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ABSTRACT

Restructuring schools has become a rallying cry among educators. It aims to create schools that are more centered on learner's needs for active, experiential, cooperative, and culturally connected learning opportunities supportive of individual talents and learning styles. This report is based on an early evaluation of the process of restructuring in 12 schools in the "Schools of Tomorrow...Today" (ST/T) project run by the New York City Teacher Centers Consortium of the United Federation of Teachers. The context for understanding school restructuring is related in terms of a set of building blocks that include: rethinking the curriculum and instruction in order to promote quality and equality for all students; recreating the structure of the school; and building partnerships, coalitions, and networks. The ST/T project initiated the building of work teams to initiate change. Changes in organizational structures and in student discipline procedures are two of the four categories addressed. Issues confronted in the process of restructuring schools concern: (1) inadequate resources; (2) relationships between personnel at all levels; and (3) organizational support needs. Early lessons include the relations between process and content, redefining success, building team relationships, and linking the team to the school. Conclusions and recommendations are given. (25 references) (RR)

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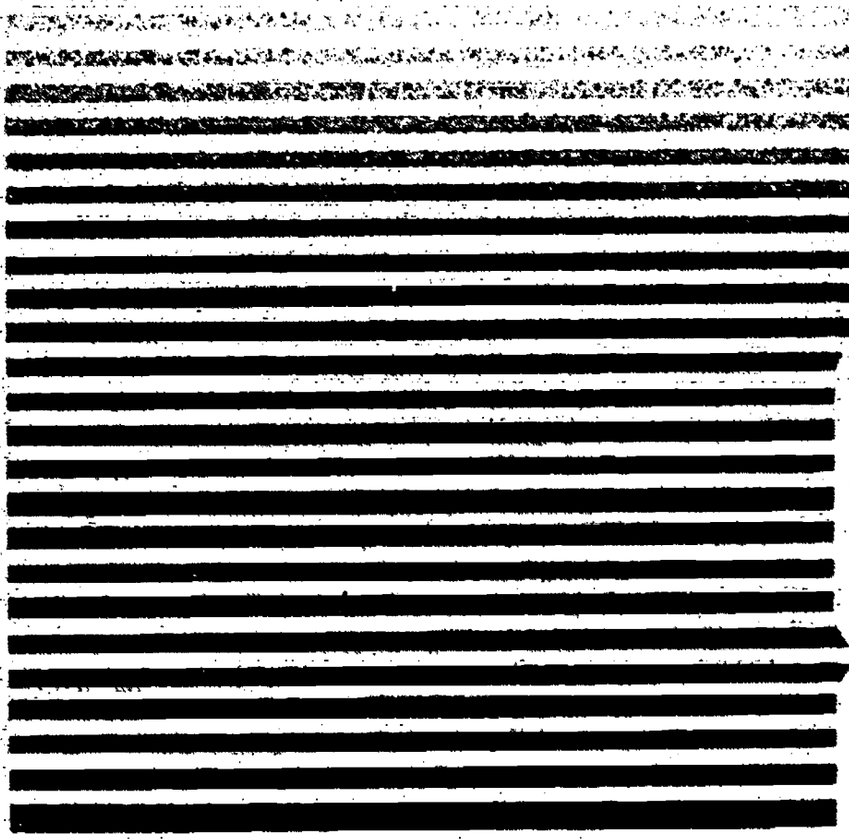
Early Lessons in Restructuring Schools



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The National Center for Restructuring Education, Schools, and Teaching (NCREST) was created to document, support, connect, and make lasting the many restructuring efforts going on throughout the nation.

Restructuring means creating schools that are learner-centered, knowledge-based, responsible, and responsive. To accomplish this, fundamental and comprehensive changes must be made in school governance, teaching practices, curriculum, parent and community involvement, assessment, and policy. We believe that no one of these changes will succeed or last unless all are accomplished.

Therefore, the Center brings together many voices: those of practitioners and researchers, parents and teachers and students, policy makers and teacher educators.

NCREST's work builds concrete, detailed knowledge about the intense and difficult efforts undertaken in restructuring schools. This knowledge is used to help others in their attempts at change, to begin to build future education programs for school practitioners, and to promote the environmental and policy changes that will nurture and encourage needed structural reforms.

Early Lessons

in Restructuring Schools

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A Report by
Ann Lieberman
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Edited by Diane Harrington

August 1991

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David Zuckerman
--August, 1991

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Executive Summary

Restructuring schools has become a rallying cry among educators and others who are concerned about America's investment in its future. For those involved in its pursuit, restructuring aims to create schools that are more centered on learners' needs for active, experiential, cooperative, and culturally-connected learning opportunities supportive of individual talents and learning styles. Restructurers aim to create these learning opportunities within school organizations energized by collaborative inquiry, informed by authentic accountability, and guided by shared decision making. But actual practice is as varied as are actual schools.

This report is based on an early evaluation of the process of restructuring in 12 schools in the "Schools of Tomorrow...Today" (ST/T) project run by the York City Teacher Centers Consortium of the United Federation of Teachers. During the spring and summer of 1990, researchers from the Center for School Reform at Teachers College, Columbia University, documented the ST/T project, then finishing its second year. This work entailed visits at the school sites, examination of relevant documents, and interviews with selected team members from each school, the team facilitators provided by the Teacher Centers Consortium (TCC), and the TCC director.

In addition to suggesting that the ST/T project must be judged a significant success, this examination uncovered a great many early lessons about school restructuring which could be of help to other schools and districts engaged in similar efforts.

First, there are lessons about what to expect when change of this kind is attempted -- what the usual and often necessary challenges will be when major shifts in governance and school organization are pursued, and what important issues will likely require attention in training sessions, in team meetings, and in resource allocation decisions:

Conflict is a necessary part of change. Efforts to democratize schools do not create conflicts, but they allow (and to be successful, *require*) previously hidden problems, issues, and disagreements to surface. Staff involved in school restructuring must be prepared to elicit, manage, and resolve conflicts.

New behaviors must be learned. Because change requires new relationships and behaviors, the change process must include building communication and trust, enabling leadership and initiative to emerge, and learning techniques of communication, collaboration, and conflict resolution.

Team building must extend to the entire school. Shared decision-making teams must consciously work out and give ongoing attention to relationships with the rest of the

school's staff. Otherwise, issues of exclusiveness and imagined elitism may surface, and perceived "resistance to change" will persist.

Process and content are interrelated. The process a team uses in going about its work is as important as the content of educational changes it attempts. The substance of a project often depends upon the degree of trust and openness built up within the team and between the team and the school. At the same time, the usefulness and visibility of the project will influence future commitments from and relationships among the staff and others involved.

Second, there are lessons about constructive ways that these schools found to meet these challenges -- lessons that provide ideas, though not prescriptions, for successful change. While each school's "right answers" may not be universally applicable, the following suggest directions to be explored:

"Finding time" for change enhances the prospects for success. Chief among the many resources required for change is time -- for working out new relationships, developing a vision, establishing objectives, and pursuing new projects.

A big vision with small building blocks can create consensus and progress. Most teams started by articulating a common vision of what they wanted their schools to become, then established goals embodying that vision, and then decided on a specific project as a focus. Each element was found to be important: the vision pulls people together, while goals and projects provide a concrete focus.

Manageable initial projects with wide involvement and visible, concrete results sustain the restructuring process. Because the process of change is so difficult, incentives are needed to sustain the necessary intensity of effort. One such incentive is evidence that the effort is paying off -- especially if it involves and benefits many sectors of the school community.

Facilitators, along with opportunities for training and for retreats, are critical components of successful restructuring efforts. Skilled outside facilitators helped teams learn how to relate to one another within a new governance structure and connected them to appropriate training opportunities. Retreats provided critically needed opportunities to reflect on and work through knotty issues.

Finally, there are policy lessons and recommendations. The influences on schools of district or state-level policies and practices are profound and often decisive. Restructuring schools without changing the environment in which they work cannot result in long-lasting reforms. For policy makers, administrators, and outside change agents who would like to support school restructuring, this study makes several recommendations:

Examine district and state regulations to remove policy conflicts. Many ST/T

schools found that state Regents requirements, district curriculum guidelines, and other existing directives worked against them when they sought to institute more child-centered practices based in collegial decision making.

Give SBM/SDM schools more authority -- as well as responsibility -- for controlling their own affairs. If restructured schools are to be held accountable for the results they achieve, they must also have the authority to make decisions about major aspects of school operations, including staffing and program offerings.

Find more flexible and proactive ways to support schools' change efforts. Restrictive program guidelines often made grant monies inaccessible to resource-starved schools. Supports for local school restructuring will require changes in the ways other parts of the educational system see their functions -- as enforcers or as facilitators of school change.

Establish ongoing supports, networks, and learning opportunities for restructuring schools. ST/T staff noted over and over again how much they wished they could talk with, visit, and learn from other schools engaged in the kinds of changes they were attempting.

School restructuring calls for genuine and collaborative discussion around value-laden issues, a process that must take place if there is to be any real change, but one that is generally ignored in schools. One benefit of the restructuring process in the ST/T schools was that it provided a forum for authentic discussion allowing for conflict resolution and collaborative decision making. Real talk is a prerequisite for meaningful action.

Perhaps the key lesson of school restructuring learned here is that shared governance, based on authentic communication and genuine collaboration, can be the engine that creates the kinds of learner-centered schools that schoolpeople want and children need.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Restructuring schools has become a rallying cry among educators and others who are concerned about America's investment in its future. For those involved in its pursuit, restructuring aims to create schools that are more centered on learners' needs for active, experiential, cooperative, and culturally-connected learning opportunities supportive of individual talents and learning styles. Restructurers aim to create these learning opportunities within school organizations energized by collaborative inquiry, informed by authentic accountability, and guided by shared decision making. More than a buzzword or another call for overnight change, restructuring offers real hope, and a significant challenge, to all those who worry and care about the next generation.

Study Design

This report is based on an early evaluation of the process of restructuring in 12 schools in the "Schools of Tomorrow...Today" (ST/T) project run by the York City Teacher Centers Consortium of the United Federation of Teachers (UFT). The project, in which the Consortium provided facilitators and other resources to each of the volunteering schools, was intended to be, first, a means for changing communications in schools; second, a means for changing school-site governance; and third, a mobilizing force for improving the education of children, school by school.

During the spring and summer of 1990, researchers from the Center for School Reform at Teachers College, Columbia University, documented the ST/T project, then finishing its second year. This work entailed visits at the school sites, examination of relevant documents, and interviews with selected team members from each school, the team facilitators provided by the Teacher Centers Consortium (TCC), and the TCC director. It afforded us a rare opportunity to observe the process of restructuring firsthand. The unique experiences of each of the 12 participating schools are revealed in a set of case studies, published separately.[1] This report summarizes their difficult and rewarding work and examines the common themes that emerged across the 12 schools. In particular, it discusses the different outcomes associated with the varied strategies the schools adopted to meet their common challenges.

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[1]The case studies are published by the National Center for Restructuring Education, Schools, and Teaching (NCREST) at Teachers College, Columbia University. See Lieberman et al (1991) in *References* for full information.

A Context for Understanding School Restructuring

The call to restructure schools is born from a new set of challenges facing our society as well as its education system. While today's schools are geared to uniformity, passivity, and order, massive changes in our world call out for diversity, initiative, and inventiveness. As many reform reports have pointed out, our increasingly information-based society requires working citizens who are able to frame problems, pose solutions, and adapt continuously to changing needs (Carnegie Forum, 1986; National Science Board, 1983; National Governors' Association, 1986).

But schoolpeople are struggling in organizations invented for "batch processing" students in assembly line fashion to prepare them for low-level tests of basic skills -- and often failing even at that (Darling-Hammond, 1990a). In addition, changed social conditions, particularly increased poverty, ethnic diversity, and declining institutional and neighborhood support for children, are placing pressures on schools to embrace a far different and more proactive stance toward their communities.

The challenge, then, is to develop an enriched and individually responsive vision of schooling for a more diverse population while, at the same time, incorporating a broader view of the school's social role and an enlarged conception of the community responsible for education. This challenge demands new ways of working in an institution that has historically been difficult to change. It requires visionary perspectives from schoolpeople who are using new models of collaborative work to reinvent the places they have previously known only as bureaucracies run by hierarchical decision making.

Restructuring is necessarily a complex process, and its various spokespersons have suggested many different kinds of desired changes. We suggest that it is best understood in terms of a set of building blocks that undergird fundamental school reform. These suggest a cluster of related agendas:

Rethinking curriculum and instruction in order to promote quality and equality for all students. This is the cornerstone of restructuring. It is necessary to question current practices as old and new problems are frustrating parents, students, and teachers alike. On the one hand are the radically increased societal needs for problem solving, higher order thinking, and global awareness; on the other are problems of dropouts, the undesirable social and academic outcomes of tracking (Oakes, 1985), and the inability of schools to deal with the many effects of poverty, changed family structures, and a raft of social dangers faced by youth.

Curricular changes need to be built upon the concept of learners as active partners in constructing their own knowledge, with diverse experiences, talents, and learning styles that must shape reciprocal strategies for teaching and learning (Wigginton, 1991). Instruction must be organized in ways that are sufficiently personalized for teachers to come to know the

minds and hearts of their students well (Sizer, 1988; Meier, 1987). The goal must be to encourage real learning and close connections between the school and the student, rather than merely to "cover the curriculum" or to "deliver instruction" (Darling-Hammond, 1990b).

Developing a rich learning environment for teachers as well as for students. Many reform movements have come and gone because they have focused solely on providing new programs and curricula for students or prescriptions for changes in teacher behavior. But investments in teacher learning are what ultimately feed student learning. Changes in instructional practices that treat teachers as less than partners provoke defensiveness and resistance. Yet changes that provide for greater teacher involvement in decision making without changing instructional practices and student environments will be empty. Teacher opportunities for both learning and input create the understanding, capacity, and sense of personal investment needed to fuel deep-seated change and continual problem solving on behalf of students (Lieberman, 1988; Little, 1990).

Recreating the structure of the school. Changes in instructional and curricular practices will require changes in how the school is organized and led. Programs and staffing will need to be reorganized so that students' and teachers' work is less fragmented and disjointed -- allowing for a more integrated and holistic view of children, and a more interdisciplinary and in-depth view of knowledge and learning. In addition, a collaboratively built structure must incorporate opportunities for continuous teacher development and participation in restructuring schools. Concepts such as site-based management/shared decision making, expanded leadership roles for teachers, and participatory structures enabling greater engagement of communities are means to achieving richer learning environments for everyone.

Increasing and changing the participation of parents and community. Parent and citizen involvement, or at least acquiescence, has always been important in reforming schools. Creating closer partnerships between parents and schools in order to develop shared goals, strategies, and commitments on behalf of students has become increasingly important (Comer, 1980). Not only must schools reach out more effectively to parents, parents must become more intimately involved in the schools' work. The boundary between school and home must become far more permeable if the learning environment is to become more meaningful for students.

Building partnerships, coalitions, and networks. It is also important for schools to form partnerships and alliances within and outside their own communities: among schools seeking common changes, between professional organizations striving for shared knowledge, and with other social service agencies dealing with similar human needs. All of these can provide the basis for exploring new possibilities, supporting risk taking, sharing new knowledge, and continually building professional bonds. Networks for information sharing as well as psychological and professional support can help sustain change and transform

potential pitfalls into communitywide and professionwide learning opportunities.[2]

Taken together, these building blocks call for a tremendous increase in the knowledge and capacities of everyone involved in schools. We have much to learn about how teachers, principals, parents, and students rethink their schools. How do people encounter and invent new ideas, new structures, new ways of teaching as well as learning and leading? How can schools prepare for and envision a new tomorrow while rooted in the traditions and understandings of the past as well as the present?

This study begins to illuminate the ways in which school communities can respond to the challenge for fundamental change and the ways in which they are able to create new ways of living, working, and learning together. It documents their trials and struggles along with their successes, and suggests lessons for how the process of restructuring may be nurtured, supported, and strengthened.

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[2] For more elaborated discussions of the meaning and processes for school restructuring see: Ann Lieberman and Lynne Miller (1990), "Restructuring Schools: What Matters and What Works?" *Phi Delta Kappan* 71 (10): 759-764; and Linda Darling-Hammond (1990b), "Achieving our Goals: Superficial or Structural Reforms?" *Phi Delta Kappan* 72 (4): 286-295.

Chapter 2

The Basis for *Early Lessons*

The Schools of Tomorrow...Today project was a carefully planned and well-supported effort to restructure the internal communications, governance, and pedagogical practices of the participating schools. After over a year of planning, TCC invited all the public schools in New York City to apply for a place in the project; 135 responded, and 12 were selected. In 1988, each of these 12 schools set up an ST/T team, which engaged in training and developed a shared decision making (SDM) process at the school. Each team was made up of the principal (or an assistant principal in some cases), the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) chapter leader, a number of teachers chosen by, volunteering for, or elected to the team, and, in some cases, one or more parents, plus two or three facilitators trained and assigned by the Consortium.

Building Teams

In some schools, the principal and chapter leader hand-picked most of the team members and asked them to volunteer. In others, team members were elected by representative constituencies (grade level teachers and specialists in elementary schools, for example). In at least one school the opportunity to serve on the team was simply announced, and everyone who volunteered was given a place. All teams had open meetings and took steps to publish their proceedings and publicize their efforts. In many cases teachers who had not been part of the original team learned what was going on and took steps to get elected or appointed to team membership. Similarly, a team member might have tired and left the team, or moved to a different school, and a frequent observer might have slid from observation into subcommittee work and thus into full membership. Or a team made up of volunteers and appointed members might have decided that the time had come to reconfigure the team by standing for election. Membership, though broadly reflective of schoolwide and systemwide staff demographics, was never entirely static.

The facilitators who guided the teams were teacher specialists with many years of experience in both teaching and staff development who had volunteered for a role in the Schools of Tomorrow...Today project. Their task was to provide both consultation and assistance to the teams. The facilitators themselves saw their first job as the difficult one of "working to maintain a neutral presence" while at the same time providing assistance to the school teams. Their work entailed helping the team develop a vision and an action plan for the school; introducing a variety of *process tools* -- approaches to handling such tasks as running meetings, sharing decisions, developing ideas into plans, and resolving conflicts;

encouraging the team to work with the whole school so that decisions were reached somewhat collaboratively among the faculty and were not left to the committee alone; intervening in discussions to keep the process moving, sometimes by acting to resolve problems, and sometimes by raising them; providing suggestions or resources (such as materials or speakers) when needed.

Once formed, each team went through a series of six Saturday training sessions and an overnight retreat, which were used to introduce them to a number of goal-setting, decision-making and group maintenance techniques. Most teams -- not all -- took to the process wholeheartedly. Most decided, or began to decide, how they wanted to work together, welcomed the new skills offered by the training, and looked back on the training with warmth and gratitude, as a member of one team noted: "The facilitators were able to give us insights we never had thought of before. They also helped us to be professional, to keep on track with our goals."

All teams were urged to set up a governance structure consisting of a central decision-making group (themselves) and subordinate task groups or subcommittees consisting of team members and other volunteers, and to formally adopt consensual decision making. Most teams did so. At least one rebelled against all suggested governance structures and techniques of discussion management, considering them inhibiting. At least one continued an informal decision-making practice of exchanging views and then waiting for the principal to make a decision.

In many cases a particular structure or process may have helped a team manage its conflicts; in no case did such structures and processes prevent conflict from occurring. Many teams reported difficulty establishing consensual practices. In some groups the principal was thought to be too dominant; in others loudly argumentative or overly deferential staff members were seen as a problem; in still others the principal was seen as too permissive, failing to exercise appropriate administrative control of discussions. And all three opinions sometimes occurred among different members of the same team.

Part of the first-year training included the opportunity to identify a mission, select goals, and consider some possible projects, and most teams did so. Many teams then extended this process by including the whole staff in a needs census that was used to determine their initial project. Some teams did not ask the staff to generate a "want list," but instead selected projects on their own. Generally, they sought approval of these projects by the staff before beginning to implement them; they had a sense, therefore, that they were expressing a mandate and not simply their own thoughts as to what would be good for the school.

Initiating Change

Not all projects were of equal scope, not all were fully implemented at the time of our evaluation, and not all were equally successful. Particular problems, and the strategies

taken to overcome them, and particular successes, and the factors contributing to them, are taken up in later chapters. The reader wishing a more complete picture of each school's story is referred to the case studies of all the schools published under separate cover (Lieberman et al, 1991).

At this point, we wish merely to present the various projects set in motion by the 12 ST/T teams to give a sense of the kind of yield that can flow from a two-year, well-supported project in shared decision making. Since most schools undertook more than one project, a total of 41 different initiatives are mentioned. We group them under four categories: (1) staff development and support; (2) curriculum and program changes; (3) changes in student discipline procedures and structures; and (4) changes in organizational structures.

Staff Development and Support. Sociologists have long pointed out that schools are constructed physically and administratively like "egg crates," with each teacher functioning in a compartment, isolated from peer interaction and administrative influence (Lortie, 1975). Other studies have established the fact that while teachers often like the resulting autonomy, they also feel deprived by their isolation, particularly when they enter a school as new teachers (Darling-Hammond, 1990a; Little, 1990). In addition, many teachers decry their lack of influence on broader school functioning (Bacharach, Scott, and Bauer, 1986).

While all ST/T schools saw the need for better communication among staff, several devoted some attention to directly improving it by increasing the occasions for professional talk. Others focused on improving resources or on cooperative curriculum planning. Two schools sought to upgrade already existing collegial assistance programs. In all, eleven different projects were instituted in these areas.

Two schools proposed to improve resource availability: one through an in-house library for staff development (Apple Elementary)[3] and the other through a teachers' resource room (Andrew Williams Intermediate School). In addition, Williams set up ongoing staff development workshops to orient new teachers and train them in cooperative learning and effective classroom management. Staff development workshops were also part of the Delancy Street Preparatory High School plan, but to a far more extensive degree, covering the implementation of a broad spectrum of new initiatives: a family groups program (giving each teacher ongoing responsibility for a small group of students), interdisciplinary education, curriculum development, house plans (creating smaller schools within the school), student activities, and alternative methods of teacher evaluation.

A number of schools acted to support or improve collegial interaction. The team at Apple Elementary introduced a model for collegial lesson planning and team teaching in a few classes. Williams Intermediate changed the school schedule so that the mathematics

[3]All school names are fictitious.

teachers could regularly share lesson planning (only to see this undercut in the second year due to increased district pressure for completion of a standardized curriculum in a specified time period). Swearingen Elementary changed the schedule to allow at least monthly meetings of all the teachers at each grade level. The Deeter Elementary team convinced the principal to reinstitute monthly after-school staff meetings, which did a great deal to help all concerned raise and address crucial issues not being taken up in any other forum, including discipline problems and racial polarization. Finally, as part of their effort to redesign the whole school schedule, Delancy Street High included optional daily meetings ("convenings") of the whole staff at the beginning of each school day and scheduled their weekly SDM team meetings at a time when all staff could be present.

Two schools improved their collegial assistance programs. Stephen Day High School set up a structure that allowed more teachers to call on colleagues for assistance. (They were building on top of a program that had limited this resource to "teachers in trouble.") And Smith Elementary School began implementing a process whereby, for the first time, teachers could be invited into colleagues' rooms for observation, advice, and assistance.

All of these projects showed a determination by teachers and principals to improve their functioning as professionals, to grapple with the significant problems of their craft rather than leave it to outside experts, increased regulation, or more extensive supervision. As with other professionals, the need and the opportunity for change were the only incentives required to mobilize their efforts.

Curriculum and Program Changes. Nineteen different projects grew out of faculties' perceptions of ways the current curriculum or school program could be improved. These improvements ranged from giving teachers a greater voice in textbook selection, to instituting new curricular approaches (such as a whole language approach to literacy development), to creating special activities to meet unaddressed student needs.

Three projects were devoted to textbook selection. The team at Bettinger Elementary became involved in choosing textbooks and developed several ungraded primary units; the team at Swearingen applied for and got a grant for a text series that could be used by both regular and resource-room teachers, so that students receiving extra help remained in contact with what their classmates were studying; and the team at Apple Elementary chose and put into use in every grade a textbook series that presented a better match with state testing.

Two projects focused on curriculum development. Four teachers at Cincinnati Elementary brought the whole language approach into two grades, from which it has since expanded; and Apple Elementary, which had been using this approach in several grades, extended its use to the whole school.

Eight projects instituted special activities, from one-day events to ongoing supports. Deeter Elementary, for example, organized a series of parent education workshops ("Mondays for Mommies") to bring more parents into the school and to increase their feeling

of being welcomed. ABC High School set up a student-organized, one-day health fair.

Teams at three schools organized ongoing extra-curricular activities because of their commitment to the needs of their students. First, Williams Intermediate School, faced with the tensions of a large immigrant influx and a lack of supportive neighborhood institutions, began a Multicultural Club, giving students a way to acknowledge, talk about, and celebrate their differences. Second, the team at Stephen Day sought and received the necessary work-rule waivers to organize a teacher-led, lunchtime activities program to take care of students roaming unsupervised during lunch periods -- and, not incidentally, to offer something to students unable to participate in after-school activities. Third, when Delancy Street High instituted a new school schedule, an hour a week was set aside for student activities and clubs.

And three schools organized important, ongoing support activities: an hour a week set aside for student mentoring at Delancy Street, a peer-tutoring program at Bettinger Elementary, and a schoolwide reading period at the beginning and end of each day at Apple Elementary.

Changes in Student Discipline Procedures and Structures. By surveying staff, the ST/T committees at three schools learned that their greatest need and first interest was to reform student discipline. At Wilson and Smith Elementary Schools, the worst problem was the lack of lunchroom discipline procedures. Accordingly, the team at Smith set up a new program using volunteer parents and teachers to shepherd students to the lunchroom and supervise them there and in the playyard. The Parent Association president stated that these changes had made the children calmer, that her own two had been "wild" in the periods following lunch but now were much better. In similar vein, the team at Wilson created an in-school suspension policy and structure (a room with appropriate staffing and material) and instituted a lunchroom discipline program based on publishing the rules, keeping charts of each class's record, and selecting a "Class of the Month" with special rewards for exemplary lunchroom behavior.

On a broader scale, at Williams Intermediate School the subcommittee on discipline was working to develop an in-school suspension policy and a uniform disciplinary procedure to be followed by all teachers. It planned to ask each teacher to try to solve disciplinary problems before passing them on to a dean, and it also planned to provide the deans with more information about what the teachers had done.

Changes in Organizational Structures. Some schools felt that they could not properly meet the needs of their students within the existing structures; their ST/T teams led in the creation of new or alternative means to take care of familiar problems. These varied from single-day events, to changes involving a few classes, to redesign of entire grade levels or the schoolwide schedule. Altogether, eight projects involved changes in organizational structures.

For example, Stephen Day High School, a technical school dealing with the graphic arts, felt that far too many students were failing and dropping out because they came into the school not at all clear about what was available to them, what would be asked of them, or even what they wanted. The team arranged for a waiver from Board regulations limiting staff activities on the days of Regents testing. Then they mobilized the whole staff so that on one of these days all prospective ninth graders and their parents could visit the school, be interviewed, and receive advice concerning the school's offerings and the various career paths available. That day was a great success and a turning point for the staff, who saw for the first time the profound benefits of working together to restructure their school programs.

On a larger scale, Swearingen Elementary planned, but had not yet implemented, a K-1 "transitional" class to accommodate students who were in some ways not ready to take a full year's step forward into traditional first grade work. And the team at Deeter Elementary departmentalized reading in the second grade, a move that was so successful that the other grades began considering the idea. Beyond that, Bettinger Elementary, with the leadership of its ST/T team, planned to redesign its Pre-K program to include curricular themes, team teaching, and the use of specialists teaching certain skills to students from several classes.

On a still larger scale, two schools restructured whole grades. Stephen Day set up a Blue Ribbon Committee that redesigned the scope and sequence of ninth grade course offerings to give students exposure to every area of possible specialization before they actually began to concentrate in any one. The subcommittee then took up the question of how to extend its work to subsequent grade levels. And the team at Johnson Junior High School created a mini-school for 150 seventh graders. This offered programming around five major subject areas and their teachers; optional scheduling -- freedom to depart from the standard 50-minute schedule; a variety of new teaching practices, including an emphasis on cooperative learning within an interdisciplinary curriculum; and structures to increase communication among teachers, students, and their parents.

Finally, the ST/T teams at Delancy Street Preparatory High School and Apple Elementary School were able to incorporate a number of changes and move toward several goals at the same time through redesigning the entire school schedule. Such changes are particularly important and are perhaps exemplary of the best early steps of school restructuring. The rigidities of the standard, factory-model schedule not only inhibit creative and responsive teaching, they typically afford little or no time for the work of restructuring itself. Time for collaborative planning, teacher leadership, and team management are necessary if schoolwide change is to be implemented and institutionalized; lack of time was the single most cited inhibitor of ST/T team effectiveness. The creation of time through alternative scheduling, therefore, was perhaps the project's greatest success.

Such adaptations are difficult for a school to accomplish, but Apple's accomplishments have been detailed already: a unified textbook series, a schoolwide whole language program, and a reading period at the beginning and end of each day. Delancy Street, an alternative school with more scheduling freedom to begin with, instituted daily,

optional staff meetings ("convenings"), student mentoring, and a weekly activities period. They consider it particularly important that, along with their other accomplishments, their work also made it possible to allow for longer instructional periods as needed.

In general, recalling that our research occurred in what was only the second year of an effort that began without explicit district supports or the leadership of the central Board of Education[4], it must be concluded that the ST/T teams' accomplishments showed creativity and ingenuity. However, it must also be kept in mind that their efforts grew not only from new-found capacities to make and implement collaborative decisions, but from intense discussion, enervating struggle, and far more conflict than they expected or were used to. They were involved in the process of change -- for team members as individuals, for their teams, and for their schools as a whole. It is that stressful and rewarding process that we take up in succeeding chapters.

[4]The new Chancellor, Joseph Fernandez, began his tenure midway through the ST/T Project's second year (in January 1990). Circular 41, the announcement and regulations for his first initiative implementing site-based management and shared decision making (SBM/SDM), was published a few months later, in the spring of 1990. As we were completing our research, some of the ST/T teams we had documented were beginning to decide whether to join the Chancellor's initiative.

Chapter 3

Issues Confronted in Restructuring Schools

The schools we examined varied in every respect -- city neighborhood, school climate, and particular history, as well as in the ST/T goals and the means of implementation chosen. However, underneath the individual details there were some common issues and problems. In this chapter, we discuss these to highlight the challenges of change. In Chapter 4, we describe how these challenges were met and, often, transformed into new understandings leading to restructured relationships and changed school realities. Taken together, we hope that this depiction of both the challenges and schools' strategic responses may provide some guidance to other schools in the process of restructuring.

No change in an organization comes about without tension, conflict, and accompanying resistance (Fullan, 1982; Huberman and Miles, 1986; Sarason, 1971). In the case of schools undertaking restructuring, the staff's efforts to build a collaborative focus, to work through differences in order to find common ground, and to implement meaningful change constitute a process with huge disruptive potential. Moreover, in normal school practice there are neither the structures nor the expectations that teachers and principals will decide upon common goals. Of course there are obligatory discussions about "goals for the year," but there is also recognition, if not acceptance, that principals and teachers will continue to work in their own isolated conditions.

In contrast, the ST/T project confronted its participants with a forum whose express purpose was *collaborative* work for school change. Without such collaboration -- without the open exchange of diverse views about pedagogy, children, culture, race, ethnicity, curriculum, and educational goals -- decisions about improving school practices are apt to be empty. But this shared decision-making process is difficult, and that difficulty is ill-understood by an educational community eager to attempt -- or condemn -- restructuring initiatives. Knowledge about such difficulties and how they can be addressed is as important as knowledge about successful outcomes of change. We discuss them under the categories of resources, relationships, and organizational support needs.

Resources

Insufficient resources was perhaps the most important difficulty faced by ST/T teams. "Change is notoriously resource hungry," Matthew Miles is fond of saying (Miles, 1990). But schools, and particularly those in urban areas, are characteristically impoverished

because they're set up to do a difficult job while minimizing their impact on the public pocket.

Time. The resource that the ST/T teams felt most keenly lacking was time, both shared time for collaborative work and individual time to take on new roles on top of continued responsibilities. As a result, almost every team mentioned the problem of time conflicts, of difficulty scheduling meetings and consultations, of problems managing both their ongoing responsibilities and their new team duties, and of simply not having enough time to meet.

In some cases, it was reported that the team was overwhelmed and had pretty much given up meeting regularly for long periods. In most cases, teams either bought time by organizing subcommittees or stole time from home and personal life by meeting briefly before school began, hurriedly over lunch, or periodically after school. Some teams were forced to meet at times when not all team members could be present; this caused communication problems and exacerbated the difficulties of finding common ground between conflicting views.

Teams in alternative schools with special schedules were able to reorganize their school or personal schedules to accommodate time for meetings -- but even they were unable to create time to take care of all the extra work involved. Two teams (Delancy Street Preparatory High School and Apple Elementary School) redesigned the entire school schedule and thus were the most successful at creating time for restructuring work.

For some teams, going on retreats was an effective way to "find time." In all cases, team members reported how important the retreats were to their work. As one said, "It is a time when we can actually work through major problems and have enough time to do it."

It should be noted that the facilitators also saw time as a major problem for themselves. Working in several schools while attending to the myriad responsibilities of a facilitator, particularly as their responsibilities expanded in the second year, was their number one problem as well.

People. Some teams found that there simply weren't enough people to do all the restructuring work that was needed. In some cases this meant that the same people seemed to be taking on most of the burdens of change, with consequent risk of burnout, while in others it meant that the team wanted to take on a wider scope of change but could not phase in the work without additional help.

Space. A few teams saw lack of space as a barrier to their work. Either committees could not find an empty room for meeting or, more important, a desired curricular change such as a language or computer lab could not be attempted because the school was too crowded.

Funding. Finally, funding was frequently mentioned as a barrier, not bitterly but with resignation as a simple and problematic fact of life. Certain desired project activities could

not be implemented, or substitutes could not be hired so that all team members could meet at the same time, or further training in a curricular specialty or new teaching method could not be arranged because of a lack of funds. Restructuring need not be an expensive process, but no change can be entirely free of cost since it requires new knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors that demand investments in time and training. Given these schools' needs in relation to available resources, funding limits were real barriers.

Relationships

By far the greatest number of difficulties reported were the unavoidable consequences and interpersonal problems associated with any attempt to change the status quo in an organization. Challenging the status quo, learning to work successfully in groups, and making decisions that are important to the school bring forth a variety of forces; these include resistance to change, conflicts of personality, value differences, and shifting power relations (Sarason, 1971; Fullan, 1982).

These problems exist in many organizations, not just schools. Workers are often as isolated as teachers in their classrooms, and those in authority often make decisions without consulting with those affected. In such organizations, however, workers rarely if ever have to work toward team agreement about means and ends, let alone about organizational purpose. Moreover, normal bureaucratic practice does not invite people to act on their own views or even to share them publicly, but rather to submerge them while they carry out defined procedures. Thus, because there is no public forum where personal views are shared and held up to scrutiny, conflict remains muted, an important bureaucratic goal. Differences are there but kept under wraps; they may appear in gossip, or through self-isolation or resistance, or in special dealing, but they are not a feature of public discourse or a problem requiring official attention.

However, shared decision making as it was being attempted by the ST/T schools required that differing views be aired and that some agreement be sought and reached if productive action was to follow. Conflict was inevitable. Many of the problems experienced by the ST/T schools must, then, be seen as representative of a complex array of forces that are unleashed as change toward shared decision making is attempted.

Furthermore, the ST/T team members faced difficulties particular to the history and circumstances of schools. First, teaching is not simply a technical craft but flows from deeply held personal beliefs. As one teacher put it, "You don't leave your personal life at home when you come to work here, you live it. And when you disagree with someone, you disagree with your heart and stomach as well as with your head. It can get very painful." Second, schools have no tradition of public argument as a means of resolving differences and arriving at decisions; thus, two strong personalities holding deeply felt opinions who found themselves in frequent argument on an SDM team might well be seen, or even see each other, as a cause of conflict. As one teacher said, "We're learning how to deal with different personalities, how to work together as a group. If you want someone to come

around to your point of view there's a way to approach them. I never had call to deal this way before being on the committee."

Third, large conventional urban schools like the ones in the ST/T project have very clear demarcations of authority and responsibility and are highly hierarchical. There is little tradition of teacher leadership or collegiality. The ST/T teams thus worked in an arena in which they were isolated and lacked a mandate from their peers and had few tools for generating collective action. An ST/T committee member faced with the problem of communicating the committee's vision to the larger staff might sometimes feel that the staff's lack of enthusiasm represented outright resistance. And even the most carefully planned strategies and tactics often produced conflict as they forced a shift in the status quo. As one team member pointed out, "Problems began right away. Everybody had different ideas of how to set up the school-based options...and even once we had set up our mission statement with its goals, everyone had different ideas about how to do it."

It should be no surprise, then, that the teams encountered many interpersonal problems. We describe these problems with an understanding that they are ordinary and expected aspects of the change process. There is no conflict-free way to restructure schools, no perfect place to begin, no plug-in bag of tricks to use so that such problems may be avoided. Effective handling of the change process means that interpersonal conflicts are managed and worked through, not avoided entirely. In almost every one of the ST/T schools, problems were constructively handled -- while, at the same time, meaningful educational projects were set in motion.

We list the apparent sources of conflict with explanations for each so that they may be understood as having significance beyond these schools. Although there were occasions when the issues proved difficult to resolve, most teams struggled mightily and learned how to deal with their conflicts. In a few cases, a breakdown in teamwork proved to be more than a team could handle, as when a principal was replaced or when philosophical differences were so deep that common ground could not be found. But in general the barriers arose from expected areas of difficulty, and the teams handled them well enough.

Principal/Chapter Leader/Teacher Relationships. With the change from hierarchical to shared decision making, some people must learn to exercise less authority and others must take unfamiliar leadership roles. Working out these new relationships is a major job in its own right. At one site, the staff refused to take on the leadership roles in meetings that had been recommended in their training -- convener, recorder, reflector -- and then experienced considerable frustration with the lack of focus to their discussions. At many sites, people were less than satisfied with the effectiveness of new leaders within their own groups. At some sites, the staff wanted to see more directive leadership from the principal as a means of getting out of frustrating circumstances, while the principal wanted to see a bolder grasp of leadership by others. And a given site might at one and the same time have some members who thought that the principal or the chapter leader was being too dominant, and others who thought they were failing to speak out.

In the ST/T schools, hierarchical leaders such as the principal or chapter leader often learned to stand back and offer support instead of direction. Staff new to shared decision making learned to show more initiative, offer more direction -- and accept the increased criticism or misunderstanding that accompanies leadership. However, rethinking programmatic or structural changes while experimenting with a new and unfamiliar, nonhierarchical form of decision making required all concerned to attempt new behaviors. These behaviors need to be learned and practiced. The new learnings -- for those who are in situations where collaborative relationships begin to replace hierarchical ones -- do not spring up fully formed.

Conflicts and Communication Problems Among Team Members. All team members reported difficulty learning how to deal with each other, but most referred to it as a "test that they had passed," and one that had led to greatly increased respect for their own and others' collaborative accomplishments. Said one team member, "I learned that group dynamics is a hard thing to work out and that reaching consensus is tough, but that, on the other hand, collaboration is good."

In general there was a pattern of hesitant but sincere starts, while people silently maintained hidden reserves of doubt, confusion, or complaint. These early efforts were marked by familiar social behaviors such as reserving or tempering expressions of strong disagreement, maintaining silence when hurt by someone's comment, expressing more agreement than was felt, and "going along" even when confused. Later, with some teams, a massive communication breakdown and breakthrough occurred: a spate of angry exchanges, occasional tears, and the profoundly felt risks of attempting to relate to each other in increasingly honest and genuinely new ways. And, finally, a new and deeply rewarding level of authentic communication was achieved by at least some teams. All of this was going on, of course, at the same time as the team addressed the ordinary business of setting meeting times, conducting needs assessments, deciding on general goals, and choosing the direction for the next meeting.

All teams had initial difficulty establishing trust and open communication between the teachers and the principal, between parents and school staff, and among teachers themselves. In addition, in the second year there were occasional tensions as new people were brought onto the committee. Old members sometimes felt "slowed down" by new members who "don't know our ways." New members sometimes felt that decisions were rushed through, dominated by the discussion style of old members.

Except in their relations with the principal (and not always then), teacher members had received little institutional support for building interpersonal communication and trust over the years and were often unaware of each other's values and vision. A representative comment was, "I didn't know why she was on the team, and I was afraid she was just here to seek some special advantage for her part of the program; but I learned that we're all here because we want what's best for the kids."

Again, this issue can be seen as part of the dynamics of getting started: unfamiliarity with new roles and relationships; lack of a process for socializing new members into the group; anxiety about change; problems addressing conflicts over curriculum, student discipline, and pedagogy; and all of this sometimes intersecting with issues of student and staff diversity in race, class, and culture. Schools are microcosms of society, reflecting society's conflicts and diversity of people and interests; but in traditional school practice, uniformity rather than diversity is treated as the norm. Teachers are to plan for and teach to "standardized" students, and it is assumed, or at least pretended, that all staff and all students get the same treatment.

Such norms have led, in part, to alienated students and frustrated teachers. The ST/T process helped teams learn how to confront student diversity through team and vision building and the facilitation of a change process. Teams, if they were to learn to trust one another, had to reveal differences rather than cover them up, work together rather than act as separate individuals, and work through the inevitable conflict. Moving away from accepted ritual to untried innovations, from lack of clarity to solid decisions, and from talk to action, consistently tried the teams' efforts to keep up their motivation and commitment.

Team/Staff Difficulties. In almost every instance, the teams' relations with the rest of the staff were experienced as a problem by both parties at some point in the change process. In some cases, this might have been avoidable: when, for example, the team was selected by a principal who asked familiar faces to volunteer and thus created a team that was not representative of all the constituent groups. Or a team that had rushed into its project without first generating political support among the staff as a whole should have expected to receive a critical reception. In such instances, the style of the group led them to be seen as "working on" the school and attempting to impose changes rather than "working with" the rest of the staff. However, in other cases it was simply the committee's energy, activism, and team spirit that caused them to be accused of being "elitist," even though their membership was open and they would have welcomed more help.

For their part, the team members often felt that the rest of the staff was insufficiently supportive, describing many as afraid of, hence resistant to, change; or cynical and skeptical that any real change could take place; or apathetic and lethargic, hence uninterested in making the additional sacrifices of time and energy required for collaborative decision making and shared responsibility. In some cases, this was probably true. In fact, the "bureaucratic malaise" of public schools is often put forward as demonstrating the need for restructuring.

It should be noted that more than one team managed to bring the rest of the school on board such that a majority of the staff became agents of change (at Stephen Day High School, for example). Nearly every team, while bemoaning the difficulty of reaching the rest of the staff, still spoke of making progress in that regard. Our perception is that the complaints on both sides, whether caused by misperception or actual differences, are common to political life. Not everyone wants to take up the burdens of office, not every

citizen responds with joy to governmental initiatives, and not every representative fills all the expectations of those who may not want to lead but who surely want to be well led.

Clashes of Values. The search for a school focus or vision encourages discussion and action around value-laden issues that must be addressed if there is to be any real change. The great merit of the shared decision-making process as developed by the ST/T project is that it provided a safe forum in which these differences could be discussed. Conventional schools generally lack such a forum. and suffer for it.

When there are conflicting values in a bureaucratic system that has no forum for discussion, either nothing will be done, so that value differences can be officially ignored; or a system of some sort will be imposed without discussion, so that something can be done while avoiding the airing of differences; or a political decision will be made to make some symbolic changes. Imposition without discussion leaves the staff split and grumbling about who "had the ear of the authorities," who won and lost; symbolic change minimizes loud objection, usually because it does nothing to address real problems; doing nothing is generally the strategy of choice, if only by default.

In most ST/T schools, differences in values about teaching and raising children caused anxiety and were difficult to express; airing these differences was fundamental to finding common ground on which to move forward. The staff at a school might have agreed, for example, that student discipline was lacking and that a new discipline system should be instituted, perhaps as the ST/T project. But then the debate began. Should the basis for that system be new clarity of rules, procedures, and consequences so that the students (and the teachers) had a better idea of what to expect? Or should the same energy be pointed more toward developing student involvement in creating and enforcing a code of discipline, so that the students take increased ownership of the process? Not only does each plan have its merits and costs, but each approach flows from deeply held values about how to raise children and beliefs about what they need. In some schools, moreover, these disagreements became attached to differences of race, class, or culture among the teachers or to accusations of bias based on class or racial differences between the teachers and the children.

Furthermore, beyond such value conflicts, there were also differences in style, personality, and temperament. For example, on one side might have been those who saw the need for careful planning and consideration of the many implications of each change before any action is taken (seen as "people who worry about everything and can't make a decision" by those of the opposite persuasion). On the other might have been those who saw the need to get the project moving sooner rather than later (seen as "people who want instant results" by those who were more worried about the consequences of mistakes than the consequences of inaction).

It cannot be emphasized too strongly that such personality and style conflicts are entirely to be expected, part of democratic discussion rather than signs of individual failures of character. The bureaucratic style of "treating persons like personnel" is, after all, merely

a means of protecting ourselves from each other so that these differences stay hidden and do not visibly intrude on ordinary business. The cost, of course, is that personality conflicts are only hidden by the system, not erased; they do intrude, and the official code of silence means only that they cannot be readily aired. Staff involved in shared decision making, then, can expect to be exasperated with each other's differences, but enlivened and energized by the possibilities for agreement and collaborative action.

Organizational Support Needs

School reform is not merely a matter of hard work and good spirits, of mistakes avoided or obstacles overcome. In addition, successful reform needs a variety of supports that we categorize as "organizational." These conditions are rarely all present in urban public schools, and the struggles of the ST/T teams to adapt, create, or do without them comprise another set of issues for restructuring schools.

The Need for School Leadership. Reform requires not only the development of new leadership relationships and structures but a significant degree of continuity. Teams that did not struggle to create new relationships but instead played out old patterns had greater difficulty establishing themselves as a source of reform; and teams that suffered a change in administrative leadership had to undertake drastic adaptation. Two of the ST/T schools changed principals during the first two years of the project; ownership and direction of the ST/T restructuring effort became an immediate issue in both cases. In one case, the new principal took charge of the ST/T effort, "got it moving" as part of his overall plans for school improvement, and made valuable use of the team as a change agent. Both the team and the school as a whole support his efforts. In another case, the new principal stayed aloof from the team and adopted the view that the committee was perhaps trying "to fix something that wasn't broken," and that its efforts were a disruptive force within a school he was trying to pull together. Change in leadership may help or hurt progress, but it is always an important concern.

Policy Needs. Over the long haul, school-level reforms must eventually encounter the policy forces in their surrounding environment. Generally, since restructuring schools are by definition challenging the status quo, they must cope with a policy environment that, at best, has not caught up to their thinking and, at worst, is downright hostile to their efforts. In a number of cases, district or state policy and practice blocked, or at least inhibited, changes the ST/T teams wanted to make.

District policy is usually oriented toward the demands and wishes of those holding the district accountable, not toward collaborative problem identification and solving (Elmore and McLaughlin, 1988). At the most basic level, district practice was problematic and burdensome for the ST/T teams due to simple nonresponsiveness. One team, for example, wanted to establish a "transitional" class for certain students between kindergarten and first grade; they couldn't get the district to even acknowledge their request for approval and information. A member of another team characterized their district even more negatively:

"The district office is the biggest barrier. They have no sympathy for this ST/T stuff. They give us regulation but no support."

A related but even more problematic area of conflict arose due to breakdowns in communication between school, state, and district. The team at Johnson Junior High, for example, was encouraged to apply for a state grant to help fund the parent involvement aspect of their mini-school; then, after a year of fine-tuning their plan and proposal to meet state requirements, they were given the money -- only to be told that it simply could not be used for the purpose intended. Similarly, according to that same team, when their principal announced his retirement, they were assured by the district that their need for a principal sympathetic to shared decision making would be taken into account. That was the last they heard of it; the new principal, a person who saw the team's efforts as disruptive and unneeded, was appointed without further consultation. And Bettinger Elementary's extensive plans to restructure its three Pre-K classes had to be postponed indefinitely at the point of implementation. Days before school began, they learned that they were to have three additional Pre-K classes, taught, of course, by teachers who were completely unprepared for the innovative structures and practices for which the Bettinger staff had been preparing and training during the previous year.

Finally, there were occasions of conflicting testing and curriculum standards or restrictive program guidelines. The team at Williams Intermediate, for example, set up common preparation times for its math teachers and began collaborative lesson planning as a step toward more adaptive teaching. They were told they had to stop; district policy called for districtwide tests on specified subject matter that had to be "covered" by specified dates, and there was simply no room for deviation. Similarly, at ABC High School the principal found the state graduation requirements to be an obstacle that limited the flexibility of the ST/T team and, more importantly, "cripples [students] even further."

More than half of the teams described some difficulty in one or more of these areas; and only the team at Apple Elementary cited any district financial support as a resource (though an inadequate one).

Needs for Parental Involvement. Part of the mission of restructuring is the development of new and more effective relations with parents and communities. This is, again, a major change in the status quo, and one that requires creative new thinking. Several of the ST/T schools saw lack of parental involvement as a significant barrier to change, but only two teams made it a point to have parents on the committee. A number of schools practiced one form or another of parent outreach, but reported that few parents seemed interested in participating more fully in school activities. And, as described earlier, the parent partnership envisioned by the Johnson Junior High team was never funded despite expectations to the contrary. In sum, parental involvement was not thoroughly addressed in the ST/T projects; the relatively low level of participation may reflect competing priorities, or the way parents were asked to become involved, or what they were invited to do.

Staff Development Needs. Teams wishing to lead their schools in restructuring need new knowledge about curriculum change and implementation -- not only what should or could be accomplished, but also how one actually goes about making specific changes in the classroom. Areas of interest included changing the K-2 grades from discrete levels, through which students were "promoted" or "retained," to an ungraded format through which students moved according to individual needs and pace; interdisciplinary curricula for team teaching; means of involving parents; and training in the whole language approach to literacy teaching. The expressed need was for "consistent" help by knowledgeable workshop leaders over a period of time long enough to see a project implemented, rather than the typical "front loading" of a workshop or series of workshops followed by unsupported implementation. The observation of one teacher -- "We need more expertise...someone to come and work with us for three or four workshops spaced out over the year" -- echoes a point repeatedly covered in the literature on educational innovation (Berman and McLaughlin, 1974-1978; Fullan, 1982).

Support Needs. Change is a process, not an event (Fullan, 1982), and school restructuring is a developmental process calling for training in new skills and ongoing support in their application. Two related categories stand out. First, teams requested further training in the restructuring process itself and continued training in decision making, conflict resolution, group dynamics, and their application in organizing, structuring, and facilitating productive meetings. Second, teams sought more communication and affiliation, particularly with other SDM teams, and the means to gather more resources (money, knowledge, people). It is a credit to the support provided through TCC that most of these needs were expressed as requests, or at least wishes, to continue and increase the kinds of training and support that had already been so successful. Having worked hard to surmount the tensions involved with making real changes, teams were more aware of their need for connection, continuous reinforcement, respect, and recognition from like-minded peers.

Chapter 4

Early Lessons

As the ST/T teams struggled to make change work for themselves and for their students, they achieved significant successes. Many of the strategies they tried worked. Even where these were not as successful as they might have wished, their efforts greatly increased their knowledge -- and ours -- about transforming schools as places to learn and work. They contributed to our understanding of the management of change. Such knowledge about difficulties and how they can be addressed is as important as knowledge about successful outcomes.

The Relations Between Process and Content

To achieve any organizational change, a team must develop an open and healthy process of interaction, while at the same time making reasonable progress on a project that makes a difference. The *process* refers to how and in what ways team members learn to work together, but the *content* of what they work on provides the focus and justification for their work. In schools, the task is to combine teacher learning and the development of collaborative decision-making with the implementation of specific projects aimed at improving learning for all students. During a given team meeting, each may call out for an unwanted share of attention and threaten to swallow the time available; yet if either is ignored the project is sure to be weakened.

School restructuring teams must indeed attend to their discussion process if any meaningful content is to be envisioned and implemented; but if they have little "product" to show for their efforts, then others might not be convinced of the value of the restructuring work. Moreover, in the heat of discussion, those on the team may lose touch with the viewpoints of those further away. Thus, committees that have overcome great difficulties to establish a degree of shared trust and a habit of collaboration may feel quite successful no matter the size or scope of the project on which they have collaborated. Those not on the committee may feel that they are seeing only a lot of talk with little action.

It is possible to learn to work as a team but to do so without enough attention to the content of the curriculum or to strategies for student-centered learning. It is also possible to work on the adoption of a new reading program, say, but pay insufficient attention to team dynamics or the necessary process of engaging the whole school. In the first case, the team's work is likely to be considered meaningless and the experiment in shared decision making judged a failure. In the second case, the project, though perhaps well conceived, is

likely to fail. Sarason (1971) described both the "programmatic" and "behavioral" regularities that obtain in schools; restructuring must change both -- what the school regards as its program and the behaviors of the people doing the work. That is an important early lesson.

This is because, as we have said, process and content are interrelated. The substance of an actual restructuring project, including the time and other resources devoted to it, often depends on the mutual support, degree of trust, and openness built up within the committee and between the committee and the school. One ST/T committee, unable to resolve its differences and unwilling to use discussion management techniques offered by the facilitators, was able to envision a project but unable to implement it. Another designed and implemented a mini-school based on cooperative learning, but failed to engage the staff as a whole in the plans. As a result, the faculty disowned the project as the disruptive and unwanted offspring of a self-designated "elite." When an unexpected change of principals led to a loss of support for shared decision making and the ST/T mission, the project had to be largely abandoned.

More positively, in yet another school, the team's great success in delivering concrete change in a visible and troublesome, albeit limited, area -- lunchroom discipline -- led to strong support from the staff, new volunteers, and the beginning of schoolwide collaborative efforts to address problems that had been festering, unaddressed for years. And at Stephen Day, the team's involvement of the whole staff in a hugely successful orientation day for prospective ninth graders and their parents led to a lasting schoolwide ethos of volunteerism and team work. Thus, when a subcommittee's efforts to restructure the ninth grade curriculum led to disgruntlement among some who saw "no reason to change the way things are," the team spirit of the rest of the staff was able to overcome their objections. Despite the necessary disruption that would be caused by its implementation, the restructured ninth grade curriculum was adopted by majority vote. The team then turned its attention to the tenth grade.

Simply put, process dynamics often determined the availability and use of resources, and sometimes the success or failure of the project chosen; while the success of the project in turn influenced further interpersonal dynamics. Although we know far more about what does not work in school innovation than we do about what does, we can sum up one of the vital lessons of the last 30 years as the simple truth that process either constrains or enables the implementation of content (Berman and McLaughlin, 1974-1978; Huberman and Miles, 1984). No project is effective unless it is desired, supported, and adapted by those who implement it. Moreover, the success of an appropriate project in turn helps to mobilize further energy and resources for change.

Redefining Success

Much like the Indian symbol of the magic snakes, each biting the tail of the one in front of it, the interrelated cause-and-effect of process and content makes the identification of

"results" problematic. Are the results of a committee's work the project selected? The effects of the work on the committee? The effects of the project on the faculty as a whole? The effects of a newly energized collaborative faculty on further restructuring efforts? Restructurers hope that the final result will be a more successful, child-centered school, but what of the interim? Our framework suggests that it is useful to separately consider both the process results and the content results of a team's efforts; each is instrumental to further changes and neither can be considered a "final outcome."

For example, as previously mentioned, the team at ABC High downplayed the importance of process results and the mechanisms to achieve them -- and found itself embroiled in seemingly endless wrangling over how best to implement its vision. Less dramatically, the team at Johnson Junior High implemented an impressive project but neglected the process of involving the rest of the staff in its vision; they saw their project rejected as unduly disruptive to school functioning and themselves condemned as "elitists."

In contrast, the team at Deeter Elementary was leading an energized school of active supporters even though the team initially was largely an elite group hand-picked by the principal from among her trusted supervisors -- and was perceived as such. Our framework suggests that it was their attention to process goals that made the difference. They began not by making specific changes but by conducting a needs census, and then chose projects identified by the staff as immediate concerns. Not every one of these projects was a success, but the school saw the team as trying to help, and new volunteers began showing up. The team's next move was to create process-oriented structures (a monthly faculty meeting, an all-school retreat) to involve the whole school in designing a new disciplinary system, the staff's most pressing concern. As we completed our research, the school was beginning to collectively address class and racially-based value conflicts that had split the staff but remained unaddressed for years. Many kinds of results, including growth in relationships as well as in knowledge and teaching, must be sought and acknowledged if restructuring is to move from hope and vision to accepted practice.

The fact that two of the ST/T teams focused their initial efforts on restructuring how lunchtime was handled is an excellent case in point. First, it must be recognized that in these large, factory-model schools filled with hundreds of children, the bureaucratic structure had utterly failed to provide for sensible care and control of the children during lunch. Each class's own teachers were not responsible (and often had other responsibilities to attend to while their children had lunch), other teachers were assigned elsewhere, and no one was really in charge. Aides and guards were present to avert chaos, but the children generally reverted to playground and street behaviors, which are quite disruptive to an orderly learning community. Everyone was upset, but, because "involvement" was determined by bureaucratic assignment, no one was sufficiently involved to make the changes necessary.

Thus, when the ST/T teams succeeded in bringing professional skills to bear on fixing "the lunchroom situation," they accomplished something far greater. They helped the staff to understand that real changes in the program could occur, enabling them to believe that it was

worth thinking about a vision of a child-centered school collaboratively run by professionals. Recognition of interim successes like these is important to stimulate continued efforts.

Big Visions/Small Building Blocks

Creating a vision -- "student empowerment" or "meeting the needs of all students" -- serves the purpose of pulling everyone together concerning a big idea. But getting there means finding projects that give programmatic form to the process of collaboration. This is difficult, because there is no blueprint or road map.

Most teams started by attempting to articulate a common vision of what they wanted their schools to become, then established goals embodying that vision, then decided on a specific project as a focus. For example, a school facing a rapid influx of immigrant children might articulate the vision of better meeting the needs of all its children, then establish the goal of reforming the primary grades in order to get an early start on the changes needed, and finally decide on establishing a whole language approach to reading in a particular grade as a specific focus. Each element of this triad was found to be important, for the vision pulls people together so that they know that more than the small specific changes are at stake; while the specific goal and manageable project provide a concrete focus for what otherwise might be grand, but empty, words. This helps people realize that real changes are taking place and sustains their energy for continued reform.

In some cases, the group started with one specific focus and was already changing it. In other cases, a grand scheme was supplanted by something far smaller. In still others, small efforts produced a big yield, proving that ST/T can really produce something important and visible to the school. The focuses for work, then, are dynamic and must be understood in that way. As in every change process, people must see and appreciate, in some concrete way, what their hard work looks like when it yields results. This becomes a symbol of the collective effort of the school and sends a message that helps build further commitment.

In one school, four teachers working on a whole language program inspired others; in another, implementing a series of small but concrete changes signaled that something could be done about a chaotic lunchroom situation. Motivation to continue was encouraged by these and similar concrete efforts. By contrast, in schools where there was a lack of any visible change despite many meetings, the process appeared to bog down. Plans must include concrete and visible outcomes on the way to larger visions.

Similarly, seeing people talk together where there was once silence, or hearing people talk about educational matters where there used to be only gossip, become signs that something positive and motivating is happening. Without such evidence, people have a hard time working through the inevitable tensions and dilemmas. Seeing such evidence, others join in and add their efforts to what would otherwise be an overly burdensome task. Vision, goals, and projects are all important as they move the change process along.

Building Team Relationships

Tensions that are inevitably part of any team building process have been evident in the ST/T student-centered restructuring effort. First, there are the ever-present problems of interpersonal relations. The Cincinnati Elementary School team, for example, started with doubts as to each others' motives for membership. As one team member described the initial skepticism: "Maybe they were there to feather their own nests, you know?" As a consequence, communication was poor or lacking, as pointed out by another team member: "People aren't always saying what you think at first..." Moreover, even when misunderstood, confused by, or even offended at others' statements, members (as they told us later) did not seek clarification or share their feelings. Misperceptions of ill will developed, arguments became more dogged, helpless depression and the blaming of others for one's difficulties began to grow. Finally, things were brought to a head at the weekend retreat. The team's own communication problems were aired for the first time and worked out. In the growing atmosphere of honest exchange, old misunderstandings were cleared up and new standards for discourse were developed. Finally, and for the first time, real alliances around a shared vision developed.

Second, there are the particular problems of forming a team out of people who, for years, have been used to an entirely different, and far more hierarchical, form of governance. The ST/T teams included several people who had formal leadership roles in the school (such as the principal and chapter leader), but the purpose was to build a schoolwide focus for work that involved others in leadership as well. Teachers and parents had to feel that they were being listened to and, in some cases, had to become ready to speak up. Some were not sure they were full members of the team and were not ready to make decisions. Others were not ready to participate in the team's leadership functions. Training helped, through the meeting-by-meeting reassignment of discussion-leadership roles (convener, observer, reflector), but shared decision making requires *dispersed* leadership that carries on beyond the reach of such props. The ST/T project took the attitude that such dispersed leadership can and must be learned; without exception, every ST/T team achieved that goal.

The initial phase of building an effective working group requires that participants actively engage in learning to work together. The ST/T teams demonstrated that this could be accomplished. Teachers, having long been on the receiving end, learned to take responsibility for decisions, while principals and chapter leaders learned to feel comfortable without controlling all decisions. The learning process included attending to self-interest, particularly through speaking up when in disagreement; coping with fears of loss of control, particularly through investing trust in and having patience with the consensual decision-making process; gaining facilitation skills through taking turns as "facilitator of the day" under the eye of the trainers; and assuming leadership and responsibility in the discussion and decision making process.

The tension could be described as working out how to engage the teachers in taking control and how to disengage the more traditional leaders. Each principal, for example,

handled the delegation according to his or her own preferred style. Some reported that they intentionally stayed away from team meetings which they would have liked to attend, if not lead, so that members could operate unaided: "But if I'm present they keep looking to me to make the decisions." Some happily took part in consensual decision making with all its frustrations of pace and personality. At least one went right on making most decisions after suitable discussion by the team. Few principals seemed ill at ease with or negatively judgmental about the ST/T process, and no team members spoke bitterly of promises denied by an overweening hierarchy. Due credit must be given to the clarity of the facilitators' mission and the strength of the training and guidance they provided on the way to accomplishing this goal. But the deeper lesson concerns the capacities of both teachers and administrators to adaptively and responsibly assume shared leadership roles toward the goal of better schooling.

Linking the Team to the School

Beyond the team's collective functioning comes its linkage with the school and its recruitment and socialization of new members. Once a functioning "in group" has begun to be created, that group learns a tremendous amount about itself, the change process, interpersonal dynamics, and a host of other things. But how does that group find ways to link to and provide leadership for the whole school? How does that group help stimulate the whole school to take on initiatives that make a difference to students?

Communication between ST/T teams and their schools was an ongoing source of difficulty for almost all concerned, as it is apt to be with new groups attempting to develop a consensus. In general, though, those teams that took care to act from a mandate and to keep others informed of their efforts saw many of their projects welcomed and most of their efforts appreciated. Those teams that paid less attention to communication risked seeing their projects rejected and themselves dismissed as "elitist."

Schools tried many strategies to move the rest of the staff to join the team, but results were rarely better than mixed. Many teachers remained ignorant of or indifferent to the teams' efforts, and some were frankly uninterested in shaking things up. Most teams, however, experienced a steady growth in influence.

Most teams published minutes of their team meetings for the rest of the school or gave reports at regular faculty meetings. Those who did not attempt even this much, or who gave up the practice after initial efforts, were often increasingly misunderstood and sharply criticized. Most teams adopted the strategy of creating subcommittees to deal with different areas such as discipline or academic life, leaving the main team to function as a communication center. One school came to call this larger team the "stirring committee," because that term had just the kind of tone that they were trying to build.

Indeed the most powerful strategy was used by teams that saw themselves first as responsible for learning from and speaking to the rest of the school, rather than making

decisions. Members of such teams took care to represent the various constituencies in the school and were responsible for reporting to and carrying messages from them to the team. Such teams exercised leadership, but they worked with rather than on their colleagues' practices and wishes. Linkage was a difficult problem for all teams, but most found some success in addressing these tensions in their own ways despite recurrent patches of conflict and misunderstanding. Though persistently difficult, linking the team to the school is a necessity and a practical possibility.

Outside Facilitation

The ST/T schools had available to them the services of TCC facilitators with an open-ended time commitment and, most important, a mandate as broad as the restructuring tasks. The overwhelming response of all who came in contact with these individuals was that their services were indispensible. A lesson already known is that outside facilitation by skilled, sensitive, and experienced people is a powerful intervention in any restructuring effort. Understanding what facilitators do, what their dilemmas are, what they need to carry on this work, and what they learn can provide us with additional and important lessons.

The purpose of this facilitation was to foster school change for the benefit of children; the primary means to that end was to help teams improve both the process and the content of their efforts, exercise leadership, and take full responsibility for their work. The new roles and relationships required were difficult for the facilitators to learn, as they were called on to mute their didactic expertise, relinquish their directive impulses, and instead help others to develop the necessary knowledge and skills. Further, although facilitators were also asked to provide guidance as teams sought access to knowledge and resources, they were somehow to do this without being prescriptive, heavy-handed, or dominating.

We have learned from previous restructuring efforts in business and education that an important aspect of a facilitator's job is to help the group avoid "group-think," a tendency to compromise and to evade difficult issues in the early stages of group development:

> A skilled "facilitator" helps the group resist the centrifugal forces that otherwise defeat consensus. The facilitator ensures that every idea, even unpopular ones, get a fair examination; that the group does not rush to judgment by giving insufficient attention to controversial issues; that personalities do not overshadow reasoning; that the group develops a solution rather than a problem statement (Rosow and Zager, 1989, p. 52).

In keeping with this, the facilitators had to decide when to intervene and when to wait, when to encourage and prod and when to observe, when to question and when to inform. Their generally shared sense was that a facilitator "listens and knows when to jump in, has the strength to jump in, and the smarts to wait to know when." But this ideal, as enacted, led to inevitable questions of when to help structure the group and when to let the group struggle and create its own structure, when to tell or when to wait to be asked, when

to lead by putting into words what others might be thinking and when to lead through silence.

The facilitators' job was a complex one, entailing many on-the-spot judgments about what would work best in a particular situation, decisions that were difficult to prepare for, difficult to summarize, and difficult to evaluate even by the person making them. Further, many of these activities had layers of meaning, and differing ones for the facilitator and the participants. Providing food for a meeting, deciding whether or not the time is right to ask a question, taking the initiative to provide direction based on research or experience, or deciding to hold back, all had different implications and consequences for the group's functioning each time and in each setting.

Balancing Process and Content. These facilitators struggled with process and content issues just like the teams. Perhaps the reasons are the same: the purpose of the project was to change schools for the better, but the process of the project made repeated demands, which had to be attended to if the purpose was to be forwarded. If anything, the facilitators were even more torn than the team members about how best to proceed and even less satisfied with whatever path they chose. Their guiding principle was: "We are neutral about the content [of the change under discussion], firm about the process." This was sometimes voiced as, "We are going to give you a way of working, but the content will be yours." In either case, the meaning was that one of the responsibilities of the facilitator was not to impose solutions on a team: "We don't say, 'Go with this program or goals!'" Instead, the facilitators worked to include as many participants' perspectives as possible in discussions. At times this included not only silent support but gatekeeping, and even giving voice to unexpressed opinions held by quieter members. Concerning the latter, the facilitators knew that as outsiders they were free from the constraints of local politics and sensitivities, and could sometimes raise issues that could not be voiced by insiders. As one facilitator put it, "I try to be an objective outsider who sometimes says what people are really thinking."

However, the facilitators were not entirely comfortable within this corral either: "We facilitate not just the process, but change. If we don't, then those who say we just care about the process are proven *right*!" Another added, "We have to keep in mind that the process is just a tool to get to the product." As a result, they struggled with the role, acknowledging that no human being could ever be entirely neutral, worrying what to do if a team should be leaning toward choices that seemed educationally unsound, conscious that there could be no absolute answers to their dilemma.

Maintaining Neutrality. The facilitators were all veteran teachers with strong opinions on every issue raised by the teams; but they had the mandate to facilitate the teams' work rather than lead it. In matters of substance, facilitators were to remain silent except when intervening to help the team members work together more effectively. Nevertheless, no human *feels* entirely neutral in the presence of a heated discussion about issues of real importance, and when a facilitator did intervene, the effect was often to help one side of the discussion at the expense of another. The facilitators, then, were never sure how to help the

group toward its goals while maintaining neutrality, or even whether their last effort to help did indeed maintain neutrality. There was no one best path of behavior to follow with different teams, or even on different occasions with the same team; any action taken was apt to have multiple and divergent consequences and be open to varying interpretations.

A second, related issue is whether it is always desirable for the facilitator to act in a neutral fashion. What is the appropriate role, for example, when the group is stuck in depression or disagreement? Group development might best be served through keeping one's silence, but such a choice might be taken at the expense of progress toward substantive school change. Similarly, suppose that the group is planning a change based on their experience as teachers, but not on "best practice" as the facilitator knows it from research and training. Neutrality would call for silence, but the interests of students might call for the facilitator to intervene.

And what if the facilitator sees the current discussion taking a direction that is likely to be hurtful to one of the members? Once the blow is struck, time and attention will have to be paid to both first aid and healing; the team's effectiveness as consensual decision makers may well be set back. And if interpersonal conflict has already begun, how long should the group be left to work out its difficulties? And when should its conflict be managed through intervention? To speak strongly at such times is to abandon neutrality in favor of leadership.

Learning a New Craft. A third difficulty was that of learning new skills. These facilitators were learning a new craft, and learning it on the job. As one put it, "ST/T was a superb learning experience," words echoed by many others. During the first year of the ST/T project, the facilitators learned their job mostly by doing it -- with the help of training and rehearsal sessions right before or right after the teams' training sessions (Regional Laboratory, 1989).

To make this even more difficult, teams, like individuals, have personalities and build different cultures. This required the facilitators to deal with the nuances of their particular sites' cultures, even as they attempted to develop more universal process tools to help the team grow.

The facilitators could tell that they were doing a reasonably good job, or not, in a given moment; but like beginning teachers, they were hungry for knowledge of general principles. How does one learn when to intervene and when to keep silent? What strategies are most useful to build leadership on the team? Are there any general principles? With the help of their trainers, they began to find answers, but retained the sense that their day-to-day experiences called for immediate responses to changing and unclear circumstances.

Dealing with the Hierarchy. Several facilitators spoke of problems dealing with people in traditional positions of authority in the school, such as the principal, the assistant principal, or the chapter leader. On occasion this may have been due to genuinely difficult people, but

a larger issue was the facilitators' sense of mission. They had worked for the UFT's Teacher Centers Consortium for many years and were powerful and experienced proponents of teacher leadership. This was *their* project, and most had deep emotional investments in seeing shared decision making take root and bear fruit. Thus, they experienced significant inner conflict at those one or two sites where the teachers on the team made comfortable arrangements with supervisory-level team members who tended to make the final decisions. Such arrangements were contrary to the beliefs and the larger mission of the facilitators -- but their mandate was to help each team function well in its own ways. They were constrained to keep their complaints to themselves. They did not raise objections in public even if they believed that a hierarchical leader was blocking full implementation of the project, but they carried the burden of such chosen silence. The lesson, and it is perhaps a key to school restructuring through shared decision making, is that if one wishes to empower people, one must occasionally grant them the room to behave in ways which one thinks are less than ideal. The larger lesson is that if one has the strength of character to restrain the desire to "make them do it right," then -- in their own fashion, according to their own needs, and through making their own mistakes -- they are capable of accomplishing great things.

Dealing with Race, Culture, and Individual Differences. A fifth source of conflict can be traced to the problems of helping people deal with the dynamics of racial and cultural diversity, elements of daily urban life that Americans have had great difficulty addressing. In two schools, for example, some teachers thought that differences in the team and in the school as a whole were race-related. They chose to speak privately to their facilitators about these beliefs but never raised their concerns publicly. Those facilitators felt the burden of carrying the secret or of finding ways to address the issues without betraying any confidence. In at least one other school, beliefs about race-related issues did eventually get raised, and the facilitators had then to help people untangle and distinguish between class and racially-based values, strong individual differences concerning how best to raise children, and lingering problems of racial relations among the staff. The lesson is that these issues, which are ruled out of normal school discourse, can be productively addressed by people of good will. Value-laden conflicts cannot ever be resolved by such discourse, but individual differences can be heard and respected, and worthwhile consensual action can be taken.

Results of Restructuring

The shared decision-making process was a powerful engine for positive change in educational practice. The teams' activities succeeded in creating better learning environments for their students. Examples are detailed in Chapter 2 and scattered throughout this report. They are the initial, incontrovertible evidence that school restructuring through shared decision making is a direction worthy of further investment and attention.

In addition, the ST/T team building gave both teachers and principals opportunities to see each other in a different light and helped to build more professional communities in the schools. As one principal remarked, "People are resourceful when treated like professionals. I have learned more about the tremendous reserve of talent on the faculty." Another said,

"I've learned that the people on the committee are wonderfully flexible and willing to help, whereas in the staff as a whole there's rumor milling and resentment between factions. The committee offers me a tremendous feedback mechanism and channel of communication with the staff."

Newfound respect for colleagues as individuals and as professionals was one result of engagement in shared decision making. One team member said, "Being on the committee brought people closer together as human beings. I saw the staff in a different way than before..." Teachers involved in the ST/T project reported powerful connections with their peers, with their students, and with the profession at large as a result of their team participation.

Perhaps most importantly, the ST/T project mobilized a group of talented people whose contributions had previously been limited by the traditional structure. Schools cannot be restructured in one year or two or perhaps even ten. So it is arguably most important of all that we create new structures that can impel the changes to come. In some cases, the team was seen as an instrument for this. Said one principal: "The team is an advisory group for making decisions at every level from computer programs to the clerical support budget. It has been instrumental in developing a peer tutoring program, in innovative textbook selection, in curriculum matters, and in the development of ungraded primary units."

Being on the team built teachers' individual senses of efficacy -- in their schools, in the district, and in the reform movement at large. The team's work thus gave teachers an opportunity not only to make decisions about a school program that was important to them, but became a powerful professionalizing experience. As one said, "We're part of a larger movement. We've been invited to speak to other schools and there's a feeling that educational reform is really coming. It's exciting."

The ST/T teams, their facilitators, and their colleagues attempted to restructure their schools on the foundation of the staff's most cherished values, and they faced the conflicts this entailed. In this they were hugely successful. One part of the message is that conflict is inevitable. The other is that it can be resolved. Rewarding collaborative action can be undertaken. One team member spoke eloquently of this:

> The main thing is that we've opened up the school to discussion of any and all problems. Everything is okay to talk about. Everyone is responsible, feels free. Previously it wasn't that way. Second, we've taken the live wires and put them in a place where they can function. Third, we've gotten commitments from people to solve problems. The "enablers," those who passively let problems go on and on and on, aren't so powerful any more.

The final lesson, then, is that building team relationships helps to broaden the respect teachers have for one another and builds commitment to their collective work and to the profession.

Chapter 5

Conclusions and Recommendations

Our early examination of Schools of Tomorrow...Today suggests that the project must be judged a significant success on at least three counts. First, as of the spring of 1990, every school had created a solid collaborative structure to carry on the work of restructuring; and this structure was reaching out beyond the decision making team to enhance the voice and collegiality of an ever-widening group of faculty and staff. Second, most of the schools had already initiated significant school-level or classroom-level changes, and all were building on their initial efforts to broaden the scope of their projects. Third, the heart of the ST/T process -- an effort to establish authentic communication among colleagues struggling to restructure educational practice -- was spreading and becoming institutionalized as TCC helped train facilitators for the nearly 200 New York City schools that had joined the Chancellor's school-based management and shared decision making (SBM/SDM) initiative.

School restructuring calls for genuine and collaborative discussion around value-laden issues, a process that must take place if there is to be any real change, but one that is generally ignored in schools. Perhaps the greatest benefit of the restructuring process in the ST/T schools was that it provided a forum for authentic discussion allowing for conflict resolution and collaborative decision making. Real talk is a prerequisite for meaningful action.

Among the tangible positive outcomes of the restructuring process in the ST/T schools were the following:

--Concrete, student-centered changes in curriculum and teaching strategies, expansion of extracurricular activities and special events involving parents and students outside of normal school hours, and the institution of more successful approaches to such aspects of school life as discipline and classroom management.

--The creation of a sense of hope and momentum within the faculty and, often, parent community, as long-standing concerns were aired and initiatives were launched to deal with them.

--The identification and mobilization of previously hidden strengths, talents, and shared ideals among staff who began to seek out more opportunities to work together toward common goals.

--The strengthening of professional norms and institutional capacities for improvement, as faculty learned how to collaborate, deepened their professional expertise, and made time -- before and after school hours, in the lunchroom and faculty room, during breaks and prep periods -- to talk about ways to improve teaching and learning for students.

As the research team examined the ST/T schools' progress after only two years of experimentation with shared decision making and school-initiated reforms, a great many early lessons about school restructuring emerged, which could be of help to other schools and districts engaged in similar efforts. This chapter highlights some of these lessons and generalizes from some of the specific issues faced by the ST/T schools.

First, there are lessons about what to expect when change of this kind is attempted -- what the usual and often necessary challenges will be when major shifts in governance and school organization are pursued, and what important issues will likely require attention in training sessions, in team meetings, and in resource allocation decisions. Second, there are lessons about constructive ways that these schools found to meet these challenges -- lessons that provide ideas, though not prescriptions, for successful change. Finally, there are implications about how environmental and policy forces influence school restructuring efforts. We will draw from these early lessons to suggest how external agents interested in supporting change might do so. Clearly, systemwide restructuring is needed if school-level reform is to occur and survive.

Lessons about the Change Process

Any kind of change is difficult; major change in an institution as complex as a school -- which is the focal point for the diverse goals, conceptions, and temperaments of hundreds of students, parents, teachers, administrators, and members of a broader community -- is extraordinarily complicated. Those who bravely undertake to enact profound reconfigurations of school life will be better armed, and perhaps comforted during the unavoidable difficult moments, to know that some aspects of the change experience are fairly universal. These are some of the themes that emerged from the ST/T schools:

Conflict is a necessary part of change. While efforts to democratize schools do not in and of themselves create conflicts, they allow (and to be successful, *require*) previously hidden problems, issues, and disagreements to surface. Consequently, staff involved in school restructuring must be prepared to elicit, manage, and resolve conflicts, as well as to listen, communicate, and find consensus among diverse perceptions and points of view. Ultimately, a self-renewing school will find new processes and norms that promote continual, constructive conflict as a stimulus to continual, constructive change.

New behaviors must be learned. Change requires new relationships and new behaviors. These new behaviors do not occur automatically. The change process must include building communication and trust, enabling leadership and initiatives to emerge, and teaching

techniques of communication and collaboration to those who have not had any prior opportunity to learn or practice them.

Team building must extend to the entire school. As SDM teams work out their internal relationships, they must also consciously work out relationships between the team and the rest of the school's staff. Issues of exclusiveness and imagined elitism may surface as the team seeks to represent and lead the school community. The problems of communication, ownership, initiative, leadership, and conflict resolution that must be confronted within the new governance structure will also arise when ideas and projects begin to touch the lives and work of other faculty. The building of whole-school relationships must be given ongoing care and attention.

Process and content are interrelated. The processes a team uses in going about its work are as important as the content of educational changes it attempts, and the two influence each other. The ultimate substance of a project, including the time and resources devoted to it, often depends on the degree of trust and openness built up within the team and between the team and the school. At the same time, the usefulness and visibility of the project chosen will influence future commitments from and relationships among the staff and others involved. Both parts of the equation -- interpersonal dynamics and the development and implementation of sound educational ideas -- require attention, care, and feeding.

Lessons about Promising Strategies

As the ST/T schools confronted the challenges of change, many of them developed, stumbled on, or learned from their facilitators successful strategies for moving ahead. These strategies may not be universally applicable -- indeed, each school's "right answers" are sure to be context-dependent -- but they suggest directions to be explored, ideas to be tried on for size and perhaps altered for better fit.

"Finding time" for change enhances the prospects for success. Chief among the many resources required for change is time -- time for working out new relationships, developing a vision, establishing objectives, and pursuing new projects. To be successful, "finding time" must be an early focus of the restructuring school. There were real benefits for the schools that restructured their schedules early on to provide time for teams to meet -- both SDM teams and other faculty, such as grade-level or departmental teams involved in implementing the change.

A big vision with small building blocks can create consensus and progress. Most teams started by articulating a common vision of what they wanted their schools to become, then established goals embodying that vision, and then decided on a specific project as a focus. Each element of the triad was found to be important: the vision pulls people together so they know what is at stake, while goals and projects provide a concrete focus for what otherwide might be grand, but empty, words. These smaller building blocks help focus energy and affirm that real changes are taking place. A failure in any one of these elements generally

led to a collapse of the effort and a need to regroup.

Manageable initial projects with wide involvement and visible, concrete results sustain the restructuring process. Because the process of change is so difficult, incentives are needed to sustain the necessary intensity of effort. One such incentive is evidence that the effort is paying off. As in every change process, people benefit from seeing and appreciating, in a concrete way, what their hard work looks like when it is put into action. In addition, a project that involves and benefits many sectors of the school community can publicize the value of the restructuring effort, engage the energies of more faculty, and establish a sense of community beyond the SDM committee itself. Where schools were able to find and implement such a project, it became a symbol of their collective efforts and sent a message that helped to build further commitment.

Facilitators, along with opportunities for training and for retreats, are critical components of successful restructuring efforts. Teams working collaboratively benefit tremendously from the presence of skilled outside facilitators. All the teams spoke highly and with profound thanks of the facilitation they received. It was critical in helping them learn how to relate to one another within a new governance structure -- how to communicate, take leadership, focus on tasks, reach agreement, make decisions, and keep on track. The facilitators were also important in connecting them to training opportunities for the curricular and other school changes they envisioned. Finally, the opportunity to go on retreats -- to reflect on and work through knotty issues without the pressures of time -- immeasurably strengthened the restructuring efforts and literally saved some of them.

Implications Concerning External Supports for School Restructuring

Sometimes the recognition that meaningful reform occurs at the school level leads to a romantic view of the school as the primary, or even sole, agent of change, and to policy proposals that place the full onus of reform on principals and teachers. But this study affirms what many others have noted: the influences on schools of district or state-level policies and practices are profound and often decisive. Restructuring schools without changing the environment in which they work cannot result in long-lasting reforms.

Some environmental and policy changes helped the ST/T schools. In fact, the entire ST/T effort was in one sense an externally-generated engine for change, activated by the Teacher Centers Consortium, which is partially funded by New York State. In a few cases, district officials provided further monetary or moral support. And it was a citywide contract provision (School-Based Option) that provided the mechanism for implementing changes designed by the teams. These supports helped schools to achieve their goals.

More often, though, ST/T schools found that external authorities failed to support or actually hindered their efforts. While urging schools to become more child-centered, flexible, and forward-looking, the agencies that direct schools' resources and requirements must do the same. This study leads to several recommendations for policymakers,

administrators, and other outside change agents who would like to support school restructuring:

Examine district and state regulations to remove policy conflicts. Our current school regulatory structures were created for a time in which schools aimed more for procedural uniformity than for practices responsive to student needs. Many ST/T schools, therefore, experienced policy collision when they sought to institute more child-centered practices based on collegial decision making. They found that state Regents requirements, district curriculum guidelines, and other existing directives worked against the reforms they were seeking to institute. Unless waivers of currently excessive constraints are made available -- or the policies themselves changed -- many desired and needed reforms will be tabled.

Give SBM/SDM schools more authority -- as well as responsibility -- for controlling their own affairs. If restructured schools are to be held accountable for the results they achieve, they must also have the authority to make decisions about major aspects of school operations, including staffing and program offerings. This implies, too, that outside agents will not have unilateral authority to make and enforce decisions (such as the selection of a principal, the designation of faculty, or major changes in program offerings or school size) that directly affect school functioning, as was the case in several of the ST/T schools, which had to work around externally imposed constraints in order to implement their plans.

Find more flexible and proactive ways to support schools' change efforts. Money for school reform is not always available, especially in central city school districts. However, restrictive program guidelines often made available grant monies inaccessible to resource-starved schools. One school negotiated with a state agency until March for a grant that was to have begun in September. When it arrived, the team found it still could not be spent for the purpose they had requested and had to send the money back. Other schools found that available funds carried so many strings that they became nearly worthless for addressing locally-identified needs, or that the hassles of administering the funds outweighed the benefits. Still other schools found that bureaucratic inattention -- a failure on the part of district offices to respond to questions or requests -- impaired their efforts. Supports for local school restructuring will require changes in the ways other parts of the educational system see their functions -- as enforcers or as servants of the public and facilitators of school change.

Establish ongoing supports, networks, and learning opportunities for restructuring schools. ST/T staff noted over and over again how much they wished they could talk with, visit, and learn from other schools engaged in the kinds of changes they were attempting. Many asked explicitly to be part of a supportive network for change, one that could provide inspiration and reassurance as well as answers to educational, interpersonal, and logistical dilemmas. While the facilitators provided a partial bridge to the outside world, participants continually voiced the need for even more training and facilitation, as well as for affiliation with companion schools launched on similar journeys.

Clearly new knowledge and understandings about both relationships and educational possibilities are essential for changes in practice. Staff in ST/T schools realized that serious curriculum and governance changes required in-depth learning that could not be acquired in single, one-day workshops. Longer-term, more sustained staff development opportunities were much requested. As one of the case study respondents noted about the spill-over effects of school restructuring:

> Now, faculty read articles...people are making unsolicited curricular suggestions, people are asking to be sent to conferences, asking for the opportunity to give up a day of their own time in order to learn something new...People are beginning to talk publicly and professionally about the process of educating children.

Perhaps the key lesson of school restructuring is that shared governance, based on authentic communication and genuine collaboration, can be the engine that creates the kinds of learner-centered schools that schoolpeople want and children need.

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