COMMUNITY IN SCHOOLS: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF MEANING AND PURPOSE

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Abstract

A large body of research literature connects the concept of community with schools and other educational organizations. This study:

1. Drew from that educational literature:
   (a) a typology of the different senses in which the term community is conceptualized;
   (b) guiding principles for building community.
2. Interviewed thirteen educators from the Calgary (Alberta, Canada) Public Board of Education to ascertain:
   (a) how these educators conceptualize the concept of community;
   (b) their views on how the concept of community could be operationalized in schools.
3. Analyzed how (1) and (2) do and do not complement each other.
4. Drew conclusions and made recommendations for future study, policy and action which will allow the idea of community in schools to become more attainable.

The concept of community, as applied to schools, identifies two types of relationships: territorial and relational. However, an optimal sense of community will not be experienced until people within territorial structures begin to interact with and relate to one another. Such an enlarged notion of community would speak to the caring and trust that exists between

people; individuals' faith in process; and a sense of ownership in, commitment to, and shared responsibility for, what occurs between people within lateral structures. Another element would be the valuing of all people; valuing their place in the community, their growth as learners, and the qualities they bring and contributions they make to the community. Finally, larger connections would be made which extend beyond the smaller territorial structures, into the larger school community and beyond into larger communities outside the school.

This study may also serve as an heuristic springboard for future research in at least five major areas:

1. How value systems are developed by educators and educational leaders.
2. How educators and educational leaders come to value shared leadership and shared responsibility in lateral structures.
3. The potential for one type of community serving as a foundation for others.
4. How currently vague and abstract concepts of community may be expressed in language that is clear, precise and practical.
5. Longitudinal studies of educators and educational leaders addressing the assumptions of what learning communities and communities of leaders are and should be.

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Preface

My journey into the world of building community in schools began as my wife and I sat in the penthouse of the Palliser Hotel in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, eating lunch and listening to Thomas Sergiovanni. He was speaking on the importance of community and the need to build community in schools.

By his own admission, after twenty years of fighting, Sergiovanni was ready to concede. I found it both interesting and sad that after a lifetime of work he had come to the conclusion that it was not possible to build community in public education or public schools. It is perhaps, as Andy Hargreaves (1994) laments that, "one of the greatest educational crises of the postmodern age is the collapse of the common school, a school tied to its community and having a clear sense of the social and moral values it should instill" (p. 58).

These pessimistic conclusions by two respected educators caused me to reflect on the number of books and articles that I had read which discussed ideas such as service, moral purpose, core values, principles, justice, shared values, and like mindedness, and which advocated a <u>need to replace that which seems lost.</u> Hearing Sergiovanni served to reinforce in me a personal need to understand more about what many in the 1990's were referring to as

building community in schools.

In the fall of 1995, I completed an independent study entitled Understanding Building Community in Schools and that brought me to this point in my journey. This study begins with a literature review that will inform the focus and methodology of this study.

CHAPTER ONE

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is twofold: a) to elaborate the different connotations of the notion of community in school as it appears in the literature; b) to develop a typology from that literature.

The Call for Community

In reaction to a perceived increase in the pace of change and the disassociation of individuals from the group, a call for community in schools has arisen. Some call to the external community and society at large for direction in developing educational opportunities and meeting educational needs. (Mitchell, 1979; Andrews, 1987; Brubacher, 1993). Others (Deal and Peterson, 1994; Graves, 1992) call internal constituencies of teachers, parents, and students "to assemble a community that deliberately and openly builds, supports, evaluates and rethinks the school program" (Joyce, 1986, p. 74).

This call for community has far reaching implications for individuals and society. As Capra (1993) describes, "the emerging new paradigm may be called a 'holistic' world view, seeing the world as an integrated whole rather than a disassociated collection of parts" (p. 232). This "holistic" view allows for "caring for persons, the more able and the less able serving each other" (Greenleaf, 1991, p. 49). It also asks for a redefinition of "the boundaries both

within schools and between schools and the broader society" (Hill, Pettit, Dawson, 1994, Discussion paper). To others (Joyce, 1986) the call for community extends to improving society itself, as Wood (1992) illustrates:

> our ability to live together as neighbors, to tolerate our differences and to arrive at mutually satisfactory solutions to common problems determines our ability to sustain and nurture democracy. The basic building block of democracy is a deep sense of commitment to community, including an obligation to think of the common good over individual good. (p. 85)

Defining community.

Gusfield (1975) defines community in two qualitatively distinct senses. First there is the ". . . territorial . . . a context of location, physical territory, geographical continuity". Then [supported by Little, 1992], there is "the relational" which "points to the quality or character of human relationships, without reference to location" (p. xv - xvi). To Gusfield, "community"

> . . . has significance in three dimensions. In one dimension it points to and describes a specific form of human relationships. In another it is part of a theory of change through social evolution. In still a third dimension, it is part of an ideological debate over the value of the present as compared to the past and to possible alternative futures. (p. 20)

To define the notion of community as a form of human relationship, is to recognize that community encapsulates some form of

connection or "bond" between people or groups. In the literature both the occurrence of human relationships and the quality of those relationships in this territorial space is measured according to Gusfield (1975), [supported by Nix, 1983], by "ways in which group members cooperate and conflict - to the existence or absence of bonds of similarity and sympathy, to what unites or differentiates a collectivity of people" (p. xvi). Sergiovanni (1993) believes "communities are collections of individuals who are bonded together by natural will and who are together binded to a set of shared ideas and ideals" (p. 9). As Gusfield (1975) states, bonding has more to do with "a characteristic of some human relationships rather than a bounded and defined group, as in the first, or territorial usage" (xvi).

In relating these concepts to a school, we could say that the school exists as a community in two forms, territorial and relational. A school exists as a community in a territorial fashion as measured both by its physical and structural relationships with the community and in people's physical and structural relationships with each other. A school may also exist as a community from a relational perspective. Here the emphasis is upon how members of a community share some form of human relationship(s) and that such sharing may predispose those involved to some form of bond(s) (McLaughlin, 1992; Kruse and Louis, 1993).

However, does 'bonding' within a territorial or relational community

infer positive relationships between people? In the literature, [supported by Little, 1992], it is clear that although people may be territorially bounded there is no guarantee that communities are "systems of cooperating individuals, groups and organizations" (Nix, 1983, p. 240). In order to identify community in an organization, Trecker & Trecker (1979) listen for "expressions" that "tell one how people tend to regard their place of habitation and indicated a certain degree of identification with it" (p. 154). These "expressions" reflect how the people within the community interact and treat both the physical (territorial) community itself and the people (the relational) within the community. (Trecker, 1979; Sergiovanni, 1993).

The Language of Building Community

Writers seem to have created their own idiosyncratic list of terms, metaphors and dictums to depict and define community. Just as the volume of literature in this topic is great, so too is the terminology diverse.

For this paper, I will focus on five specific terms and phrases that share common usage in the literature: shared values; caring; collaboration; relationships and trust; and sense of place.

Shared values

There is wide agreement in the literature as to the importance of shared values in groups and their significance in effecting and maintaining a sense

of community. Kouzes and Posner (1993) believe that "shared values are the foundation for building productive and genuine working relationships" (p. 121). Others include terminology such as "shared values and ideals"; "infused with value"; and "congruence with community values" (Sergiovanni, 1994; Selznick, 1957; Sykes, 1986; Gusfield, 1975).

Sharing values in organizations is also connected positively with the success or performance of groups or organizations. As organizations or institutions share values, people benefit personally and the organization benefits collectively. (Kouzes and Posner, 1993; Selznick, 1957; Solomon and Battistich, 1994; Faucette, 1994). Finally as Rutter (1979) states [supported by Solomon & Battistich, 1994; Hill, Pettit & Dawson, 1994; Kouzes and Posner, 1993; Boyd & Hord, 1994], shared values seem to be only as powerful as the group which holds them, in that the group itself must be "cohesive and supportive of its own members" (p. 192).

Caring

The notion of community also seems to be grounded in a "sense of being part of a common group where loyalties and obligations rest on affective, emotional elements" (Gusfield, 1975, p. 10). As Gusfield elaborates, "the community - society typology might also be seen as distinguishing relationships based on *sentiments* - emotional and intrinsic attachments - from those of *interests* - mutually held goals which prescribe cooperation in

their pursuit" (p. 10).

Caring, it is argued, is tangible, observable and can be developed as individuals make a "total commitment to each other" (Sergiovanni, 1994, p. xviii). As Noddings (1992) identifies, "caring is a capacity (or set of capacities) that requires cultivation" (p. 114) and can be "demonstrated by the respect, caring and commitment" (Wood, 1992, p. 85), that people demonstrate towards each other.

The degree to which people care influences others and is influenced by the degree to which others share values. As Kouzes and Posner (1993) [supported by Rutter, 1978] state: "when individual, group and organizational values are in synchronization . . . commitment, enthusiasm and drive are intensified: people have more reason to care about their work" (p. 121). In schools, caring for work could be reflected in the actions of teachers giving of their time to students, or, in the actions of students providing some form of service to the school (Rutter, 1978; Sergiovanni, 1994).

Caring is also connected to familial characteristics or qualities of kinship in the community. Gusfield (1975), [supported by Wood (1992), Sergiovanni, (1994) and Cooper (1988)] believes that "the building blocks of community are thus familial, kin, territorial, ethnic and religious . . . " (p. 10). In application to schools, these characteristics are on "public display," demonstrating the "genuine compassion and respect the adults in these schools display for their charges and for one another" (Wood, 1992, p. 112). Cooper (1988) states

> the key relationship in schools is that between child and teacher, and that relationship is more comparable to a family than to an institutional model. Relationships internal to schools are based on human service; the corporate model is as alien as the factory model has been acknowledged to be. . . . In professional settings, when teachers are moved to share, it is usually because they are *proud of something they have done with children*. (p. 14)

Collaboration

Although not defined specifically in research reviewed here, it is clear that collaboration has ties with the relationships and values that people in organizations and communities share. As Hargreaves (1994) indicates

> collaborative cultures comprise relatively spontaneous, informal and pervasive collaborative working relationships among teachers which are both social and task centered in nature. These entail forms of leadership that support and facilitate these collaborations on an ongoing basis, rather than controlling and constraining them. (p. 135)

Much of what is written about collaboration has a connection to the notion of shared leadership where "teacher leaders were successful if . . . they worked with willing colleagues and had time to collaborate" (Wasley, 1992, p. 212). Hill, Petit & Dawson (1994) in discussing a "culture of collaboration", speak of the development of "culture, in which all members of the community contribute to the achievement of shared goals," (p. 2). To Lieberman (1991) collaboration may "lead to more effective decision making processes and improved outcomes" (p. 36).

This shared form of leadership according to Hargreaves (1994), [supported by Little, 1992] allows for the creation of "communities of colleagues at the school level who work collaboratively to set their own professional standards and limits, while still remaining committed to continuous improvement" (p. 156). Finally, collaboration in a school community can happen at any level and at any time, "before and after schools hours, in the lunch room and faculty room, during breaks and prep periods" (Little, 1992, p. 36).

Relationships and Trust

As I have discovered, the use of language in building community has more to do with the relational than the territorial "relationship" of people in a community. It would be redundant to prove that relationships exist in groups or communities; of course they exist. It makes sense that writers in this field speak of the value of relationships and the types of relationships that exist between people and groups which lead to a sense of community.

This sense of community is, as we shall discover, often defined by who in a community relates to whom, what type of relationship they share and what the qualities of that relationship are. As Little (1992) [supported by Clandinin and Connelly, 1991; McLaughlin, 1992] states

> in looking for community only where teachers gather in some organized forum, we are likely to miss some of the most potent features of teaching as an occupational community, and of schools as organizational cultures - the way persons act or do not act in one

> another's presence (or outside it), form their views in relation to one another. and construct interpretation of one another's actions. (p. 162)

Relationships in a school community are closely linked with the notion of caring and emotion (Noddings, 1992; Sergiovanni, 1994). In schools that share a spirit of community, relationships exist "between teachers, learners and community members" (Joyce, 1986, p. 79) and it is the "nature of the relationships among students, between students and teachers, and between teachers and administrators that will determine whether community exists. . ."(Sergiovanni, 1994, p. 102). This view is shared by other writers such as Hill, Pettit & Dawson, 1994; Deal, 1987; and Boyer, 1995.

The "nature of relationships" to which Sergiovanni refers is characterized by Cooper as having a "familial like" quality, where the "relationship is more comparable to a family than to an institutional model" (1988, p. 14). In practical terms, this "sense of family" in schools may arise as a feeling one gets when one enters a school, witnesses displays, or simply views the manner in which adults greet "students at the door - relating something personal for that student" (Wood, 1992, p. 112).

The extent to which relationships develop is grounded in the level of trust that exists between members of the group or community. Trust is labeled as a "by product of how people are treated" (Grafft, 1993, p. 18) and as an integral "foundation" from which "good parenting or teaching starts"

(Noddings, 1992, p. xii). "Trusting relationships" (Noddings, 1992; Grafft, 1993; Lieberman, 1988) not only must exist between the adults in a school but also between adults and the children. According to Hargreaves (1994),

> trust, in other words, can be invested in persons or in processes - in the qualities and conduct of individuals, or in the expertise and performance of abstract systems. It can be an *outcome* of face to face relationships, or a condition of their existence. Emphasis is placed on intimacy, warmth and personal trust in building rewarding and also productive collaborative working relationships. (p. 252)

Sense of Place

As people relate in a caring community where they develop trust and bonds and begin to share values and collaborate, this interaction and building of relationships leads to a perception or understanding of a "sense of place" (Faucette, 1994, p. 11). This "sense of place" gives meaning and greater significance to what people do within the community. It appears as if something larger is occurring than just the normal day to day operations of a large group.

Participation in a group that has developed trust and bonds can lead to "a sense of being part of a common group where loyalties and obligations rest on affective, emotional elements" (Gusfield, 1975, p. 10); giving people a "sense of what is important and what is of value" (Sergiovanni, 1987, p. 121); and a "sense of belonging" (Noddings, 1992, p. 67). As people participate in the

group and share in a "collective experience," they can develop a "*sense of participating in the same history . . . (of) shared attitudes towards events, both past and present* " (Gusfield, 1975, p. 35, emphasis in original), as well as a "sense of agency" (Hill, Pettit & Dawson, 1994, p.3), enabling them to create and share in the process.

Defining a Community

Building community in schools may give the impression that what is being built is singular in nature, an entity unto itself, a single tie that binds many parts together for a single purpose. In reality, the types of communities which can be built are as diverse as the relationships and senses that can be developed. My analysis identifies and focuses upon two types of communities: a community of learners and community of leaders.

Community of learners

First, in speaking of a community of learners, the literature clearly indicates that certain pre-conditions need to be met before such a community can be established. Writers speak of learning as a condition or attitude and argue that there needs to be a commitment to the value of learning for all members of the school. (Barth, 1991; Rowan, 1991; Sergiovanni, 1994; Hill, Pettit & Dawson, 1994; Griffin, 1991). As Miller & O'Shea (1992) state, "for teachers to be truly effective, they must see themselves as learners" (p. 201).

But what might a community of learners look like? It is easy to say that teachers must form learning communities and that collaboration leads to this sense of community, but what is the tangible part of the relationship that is built in a community of learners?

Miller and O'Shea (1992) identify a community of learners as a combination of interactions that stem from invitations into classrooms "to observe and work with small groups of students" and opportunities to "do demonstration lessons" (p. 200). Graves (1992) believes that "school restructuring that considers longer class periods and teacher teams that seek to integrate concepts or methods across subject matter areas can help to build true community for students and teachers" (p. 66) and "cross disciplinary and cross grade level collaboration - for developing integrated curricula or authentic assessment techniques for example - can build community . . . " (p. 70). A sense of a community of learners also has connection to the degree to which teachers can make decisions about and changes to curriculum "to meet the needs of their students, inventing assessment pieces and investigating current theories" (Miller & O'Shea, 1992, p. 201).

As stated previously, the idea of a learning community also has ties to school improvement and school restructuring, both relational and territorial. In the territorial, the form or shape this community takes is influenced by the size of the school. As Wood (1992) indicates, "the lack of connection with the school, the lack of a sense of community, is often due to the sheer size of the

school" (p. 107). Both Hargreaves and Sergiovanni indicate that attempts should be made to reduce the size of teaching teams creating "smaller professional communities of teachers at the school level" (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 148). Sergiovanni (1994) goes one step further in advocating for "school within a school" (p. 44). In practice, a school within a school would be a smaller number of teachers being responsible for the learning of a smaller number of children, while working with children in a number of capacities. (Hill, Pettit & Dawson, 1994; Pearce, 1992; Rowan, 1991).

It must be noted, however, that territorial changes in the structure, shape or the size of the school must coincide with relational changes if community is to be built. Community will not be built in a school if there are territorial or relational changes acting alone (Clandinin and Connelly, 1991; Kruse, Louis and Bryk, 1994; McLaughlin, 1992; O'Neil, 1995; Hargreaves, 1994; Deal and Peterson, 1994; Kain, 1993; Sergiovanni, 1994).

Kruse and Louis (1993) have established a "framework of the dimensions of professional community" where they list five "structural pre-conditions" and six "dimensions of human resources". As Kruse and Louis (1993) elaborate

> . . . structure appears to act in tandem with other dimensions and social and human resource factors, facilitating the creation of communities of learning. Our data suggest the development of professional community requires several pre-conditions related to social and human resources. The social and human resource conditions supportive of the

> development of community include openness to improvement, trust and respect, shared expertise, a sense of efficacy, leadership and social mechanisms. (p. 17)

Community of leaders

Barth (1988) indicates that "a community of leaders is a vision of what might become a condition of school culture, a part of shared norms, beliefs, rituals and actions of the school" (p. 146). Ideally for him, a community of leaders may refer to a community where everyone provides some form of leadership and "once empowered, teachers . . . work together as team members who view the (whole) school, not just their own classroom, as the place for learning" (p. 40).

In reality, it has been found that "communities contain a relatively small number of key leaders whose influence is general" (Nix, 1983, p. 244). These leaders concern themselves with the performance of both "task" (promoting physical and technical change) and "social" (reducing friction, improving relationships) functions (Nix, 1983; Deal & Peterson, 1994; O'Neil, 1995). While in these roles, leaders perform various functions, one of which is to link "his (her) group to the rest of the organization" where:

> one is creating a reflective environment and a degree of safety where individuals can rediscover what they really care about. And the second dimension is to bring those people together in such a way that their individual visions can start to interact. We communicate our own visions to one another and eventually start to create a field of shared

> meaning - where there really is a deep level of trust and mutual understanding and we gradually begin to build a shared vision. (Likert, 1969, p. 361, p. 22)

Leaders who build community "spend time articulating the purpose and the mission of the school. They socialize others to these values. They define and redefine the uniqueness of the school" (Owens, 1987, p. 25). Kouzes and Posner (1993) indicate that

> while credible leaders honor the diversity of their many constituencies, they also stress their common values. Leaders build on agreement. Their efforts are not to get everyone to be in accord on everything - this goal is unrealistic - perhaps even impossible.
> Leaders encourage their constituents to question routines, challenge assumptions, and with respect to appreciating diversity, continually look at what is going on from changing perspectives.
> (p. 121, 168)

Leadership in a school can take many forms, as has been indicated by Sergiovanni, Boyd and Hord and others who have studied the varying ways that schools and organizations are being currently restructured. Leadership can be provided school wide or be as simple as recognizing teachers as "leaders in their classrooms" (Miller and O'Shea, 1992, p. 201).

In schools where a community of leaders exists, the physical relationship of decision-makers has been transformed and/or fluctuates from one of a "vertical" to a "horizontal" relationship and conversely back again. (Deal and Peterson, 1994). Others describe this relationship as ranging from

"Institutional" to "Communities" (Wood, 1992); "Technological" to "Human" (Selznick, 1957); "Technical" to Symbolic" (Hargreaves, 1994); "Rational/Bureaucratic"-"Hierarchical/Centralized" to "Ecological" - "Ecosystem/Decentralized" (Andrews, 1987); "norms of privacy" to "norms of collegiality" (McLaughlin, 1992).

It has been argued that there has been a recent move to increase the decision making power of everyone in the school (Hargreaves, 1994; Newman, 1994; O'Neil, 1995). As Deal and Peterson (1994) believe, in discussing the coordination of schools,

> the form that coordination takes says a great deal about what a school values. Vertical coordination, through either command or rules, emphasizes the value of authority and a belief that people in top positions have a better idea than those further down the formal hierarchy about how to get things to work effectively. Lateral coordination supports the value of collegiality and the idea that integration happens best when people can synchronize their activities through face to face dialogue and on the spot collaboration. (p. 80)

Reasons accounting for this move to a more collaborative culture are varied (Lieberman, Saxl & Miles, 1988; Barth, 1988; Hargreaves, 1994). However, more importantly, the trend itself is based on a number of assumptions. As Lassey & Sashkin (1983) summarize:

> first, we assume that participative decision making is more productive than centralized decision making. Second, it is assumed that planned change involving wide spread participation by all affected parties is

> possible and is more desirable than unplanned or ad hoc change. Third, we believe that the process that produces planned change can be learned and used by a variety of people who are interested in improving the quality of their community. (p. 251)

Regardless of the degree to which these assumptions apply, one needs to ask if there are certain conditions that enable better decisions to be made by those sharing responsibility. Wasley (1992) through study of teacher leadership has identified a number of conditions that lead to greater success for teacher leaders:

> teacher leaders were successful if (a) they worked with willing colleagues and had time to collaborate; (b) there was shared agreement on the need for change; (c) they were not diverted to administrative work, such as scheduling assemblies and organizing volunteer teas; (d) the instructional focus of their work supported changing practices; (e) their role had been created and implemented by those who were supposed to change as a result of the teacher leaders' work; (f) that role was flexible enough to provide different kinds of collaborative relationships for a faculty with diverse needs. (p. 212)

Summary

This chapter began with an overview of how pervasive the 'call for community in schools' is today. However the reader was cautioned that the term 'community' has many connotations. An analysis of the literature revealed that the idea of community is understood in four basic senses: territorial community, relational community, community of learners and community of leaders.

CHAPTER TWO

THE STUDY

The purpose of this chapter is to help the reader to understand what was undertaken in this thesis. This chapter begins by identifying guiding principles for building community, from the literature. From these guiding principles several questions arise which lead to the purpose of this study and an outline of the research methodology. Following the outline of research methods is a description of perceived limitations to this study.

Guiding Principles for Building Community

It is not the intent of this section to present my views as to whether community should be built in schools, what type of community should be built, how the task may be accomplished, or whether the task is even possible to accomplish. Instead, the purpose here is to identify and articulate the principles found in the preceding literature review, which address these questions.

Even a cursory examination of the literature immediately yields two major principles:

PRINCIPLE 1 - building community in schools is desirable.

PRINCIPLE 2 - building community in schools is possible.

The literature review in chapter one clearly documents that the writers do not question the value of, or need for, community in schools. Accordingly, this study will question the concept of community and its connection with schools. Is it community that is so desirable or is it something else that is associated with community? I also question authors who claim to witness community in a school or community being built. Are these authors making generalizations that are unsupportable? Is Gusfield correct when he claims that people act "out of a sense of community" (p. 11)? Is the term "community" being extended into areas that it does not belong? Can educators articulate a definition of community that reflects the literature and to what degree do educators believe it is desirable/possible?

PRINCIPLE 3 - building community in schools will lead to shared values and beliefs.

The majority of the research examined supports a concensus or 'functionalist' perspective where all members of the community share compatible viewpoints and their practice reflects those beliefs. From this body of research springs this third principle. However, we must also recognize that there is a variance of opinion on this point in the research.

As Selznick (1957) [supported by Kouzes and Posner, 1992; Nix, 1983] indicates "membership does not mean the same thing to all who belong to an organization. Thus, individuals differ widely in the importance they assign to

their own membership and to the organization itself" (p. 98). If this is the case, and individuals are assigning differing levels of value and commitment to core beliefs, what does this do to the sense of community? Can one have a sense of community if the individuals in this community do not share what is most basic or core to its operation? How would this pluralistic view of community, where a diversity of views is encouraged and tolerated, affect the sense of community? Is our rush to share beliefs and values and to achieve community bonds and collaboration entrenching a conception as Gusfield (1975) [supported by Noddings, 1992] states "of communities as fixed social groups rather than as processes; in conceiving of institutions as clusters of values and normative procedures rather than as arenas in which people are acting to achieve purpose?" (p. 44).

Perhaps Hargreaves (1994), [supported by Heckman, 1987] is correct when he states "the *form* of teacher culture, the pattern of relationships among its members is as important as the *content* of any shared beliefs within that culture" (p. 190). Do the members of a community inside the larger community see that they share power and influence with others in the school? Or, do certain groups inside a community attempt to influence and manipulate what happens inside the community to serve their best interests? (Noddings, 1992). How, then, does all of this influence how leaders structure a school?

PRINCIPLE 4 - building community in schools could be related to the

concept of learning community, professional community or community of leaders.

Research clearly demonstrates that there are numerous types of community to be built. What type of community should be built before the other and which one is most desirous given the complex nature and role of schools? Can community refer to a collection of communities that are all striving and being directed toward one purpose? Or is it possible given the diverse nature and types of communities to be built in the literature that in reality they are competing against each other and working counter to that which is intended? What characterizes all of these different types of communities other than their relational and territorial perspectives? Can educators articulate a vision of what these might look like in a school? Will educators agree in their visions for building community in schools?

PRINCIPLE 5 - territorial changes in the structure of the school must work together with the development of the relational component of community.

While it seems clear in theory what territorial or structural changes may need to be made to build community in schools, it is less clear as to what actions need to be taken to satisfy the relational component. Understandably placing people into a new physical relationship to each other will cause new relationships to be built. However, it is clear that simply placing them into

this new territorial relationship is no guarantee of success in building a sense of community (Kruse, Louis, and Bryk, 1994).

The relational component is extremely critical to the construction and maintenance of a "sense" of community. Although the research identifies the relational with words such as "sense of", "family", "caring" and the like, it provides little concrete evidence of how to build the relational component of community in schools. Nor does it give evidence of what qualities or characteristics might lead one learning community to be more successful than another once restructuring is complete. How would people in a learning community develop relationships that lead to trust, shared beliefs and values? Can educators operationally define this process? Does the development of relationships within a learning community lead to a greater sense of professional community? In educators perceptions how might the development of relationships happen and what would be the measurable results?

Purpose of the Study

To this point, our investigation has:

1. Reviewed the educational literature on 'community' to draw from that literature:

a) a typology of the different senses in which the term is conceptualized

b) guiding principles for building community.

From this point on, the focus of this study is:

2. To interview educators in a school district to ascertain

   a) how they conceptualize the concept of community

   b) their views on how the concept of community could be operationalized in schools.

3. To analyze how (1) and (2) do and do not complement each other.

4. Draw conclusions and make recommendations for future study, policy and action which will allow the idea of community in schools to become more attainable.

Research Methodology

This study employed a qualitative approach to gather, organize, interpret and analyze research and data collected for this study. Given the purpose of the study, the intent was to interview a small number of teachers, assistant principals, principals and associate superintendents in one school district. After receiving approval for the study from ethics committees from both the University of Lethbridge and the Calgary Public Board of Education, a list of potential interviewees was constructed (see limitations). Potential interviewees were contacted by phone and given information on who I am, details/purpose of the study, what was intended in the interview session and analysis of the results. As individuals agreed to participate, a mutually convenient time and location for interviewing was selected. Before the

interviews began, letters of intent/permission to quote directly were signed by each participant (see APPENDIX A).

Thirteen interviews were conducted with individuals from the Calgary Public Board of Education. The participants in this study included three junior high school teachers (two with recent elementary experience), three junior high school assistant principals (one learning leader), five principals (one elementary, one elementary/junior, one junior high, two high school) and two associate superintendents. Four of the participants were male and nine were female.

The rationale for the selection of Calgary Board of Education as the site of this study and for the distribution of interviewees was based on the following:

a) schools in the selected district are being territorially restructured to allow for more lateral representation in decision making. This new territorial arrangement allows for greater shared responsibility and greater voice from all parts of the "community".

b) decision making occurs and relationships exist at every level of the school community. Responsibility for those decisions appears to rest with everyone. Site-based management and decentralization is becoming a reality in which everyone is being held accountable for actions and results. This sharing of responsibility affects everyone in a school community.

c) We have learned in the literature that a leader can be defined as any

educator from any of our chosen groups. In a horizontal relationship teachers would share equal voice and carry equal responsibility for actions in the school with team leaders, assistant principals and principals. Principals share both school and system responsibility, while superintendents allow for greater participation and shared decision making from all levels of a school system. This would require any study in this area to include a wide representation of individuals extending from those providing leadership in a school, to those providing leadership and direction to a system.

A "standardized open ended interview", combined with an interview guide approach, was utilized. An attempt was made to create "a set of questions carefully worded and arranged with the intention of taking each respondent through the same sequence and asking each respondent the same questions with essentially the same words" (Patton, 1990, p. 280).

Participants were asked two main questions: What does the concept of community mean to you?; How can a sense of community be built? Each main question was followed with a series of probes that helped to provide a clearer understanding of the opinions of each participant.

A combination of these techniques allowed for structure and consistency, yet some degree of flexibility in interviewing and questioning. The design and sequencing of questions was drawn from a variety of sources in qualitative research and/or interviewing. (Patton, 1990; Dana, 1992; Seidman, 1991; Fitz,

1994). (see APPENDIX B). All interviews were tape recorded for use in the presentation of results, analysis and discussion chapters of this thesis, but the tapes were not transcribed.

Limitations

It is important for the reader to recognize what this study represents and does not represent. It should be recognized that information collected in interviews for this study was never intended to validate or invalidate theories and ideas found in the research or in a hypothesis or position adopted by the researcher. This research is qualitative, and exploratory in nature. It is an attempt to explore how the research that exists is or is not complemented by opinions expressed by thirteen educators.

Results and findings of this study are not generalizable to other situations and circumstances. Lack of generalizability is related to the size of the interview sample, the fact that all interviewees are from one district, specific characteristics which may be unique to the district from which the interviewees are drawn, and the qualitative nature of this study. Furthermore, as there were thirteen interviews completed for research purposes in this study, the sample cannot be assumed to be representative of the larger body of educators in the Calgary Public Board of Education or of other school districts. This limited the depth of the analysis to reporting what was found and to making connections between interviews and the research.

It is also possible that different educators may have varying levels of understanding of the notion of what building community in schools represents. These differences may in part be due to the practical experience of the participants and their personal knowledge of the literature and terminology that is part of this study. It is possible that the views and opinions expressed in this study by the participants have been influenced by emerging trends and professional development opportunities explored by this specific school district and offered to teachers. Other districts or groups of teachers may not share the same level or intent in their professional development or professional activities in their schools.

Finally, other researchers upon examining the interview data collected for this study, may draw different conclusions about the coding and categorization used in this study. Responses given by participants may be interpreted differently by other researchers. Again this would influence the generalizability of the research to other situations and circumstances.

However, this is an exploratory study and an initial attempt at bringing some form of order to the boundless array of research that exists in this area. Hopefully other researchers will take the information generated in this study and progress further in researching specific areas. Or perhaps this study will assist others in making connections between all of the areas that influence building community in schools.

Summary

This chapter describes in detail the guiding principles of building community which arose from the literature reviewed for this study, the purpose of this study, the methodology used and the limitations that exist for this research. The guiding principles for building community are as follows:

PRINCIPLE 1 - building community in schools is desirable.

PRINCIPLE 2 - building community in schools is possible.

PRINCIPLE 3 - building community in schools will lead to shared values and beliefs.

PRINCIPLE 4 - building community in schools could be related to the concept of learning community, professional community or community of leaders.

PRINCIPLE 5 - territorial changes in the structure of the school must work together with the development of the relational component of community.

After each guiding principle, questions were generated that served to give shape and form to the purpose of this study which was to analyze how the research literature, and the information collected from interviews of educators from one school district, serves to complement or serves not to complement each other.

Thirteen interviews were conducted of educators from the Calgary Public

Board of Education (Alberta, Canada) in order to ascertain

a) how educators conceptualize the concept of community

b) educators views on how the concept of community could be operationalized in schools.

Qualitative methods were used to gather, organize, interpret and analyze research and data collected from the interviews. Participants were asked two main questions: What does the concept of community mean to you?; How can a sense of community be built? Each main question was followed with a series of probes that helped to provide a clearer understanding of the opinions of each participant.

It was reinforced in the limitations of this study that information collected in interviews for this study was never intended to validate or invalidate theories and ideas found in the research or in a hypothesis or position adopted by the researcher. This research is qualitative, and exploratory in nature. It is an attempt to explore how the research that exists is or is not complemented by opinions expressed by practicing educators.

Other limitations to this study related to: a lack of generalizability to other situations and circumstances, variance in participant understanding of what is represented by building community in schools, and the extent to which other researchers, upon examining the interview data collected for this

study, may draw different conclusions about the coding and categorization used in this study and subsequent analysis.

CHAPTER THREE

RESULTS

This chapter presents the responses of participants in this study. Thirteen interviews were conducted with the intent of documenting the views of educators in response to two questions: What does the concept of community mean to you?; How can a sense of community be built?

The responses of the participants were analyzed in a search for similarities in responses, differences in responses, and emerging themes between interviews. Information gathered from the interviews was coded to assist in the compilation of data. Coding, categorization and construction of themes was influenced by the terminology that is found in the literature, from questions that were constructed and used in the interviews, and from a review of responses provided in the interviews.

Participant responses were coded as follows:

T - teacher

A - assistant principal

P - principal

S - associate superintendent

The numbers which follow each particular code were used to assist the researcher in the processing of information from tape recordings and in making connections between participant responses. In presenting the

responses of participants, there are occasions where a direct quote from one participant is presented or is connected to a 'like' response of another participant(s). In those situations where similarities exist between respondents, the similarities will be presented in the form of the following codes:

participants - a like response from participants from all levels

school based personnel - like responses from teachers, assistant principals, and principals

school based administrators - like responses from assistant principals and principals

administrators - like responses from both school based administrators and associate superintendents.

Categories used for collecting information that related to this study were:

* the concept of community
* shared values
* purpose
* caring
* territorial/relational/structure
* the meaning of community for educators
* collection of communities
* learning community
* professional community

* community of leaders
* connections between types of community
* building community in schools

These categories were then grouped into five major themes for purposes of reporting: The concept of community; Why build community in schools?; What makes a community?; Types of school communities; How might a sense of community be built in schools?

The Concept of Community

As indicated previously, participants individually were asked to explain what the concept of community meant to them and from their responses, the following emerged.

School based administrators stated that community exists on a number of levels and is plural in its meaning. That is, community can be conceptualized or operationalized in several ways. This plurality could be operationalized in the size of the community, with people "deferring to a larger community" (P1, Interview), in neighborhoods, individual residences, family, students, teachers, parents and any support groups in the school (T2; S2; A2; A1; P1; P4; P3; P5, Interview). Plurality could also be expressed in a school system "where we have a number of communities" (P1, Interview), or within a school where there is "such a diverse population" (P1, Interview), or "learning communities" (S2, Interview). The notion of a "learning

community" was also expressed by one teacher, one assistant principal and two principals.

As one principal indicated, community is "something that you don't make explicit" (P5, Interview), and is "not terribly visible" (P5, Interview). Community is something that is "initiated individually" (P4, Interview), as individuals possess "talents and beliefs and values" and are "willing to share . . . offer those out in a spirit that can bring shared meaning . . . I have this to give, I am willing to learn, now how do we go from here?" (S1, Interview).

Although community may be initiated individually, to principals, one superintendent and one teacher, community seems to represent "a mentality that you were a part of something that is bigger than your individual perspective" and "extends way beyond the boundaries of buildings" (P4, Interview). This could be representative of "people working or living or being together with a common goal, with a common responsibility" (T3, Interview) or displaying a "willingness to share . . . helping others to grow" (P2, Interview) or in providing some form of service for others (P1; P3; T3; A1; A3, Interview).

Definitions of community are also connected to the notion that community is "inclusive", (S2, Interview), where "there is a feeling that everyone is important" (P1, Interview). In other words, community is a place where there is "unconditional acceptance" (S2, Interview), a place that is

"safe" (P5, Interview), and "non judgmental" (T3, Interview). Other words or terms used frequently by participants in their conceptions of community were the terms trust, sharing, caring, relationships, support and feeling (Interviews, 1996).

Why Build Community?

In asking the question, "Is community really meaningful for educators?", the overwhelming initial response was, yes, it is. Reasons given as to why varied from the isolation that individuals would otherwise feel, peoples' social needs and responsibilities, and the importance of relationships.

Some of the participants spoke of an ever increasing feeling of isolation both in society, and in daily life in schools (S1; T3; T1; P2; A3, Interview). It was felt by one participant that because "we work with people of certain backgrounds and social-economic status . . . there is a need to work together more here to establish that sense of belonging . . . as a society we have been pulling away from that . . . we have to re-connect with people" (T3, Interview). This re-connection may allow people to become "more familiar than less familiar" and allow us to "see how interdependent we are" (P2, Interview). This isolation and interdependency could also be related to a belief, as expressed by one participant, that "it is impossible in this day and age for one person to be able to do the job alone. Not only do you not have the expertise, the energy, the know how, the knowledge . . . you can't do it alone

. . . it is too big" (S1, Interview). A sense of community holds significance for another who feels

> it is better to have a sense of community in a school. It helps me be better in my job, it is much more enriching for me personally, it makes me look forward to coming to work. Because I know there are going to be people there who I enjoy seeing and being with and it is a support system . . . we can get so isolated that we don't know what is going on out there and we don't know what other ideas are possible. When you have people in a community setting, everybody can help pull everybody along. We hit these slumps sometimes when we are not very motivated or feeling that we are not doing very well and people can around can help pull us out of it. (T1, Interview)

Social needs and responsibilities extend beyond the individual where people need to "think about how our work can have impact on the greater community than ourselves" (P1, Interview). Having a "greater impact" seems to be connected with the notion that "growth is the end . . . we want good citizens . . . students to have a healthy attitude, respect and a sense of selves" (P3, Interview).

Participants used words like "citizenship", "ownership", "involved", "responsibility", and "caring" to explain the meaningfulness, sense of purpose, and association community has to educators (T3; P2; P1; P3; S1; P4, Interview). In the words of one participant

> I am here to create the right public. You can't have community without the right public. The right public has a conscience. We have a right to basic human needs. I don't think that everyone is born with that notion, I think it is something that needs to be taught . . .
>
> I think that schools have a great responsibility right now to work with

> parents to bring these issues forward. My experience with parents thus far is that they are quite interested in becoming involved because it is their children and my message to them is that this is why I have my job. My job is to remind you that it is all these children and that I will stand behind all of them not just yours. This one may be different from this one and needs are different. I am the go between sometimes to help people understand that somebody else's needs might outweigh your child's needs right now. Community at school, the community we create at school is just the model within the bigger community. (P2, Interview)

Also related to this theme was the significance of relationships formed between people in the school community where "community and the feeling has everything to do with the connectors and relationships with kids. It has everything to do with who is feeling for kids" (P1, Interview). Others spoke of a connection between community, sharing, caring and learning (S2; P4; P5; A2; P3; A3, Interview), an "embodied attitude" (P5, Interview) where in order to "have a positive learning experience you need to have that sense of community. Kids need to feel that they are cared for" (A2, Interview). Further to this

> when we have twenty-five or thirty individuals each going their own way with no common thread then you will not build community. You will not have an environment that is healthy for kids. The kids need that continuity, they need that structure. They need to know what it is that the people they are working with or for or the belief. Through that we have respect, we have shared responsibility. We ask kids to do x, y, z, - the staff should do x, y, z. (T3, Interview)

What Makes a Community?

This section will elaborate on some of the descriptors used by participants to describe community. Terminology and the language used will be presented in four subsections entitled: The purpose of community; Distinguishing shared values; Caring; Territorial and relational concept.

The purpose of community

While community or the sense of community may be plural in meaning or form, it seems to be connected with what appears to be a singular need (A2; S2; Interview). This need may be expressed as "something that everybody is working towards" (A2, Interview), along with the notion that "there needs to be something that we all agree as to the reason we are here . . . that is the filter for what we do" (S1, Interview). Other descriptors used to describe this singular need or "something that we all agree as to the reason we are here" were "common ground", "common purpose", "common understandings", "global community", "right public", "stick in the ground", "foundation statement", "going home", "beacon" and "greater good" (Interviews, 1996).

Two principals identified this plural-singular nature of community (in a school) as

> the purpose is to get along, to grow individually, to know one another, learn from one another and grow stronger . . . each of those cultures whether it is Muslim, a Sikh, a Hindu, we are different communities, in that sense yes. Even my teachers bring a different community, but

> together with this student community we have a greater community. (P1, Interview)

Learning also seems to hold significance in this "reason why we are here". Administrators were the most common group to connect learning and the concept of community. As one participant indicates

> why don't we combine a notion of what we are here for - purpose: learning. In a broader context it could be in the street, that it could be in the place where they spend most of their life time in the community and why don't we talk about creating different structures in which they can learn. Let's get a notion of a learning community. (P5; Interview)

Lastly, while there seems to be a need for a singular purpose there also appears to be the requirement for flexibility or freedom "in the manner in which you attain that purpose" (A2, Interview). The idea that people have some form of flexibility in the way that they do things was shared by both associate superintendents, two assistant principals and two teachers.

Distinguishing shared values

As participants typically indicated in this study, beliefs are constituents of individualism, "an individual aspect of our being" (T3, Interview). As one principal indicated, "my fundamental beliefs are mine and they are based on my history and the way I perceive things and what I value" (P4, Interview).

It is clear from participants' responses that people can differ in their beliefs (T1; S2; A3, P4, T3, T2, Interview), and this "diversity needs to be valued and explored" (S2, Interview) allowing people to "differ in the way we achieve our goals" (T1, Interview). However, while diversity may be valued or encouraged, there is also agreement that for community to exist there needs to be some commonality that exists between people (T3; T2; P2; S2; S1; P4; P3; A2; P5; A3, Interview). As one participant indicates

> I think you can have community based on diverse understanding, diverse beliefs but there has to be some agreement in principle about what we are trying to accomplish as a community . . . if you really want true community one that is lasting, you have to have the ability to disagree, to debate, but still come to some form of understanding and probably some agreement on how things play out in the roles that you play. (P4, Interview)

Not coming to some form of agreement or understanding, according to one participant may interfere with the building of community where

> you don't have to have when you are building community, people who are of completely like mind. They do not have to hold all of the same beliefs or do things all of the same way or react to things in all of the same manner. But if you have people who have some basic beliefs that are not in synch, then it would be difficult to build community with those people.
>
> For example, if you believe that decisions in the school should be made in the best interests of teachers because they are the key to successful education. And so whatever we do we need to make sure that we keep them happy so that they can do the best job with kids and that is your belief--and I believe that decisions should be made in the best interests of kids because that is why we are here and that is who we are working for and with. If we have that conflicting belief then you and I are not going to be successful in creating a community. We may co-exist in

one location but we are not going to grow together. (A2, Interview, 1996)

Given all of the above, the next question asked in the interviews was: How would the participants go about building trust, shared values and beliefs? This was, from my observation, the most difficult question for participants to answer and the one that produced the greatest differentiation in responses.

Once again there seems to be a link to what people perceived they could do individually, as an individual in a group, or in groups involved in a process (P1; T1; T3; T2; P3; A2: A3, Interview). Individuals might build trust by being there "when you say you are going to be there" (T1, Interview) and doing "what you say, say what you do--walk the talk" (P3, Interview). It may also be represented by "being straight forward with people . . . separating the problem" (P2, Interview) or "giving the same messages" (A2, Interview).

For an individual involved in a group, trust could be demonstrated as one goes about "affirming others" (P1, Interview). It could also be representative of "putting faith into someone, mentoring, allowing them to lead" (T2, Interview) or allowing "people to take responsibility. We have to support people as they make mistakes" (T1, Interview).

Involvement as a group, in creating a sense of alignment between people's beliefs and values, has connections to a process (P1; S2; A2; T3; A3,

Interview), where the group decides "on some actions, specifying some actions, trying them, exploring them, keeping the talk going around them, evaluate and assess constantly" (S2, Interview). Similarly, participants spoke of dialogue, debate (P1, P4, A3, Interviews), and a need "to feel the procedure in the decision making is a shared one and a fair one" (T2, Interview) and "to see that you listen . . . to see that their ideas can be different" (P1, Interview). One principal indicated that to build these things requires a "high profile mission and a high profile way of examining it. Accountability by making all of the departments reflect on what we do-how does this reflect on our belief statement?" (P1, Interview).

Caring

Judging from responses given, caring holds a significant place in the shaping of a community. All participants mentioned caring either separately or in conjunction with another concept or idea. Caring holds significance for a community in the sense of enriching relationships between people (T3; P5; P4; P1; A1; T1, Interview). Caring also seems to contribute to other qualities or characteristics like ownership felt, responsibility for, and contributions to a community or feeling of community (T3; S1; A2, T1; P1, Interview).

Like community, caring could exist on a number of different levels where "I care about what we are doing with the kids and I care about all of us as a team and the work we are doing to get there. I care about you as a person, as a

professional and therefore as a member of the community" (T3, Interview). Caring "helps communities rise above" and a caring community "has to do with the wanting what is best for the whole, rather than for the individual . . . we all know why we are together and we care about being a part of what that is" (S1, Interview).

In schools, caring is linked closely to the relationships that are formed between people (P1; A1; T1; P5, Interview). In a school, caring is visible when people support others, take an interest, acknowledge a favor, recognize the important things that people do in the community, write notes, make gestures, cover classes, share materials and knowledge (T1, T3, P1, Interviews) and "people bending over backwards to get me what I might need and to help me" (T1, Interview).

Where "care is prominent" there is a "sense of belonging" (P5, Interview). Where care is not prominent "if no one cares if I come and go during the day, if I have no contact with people who know what I am doing, then there is no sense of belonging, no ownership, no sense that I am worthwhile" (T3, Interview). Without caring, "nothing mutually brings us together for the support and for the wanting what is best for all of us" (S1, Interview). In addition

> I think the person who doesn't buy in, doesn't follow up will not demonstrate that caring, will be a negative influence, will be off track, will criticize, because they don't trust you. They don't trust me. They don't trust that we are both working towards that same ends. If that trust

> isn't there, if that security isn't there, we have not been successful in creating that vision of working towards that or building that community. (T3, Interview)

Territorial and relational

Rather than asking participants for definitions of what territorial and relational meant to them, these concepts were combined with the idea of restructuring as it relates to building community in schools. Much of the resultant discussion revolved around what is representative of the terms territorial and relational in schools, the term structure, and what structures are perceived to help or hinder building community.

Community in a school in the territorial sense has connections with the concepts/constructs of time, facility, organization, location, size (P4; P5; S1; S2; P2; T2; A3, Interview). The relational sense is connected with relationships, connections, trust, sharing, and interaction between people (P3; P1; T3; T1; P2; P5, Interview). In schools both territorial and relational senses function independently and co-dependently as illustrated by the presence of a "common work area" (P1, Interview) that provides a space to "sit with colleagues and share ideas" and large, central "common spaces" that "drew people together so that conversations happened everyday" (P4, Interview).

Territorial and relational also have connections to the idea of physical closeness (P1; P4; T2; T3; A1; P2, Interview). In the territorial this physical

closeness may be reflected in a facility with "kids in one area of the school, lockers are close, five classrooms in a tight circle. We can see who is in class and who is not" (T2, Interview). Physical closeness may also be reflected in the size of groups or in the number of people who work closely with each other. Although several administrators felt that it was possible to build a sense of community in a large school with a large population (P1; P4; A1; A2; S2, Interview), eleven participants felt that the task seemed easier or more attainable if the group was smaller and that these smaller groups collectively could build a greater sense of closeness (P1; P2; P3; T3; T1; T2; A1; A2 S1; S2; A3, Interview). This closeness could be found in: teams of teachers interacting, meeting regularly, and talking to each other; teacher advisor groups; or in teachers seeing fewer students during a day (A1; A2; T1; T2; T3; S1; P5; A3, Interview). It is worth noting, however, that while teams of teachers may facilitate a sense of community, three principals, one teacher, one superintendent and two assistant principals felt that teams can also lead to a feeling of "territorial by department" (P1, Interview), "ghetto-isation" (A3, Interview) or "compartmentalization" (P3, Interview). This could, in their opinion, hinder a sense of community.

In the relational, participants connected physical closeness with the "relationships that people have with one another" (P1, Interview), caring and trust, respect that is demonstrated, conversations (T1, P4, P5, T3, Interview) and the "ability to interact and to tell stories" (S1, Interview). Although some

participants mentioned that there is no guarantee that interaction will garner a sense of relational closeness (S2; S1; T3; T1; T2, Interview), it was felt that "you absolutely have to have the proximity and the ability to interact . . . or what you have is twenty-five classrooms with twenty-five inhabitants not even knowing what each others' talents and gifts are" (S1, Interview).

There was almost universal agreement by participants that a sense of community will be facilitated where relationships are positive. Some participants separated the term relationship into personal and professional (T3; P3; A2; T2; A3, Interview). Professional relationships could be defined as being civil to one another, trusting one another, working towards the same thing, or a place where there is open communication (A2; T3; T2, Interview). Personal relationships seem to involve a closer tie with another person or persons. This "comes when I would have chosen that person for a friend outside of the work-place" (A2, Interview).

Whether there needs to be some connection between personal and professional relationships in order to build community is unclear. One assistant principal believes

> there has to be an overlap and intertwining between personal and professional in order to develop those really significant relationships that occur in education. If that is happening people are talking about their family and socializing, getting together outside of the school but at the same time they are talking about some of the deeper questions about education . . . ultimately the spin-off is going to be more productive and better quality education for kids in the building. (A3, Interview)

Another teacher and assistant principal appear to pose contrasting views where they state

> I have worked with people that I don't necessarily admire or I don't like their personality or it is someone who I would not choose to be buddies with. But that doesn't mean that they are not effective or that they don't share the same vision. That doesn't mean that I can't work with them. But it does mean that we still have the positive relationship because we are working toward the same goal. (T3, Interview)
>
> . . . I don't have to socialize with everyone in the school to have a relationship" (A2, Interview).

Before we leave what makes a community, it would be important to demonstrate the relationship that structure seems to share in this discussion, how in one participant's words "structure becomes the practice" (S1, Interview). By asking the question, "Is it necessary to restructure thereby changing the physical relationship that people have with one another?", few people talked about how to restructure or even used the term. Several, however, used the term structure to answer the question. Answers to this question as they relate to structure in my interpretation took five forms: acknowledging that structures exist; defining what structures exist; believing that structures can exert positive or negative influence; recognizing this control is influenced by power; and feeling that people can exercise control through certain processes.

The structures that participants mentioned or identified were related to

the structures that are a part of life in schools. These structures were identified as facilities, timetables, teams, leadership roles, and hierarchies (P1; P5; T3; T1; T2; S1; P4, Interview). It is seen by some that "you must have structure" (T1, Interview), or "conditions that allow for certain things to happen in a school" (A3, Interview), where for example a school needs a timetable with "common shared planning time" (A3, Interview).

Participants' perceptions of structure and structure's almost paradoxical capacity to help or hinder one's sense of community is best illustrated in participants' examples of the necessity of teacher teams or pods. As previously discussed (see p. 45), several participants believed that the presence of teacher teams or pods seems to lend itself to achieving a community feeling as staff "work together to create that and support it" (S2, Interview). This seems in direct contrast with participants experience in teams (see p. 45) which describes a larger problem of talking to people outside of "my team" and "bringing the schools within a school together within a community" (T1, Interview).

It seems that the sheer presence alone of a structure is no guarantee that it will lead to any sense of efficacy, of being together, or sense of community (T2, A3, Interview). In one participant's view and experience, this was expressed as "I see structure in place and I see structure aiding in . . . community. But I believe that and have watched schools that have not developed a sense of

community. The structure was there but community was not built" (T3, Interview).

Control and people's, or an organization's, ability to control the structures that perhaps limit what people do, is closely connected to this discussion. This control could be manifested in structures within "our current education system" or "within a school and the assumptions within that community" (S1, Interview). The practical example of control in a system is illustrated where "we say to our schools you do what you need to do" but "the prime person in the government says we will do this and this and you are accountable to us and so through the hierarchy, expectations, and accountability comes down" (S1, Interview). Within a school this could be reflected when "a leader goes into the school and assumes this is how you lead. The teachers are trapped by those assumptions" (S1, Interview)

The ability to change the structure seems to be connected with both willingness to change and the inherent power one possesses to enact that change (S1; P5; P1; P4, Interview). While one principal said "change the structure - change the practice" (P2, Interview), perhaps changing a structure is not that easy. This ability to change a structure also seems connected to the power an individual possesses to enact that change or perhaps to people's perception of the power they possess to enact change. This is best illustrated in the comments of one principal: "if I don't have the power within the structure to provide the support, the resources, to provide what they need,

then . . . the way those decisions are made are not played out as to how they affect the school" (P4, Interview).

All of these issues, structures, power, control, and peoples' perceptions also have a connection with both the "organizational structure and the power of the structure" (P5, Interview) or process used in that structure (P1; S1; P4; P2; P5; T1; T3; A3, Interview, 1996). This process may be best illustrated in two examples where participants conceptually share a process where:

> [w]e engender a notion of our community, what we are, and what we require in terms of teachers doing what they need . . . we could release the structures to them. So if it is community it somehow will devise and develop and evolve in its own uniqueness. (P5, Interview)

> . . . within a stewardship model. It isn't something that you can mandate. Instead it is something that guides you into taking ownership, accountability for their own development. (P1, Interview)

Types of School Communities

In the literature review, three types of community in schools emerged: a learning community, professional community and community of leaders. Information gathered from participants in this study will be presented in these three contexts. Connections between the three will also be discussed.

Community of learners or learning community

In the interviews, administrators were most able to articulate a sense of what a learning community represents. A learning community may refer to

an "entire community of people in a school, teachers, students, parents and any other stakeholders, where at some point everyone is a learner" (A2, Interview) or as "a means of saying all of those who were participants in this thing" (P5, Interview). In a learning community, learning "goes across all different communities" (P1, Interview), and while "we can all learn from each other" (S1, Interview), learning is also "fundamental to the person" (P4; Interview). It is interesting to note that principals unanimously embraced the notion that we can all learn from each other.

Learning also emerges from "our structure . . . from the nature of who we are as a group of people who care for one another" (P5, Interview). In this sense, and in the sense that learning exists in different communities, learning represents "a commitment from all of us. So whether you are a caretaker, a secretary, a student with their own achievement goal, or a teacher who says this year this is an area I want to grow in. Therefore we are by profession, all of us, learners" (P1, Interview).

A learning community may be "a place where there isn't one way to do things . . . one best way . . . that the opportunities are there, the choice is there . . . thinking skills, teaming" (P3, Interview). It seems to be a place that is "safe and non judgmental" (P5, Interview), where there is "responsibility, commitment, stretching beyond oneself" (P4, Interview), that includes a "particular part of the school or the whole school" (S2, Interview). Individuals who participate in this learning community may experience

"different roles, different times, different ways. Ways of anticipating, forever changing on the moment, on the hour, on the long term, totally unpredictable" (P4, Interview). Individuals in a learning community also "want to be part of taking in and hearing about and taking from what other people have to offer and of course giving what you have at the same time" (T1, Interview).

Professional community

In my interpretation in the interview process, articulating their idea of what a professional community is, was the most difficult task for participants. It took the most time and required the greatest degree of clarification for participants.

The notion of professional community according to participants in this study seems to involve a group of people who "through some type of calling, have come together, who share the core value around that" (S1, Interview). While the sense of professional community involves "the entire staff" (T2, Interview) and knowing "the right thing to do and standing by it" (T1, Interview), it also is representative of

> when you are an individual you make commitments to some larger picture that will help to define your role in the larger community. . . is the extension of commitments and how people play that out, how they model it and to the extent that, even beyond their immediate community, how their actions might play out for the school. (P4, Interview, 1996)

To one assistant principal, the notion of professional community suggests a hierarchy or negative connotation where "it seems that we would be differentiating in a school group, these are the professionals and these people are not" (A2, Interview).

A professional community might include "empowered people" (P1, Interview), who make "commitments to grow and to do the best you can for the community and for yourself" (P4, Interview), and who "take on the responsibility to fully stay abreast of all the things that are important to you and your job" (A2, Interview). This sense of professional community may be "influenced by how teachers perceive themselves . . . are they supported by one another? Are they supported by administration, kids, parents . . . " (A1, Interview). This support is played out in a variety of ways ranging from: a "stewardship model" or bringing "in a sub for one day or giving time to them" (P1, Interview); "believing what is happening in the school through curriculum" (A2, Interview); or in "getting a pat on the back . . . teachers meeting each other with a rose and saying thanks for all of your hard work" (A1, Interview).

Community of leaders

Simply put, a community of leaders is "a group of leaders with a common vision" (P1, Interview). Others identified what a community of leaders is not. To all principals and two assistant principals a community of

leaders is not top-down, nor is it a hierarchy (A2; P2; P3; P5; A1; P1; P4, Interview).

While it is admitted that "fundamental to schools is that you have a designation or title or an assignment . . . in a bureaucratic sense or hierarchical sense . . . where leaders are found and trained" (P4, Interview), communities "define leadership more where anyone can take on a leadership role in the community" (P4, Interview). And as anyone takes on a leadership role, this helps to create both "a sense of interaction where nobody is the formal leader" (P5, Interview), and "ownership and sense of responsibility and commitment" (A1, Interview).

This sense of ownership, responsibility and commitment was shared by one other principal. A teacher spoke of leadership qualities as they relate to community of leaders in that "leadership is putting people in a position to feel like they are leading and mentoring them to feel like they are leading" (T1, Interview) and "leaders recognize the different talents and strengths of the individuals in the community and make the most of these strengths and help each other out" (T1, Interview). Leadership in a community of leaders

> will come from whoever is willing to step ahead with a passion inside a community at given time. Probably some status will be given or at least perception given to some people in the long term as being the chief worriers of what the community is all about. Or the people that one bounces ideas off of or maybe the group that brings new people to the community. (P4, Interview)

Leadership is also illustrative of "times when different people assume a leadership role " (A2, Interview) and is "not beyond coming out and letting somebody else come up and take a turn at leading" (T1, Interview). Participants in this community of leaders can also "come out of nowhere . . . having informal titles and very significant leadership roles that won't be long lasting" (P4, Interview).

Finally, a community of leaders might be representative of "student councils, student input, teacher leadership in the classroom, student leadership in the classroom" (A1, Interview). A community of leaders could also be representative of a place where "decisions are made on the input you have from everybody and the feeling you have for the community inside the school and outside the school, from parents, kids, staff and community leaders" (A1, Interview).

Connections between types of communities

Although few participants spoke directly of connections between the three types of community mentioned above, it is worthwhile to note the comments of the three individuals who did. Three participants connected a professional community and learning community and one participant envisioned all three blending together in a school.

As one teacher indicated "I believe that to be effective I as a professional must always be learning and my students must be learning" (T3, Interview).

In connecting all three types of communities, an assistant principal indicated

> if you were looking at all three of them . . . professionalism affects the other two areas. People who are abreast of ever changing things in a school and ever changing things in the classroom, they have more input than on a community of learners . . . giving that information with kids or sharing with colleagues. (A1, Interview)

Another assistant principal felt that a

> community of learners and community of leaders can be considered simultaneously, because I see that they could be either/or. When I hear the term community of learners, that talks about an entire community of people in a school . . . where at some point everyone is a learner. And then conversely everybody is a teacher, everybody is a leader . . . everybody has a different talent to offer. We can all learn from one another and we can all be leaders at any given time. As a teacher we don't always have to be the one who knows or the one who is teaching or learning. We can share that in the community. (A2, Interview)

How Might a Sense of Community be Built in a School?

Participants' responses and information gathered from the interviews for this section will be found in the following two subsections. First, some preliminary thoughts will be shared on what seems to be most fundamental to the building of community (in a school). Second, ideas will be presented under the heading, What community in a school might look like.

Preliminary thoughts

In sharing their thoughts on how to build community in a school,

participants did not begin by speaking of specific actions or examples. Instead, participants focused in a general way on what needed to be done before actions could take place. Much of this discussion revolved around the perceived need for people within the community to "think of how our work can have an impact on the greater community than ourselves . . . how can you be more than who you are, truly extend beyond yourself?" (P1, Interview). Being able to establish some form of vision for what is desired or what could be accomplished was deemed important (T2; T1; S2; S1; P4; A3, Interview). In the words of one teacher

> the most important thing in educational communities is to establish a vision, have a vision which is common to the people responsible for delivering the program. The people who are doing that need to decide individually whether or not they can live with that common value and make a very conscious and mature decision whether or not they can live within that, with that. Once this has been established everything that person does is helping to work towards it.
> (T3, Interview)

One associate superintendent referred to vision more specifically as a purpose and that "you need to come together for a purpose and then articulate that purpose" (S2, Interview).

What that vision or purpose is and how it is achieved and articulated seems to have its roots in the answer to some fundamental questions that need to be explored by "the people who are in the community at a particular

time" (P4, Interview). Generally these questions ask "what is the purpose of the community?, why do you want to build community?, what are you trying to do? what are your beliefs and values?" (S2, Interview). More specific questions explore "what are the things that we celebrate?, what do we understand as the meaning of giving?, how do we make these events [rituals and celebrations] truly meaningful for kids?" (P1, Interview). Understanding, articulating, operationalizing this purpose and celebrating the result, is important to a sense of community (T2; P4; S2; S1; A2; A1; P5, Interviews).

To two administrators, the answers to these questions allow people to "clarify your own thinking . . . clarify your own beliefs" (S2, Interview) where "you put your points forward, listen to others and as the group comes together, they distill it into a direction" (P1, Interview). Another principal describes this as

> it's not like those places where you get to have a say and there's little places where Joe gets to have a say. Its not like that. We work and I think this is what communities do-we work for a sense of alignment, creating a sense of alignment. We're never going to agree. I don't like agree. But you know we can come closer and closer to a sense of alignment around which we can make decisions and do things and agree. Coming to alignment is a process. That is why it is such slow work. (P2, Interview)

This process seems to require that some basic needs of people are satisfied throughout. Of all of these basic needs, all teachers, assistant principals and two principals mentioned that it is necessary for "people to feel that they have

ownership" (P1, Interview). Other needs included, that people "are listened to" (P1, Interview), "have an equal voice" (T3, Interview), "see that it is important to do" (T1, Interview), and have a "sense that they can make choices" (P1, Interview). Others speak of the chance for people to talk, dialogue, debate (S1; A3; P4, Interview) and to "come up with actions to set it in motion physically" (T1, Interview). As this process is slow and is seen as hard work, the element of time becomes a factor (S1; T1; P4; P3; P2; P1; P5; A2; T3, Interview). In the words of one principal, "we expect too much in the shortness of time" (P5, Interview).

The element of time seems to impact this process in many ways: time for discussion/sharing, time to work together, and change over time. Clearly, participants agreed

> the thing that we say we always don't have time for is what tears a community apart. There always has to be time for the talk and the shared stories, the rituals. The things we do to nurture each other become the rituals. The way we work together becomes established through the talk. (S1, Interview)

Time could also be expressed as people giving of their time to others where, "as long as people respect other people well enough to say this isn't on my list today but because it is important to you I'm going to walk down this path with you" (P4, Interview). Time is also given to large groups where a staff in a school meets to discuss, "how do you teach responsibility? We had a day to

talk about this. That day, just on a simple issue like that" (P4, Interview).

Others identified the importance of people being together over a length of time. Clearly "one of the difficulties we have in education is how to keep our teams together" (P1, Interview) where the

> same people have to be involved over a length of time doing the same thing over and over again. In schools you've got a lot of transients and people moving from place to place. You really have to rely on the core to maintain the tradition. To maintain that tradition and to find out that it is important enough to pull people along and introduce them to new ways" (T1, Interview).

It is important to note, however, that while time seems to tear at people's ability to develop consistency, it also can lead to difficulty where "the people who were here first can't understand when others don't understand" (A2, Interview).

In speaking of time and tradition, one person recognizes that "sometimes we hang on to those after they have lost their meaning. We have to be sure things we are doing have some relevance to the kids we are working with at that particular time" (A2, Interview). This falls in line with administrators who speak of rituals with meaning (P1; A2; S2; S1; A1, Interview), where "those kinds of things need to evolve and be created by the people who are in the community at a particular time" (A2, Interview). More specifically

> if it has always worked in the past, people do not see the need for a change and just to keep up with the times sometimes you have to initiate

> a change. I don't think that it is appropriate to maintain the same kind of teaching and learning community in a school that was successful in the nineteen fifties--in the nineteen nineties" (A2, Interview).

Part of this process also has a connection to what individuals do in the community to ensure that the vision is being realized. In one teacher's view "when you have resistance in one corner or one area or with one small group, it can inhibit the building for everyone else" (T1, Interview). While two teachers and one principal acknowledge that the "leader of the school has to be behind it-to set the tone" (T1, Interview), others feel that everyone in the community shares in the responsibility to ensure the vision is being realized (P4; P2; P1; T3; S2; S1; P5; P3; A1; A3; A2, Interview, 1996).

This responsibility not only seems to extend to the actions and beliefs of people in the community but also where

> if I believe strongly in what we are trying to accomplish and I observe that they are choosing not to, then I have a responsibility to say I'm really unclear on what is happening here. I thought we had agreed on, or, I'd really like to clarify with you. I am an equal shareholder here. I think that I have an equal voice to everyone else and I have the right and the obligation to voice those things. If I don't then I am shirking my responsibility. (T3, Interview)

This sense of responsibility to act is supported by a principal who adds "what absolutely doesn't work is not tuning up. If it never gets to the level of grass-roots conversations about what is appropriate at a level that causes influence

on people's behavior you don't have a chance" (P4, Interview). And while an assistant principal identifies that "if someone is destroying that sense of community then that has to be fixed or they have to be removed" (A2, Interview), it is acknowledged that "schools are a special community. It's hard to move on people at a level where you say we don't want you to be a part of it. How you handle that has more to say about the people around you than the person . . . " (P4, Interview).

Perhaps a solution is offered where it is suggested "I don't think that we put enough emphasis on the need for cooperative team planning and working together and team work and a sense of community that we need to create. . . It is a long process. This is something that has to be looked at" (A2, Interview).

What community in a school might look like

Rather than saying 'this is how a sense of community is built in a school', I have chosen rather to use participants' thoughts and ideas to paint a picture of what community might look like in a school. Again I reinforce that these are the thoughts and ideas of a limited number of people and in recognizing that, it is also acknowledged that these are not definitive answers or actions to guarantee a sense of community being built. The key in this section is to see if it is possible to identify specific actions that people take in a school community that lend themselves to, or are perceived by others as building, a

sense of community in a school.

Building a sense of community seems to be based on people: their relationship, thoughts, interactions and actions. This could be reflected on or observed in a learning community or school by asking:

> Are kids and staff here every day? Are they pleased to be here? What are staff doing when it is not teaching time? Where are they, who are they interacting with? What are kids doing? Are they out and about in the school? Are they off by themselves, are they in groups? Are they comfortable in that atmosphere and are they interacting with their teachers in down time? Are teachers together? Are they interacting with one another? . . . How do people respond when there is a bit of crisis in the building? How much, what type of support is shown? What happens when someone is not carrying their load and what are some of the responses to people? What are your turn outs like at celebrations? What have you done to communicate your program, what are you doing and why are you doing it? Asking a kid . . . why are you doing this? What is really important about our school? What sharing of personal things occur in the school? What are the qualities of interactions that exist with staff in a social setting? (A3, Interview)

In order for a sense of community to be built, there seems to be a need for two things. The first is the presence of someone to generate the discussion (S2; S1; P4, Interview), and the second is "a need to move . . . an opportunity to participate and get involved" (S2, Interview). School based administrators operationalized this in the form of growth plans or a governance model (P3; P1; P4; P2; A3, Interview). This could also take the form of "built in time", where people discuss issues and key questions such as:

> What are the characteristics of the young adolescent?
> What are the characteristics of our students?

> How do students learn best?
> How do our students learn best?
> What teaching and learning strategies should we be employing in our building?
> What is required through the program of studies?
> How can our view of kids fit into the program of studies? (A3, Interview)

To one teacher a sense of community is displayed by how all people in the community greet each other and how "they demonstrate caring, consideration, trust and respect" or as an expression or condition of the environment measured by "when you walk into a school you can tell how the gardens are kept out front, by the graffiti on the doors, the posters, the cleanliness" (T3, Interview). Structures or boundaries need to be in place so that everyone understands what is expected in the school (P5; P4; T2; T1, Interview). In the words of one teacher, structures need to be "in place so that kids know there is a way to protect that . . . that there will be consequences if that is destroyed" (T3, Interview). This environment could also be measured in how "people hang around . . . wondering if anyone else needed help" (P4, Interview) or in "noticing when someone is having a bad day and in just asking if you can help out" (T1, Interview).

While several participants felt that a sense of community is built through shared responsibility of everyone in the community, a principal also spoke of the "chief worriers" (P4, Interview), or a leader(s) who sets the tone (T3; T1; S2, Interview). As we have discovered, leaders in this instance do not

have to share a title, but it is clear that the leader(s) must "have a strong sense of moral values", a "clear vision of what learning and teaching is all about" and a "strong sense of who they are and where they are going . . . who can pull things together and continue to move in a direction" (S2, Interview).

Recognition of peoples' efforts, "celebrating growth . . . moving forward and affirming actions" (P1, Interview) seems to hold some importance in building a sense of community (A1; P3; S2; P4; A2; P5, Interview). While recognition could relate to more official things that are done in schools like: recognition assemblies and Winit programs, it could also relate to informal things like notes in mailboxes, secret hearts on Valentines day and muffins or goodies brought to a meeting and birthdays (T1; A3, Interview) where "there is positive acknowledgment for that person" (A1, Interview).

Recognition could also mean being "visible to kids and parents and to staff" (A2, Interview) or "demonstrating interest in knowing what people are doing by going to watch a basketball game, going to listen to the band play . . . demonstrating that I think what they are doing is important" (A2, Interview). The key seems to be in the simple recognition by people in the community that it "isn't about majors and minors and that . . . it is about celebrating growth" (P1, Interview) and that those who are doing the recognition be able to "recognize the efforts of everyone" (P1, Interview), in the community.

What also seems to be important is the recognition that in schools there

are a number of people who contribute to a sense of community (P2; T1; T2; P4; P3, Interview). As one assistant principal indicates, "If you can take their input and act on it, this gives them a greater sense of ownership about what is happening" (A2, Interview).

Furthermore it seems important that schools involve "parents as equal partners" (P3, Interview) and that schools do whatever they can to "get rid of all the educational jargon . . . it separates us . . . then it is us and them" (P2, Interview). This could be achieved, according to one participant, in the form of a meet the teacher evening where you offer "an open house atmosphere . . . shooting baskets, burgers, chips, ice cream . . . then it is not as much of a step into the hallway to see the displays of student work and actually meeting the teacher" (A1, Interview).

School based personnel believe that students must have the ability or forum to speak in the school and to "have an opinion that might be different" (P1, Interview). As well, students must see common themes in the school, participate in transition programs, be encouraged to take on leadership roles (P4; A1; A2; P2, Interview), and be able to participate in "rituals with meaning" (P1, Interview). Whether these rituals take the form of activities that happen in the school, for example, Intramurals, dances, clubs, or making a donation to the WISH Foundation, Shoes for Bosnia, Food Drive, environmental projects or an Adopt a Family project (P1; P3; P4; S1; S2, Interview), participation in something inside, or outside but somehow

connected with the school also seems to be important.

Summary

This chapter presented the responses of educators who participated in this study. Information collected from thirteen interviews was analyzed in response to two questions: "What does the concept of community mean to you?" and "How can a sense of community be built?". This chapter illustrated connections between their responses, causing us to consider how those connections complement the research on community in schools and how they complement each other. The information collected was categorized into twelve categories and then grouped into major themes for purposes of reporting: The concept of community; Why build community in schools?; What makes a community?; Types of school communities; How might a sense of community be built in schools?

While many similarities existed between participant responses and across roles of participants (teacher to superintendent), some themes (conception of community and learning community) were dominated by certain groups for example administrators. Our understanding became clearer, particularly in the distinction between shared values and beliefs, as well as realizing that how a sense of community is built is diverse, meaning many things to many people. Few themes demonstrated any dissimilarities in viewpoints although

the differentiation between personal and professional relationships seems to require further attention.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS

To restate, the purpose of this study is to:

1. Review the educational literature on 'community' to develop:

   a) a typology of the different senses in which the term is conceptualized.

   b) guiding principles for building community.

2) In a school district, interview educators to ascertain:

   a) how they conceptualize the concept of community.

   b) the manner in which the concept of community could be operationalized in their schools.

3) To analyze how (1) and (2) do and do not complement each other.

4) Draw conclusions and make recommendations for future study, policy and action which may allow the concept of community in schools to become more attainable.

To this point, the first two objectives have been realized. We now turn, in the course of the next two chapters to the third objective. Chapters four and five attempt to make sense of the information gathered to this point. Chapter four is an analysis of how the literature and the interviews complement or do not complement each other. Chapter five, entitled Discussion, revisits the guiding principles of the study and takes us beyond, to more in-depth discussion of several key principles and concepts.

Community as a Significant Concept

Community is not a singular "thing". Community can mean different things to different people, be plural in meaning and can exist on a number of levels. A collection of communities may exist within one community. Community has connections to individuals and groups. In a school this could relate to the notion of a learning community or a community of leaders.

A sense of community is important to people. Community conjures up notions of looking out for one another, caring for others, and being concerned about more than oneself. This sense of community is displayed within personal interactions and within groups, schools, neighborhoods and society.

A sense of community arises from individuals, who are willing to share and enter into a relationship with others. That relationship is defined by caring and trust. In a community these relationships extend themselves beyond the individual to the betterment of the group (i.e. common good). They are inclusive and valuing of all individuals.

The concept of community held meaning and significance to educators participating in this study. Community's appeal to these educators was strongly associated with relationships which exist between all members of the community and through all levels of the community. This may be manifested in several ways: reducing isolation; support received or given to others; meeting societal needs and responsibilities; the purpose of schooling; interdependency between educators; caring for others at various levels;

citizenship; ownership; and shared responsibility. Now let us look at specific connections and major themes that have emerged from this work.

Territorial and relational

Community in organizations provides a larger picture of the sense of community that might exist in a school. Community in organizations or schools has strong ties with the territorial and relational model proposed by Gusfield (1975).

The research literature on community collected for this study defined community as representative of human relationships existing on two levels, territorial and relational. The literature distinguished between territorial and relational and the contexts in which they could be found or described.

Participants connected territorial and relational to structures in which people work; structures that bring people together, push people apart and that build or hinder relationships. Both the literature and participants agree that quality of relationships influences the extent to which communities are "systems of cooperating individuals, groups or organizations" (Nix, 1983, p. 240).

In articulating their concept of community, participants did not use terms like territorial, or relational to describe what community meant to them. Instead some participants, specifically administrators, acknowledged that community does exist on a number of levels or is "plural" in its meaning.

Participants also referred more to locations or events where a sense of community might be found, who as an individual or group might be involved, or what specific qualities or characteristics of human relationships that exist.

For instance, the literature stated that territorial represents a "context of location, physical territory, geographical continuity" (Gusfield, 1975, p. xv - xvi). In comparison, participants named locations like: neighborhood houses; where you live; school facilities; or structures that people control or are controlled by in a school (Interviews, 1996). Teachers and administrators identified that territorial is representative of who we might find in this structure (e.g.) family, students, teachers, parents or "any support groups in the school" (T2, Interview), and how individuals are represented as a "diverse population" (P1, Interview) or in "learning communities" (S2, Interview).

Contrast this with the relational form of community that speaks of "the quality or character of human relationships" (Gusfield, 1975, p. xv - xvi). Although there was no mention of the word 'relational', 'trust', 'caring', 'relationships', and 'beliefs' gave meaning and form to participants conceptualizations. Some words like 'caring' and 'trust' seemed to hold special significance and perhaps underpin those critical connections to be made later in this chapter and in the discussion.

Relationships

Relationships can exist both territorially and relationally. Territorial relationships are associated with physical proximity to others within structures, for example, school populations in buildings, teacher teams. School based participants identified physical proximity or physical closeness as important to one's sense of community.

However, the literature and participants agreed that by itself, physical proximity does not guarantee association with community. It is clear that one's sense of community is enhanced by the quality of relationships that exist between people.

Relationships are linked closely with the language of building community and more specifically the sentiments of caring and trust. It is clear that mutual caring and trust are at the foundation of strong relationships between people. As relationships grow through the display of caring and trust so too may grow peoples' associations of what transpires in those relationships with actual events, places or locations. From the associations may spring an association with or sense of 'community'.

Trust

The literature and participants shared much the same perspective on trust and the value of trust to a sense of community. The literature spoke to a sense of trust that was highly conceptualized, whereas participants tended to

identify specific examples of what trust represents.

The literature indicated that trust is a "by product of how people are treated" (Grafft, 1993, p. 18) either through an "outcome of face to face interaction or condition of existence" (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 252). The trust that people have in others is key to our understanding its value to relationships.

Participants were perhaps more specific in identifying who is involved, where trust originates and how it can be shown to others. Trust can be demonstrated in words or by actions. It can originate from individuals, between individuals in groups or in groups involved in a process. Administrators identified that trust can also be demonstrated in effective communications between people.

Trust in people, or, in people who establish some form of relationship with one another, can be demonstrated in several ways. One could demonstrate trust in others by affirming their actions and affirming that their actions are supportive of the "groups" sense of community. Trust could also be exhibited when someone places faith in someone else. In a community of leaders this would allow individuals other than formally designated leaders to lead and take responsibility. Finally, trust could also be placed in someone as individuals enter into a process of mentoring. In this situation trust is shared between two individuals either in "face to face interaction" or as a "condition of existence" (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 252).

Caring

In both the literature and in the views of participants, caring plays a prominent role in an individual's or group's sense of community. While the literature extended caring into familial characteristics or qualities of kinship, participants extended and linked caring to a sense of belonging, support, ownership and trust.

Caring holds significance not only in the quality of relationships that exist between people but also how caring is expressed through people's actions in a community. In a school these relationships could exist between all members of a school 'community'.

Caring can be displayed both territorially and relationally. Territorially, caring is demonstrated in how people treat their event, place or location. As the literature and participants agree, one can make a judgment of how much people care for their event, place, location by how they keep it clean, do not mark it with graffiti, or witness displays of caring between people however small or large.

Relationally, caring is illustrative of the emotional, affective support displayed in relationships and in the affirmation and acknowledgment of others and their contributions. The act of caring could be related to: giving of oneself to others individually or as part of a group; in the giving of time to someone or something for a purpose; and to people's sense of responsibility for themselves and others.

Caring also has strong connections with ownership, shared responsibility and commitment. Individuals who care for others, events, places and locations are perceived to have a certain degree of: ownership for what happens; a degree of shared responsibility; and commitment to others. A lack of ownership felt by an individual for an event, place, or location may affect negatively the degree to which they are committed, share responsibility and the degree to which they are perceived by others to care. Although no one can mandate the extent to which someone cares, how a lack of caring is dealt with by others is critical to a continued sense of community. Administrators and some teachers clearly expressed that if nothing is done to reaffirm a sense of commitment to that which the 'community' values, the sense of community that is shared could be irreversibly damaged or lost.

Levels of ownership, shared responsibility and commitment vary between individuals. Individuals would demonstrate this through their actions with and towards others and towards their event, place or location. In a community of learners or leaders it would be assumed that everyone shares to a certain degree caring, ownership, responsibility and commitment for learning, or leading. Individuals who, as one principal coined are the "chief worriers" (P4, Interview) in a group are perceived to have high levels of ownership, shared responsibility and commitment.

For example in a community of leaders we could say that all individuals share responsibility for leadership at some time and in some way. If a

community of leaders has established and values shared responsibility, you might witness individuals caring for others and caring for what the community values. This caring and shared responsibility could be operationalized by individual leaders "tuning up" (P4, Interview, 1996) others, causing them to reflect on how their actions align themselves with those of the group, and the values of the community. In a community of leaders, in order for a sense of community to be sustained, everyone needs to care and share in the responsibility of aligning actions with values for themselves and others.

Recognition and celebration

How a sense of caring for others is demonstrated and is developed in a community also has connections to recognition and celebration. It is clear from school based participants that both the little things and the big things that people do for one another help to develop that sense of caring. The little things could be as simple as: "being there" when someone or a group (e.g., band, debate club, teams and so on), needs support; writing notes to others to say thanks or to recognize some form of contribution; and in helping to celebrate/recognize growth in individuals, groups or programs. How recognition is given appears related to the type of event, the celebration planned or required, and what environment is best suited for the celebration. Taking time for recognition and celebration appears to be critical to one's

sense of how much people care in the community, to how they value contributions of others and to the relational development of individuals or groups in a community.

Time and tradition hold significance and meaning with rituals and celebrations. Rituals and celebrations must maintain a sense of meaning and purpose (P1, Interview) and hold significance to those within the community at that time (A2, Interview). For rituals and celebrations to hold meaning they must connect in some way with the larger vision for what is to occur within the 'community'. When this connection is lost, individuals and groups within and outside of the 'community' will question the significance of more rituals and celebrations.

Part of the shared responsibility in a school seems to rest on how teachers and parents can guide student understanding about what represents significant contributions to a sense of community and what does not. Significant contributions mean not only contributions to the school community but also to the larger community outside of the school.

Although it cannot be stated conclusively, it seems that the sense of pride and identity that a group has, and in our case a school possesses, is connected with what the group chooses to ritualize and celebrate, how the group goes about that process, and to what depth they pursue the process in their work. Many participants spoke of the value of activities and rituals within the school such as Intramurals, dances, clubs, Meet the Teacher evenings, chances

to share stories, and so on. Participants saw these as contributing to a sense of identity. Not only do these activities give people an opportunity to participate but they also may allow people to experience connections with other events and themes within the school. Larger initiatives which "project" themselves into the larger community, outside of the school, also contribute to this sense of meaning and significance. Larger projects (such as Adopt a Family, Shoes for Bosnia), allow students to see how their work, their sense of caring and giving to others, may in some way help to make the larger community a better place. Perhaps from this work would extend a sense of pride and accomplishment in giving of one's time and energy to others and a connection of pride and accomplishment as a school "community".

One other connection that can be made is between recognition, celebration, and inclusivity in recognizing the worth and significance of everyone, their contributions, and the "efforts of everyone" (P1, Interview, 1996). In a true community of learners, inclusivity would be recognized in thinking and practice, reinforcing the notion that everyone can learn, from anyone else. In a community of leaders, inclusivity would reinforce the notion that everyone can lead. Thus leadership would take many forms and arise from any place within or outside the school.

Shared Values

Shared values between group members, or members of a territorial

school 'community', are critical to a sense of community. In a school, shared values may influence the extent to which the people inside the school grow and move forward together. Shared values also have ties to our ideals of inclusion and a holistic common good. The degree to which a group shares common values and works to sustain those values influences the sense of community that the group shares.

In examining the commonalities between the literature and participants, suffice it to say that they shared much the same thought with regard to shared values. In the literature, shared values were seen as affecting the success and performance of working groups. This could relate to participants views, in particular to school based administrators, where it was believed that not coming to some form of "agreement in principle" (P4, Interview, 1996) would act as a roadblock to building any sense of community.

Secondly, the literature indicated that to have influence over community, shared values need be applied to the "whole social group . . . " (Rutter, 1979, p. 192). Participants agreed and reinforced a notion that a community must value inclusivity in order for a sense of community to exist. By valuing inclusivity one could say that shared values apply to everyone, and that the community is accepting of everyone's ideas and thoughts in the construction of those shared values.

Role of talk and process

Construction of shared values or "agreement in principle" (P4, Interview) occurs through a process that allows individuals and groups to talk and revisit their ideas on an ongoing basis. Clearly the process used to achieve "agreement in principle" (A4, Interview) must allow individuals within the community the time and "freedom to disagree and debate" (P4, Interview, 1996), and must address the need of individuals and groups to: be "listened to"; "have an equal voice"; "see that it is important to do"; and "have a sense that they can make choices" (Interviews, 1996),

Once shared values are "aligned", or that "common ground" (Interview, 1996) is reached, the freedom to disagree or debate seems to change by concentrating more on how the actions or beliefs of individuals or groups align themselves with the shared values. This "change" in the talk places shared values in a central guiding position and it is from this position that stem beliefs and actions that support and help to build upon a sense of community.

Individual differences

Individual differences can exist within a place, location, or event. Individual differences can mean physical differences, differences in beliefs, or differences in values and in actions. In the literature it seems to be the perception that people can differ in their beliefs and yet share common

values. Where participants expanded this perception was in their thinking that beliefs can differ between individuals and that diversity should be valued. This diversity in beliefs or individual differences was seen as lending strength to the groups' sense of community.

Furthermore, for some participants, individual differences are subject to perception. If it is perceived that individual differences will not result in personal harm, or lead to exclusion, these individual differences could be accepted. Questions may be asked by others to clarify the purpose or intent, but the individual difference may be permitted and may be seen as strengthening the community's inclusivity.

In a territorial community individuals can express their opinions and can differ from what is "commonly believed". Where a sense of community is sustained, these differences are allowed and accepted but still maintain or uphold the basic ideal of a common good or preserve that sense of alignment the individuals or group shares.

Where a sense of community is not sustained, individual differences may more specifically compromise shared values; that is, they may supersede what is known as the "common good". Self-serving actions which deliberately place one at an advantage over another, because they are exclusive in nature, tend to erode relationships and chip away at the foundation established by mutual trust and caring. Individual differences can also be the result of a lack of trust in and care shown for others, or in a lack of

respect shown for the contributions made by the individual or group.

How individual differences are addressed and acted upon is a chief concern of some researchers, (e.g., Noddings), as well as school based administrators in this study. This would appear to be an area needing further consideration and thought. What is crystal clear, however, is that ignoring individual differences and actions that are exclusive is not recommended as good practice for sustaining a sense of community.

Structure

The structures in which individuals or groups operate can affect an individual's sense of, or association with, community both positively and negatively. The influence of structure on an individual or group is based in the reality of day to day operations and in ones perceived power to influence or exert control.

In reality the form of structures in which people exist together, work together and relate to each other, serve to limit or promote freedom. Both the research literature and participants in this study identified these structures as a school's physical design, architecture, school size, the organization of people within the school, teacher teams, timetables, styles of leadership and decision making.

School facilities which are designed with a lack of common spaces where people can naturally gather, appear to hinder a sense of being together, and

their sense of community. While it is not seen as impossible to sense community in schools which lack common spaces, a lack of common space requires people to use a little more thought as to how to creatively bring people together. Schools which are designed with common meeting or gathering areas are perceived to be ones that facilitate people coming together, and therefore to facilitate a sense of community. Whether or not a sense of community in fact can be attached to gatherings in common areas is, as we have learned, dependent upon the qualities or characteristics that define those gatherings, and the relationships that are persued therein.

Never-the-less school "re-structuring" of large schools into smaller "schools within a school" (Sergiovanni, 1994, p. 44), where fewer students interact daily with fewer teachers, and teachers interact in teams, appears to be important to our discussion. The literature suggests that the size of the school, and more specifically the size of the school population that interacts, is related to attaining a sense of community. While some participants believe that it is possible to achieve a sense of community in large school populations, the majority agree that smaller populations allow for a greater sense of closeness, and perhaps a greater chance to establish community. This closeness could be found in teacher teams, advisor groups, "cross disciplinary and cross grade level collaboration" (Graves, 1992, p. 70), and in teachers interacting with a fewer number of students on a daily basis. However, it was

also perceived equally in literature and by participants that smaller numbers of people in teams or smaller populations within a school could lead to compartmentalization. This, in turn, could hinder the establishment of a sense of a larger community. Clearly, if a school re-structures into "schools within a school", the whole school would require other structures to be in place to pull these smaller collections or schools together.

Leadership

Leadership structures also help or hinder one's sense of community. Those leadership structures viewed by the literature and participants alike which serve to limit freedom were often associated with a vertical or hierarchical structure. In contrast, leadership structures which promote freedom are often associated with shared leadership styles or lateral relationships. In a community of leaders, structures would exist that not only promote freedom but also promote a sense of shared responsibility. It is clear that for there to be a community of leaders, everyone needs to share in taking responsibility. This responsibility could be played out in several ways, (e.g.), by doing what needs to be done, looking out for others (caring), and 'looking out' that actions of others mesh with the values and purpose of the community. [see caring/shared values]

Closely connected to this discussion is the notion of process and the process that is used within those structures to make decisions (i.e.,

governance model). A process seen as promoting a sense of community is one in which shared decision making is valued and all individuals within a school are able to exert an influence through their decisions and actions. This process could take many forms. It could take the form of a stewardship model where each individual in the group takes ownership, and is accountable for, his/her own development. Or it could satisfy peoples needs for ownership, being listened to, and sharing an "equal" voice. (see role of talk and process)

Perception also plays a role in the degree to which leadership structures influence a sense of community. An individual's or group's perceived power to influence or exert control is closely related to the structures and process within which they work. A leadership structure or process which in reality limits an individual's voice, opportunity for input, and actions, may limit ones sense of community. This in turn may serve to limit ones perception of his/her ability to exert influence, power or control over his/her surroundings. Ironically, this loss of power may influence the degree to which individuals willingly take action within the "territorial community."

Time

As part of our discussion on structure, we need to recognize the significance of the concept of time. Although it is difficult to recognize time as a structure, time's influence on structure is significant.

Time is something which can stand on its own. It can be used as a

measure, it can be given away and it needs to be valued. Time seems to share a paradoxical relationship with one's sense of community in schools, in that it influences our sense of community both positively and negatively. In schools both the literature and the participants document that not only is there not enough time in the day, but people do not have enough time together to do what has to be done. Administrators in this study spoke clearly about the challenges which face teachers and schools when teachers are together for such a short period of time. One of the greatest challenges facing schools is to keep "our teams together" (P1, Interview, 1996) and time always seems to be the enemy.

Time can be connected with other concepts, such as, tradition. Traditions over time were seen both positively and negatively by participants. Positively in allowing schools to maintain a sense of identity in times of change, [e.g., teacher transfers from a school (T1, Interview, 1996)], negatively in how people new to a school might not see value in traditions and when traditions lose significance and meaning over time.

Time also appears to be something that people possess. Therefore, like a possession, it can be given away to others. While I am not suggesting that giving time to others is always productive and beneficial, never-the-less it may reap benefits and rewards. Time seems to command our respect and attention. It seems, that for teachers and schools to accomplish their goals, time should be built into the structures of a school and in particular the

timetable. Timetables which promote time for teachers to meet and to discuss issues are perceived more positively that timetables that do not provide that flexibility. Giving time to others to talk, to share, and to solve problems is perceived to be valuable by the majority of participants.

Allocating time in a timetable for teachers to meet during their day can be influenced, however, by any number of factors which can detract from its perceived usefulness. What happens beyond the scheduling of time seems dependent on the leadership that emerges and the relationships that are developed. To not offer this time, I would suggest is to not value its significance, nor the opportunity to work together.

Summary

This chapter demonstrated and analyzed connections between the literature and the research completed for this study on three distinct levels. The first was a most basic level where terminology was used in the same context in the literature and in interviews. Terminology that was used in the literature and by participants that gave meaning to the concept of community and to the operationalization of the concept (e.g. caring, shared values, beliefs). The second level connection was where the literature and participants expressed common thoughts, but in doing so, used different terms, orientations, and/or language. For example, a principal's use of the term "chief worrier" (P4, Interview) indicated someone in a community of

leaders who perhaps carried a level of responsibility for something in a school, regardless of designation. The third level was where responses of the participants and the language they used necessitates consideration of new connections. This could be illustrative of participants distinguishing between what is representative of values and beliefs, defining relationships that exist between people, and an improved understanding of what a learning community might represent.

Finally it is important to recognize that this analysis was based heavily on what is associated with the concept of community and how the concept of community can be associated with schools. While this association allowed us to identify where community might exist and the qualities of the relationships that exist both territorially and relationally, it also places limits on us in our attempts to associate the concept of community with schools. These limits will become more apparent in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Introduction

Now that we have explored some of the connections that exist between the literature and the data of this study, let us go one step further in using this knowledge to explore deeper connections and questions that may still exist. To do this, we will revisit the guiding principles identified in this study. This may allow us to revisit some key points of information that we have already discovered, and to reflect upon potential new areas of thought, or upon limitations that might exist in our connection of community with learning and leadership.

Before I begin, I will state that the connections between community, inclusivity, caring, trust, ownership, shared responsibility, leadership and learning cannot be overemphasized. Above all else that has been said or may be said from this point on, it would appear that the sense of community that we feel as individuals or as part of a school has connections with all of the above.

Community appears from this research to be easily articulated, connected with a vision for a school, and is tangible over time. What community might look like in a school illustrates its complexity and fragility. Community is something that takes so much to acquire, requires careful nurturing, does not follow an obvious formula, yet can disappear in an instant.

PRINCIPLE 1 - building community in schools is desirable.

Given all of the information presented, we can safely say that building community in schools is desirable and that the concept of community holds meaning and significance to educators in this study. The one question that has not been specifically addressed is Why is community desirable? Why do people want to achieve a sense of community? Is it community that people desire, or is it the sense of community? Or, is it what might be attached to that sense of community that is most desirable?

By itself, community is a concept. What gives meaning to the concept of community is centered around people, and the relationships they share with one another, both territorially and relationally. While it is acceptable for people to associate community with a territorial structure, the true sense of community requires involvement on a relational level. The quality of interactions that take place within these relationships give meaning and form to peoples' sense of community. In relating this to schools, our association of community with a school facility, or for that matter a team of teachers, is also acceptable, yet limited. For what we recognize as community goes beyond mere territorial structures like facilities and teams. While a facility or team itself might ease the process of bringing people together, of placing them in close proximity to one another, it does nothing to facilitate what might happen inside the facility, or inside the team, when people begin to relate to

one another. This is an important distinction to make. Claims of community speak not just of territorial structures but more of relational "events" between people.

Community in a school or organization cannot grow, be experienced, or talked about until people within the school building, [that is, within structures], begin to relate, share, and interact amongst themselves. Even then, once this interaction takes place, there is no guarantee that people feel a sense of 'community'. So what leads to a sense of community and causes people to say that a sense of community is desirable?

The participants made clear that a sense of community arises when individuals or groups are willing to share and to enter into a relationship with others. What must exist as a foundation for these relationships is both caring and trust. Trust may originate individually, but it soon extends itself to others through affirmation - placing faith in, or encouraging people to share in a process. Caring, being something more personal, is demonstrated in individual actions and through individual's thoughts and actions for others. Over time, as caring and trust are repeated and reinforced in relationships, qualities such as: ownership; commitment; shared responsibility; recognition; and valuing of others' contributions, may become attached to these relationships.

In groups, schools and organizations these qualities seem to serve as the cement which reinforces the foundation of relationships that exist between

people. In individuals or groups that share these qualities in their relationships, a sense of caring and trust can become visible and tangible. This caring and trust can be demonstrated through personal actions displayed not only towards one another, but also displayed towards the processes or structures in which people find themselves. Therefore, in a school facility, people who have ownership and commitment to their school are seen to care for it by, for example, not marking it with graffiti, by picking up garbage without being asked, by volunteering time to some event and so on. Teachers on teams who trust in one another, and share in responsibility for teaching, may share tasks that help to make an impossibly big project seem smaller, more possible.

These distinctions and examples are important to make. They give us a perspective on what is important to people. Clearly, feeling cared for, being trusted, having ownership in and commitment to something, and feeling a shared responsibility for the successful completion of a task, are some of the things that truly make community desirable. In a time of constant change, where people lack constancy in their professional and personal lives, perhaps 'community' is the 'catch-all' for what is important to people. By saying 'community' is desirable, perhaps people are really speaking of constancy in relationships with others.

PRINCIPLE 2 - building community in schools is possible.

Before entering into discussion on this principle, perhaps it might be more useful to ask, Does all of what is spoken of in principle 1 guarantee that a sense of community will be built or experienced by people? Does knowing about the value and importance of relationships guarantee that people will attain a sense of community? Does a sense of community naturally arise, or does it require a conscious effort on the part of individuals in the territorial community to make it happen? Furthermore how would one know when one has achieved 'community'? Can it be measured or is it an ephemeral feeling or sense that something has been achieved?

Clearly, community is not something that one builds, like one would build, for example, a house. While one recognizes that there are some qualities of relationships that may have to be satisfied, there is no easy plan to follow to achieve a sense of community. Building a sense of community in a school may be desirable and may be a goal of people in a school. In fact community may even be attached to learning and be used as a way to characterize what transpires in a location. But community does not come with a set of instructions to follow, or a set of guidelines, or a set of fixed processes. Knowing what is at the foundation of community, at the heart of those relationships between people, does not, as Noddings (1992) cautions, "tell us what to do" (p. 117). Knowing that caring and trust are at the foundation of relationships and knowing what "community might look like"

is no prescription for what should be done.

Writing notes to someone thanking them for their work, or countless other acts of kindness or actions, are not things that will build a connection between people unless they are offered genuinely. Clearly the "things" that people do for one another in a location must hold "meaning" to those persons or those groups. But, even then after doing all of the right 'things' at the right times, there is no guarantee that people will achieve a sense of community.

Achieving a sense of community is an incremental and infinite process which depends on many things. Achieving a sense of community does not have a finite end point. Yes, as we have discovered, there may be tangible events (letter writing, attending events) that occur which give us a sense of community, closeness, or being together. However given the fluidity of a school and all of the forces that push or pull on people, it seems impossible to make a claim that community has been achieved, in a sense completed, based on singular events.

Whether they are students, school staff, or parents, people come to a school with varying beliefs, values and levels of commitment not only to each other but to the roles that they play. Knowing this forces us to acknowledge that achieving a sense of community extends into the entire fabric of the school; into what people believe, what they value, what they do with and to each other. It extends into the everyday interactions that occur

between people within their territorial relationships. It extends into the everyday occurrences at any particular time, in any particular structure.

Since achieving a sense of community is an infinitely complex task, we could say that it is impossible to claim that one has achieved community as if it were a singular 'thing'. Perhaps, in achieving community, one should not always focus on the end point. Perhaps one should reflect on how all things that occur lead to a sense of community and, on that continuum, be able to identify those things that enabled people to associate what happened with a sense of community.

PRINCIPLE 3 - building community in schools will lead to shared values and beliefs.

Values and beliefs are much the same. Both values and beliefs can originate in individuals, guide people's actions and have the potential to influence events within the territorial community. However, based on this research, values maintain a greater probability of being shared than do beliefs. For example, in the truest sense of a learning community it could be assumed that all people value learning for all members of the community. This valuing of learning is shared by everyone and permeates all that occurs between people within the "learning community". However, how this learning takes place is different within the learning community. For as much as people value learning, they believe in different ways of teaching for

learning. One teacher believes that learning is best done in rows, while another believes learning is best done at tables. Both value learning, as is evident in their teaching and in their relationships, but their beliefs about how it should occur are different.

In the truest sense of community, diversity in belief and action not only would be valued, thus serving to reinforce the inclusive nature of the community, but would also serve to reinforce the values that people share within the community. This congruency or alignment between values, beliefs, diversity and inclusivity would serve to reinforce and sustain peoples' sense of community. In a school, this degree of alignment would require students, school staff, parents and perhaps groups external to the school, entering into discussion and debate on what the community values, what members expect from each other, and how they intend on resolving differences in beliefs and actions.

So long as the beliefs of individuals, and any resultant actions, serve to reinforce the shared values of the 'community', there will be growth towards the common purpose. In the truest sense of community, beliefs, or actions that do not align themselves with the purpose or shared values that a community holds, will be openly questioned and need to be justified.

A community that exists in name only will not share this alignment, nor will its members share in the process of self examination. In a community which lacks shared values, and the structures and processes that encourage

self-examination, misaligned actions will not be challenged as readily. Allowed to continue, these misaligned actions may become exclusive, benefitting only certain groups or individuals. If this is allowed to occur, this may diminish the sense of community that is shared, influencing directly the community's sense of purpose. A "community" that has deteriorated to this stage would be seen as truly unhealthy, perhaps a community that exists in name only.

One of the truest tests of a schools sense of community is in how misalignment between shared values, beliefs and actions is addressed and resolved, and the degree to which people's actions change to reflect greater alignment. While I cannot offer a process to help resolve this dilemma, I can raise questions and suggest important considerations that need to be made: Did all people in the community have an opportunity to address the issue? Do people perceive it as a issue that needs to be resolved? Was a decision reached after all potential opinions were heard? Who serves to benefit from the decision - the whole group, or a certain segment of the school population? If the decision is not to a particular individual's or group's liking, can he/she/it be trusted to act in the manner agreed upon and, to uphold the decision and for that matter the process?

From the perspective of this study, any process used to resolve a community's sense of alignment would require each individual or group entering into the process knowing that they share an equal voice. It would

also require an understanding that while specific individuals and groups may not get 'their way', their support will be counted on to address the problem in the manner agreed upon. Clearly this process must be ongoing and continuous, and each member of the community must approach the process or issues with an open mind, by valuing the contributions of all members, or participants, involved.

Leaders have a significant role to play in the process of establishing and maintaining values and purpose. While they may share an equal voice with everyone else (i.e., community of leaders, lateral governing structures) in this process, they also hold a very distinct place and have a distinct role to play aside from "everyone else". Before entering into this process of alignment or resolving emergent issues, leaders must have a clear sense of who they are, a clear vision of what shared values represent, of what is the desired outcome of the process, and how they will act to maintain it. Leaders in a school play a critical role in all parts of this process. For, once the school "community" has established the values that everyone will share, it becomes the leaders' responsibilities to continually revisit, articulate, filter and model the values of their school community.

In the truest sense of a community of leaders, where everyone is perceived to share in this responsibility, it would be relatively easy to maintain a sense of alignment between values, beliefs and actions. Ideally, responsibility for this ongoing process would be shared by everyone and

would be made visible by everyone questioning, sharing, reflecting and modelling through aligned actions.

In reality this may not be totally possible. Situations are complex and there are many factors which influence the degree to which people share responsibility. In reality, sometimes the extent to which individuals share responsibility becomes more a question of what people in the school feel responsible for, and what they perceive to be out of their range of responsibility. In a school, despite intentions of sharing responsibility, leaders may be shouldered with the responsibility of ensuring this process takes place. In this case the structures in which people operate [vertical and lateral] and the processes [debate and discussion] people use to resolve and act upon issues, would have to reflect a valuing of shared responsibility on the part of all people. Designated leaders would have to continually question why the community is moving in this direction. The questions become: Why are we/you doing this?; How does this direction fit with our shared values? To move people into sharing responsibility would require the "leaders" to allow people to experience the responsibility for shared decision making and trusting in them to take appropriate actions. Given this, perhaps the guiding principle should be modified to read "alignment between shared values, beliefs and actions may promote the building of a sense of community".

PRINCIPLE 4 - building community in schools could be related to the concept of learning community, professional community or community of leaders.

Introduction

We have learned that both learning community and community of leaders holds some degree of significance both in the literature and for participants in this study. Professional community as a subset of a learning community, on the other hand, has less significance for participants in the sense that participants had difficulty articulating a meaning to the notion of professional community.

To some, professional community held connections to the level of responsibility and obligations that people share as teachers and administrators in a school. This 'responsibility' had connections with teachers being current in their knowledge and practice and that their actions were aligned with the values of the community. To others, professional community held a negative connotation in that it singled out one particular group being above everyone else, giving one a sense that a hierarchy might exist.

Although the literature does not state that a professional community is part of a learning community, we could speculate that a professional community is a part of the larger learning community in a school. Knowing this might serve to reinforce our understanding that community is plural in meaning and that we can have a collection of communities that work

towards one purpose. This could be a collection of communities such as schools within a school, a community of leaders, or a professional community within a learning community.

Why did participants in this study agree with the notion of a learning community and a community of leaders that was articulated in the literature? Perhaps participants were well read and were current in their knowledge of community in schools. One could also speculate that, because all participants are from one school district, they have had numerous opportunities to discuss this concept which in turn has led to an accepted way of talking and believing. This agreement could also be based on personal experiences in schools, ones that have proven themselves to work and others that have proven themselves not to work. I observed that when participants spoke most passionately, it was when they were relating a personal belief or relating a personal story based on past experience in a school.

Learning Community and Community of Leaders

The connection of building 'community' in schools with learning community and community of leaders naturally assumes that community can be connected with learning and leadership. Before we connect the concept of community with the concept of learning or leadership we need to establish some common understandings.

Community and learning

The connection of learning and community seems to exist on two distinct levels; first on a "process" level, second on a deeper "foundational" level. First, both learning and community share similarities in process. What we have come to understand as the development of a sense of, or association with community is in most respects an ongoing process. Allowing for a sense of community requires time, effort, and energy. Although we can claim a sense of community within an event, place or location, we have learned that there is a delicate balance between success and failure within this process.

The learning process shares many characteristics with community. As with community, learning is an ongoing, lifelong, process. While we at times claim to have experienced "learning", and over time may be encouraged towards further learning, there is no guarantee that learning will be experienced on an ongoing basis. One can experience failures and setbacks in learning as easily as with community. If we accept this, one could say that, learning communities are ever changing, delicate, ongoing processes, subject to success and failures on many different levels.

At the foundational level, the notion of learning communities goes well beyond a simplistic recognition of similarity in process. At the foundational level the existence of a learning community depends on everyone valuing learning for all individuals; valuing inclusivity and diversity in thought and action; and valuing the foundation of relationships. Simply put, everyone

must recognize the value and the importance of caring and trust between people.

Clearly, what will challenge a school's sense of being a learning community is a schools' ability to respond to challenges at the foundational level. These challenges often have roots in what we have identified as the foundation of relationships between people - caring and trust. For it seems that relationships between people which do not reinforce caring and trust for all people will be one of the challenges to our claim of being a 'learning community'. Without relationships between people which value caring for and trust in people and processes, learning, the school community's central purpose, will not be realized to the extent that it might otherwise. A lack of caring for and trust in others or things could lead to a lessened sense of caring for and trust in others relationally and caring for things territorially. Left unchecked or ignored, this lack of caring and trust for others, territorially and relationally, when displayed in the actions of individuals and groups acting against the community or against the group's sense of alignment, could become a larger issue. Ultimately, individuals and groups may begin to fundamentally question both in words and in actions the values of the community and the justification for its existence. Clearly, if events unfold to this stage, one could question if a sense of community exists at all. At this point, perhaps what exists as a learning community exists in name only.

With this in mind, presented below are some fundamental questions that

seem to be appropriate in addressing a school's commitment to community and the process taken to achieve that sense of learning community.

What processes exist that allow people to identify what is valued by the territorial community?

How do people expect to be treated while being a member of the territorial community?

What visible signs are there that people within the community care for one another and trust in one another?

How does learning fit into the relationships that exist between people within the school?

How do those relationships display and value learning?

What processes serve to encourage learning in a variety of different ways?

What tangible evidence is there that individuals and groups are committed to upholding the values of the community?

What tangible evidence is there that individuals and groups share in the responsibility to ensure the values of the community are upheld?

What processes exist for expression of diversity in thought and action for individuals and groups within the territorial community?

What structures are in place that celebrates diversity in beliefs between all individuals?

What rituals, celebration and ceremonies exist that value learning?

What rituals and celebrations exist that have meaning not only for the school as a learning community, but as a contributing member to the larger community?

How do these rituals and celebrations reinforce the learning and inclusion of all people within the community?

What structures in the school, do not value inclusivity, or diversity of beliefs?

What processes exist that promote questioning and change?

What processes exist that allow for individuals and groups to question actions that do not fit with shared values?

What structures exist in the school that allow for and value the voice of all individuals to be heard and to influence decision making?

What processes or structures allow for learning to continue while fundamental questioning may take place?

Can the idea of a learning community be extended to organizations, beyond schools? Although I have not specifically addressed other organizations, it would seem to me that coming to a sense of alignment as an organization is similar to, yet vastly different from, the process shared in a school.

The challenge for an organization to be a true learning community, in my interpretation, is in achieving a sense of alignment on the definition of what constitutes inclusion and what constitutes exclusion.

How are inclusion and exclusion defined both contextually and operationally?

Will an organization exist as a learning community or learning organization if there is not a sense of caring for and trust in one another?

Will an educational organization exist as a learning community if there is not a valuing for each part of the organization and for the growth of each part relative to where it might be on the learning continuum?

What is done within the territorial community to encourage and stimulate growth in parts of the organization that are struggling in their sense of community?

What sense of ownership, commitment and shared responsibility exists in the organization?

Should each part of the organization have a shared responsibility to assist other parts who might struggle with their sense of community?

Where is the line drawn on the degree to which parts of an organization must extend a helping hand to other parts?

All of the questions I have posed may have to be answered in a school's or organization's process of coming to a sense of community. Knowing that coming to a sense of community is not a finite, orderly process perhaps allows a school or organization to progress through the process by always striving to achieve a sense as a learning community but recognizing that it will never quite be able to say that it has completely achieved it. Perhaps our

knowing this allows us to recognize how delicate the process is. Indeed, while a school may be achieving a sense of community in one way, the school or organization may be losing its sense of community in another. Perhaps schools or organizations that already exist as true learning communities have discovered a starting place that is peculiar to their "place" and have demonstrated growth from that "place". And although their growth may be different from others, it is valued, accepted and encouraged by all members of the larger community. This diversity in "places" perhaps reinforces our assumption that there is no one way to achieve a sense of community in a school or organization, but that we share a sense of community in the process of trying to achieve it.

Community and leadership

We can also connect the concept of community with the concept of leadership, thereby creating a community of leaders. As we have come to recognize, a community of leaders may refer to any individuals, designated or otherwise, within the territorial community who provide some form of leadership. A community of leaders has a strong connection with shared responsibility, commitment and ownership. People within the community who provide some form of leadership could be seen as possessing some sense of those qualities or characteristics.

Community of leaders seems to be something that is both spoken and

unspoken. It is overt in people's actions as part of the normal operations within a school. It is also evident in the actions of a designated leader who continually reinforces and values the ideal of sharing responsibility and displays in his or her actions a willingness to trust in others and to value others leadership. On the other hand, it is unspoken when evidenced in the caring for others, helping others without being asked, and being willing to "pitch in" without any extrinsic reward or recognition. Perhaps a community of leaders speaks not so much about the designation of a leadership position, but speaks more of recognition and valuing of informal and formal situations where there are opportunities to lead. These are opportunities where leadership is not only "on display" but is also "behind the scenes". Here leadership can come from anyone in a school's territorial community, including students, parents, school staff and those outside of the school, in the larger community.

Community of leaders also has a connection with the foundation of community, where there is caring and trust and a shared vision for what the "community" stands for. Such vision is inclusive, appreciating, allowing for diversity, yet reinforcing a notion of the common good for all.

Community of leaders is a meaningful and valuable notion. It becomes especially important when one considers the complexity of both teaching and leadership in schools today. When it is related to the purpose of achieving a sense of community in a school, a community of leaders reinforces that a

singular leader cannot do this type of work alone. In order to achieve a sense of community, a leader has to rely on the shared responsibility of others.

Community of leaders and structure

Is the notion of community of leaders best supported in a vertical or lateral structure? Relying upon what I have discovered in this study, I would argue that a lateral structure is more supportive of a 'true' community of leaders.

There is some merit in the position that there is potential for community of leaders in vertical structures. This follows from the perspective that individuals and groups, once given a mandated program, are free to choose how to implement the program. However, a community of leaders seems to go beyond freedom after delegation. Community of leaders speaks more to the involvement of people from the beginnings of a process and throughout that process. It speaks more to the opportunities being offered for input throughout a process, rather than the responses to a decision which has been made or process which has been created.

Also, like a community of learners, a community of leaders can exist in name only. A community of leaders that exists in name only would not contain structures that allow members in a territorial community to share in the process of decision making, or in the valuing of differing beliefs, opinions and actions. A community of leaders seems to be much more transparent

than a community of learners. Contradictions that might arise as people speak of valuing or practicing as a community of leaders, but do not act in that manner, would become evident very quickly.

People who perceive that significant opportunities exist to provide input into decisions, seem more likely to participate in processes and are more likely to display their support for the end product. People who perceive that their voices are not being heard, and not valued, or that the process for making important decisions is not shared or is unequal, may not allow this apparent contradiction to exist. While these individuals and groups may lack the structures to voice this concern, other methods could be used to convey their dissatisfaction. Most obviously they could withdraw their verbal and physical support. Should this occur, the health of the community is called into question. Indeed we again begin to ask whether a sense of community of leaders exists at all.

Ideally, much like a community of learners, a community of leaders relies heavily upon peoples' sense of community and seems to operate under some key assumptions about people and structures. First, in a community of leaders one would assume that all people share responsibility and a sense of ownership for, and commitment to finding solutions to challenges that face a school community. Second, it is believed that people in the territorial community share an interest in providing solutions and share an interest in problems or challenges other than their own. Third, everyone is perceived as

being a valuable contributor to finding a solution to any problem that faces the school community, regardless of age, role, years of experience in teaching or years of experience as a staff member or member of the community. Fourth, the potential solutions offered are congruent with the shared values that the territorial community have come to "alignment" on. Fifth, everyone sees it as his/her responsibility to be involved in the process of helping to align others whose actions are not congruent with the shared values of the territorial community. Ideally we would assume that people enter into this community or leadership relationship with each other in a "ready" state. "Ready" to align themselves, ready to act congruently and ready to help each other to reflect upon the alignment of their actions.

However, in reality we recognize that this is not entirely true. While people are diverse, it does not seem realistic for us to assume that people naturally bring all of their talents, skills, and desires into the community. I would expect rather that people will bring varying levels or degrees of these talents, skills and diversity to the community, and that it becomes the challenge of the leaders of the community, formal or otherwise, to help nurture these talents and skills to achieve a sense of community of leaders. For, just as we speak of a learning process being ongoing for all members of a territorial community, a community of leaders must be established, be allowed to grow, be nurtured and maintained.

When and how this happens seems to depend upon the extent to which

designated leaders in the school value lateral leadership structures and shared leadership. For shared leadership in a community of leaders speaks not of delegation (although delegation may occur), but entirely of the entrusting in others for the shared leadership and growth of people within the school. Leaders in designated leadership positions who value a community of leaders: care for and see value in the leadership that non-designated people community have to offer; recognize that the leadership others have to offer can take many forms; structure the territorial community to allow for others to enter into roles and relationships with others that promote their taking a leadership role; trust that others can fulfill responsibilities and roles within the community and that growth will result; and share responsibility for decisions and tasks with others and see this to be important to everyone's sense of community.

How flat, or lateral, structures become within leadership of the school seems dependent upon the answers to the following questions. Who gets to decide upon the design of leadership structures; the leaders or all leaders in the community, or is it a combination of both? What structures in the territorial community are in place to facilitate this levelling of responsibility? Does a community of leaders function best if everyone shares equal responsibility for everything? Does a community of leaders who operate both informally and formally work best when people are free to select where their influence would best be offered? Does a community of

leaders work best if people, as part of the process, are able to choose times and places where their influence may be general, and times and places where their influence may be more specific?

These questions, and the work that I have completed in the course of this study still cause me to question whether one can truly flatten leadership structures. Will one will always have a case of lateral and vertical structures working together? Perhaps a community of leaders works best when it is recognized and accepted that the structures which guide peoples' work is lateral, but at times there will be opportunities or circumstances where it becomes vertical. Perhaps that is especially the case when leaders perceive that the values of the community are being compromised or threatened, and must act to preserve that which the community values.

One last question seems to demand our attention. How are leaders developed and how do they come to value a lateral relationship in leadership structures? Answering this question may provide some insight into why leaders do what they do. We may also discover what significant occurrences or incidents have lead them to become lateral in their thinking and practice.

PRINCIPLE 5 - territorial changes in the structure of the school must work together with the development of the relational component of community.

As we have seen the effects of change in territorial structures in a school

are complex. What seems to be clear is changes in territorial structures can come from many directions; these changes can be driven by individuals and groups, and can come from the side, the bottom up or the top down; in a school or organization changes in the territorial community may affect the strength of people relationally; the strength of people relationally may force change in territorial structures; changes in territorial structures not only change the physical relationships that people share but also change the way in which people relate to each other as well as the qualities of those relationships.

A community of learners or leaders would seem to favor change that is created by people from within the territorial community and a situation where the change is valued by everyone and thereby supported by everyone. Clearly, for a sense of community to exist, changes in the territorial community must be seen as having offered people the opportunity for input. Opportunities for input may give people a perception that their opinion counts, that they have been "listened to", have a sense "that they can make choices" and to see their ideas are being acted upon. A community of learners or leaders who demonstrate honesty, affirmation of others, dependability, and faith in others, may be implement changes more quickly and more successfully.

However these processes may not always be possible or may be seen to be inappropriate at any given time. Sometimes, in reality, changes in structures

are undertaken to change the dynamics of a situation without the prior consent of the affected individual[s] or group[s]. What happens after such changes take place in the territorial and relational relationships between people seems to influence the success of the change or the sense of community within the relationships that people share.

Peoples' perceptions of such changes are critical to consider if a sense of community is to be maintained. People who perceive that they are being supported in such circumstances may see the change more positively than those who do not believe they are being supported relationally. These perceptions may also influence the success of the change effort. This is why it seems necessary that territorial changes be matched with relational support for those experiencing a "change".

Changes in the territorial structures in schools can take many forms. However, for our purposes, change in territorial structures has focused on breaking larger schools into smaller schools, thereby breaking the population into smaller, more manageable populations. This re-structuring is often connected with more effective learning and the opportunity to develop stronger relationships between people.

My opinion, as a result of having completed this study, is that the size of a community is not a determining factor in achieving a sense of community. Although it is often perceived that a smaller "school within a school" may facilitate the process, one cannot assume that the act of breaking a large school

into smaller schools will of itself achieve a sense of community. Simply stated, re-structuring a school into smaller schools will not guarantee an improvement in anything, until people begin to interact and to develop relationships, and effective, insightful, visionary leadership is allowed to grow.

In larger groups, achieving a sense of community may take longer and be subject to a greater multitude of challenges in the process. However, as the participants in this study and the research literature have identified, smaller territorial communities can reinforce "compartmentalism" which would directly interfere with any sense of larger community. Either way, in either large communities or smaller communities, what happens or is allowed to happen between people in their relationships will ultimately determine the success of the restructuring.

The act of re-structuring into smaller groups or perhaps learning communities seems to operate under three assumptions: 1) that changes to the structure will be better and will enable teachers and students to develop stronger relationships and learn more effectively; 2) significant relationships either presently exist or could develop that would enable those structures and processes in a smaller community to succeed; 3) that other structures exist or will be created that facilitate people in their ability to work together.

Clearly, if a school chooses to re-structure, the success or failure of the re-structuring will rely not upon the structure itself but on the people within

those new structures to make the change work, upon their ability to relate to one another, and upon the support they receive or perceive they are receiving. This seems to require, in any re-structuring effort, consideration of who the change is liable to effect the most and how those people might need to be supported internally and externally to the school.

Changing territorial structures requires that leaders within the community recognize that a sense of community relies on many diverse factors, both tangible and intangible, that require great attention to detail. What is clear is that changes in territorial structures should not be undertaken without some prior consideration of what might result, what type of support people might need in the process and what time period is required for these changes to be implemented. Leaders who are in designated or non-designated positions would be seen as key players in the provision of the relational support as all individuals try to make sense of the change, and to put the changes into practice, within the territorial community.

An important first step would be to establish a vision of what needs to be accomplished or changed within the territorial community. It was clearly articulated by this study's participants that establishing a vision or purpose for what is done in schools is just one important step taken to establishing a sense of community. How this vision or purpose is obtained relates to the structures and processes that are in place which either enable or limit peoples' ability to "clarify where they stand". Structures and processes which do not

enable voices to be heard, or which do not allow individuals or groups to delineate and articulate what should be done, will hinder the visioning process. This will in turn hinder or limit ones sense of community.

The data collected in this study from participant responses on how people sense ownership and how this affects the commitment they display and the shared responsibility they take, should not be ignored.

Summary

This chapter explored deeper connections and questions arising from connections between the literature and the research. To accomplish this, the guiding principles of this study were revisited, allowing us to examine previous conceptions and pressuring us to consider new 'plausible connections'. Certain limitations were presented surrounding the connection of community with learning and leadership and the assumptions arising from those connections.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

This study has taken a portion of the literature that exists on community in schools and attempted to draw connections not only between what is presented in that literature but also between the literature and the perceptions of thirteen educators from one school district. .The concept of community is valuable and practical for education, especially in its association with schools, and the relationships that exist between people in schools. The concept of community, in its relationship with schools speaks of territorial relationships and the changes that can occur in structures at that level. More importantly, it also speaks of the relational and, more specifically, of the foundation and qualities of relationships between people.

It is appropriate to label a collection of people as a community of learners, learning community or community of leaders, to restructure schools into smaller populations [or "schools within a school"], and to connect the justification for this restructuring to the purpose of schooling. However, the truest sense either of a learning community or a community of leaders will not be experienced until people within those territorial structures begin to interact with and relate to each other.

A sense of community speaks of the caring and trust that exists between people and in processes, the sense of ownership, and a commitment to

and shared responsibility for what occurs between people within lateral structures. A sense of community speaks of a valuing of all people; valuing their place, their growth as learners, the contributions that everyone can bring, as a leader, to the territorial community. A sense of community also speaks of the larger connections that can be made, beyond the smaller structures within a school, into the larger community within or outside of the school.

While we still may be trying to recognize how to achieve a sense of community and how to operationalize community into words and actions that people in schools can understand, one thing is very clear. Not attending to the foundation of relationships between people and not nurturing the qualities of those relationships does not bode well for achieving a sense of community in a school. Knowing this "does not tell us what to do" (Noddings, 1992, p. 117), but it does serve to remind us, perhaps warn us, <u>that achieving a sense of community is an ongoing process that we all share</u>.

CHAPTER SEVEN

RECOMMENDATIONS

From this study the investigator draws the following recommendations for future research:

1. There is a need for studies to detail how value systems are developed in leaders, especially in how leaders come to value shared leadership and shared responsibility. What critical experiences, lead certain people to value lateral structures over others? How do these experiences shape emerging leaders' value systems, beliefs and actions?
2. The concept of community, as it is represented in research, is too broad and diverse in definition and context. More research needs to be undertaken to connect the various contextual and operational definitions. When the various types of community have been fully defined, perhaps subsequent research will point to one foundational notion of community that serves as a base for others to build upon.
3. The current study demonstrates that it is not an easy task to operationalize the notion of community, or the qualities of relationships that exist between people. More research needs to be undertaken to bring the concepts elaborated by participants in this study into language that is practical and which allows people to consider how the language and the ideas might apply to their situation

or experiences. In other words, it is easy to say that individuals must care for one another and trust in one another, but it is difficult to explain how. Explaining how is what needs to be investigated further.

4. A broad, longitudinal, study of leaders and non leaders needs to be undertaken which addresses the assumptions of what learning communities and communities of leaders are. From this study might come greater knowledge of, and informed practice on, the extent to which: people desire leadership, ownership and responsibility; how to influence people to take on these roles; and how this influences our sense of a learning community and community of leaders.

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APPENDIX A

Letter of Consent

Name
Position
Location

Dear _____:

I am currently enrolled in the Master of Education program at the University of Lethbridge and am completing course requirements for a thesis entitled Community in schools: An exploratory study of meaning and purpose.

I am inviting you to take part in this research through participation in an interview session. The interview will last approximately one hour and will consist of two open ended questions relating to the notion of community and how community can be implemented in schools. I anticipate that you and other educators will benefit from participation in this study through:

1) improved recognition/definition of terminology, informed by current research
2) improved understanding of building community in schools.
3) improved educational practice in primary and secondary schools.

In addition to your participation in the interview session, I also request your permission to quote directly statements made by you that help in analysis or to form any possible conclusions. All information will be handled in a confidential and professional manner. Only the title of the Calgary Board of Education will be identified. All other site/school participation sites, participants names and any other identifying information will ***not*** be included in any description, discussion or analysis of the results. You also have the right to withdraw from the interview or study, without prejudice, at any time.

If you choose to do so, please indicate your willingness to participate by signing this letter in the space provided below.

I very much appreciate your assistance in this study. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at school or at home. Also feel free to contact the supervisor of my thesis, Dr. Kas Mazurek, The University of Lethbridge, at 329-2462, or Dr. Peter Chow, Chair, Faculty of Education Human Subjects Research Committee at 329-2443.

Yours sincerely,

J. Simpson
(W) - 777 - 7060
(H) - 241 - 0183

I, _____ , agree to participate in this study.

_____ _____
Participant Signature Date

APPENDIX B

Instrument

Questionnaire

COMMUNITY IN SCHOOLS: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF MEANING AND PURPOSE

INSTRUMENT

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Thank you for participating in this process. I would like you to share your perceptions, opinions and feelings about what community is and how to build community in schools. My questions purposely are as open ended as possible. There may be moments where I will ask you to elaborate on a thought or idea. Please ask if you need to clarify a question. I will be tape recording this interview for use in my research as well as taking notes throughout our discussion. If for any reason you feel that we need to stop the interview or take a short break please let me know. Do you have any questions before we start?

1) What does the concept of community mean to you?

PROBES

* Is the idea of community really meaningful for educators?
* Can community refer to a collection of communities that are all striving and being directed toward one purpose? several purposes?
* Can people differ in their beliefs and at the same time build community? Can people differ in their actions and at the same time build community?
* If we divide the general concept of community into three types of community - namely learning community, professional community and community of leaders - what do these types of community mean to you? Is there one type of community that holds greater significance to you than others?
* Another way of looking at community is from two perspectives - territorial and relational. Territorial in the physical/structural and relational in the way people interrelate to and with each other. In a school is it necessary to restructure thereby changing the physical relationship that people have with one another?
* Does the notion of school within a school hold any significance to this discussion? Explain.
* What is your response to this quote? (Is Noddings correct in her assumption):

[w]e want people to be able to resist the demands of the community for conformity or orthodoxy, and we also want them to remain within the community, accepting its binding myths, ideas and commitments.

The problem is that communities often act like bloated individuals. Just as an individual may have a personal rival or enemy so may a community or group. But now the situation is more dangerous because we

feel safer acting as a group. So long as we are in a positive relationship with people, we need not be so concerned about relationships with others. (p. 118)?

2. How can a sense of community be built?

PROBES

* Is it ultimately possible to build a sense of community given as Heckman states that "children and youth carry into a school a set of norms that differ significantly from the norms of their teachers" (Heckman, 1987, p. 70)? How might this be accomplished?
* In your opinion what criteria must be met or developed for there to be a sense of community in a structure/organization/school?
* Does sharing values and beliefs guarantee that community will be built? Why/why not?
* To achieve a sense of community is it necessary for all people within a structure to share beliefs/values?
* There are numerous types of communities that can be built in a school. Given the complex nature and role of schools, in your opinion, what type of community(s) should be built?
* What tangible/observable characteristics/qualities help to define a learning community? What qualities in a learning community make it similar to or different from a professional community? Community of leaders?
* How do people in a school learning community, professional community, community of leaders develop relationships that lead to trust, shared beliefs and values?
* Do you think that actions in the territorial must be mirrored by actions in the relational? What do you envision as needing to happen in the relational to build a sense of community in a school?

* Does the development of relationships within a school learning community lead to a greater sense of professional community? community of leaders? professional community? In your perception how might the development of relationships happen and what would be the measurable results?