of leadership support they most desire. What questions would you ask? List them.
3. Journal your responses to Margaret Wheatley's questions on p. 50.
4. List the problems you think the students in your school/district/agency would like to see removed from their schools.
5. List what you think are the top five qualities students in your school/district/agency would like to see in their schools.

SELF-REFLECTIONS

We designed the exercises in Box 3.7 to help you assimilate the ideas we've been presenting so far. We hope the exercises will help you begin translating these ideas into your thinking and planning about transforming your school, district, and/or agency.

We have many challenges and exciting opportunities ahead. We hope that you, along with us, are feeling more inspired and ready to take these on.

WHAT'S NEXT

In Chapter 4, our journey will deepen into what it means to lead in these changing times. You will have an opportunity to explore additional tools from our research and further explanations of how the Assessment of Learner-Centered Practices School-Level Survey tools can help in the implementation of change and in fostering the emergence of the leaders we need for transformed models of schooling. We will explore what it takes to facilitate the emergence of networked communities of learning and practice that can give birth to new leaders throughout the educational system. We will look carefully at the processes for meaningful dialogue that are being advocated by some of our most enlightened scholars and educators. As in this chapter and in Chapter 2, Chapter 4 includes exercises designed to help you think about and reflect on the ideas and potential challenges to your thinking that we present.