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ABSTRACT
              A study examined teacher stereotypes as a factor in
teacher resistance to change in schools. Based on a poststructuralist
perspective, the study views teachers as both objects and subjects of
reform and argues that research informs practice in ways that often
result in socially constructed stereotypes. Methodology included a
literature review, 129 teacher interviews, and 20 followup
interviews. The sample included educators from Oregon schools that
were in the following stages of implementing democratic participatory
practices: infancy (under 3 years); early (3-4 years); midstage (4-5
years); and advanced (6-7 years). Findings indicate that the
stereotyping of older, experienced teachers was equally prevalent in
schools, despite the stage of implementation. Second, midlife
teachers perceived older, experienced teachers as resisters; however,
older, experienced teachers described themselves as avid questioners
but supporters of change. Third, older experienced teachers
frequently engaged in a learning experience with a new, young
teacher. Fourth, increased participatory practices did not
necessarily modify stereotyping behavior. Finally, current age and
stage theories do not match current teacher demographics. The data
show a dramatically changing work force in schools. Implications of
this difference when considering teachers' attitudes toward change
are described. One table of participants' characteristics is
included. (Contains 40 references.) (LMI)

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Resistance to Change: Fact or Stereotype

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Resistance to Change: Fact or Stereotype

*Educational change depends on what teachers do and think --
- it's as simple and as complex as that.*

Fullan (1991)

Change and resistance to change are not neglected subjects. Because reform and restructuring activities are currently everyday lived experiences for people in schools across the country, educators are faced with overwhelming messages about change. As the reform and restructuring efforts intesify, these same educators become both subject and object to the reconstruction of a conversation about what is happening in public schools.

Our schools traditionally house a population of autonomous teachers. Contradicting this norm, many legislators are currently directing schools of the 21st century to focus on decentralization and site-based decision-making. The resulting clash of internal forces such as site and personal goals with external forces such as state-mandated reform intensifies the complexity of life in schools. Because too often we focus on Karl Weick's (1976) concept of the school as being loosely coupled, we tend to ignore the power of the organizational norms. Organizational development specialists, Richard Schmuck and Phil Runkel (1985) state that "norms hold together the organization's patterns of behavior and are most difficult to alter because the change may cause stress, involve topics rarely discussed openly, and may conflict with norms already in place" (p. 19). Formal norms, such as those created by state rules and regulations, tend to meet the most resistance and are the slowest to implement. The very nature of these forces suggest that the unstable conditions they create add to the complexity of an individual's attitude toward change.

Educators in the state of Oregon are one example of this complex conversation. Their experiences range from voluntary local site participation in school improvement activities under the auspices of the 1985 House Bill 2020 to mandated restructuring requirements for all schools under the 1991 House Bill 3565. HB 2020, Oregon's School Improvement Act, invited local sites to develop school improvement activities but required site-based decision-making practices. In contrast, HB 3565 requires local sites to engage in site-based decision-making to implement state-mandated changes. The study reported here documents the lived experiences of teachers who are both subject and object to a school reform effort.

Background and Purpose of Study

This study was initiated through disruption. The questions are based on what Sieber (1982), refers to as the "serendipitous findings" of two separate case study inquiries that were designed to understand what is happening among educators in schools engaged in planned change. The authors, both long-term public school educators, recently completed studies in Oregon schools that examined attitudes of teachers engaged in state-mandated collaboration (Perry, 1993) and democratic behaviors of educators engaged in participatory practices (Rusch, 1992). Both studies yielded serendipitous data about age and experience that suggested a less-than-adequate understanding of change and resistance to change in restructuring schools. Listening to various participants in dynamic and interactive school sites prompted us to question how previous knowledge about change and adult career development influenced educators' perspectives of resistance. The data also implied that what educators know about change and resistance to change represents a reification of stereotypes of people at certain ages and stages of a teaching career. This reification of knowledge may actually represent the biggest barrier to organizational change, particularly in schools where democratic or participatory practices are emergent. We wondered if the stereotyping of "avid questioners" as resisters was limiting the exploitation of valued experience which could benefit the entire organization. We were puzzled that even though experienced staff knew they were regarded as resisters, they still expressed great

enthusiasm for change. Current knowledge about change, adult career development, and resistance to change did not address these disparities. This study then was designed to explore the relationship between experience and perceived resistance.

To examine the lived experience of people actively engaged in change, we turned to a review of post-structuralism by Cleo Cherryholmes (1988). His review points out that, as educators, we are both subjects in discourse and practice and subject to discourse and practice. Following the thinking of Foucault, he notes that researchers frequently define the behaviors that educators engage in and use their power as researchers to produce knowledge to reinforce and legitimize those behaviors as forms of truth. He notes:

> What subjects and researcher say (write) is located in an inherited context of time and place enforced by power relationships. What is said and written can be criticized. There are alternative interpretations and stories to tell. (p. 120)

This study represents an alternative interpretation of change and resistance to change. We believe administrators must understand teachers' personal factors influencing their attitudes toward change. In addition, they must be aware of how external and internal organizational forces are perceived by the members of their organizations before planned, systematic change can occur. What must be remembered above all is that how teachers respond to change ultimately shapes outcomes in the classroom as well as in their personal and professional lives.

Because this study is based on post-structuralist notions of criticism, we take the position that research informs practice in ways that frequently results in socially constructed stereotypes of people. In other words, as people in schools work together to change their beliefs and practices, what they understand about the construction of knowledge and the uses of knowledge can and does inform how they view their own and other's behaviors. Educators, and specifically administrators, are privy to research, theory, and professional messages about change and resistance to change. These data, both formal and informal, construct and reinforce embedded notions about people and their behaviors. Clearly, then, a study of resistance to change in schools must include an in-depth look at what factors influence teachers' attitudes, and if they are grounded in fact or clouded by preconceived stereotypes.

Methodology

The study was designed to combine theory, research, and praxis in a descriptive, heuristic way. Because we believe that teachers are the front line implementers of change in schools, inquiry procedures were selected to give them an opportunity to exercise their fundamental democratic right to have their voices heard about things affecting their workplace. At the present time, naturalistic procedures are frequently preferred by researchers trying to gain understanding of the internal dynamics of people within systems (Blase, 1991; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Schon, 1991; Smith, 1987, 1990; Srivastva & Cooperrider, 1986).

The initial studies that formed the foundation of this inquiry were similarly grounded in design, research strategies, theoretical perspective, and data analysis. Each was a case-study design that combined qualitative and quantitative techniques. In each study, participants completed a questionnaire that included perceptual questions about restructuring activities and demographic questions about age and experience.

Rusch's (1992) study, focusing on schools engaged in long-term restructuring, was designed to locate included and marginalized voices among people engaged in shared decision-making and participatory practices. Working from the premise that there is a dialectical relationship between the values of equity, inclusion, and participatory activities in schools, Rusch examined the social construction of democratic values that governed who

got into the restructuring conversation and who was excluded using the actual lived experience of people in the settings. To gain insight into staff perceptions of participation, influence, and inclusion, her study combined a school-wide sociogram interview, a demographic survey, and content analysis of multiple documents. Sociogram interview data and demographic survey data were analyzed to locate patterns of included voices, patterns of excluded voices, and patterns of totally missing voices. Data included analyses based on age and experience in education. The data were then combined to examine the dialectical relationship or the congruence between the espoused values of participation and the actual participatory experiences of people in the restructuring conversation.

Perry (1993), concentrating on schools new to restructuring, examined how state-mandated collaboration was viewed by teachers in a district with a traditionally low commitment to democratic practices. Her inquiry focused on factors that most influenced teachers' attitudes toward forced collaboration and how those attitudes differ among young, early-career teachers (21-26 years old with 5 or less years' experience; mid-life, mid-career teachers (36-43 years old) with at least 15 years' experience; and older experienced teachers (50+ year old) within 5 years of retirement. A questionnaire was used to determine teachers' attitudes toward select participatory concepts in Oregon's Educational Act for the 21st Century (also known as House Bill 3565 and the "Katz" Bill). Interview questions emerged from the major trends identified in the questionnaire responses. Data were cross-analyzed by participants' age, length of service in the school district, and length of time as a teacher. Findings seemed to show that teachers felt individual growth was the greatest factor influencing a person's attitude toward change, however, they labeled older teachers close to retirement as most likely to resist change.

To bring congruence to the separate inquiries, the researchers triangulated their review of the existing data with an extensive review of current theory and research on resistance, age and stage theory, and stereotyping. Existing qualitative and quantitative data from both studies (Perry, 1993 & Rusch, 1992) was reanalyzed based on this theoretical review and a series of follow-up interviews was conducted to add strength to the findings.

Both qualitative and quantitative data were used for analyses. Age and experience demographics for each participant were compiled from survey forms, but the most comprehensive data were the transcriptions of 129 interviews conducted during 1992. Initial analysis of interview data included coding of all comments related to personal views of change and attributed views of change. Data were then coded for elements that described personal views of resistance and attributed views of resistance. Finally, these data were sorted based on respondents' age and experience and reviewed for commonality and consistency. The patterns and themes that emerged from these analyses framed the questions for the 20 follow-up interviews conducted in 1993. This combining of qualitative and quantitative inquiry procedures is promoted by Todd Jick (1983) who maintains that, in addition to building confidence in results, a triangulation based on multiple methods can also bring out divergent viewpoints.

Limitations of Study

This study has three methodological constraints. First, data gathering strategies, though similar, were not designed or controlled in a parallel fashion. Variations in modes of data gathering (telephone versus personal interviews), specific content areas (collaboration versus equity), questionnaire designs (semantic differential versus researcher-initiated), and choice and formulation of interview questions (emergent versus pre-designed) made it difficult to build matching data sets. Second, because our sample represents a limited number of participants, further studies may uncover exceptions to our findings. Third, in both original studies, institutional constraints were imposed by the University of Oregon Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects which limited the criteria and method for including and excluding subjects.

Research Participants

Uncovering divergent viewpoints was a goal of this study and the selection of participants was informed by the stage theories espoused by Loevinger (1976), Neugarten (1980), and Steffy (1989). In other words, going beyond the personal attributes of the age and experience of our respondents, we also looked at the organizational stages of development when selecting participants. The schools invited to participate in this study represented several phases of a change effort, from infancy to adolescence. Our goal was to locate all possible variations in the conversation about change and resistance to change by talking to teachers and principals at various stages in the implementation of participatory practices for restructuring their schools.
Participants included educators who were in the infancy stage (less than 3 years), early stage (3-4 years), mid stage (4-5 years), and advanced stages (6-7 years) of democratic participatory practices.

Initial Stages of Democratic Participatory Practices
Infancy Stage: 330 teachers invited to participate in this study were employed in a large Southern Oregon rural school district. Of the 179 teachers who responded to the initial questionnaire, 34 volunteered to be interviewed. Their district covers 900 square miles and is known for its conservatism and limited financial support from the community. There are approximately 6,000 students enrolled in 16 schools: 3 high, 3 middle, and 10 elementary. Hellegman, an instructor of School Business Management at the University of Oregon, described this district as a "classic example of a system that has been in an educational stranglehold because of an inadequate tax base available to support its schools" (personal communication, November 3, 1992). Recently they have been removed from Oregon's financial safety net established to keep the schools open, and brought into equitable financial status with other districts in Oregon. Such a giant rise in funding as well as the 1992 hiring of an out-of-state, energetic female Superintendent has set the stage for the possibility of enormous school change in this traditionally staid community. Besides being ultra-conservative, past district leaders have had a reputation among educators throughout the state of managing school programs in an authoritarian style. They are seen as strong-willed autocratic leaders who would not collaborate with subordinates nor value their input in decision making.

Early to Advanced Stages of Democratic Participatory Practices
The other schools in this study were a part of a seven-site network in Oregon, funded by the U.S. Office of Education as one of twelve projects in the nation examining restructuring efforts in public schools. The schools in this network have 3 to 8 years invested in restructuring efforts and actively use some form of site-based leadership teams for initiating and implementing their reform efforts. Schools were selected from the Network for this inquiry based on the length of time they have practiced site-based decision-making and the researcher's perception of their developmental stage.

Early Stages: A small (217 students) K-5 elementary school located in a district of 7700 students was selected to represent educators involved in the early stages of democratic participatory practices. The district, located in a university community and urban center of 45,000 people, is still viewed by many patrons as a rural district. Rapidly changing demographics turned a predicted closure into growth of a classroom per year since 1988. The staff has engaged in site-based decision-making and active restructuring for 3 years. Personal interviews were conducted in 1992 with 16 of 24 staff members. The group included 77.8% of the certified staff, 83% of the classified staff, and the one administrator in the building. Two teachers and the principal participated in follow-up interviews in 1993.

Mid Stages: This stage is represented by a comprehensive 9-12 high school with 1500 students in a city of 150,000 people. The school is located in the middle of an older well-established neighborhood and draws its student population from a variety of ethnic and class backgrounds. The school is in its fifth year of site-based decision-making for the purpose of restructuring. Staff members refer to their reform effort as "becoming an alternative school in a tuxedo." Personal interviews were conducted in 1992 with 74 of the 108 staff members including 79.4% of the certificated staff members, 100% of the administrative staff, and 60% of the classified staff. Follow-up interviews were conducted in 1993 with eight teachers and two administrators.

Advanced Stage: A comprehensive 9-12 high school in a university community of 100,000 people was chosen to represent educators involved in the advanced stage of democratic participatory practices. The majority of the 990 students enrolled in this school come from an economically depressed and poorly educated population. Seven years ago the school implemented a site-planning committee that flattened out the decision-making structure of the school. Staff members describe their school as a "learning organization" pointing to persistent action research and internal staff development as the foundation for a dramatically changing environment for students. Initial interviews were conducted with four staff members and the principal in 1992. Six staff members and the principal participated in follow-up interviews in 1993.

Review of Research and Theory

Understanding Resistance To Change In Schools
Keith (1991) points out three main barriers to change implementation in schools: organizational, managerial, and employee. She states that organizational barriers can be philosophical and structural. The philosophical barriers are set by the values and beliefs of the leadership while the structural barriers relate to reward and punishment systems that allow or discourage people to express their opinions toward change. Keith explains that managerial barriers may come from a lack of training as a change agent or a fear of loss of power, especially when change involves participatory decision making. She adds that employees may view change as added work or feel inadequately trained to perform the new tasks.
    Corbett, Firestone, and Rossman's (1987) found that resistance depends on the fit between a school's culture and the proposed change. Their research indicates that "change is greeted with suspicion and reluctance when expectations for behavior embedded in a new practice, policy, or program do not coincide with existing conceptions of the way school life is or should be. . . . Teachers have the reputation of being inherently and universally stubborn when facing change" (p. 36).
    Duttweiler and Mutchler's (1990) survey of educational practitioners identified eight attributes that might be conceived as resistance to change: (1) fear of taking risks, (2) fear of losing power, (3) resistance to changing roles and responsibilities, (4) lack of trust, (5) lack of definition and clarity, (6) inadequate or inappropriate resources, (7) lack of skills, and (8) lack of hierarchical support. Resistance to changing roles and responsibilities followed by dependence on norms and role expectations rated highest as respondents' major difficulty in trying to change traditional behavior when initiating shared decision making.
    Senge (1990) believes that attitudes toward change may be hampered by an individual's "perceived lack of relevance, fear of failure . . . or perceived threat to the status quo" (p. 345). Williams' (1990) research supports Senge's theory. She studied the attitudes of 320 teachers towards the Illinois School Reform Act of 1988 and found that more experienced teachers surveyed were (1) "most anxious and had the lowest endorsement" of the act, (2) felt "they have the most to lose by the new policy" and (3)

perceived "reform as a process to motivate them to early retirement" (p. 12). On the other hand, Buher and Roebuck (1987) studied 215 Texas teachers' attitudes toward legislative reform and found "the overall effects of the legislated reforms were perceived to be negative regardless of differentiation by grade level, gender, years of experience, or locale.

Factors Influencing Attitudes Toward Change

Change is highly complex. Theorists do not agree on whether personal or organizational factors most influence attitudes toward change. Some think personal factors such as age-related phases, individual growth stages, or individual attitudinal awareness factors are most influential. Others think organizational forces are the strongest determinants on how individuals view change. Considering the wide range of possibilities, it is no wonder that individuals' attitudes are misunderstood and often misconstrued as resistance to change.

Age-Related Phases

Adult developmental theorists such as Erikson, Levinson, and Gould argue that age is a critical personal factor that shapes attitudes. They regard phases of development as a definable pattern of events linked to a person's age.

Erikson (1968) describes a stream of predictable internal conflicts that an individual moves through while experiencing eight distinct life cycle phases. He saw young adulthood (in ones 20s and 30s) as a phrase of intimacy versus isolation. According to Erikson, maturity occurs in ones 40s and 50s where the issue of generativity versus self-absorption is critical. He concludes his age phase theory with the category of "old age" which he designates for individuals over 60 who he sees as struggling with issues of integrity versus despair and disgust.

Levinson (1978) studied transitions of 40 men in early, middle, and late adulthood. He points out the relationship between age and specific tasks in which men are typically involved. He reports that when the task was complete or no longer important, men move to the next age phase. The age-phase structures relevant to this study include: (1) Early Adulthood (22-28), (2) Settling Down (33-40), (3) Midlife transition (40-45), and (4) Middle Adulthood (50-60). Levinson believes that men in the Early Adulthood phase start to venture out into society and form a dream of what they wanted to become in the future. They usually model their career after a mentor who they see as having attained a dream similar to their own. As a man ages, he starts to settle down, moves away from the mentor relationship, and establishes himself as a mentor to younger men. During this period men are most concerned with establishing and advancing themselves in their careers. Levinson sees the Midlife transition as a period when men modify their dream, become concerned about unfulfilled potential, struggle with keeping their lives constant or moving in new directions, and become strongly aware of their own mortality. Daloz (1986) reflected on Levinson's midlife transition theory when he wrote:

> For many men the most dramatic transition, it [midlife] prompts us to reappraise out life, not simply against our dream as we did years before but against our whole life span, cast with growing sharpness against the backdrop of our death. The neglected parts of ourselves call out more loudly to be heard, and for many, a longing for wholeness begins to replace the ideal of perfection. (p. 56)

Moving from midlife transition to middle adulthood, Levinson found great difference in 50 to 60 year old men. Some "entered more deeply and richly into their lives than ever before; others seemed simply to be marking time until retirement; and still others seemed to find it a time of great pain, of 'constriction and decline'" (Daloz, p. 58). Judith Arin Krupp's (1986) research enhanced Levinson's theory by presenting data on how people at mid-life start to face their own mortality and question their self-worth.

Like Levinson, Roger Gould (1978) links age to specific characteristics people exhibit as they move through phases of their lives. Gould's theory focuses on how holding on to childhood assumptions can affect adult attitudes. He describes individuals aged 22 to 28 as being optimistic and confident. People in this young, early-career age group believe if they work hard, they will automatically be rewarded. As they venture away from the family circle into the work world, they continue to rely on a childhood assumption that their parents will provide them with strength, support, and security. Gould believes mid-life, mid-career people (ages 35 to 50) undergo a period of questioning and experience feelings of disillusionment. They try to cling to their childhood assumption that life is simple and controllable but are filled with unrest when they weigh their past aspirations with their current accomplishments. They look for stability in their work and increase their commitment to their job. A sense of urgency arises within them as they became aware of their own mortality. Gould warns that if people do not come to an understanding and shedding of childhood assumptions, they live out their lives "controlled by the impossible attempt to satisfy the magical expectations of a child's world" (p.78).

Levine (1989) synthesized the importance of age phase theories such as Erikson, Levinson, and Gould's as follows:

> [Age] phase theories offer a widened lens through which to view and understand human behavior. . . . identify issues . . . place development in context . . . emphasize the quality and frequency of developmental transitions . . . [and] help to explain the emotional swings of adulthood and the predictable times of loss and crisis. (p. 83)

Individual Growth Stages

The theorists who think age is not the independent factor in how people think or act are divided in two groups. One group (such as Piaget and Loevinger) argues that individuals move systematically through growth stages. The other group (such as Neugarten and Steffy) thinks systematic progression to growth stage movement does not necessarily exist.

In the 1950s Piaget introduced the theory that both children and adults view themselves and the world differently as they move through development stages. Loevinger (1976) enhanced Piaget's theory by considering ego as a basis for development stages. She wrote that at some point most adolescents experience an ego development that moves them from a Pre-social, Self-Protective stage to a Conformist stage where peer approval is an important issue. Oja (1980) suggests that adults who never advance beyond this stage "obey rules simply because they are group-accepted rules. . . . Personal emotions are expressed through cliches, stereotypes, and moralistic judgements" (p. 22). Loevinger contrasts the Conformist stage with the more developmentally advanced Conscientious stage where adults are more rational about rules and are able to internalize others' differences without stereotyping. At the next level, the Individualistic stage, she adds the increased ability to tolerate ambiguity.

Neugarten (1980), on the other hand, argues that personal growth happens at different rates among people making it hard to attach attitudes toward change to any particular age or individual growth stage. Her analysis focuses on people spending the first half of their lives thinking about and moving toward their future and the second half reflecting back and assessing how to live the rest of their lives to the fullest. Even though she speculates at what ages this forward and reflective thinking tends to occur, her main emphasis is that "choices and dilemmas do not sprout forth at ten-year intervals, and decisions are not made and then left behind as if they were merely beads on a chain" (p. 263).

Steffy (1989) developed a career stages model of classroom teachers on the same assumption. She identifies five stages teachers move through during their careers: anticipatory, expert, renewal, withdrawal, and exit. The first and last stages refer to a

teacher's entrance to and leaving of the profession. The middle three stages depend on the teachers' motivation and competence level. Like Neugarten, Steffy does not see adults moving through stages on a pre-set continuum. She believes late career teachers are not necessarily master teachers nor can we label young, early-career teachers as inexperienced just because of their age.

Empirical findings reported by Michael Huberman (1988) focus on attitudes of teachers at various career stages when engaged in a school reform effort. Using a combination of statistical measures and ethnographic techniques, Huberman concludes that older, experienced teachers who have gone through a renewal or experimental phase in their career tend to pull back and turn inward rather than engage in new school improvement efforts. He infers that "over time . . . teachers see themselves as less willing to invest as heavily in their careers and, more specifically, in attempts to change local practices" (p. 128). Using a self-reporting attitude scale, teachers selected adjectives about previous phases of their career. Huberman concludes that "for older teachers, notably the shift seems unequivocal: less energy; less activism, less involvement, less idealism, more skepticism, more pessimism" (p. 129).

Evans (1989) adds to the stereotyping of older teacher. He wrote:

> At midcareer all professionals, including teachers, are prone to de-
> motivation (boredom, loss of enthusiasm, diminished job interest) and a
> leveling off of performance. The growth curve flattens out, particularly for
> those who do not move into new roles or change jobs; and energy flags.
> (p. 11)

The Huberman and Evans studies are examples of researched behaviors Cherryholmes (1988) suggests can become forms of truth for practitioners in schools. The studies contribute labels for a group of teachers that might be viewed by some as pejorative. These labels, or generalizations about the research findings, become embedded in professional conversations about older, experienced teachers and have the potential to define how administrators and teaching colleagues view behaviors of a group of people.

Understanding Perceptions Of Change

Judson (1991) defines change as "any alteration to the status quo in an organization initiated by management that impacts either or both the work and the work environment of an individual" (p. 10). He believes a key element in managing change successfully stems from leaders who understand the factors that ignite resistant behavior. These leaders are aware of the social, psychological, and operational effects on people's behavior. Schmuck and Runkel (1985) also stress the importance of uncovering an organization's norms, structures, and procedures when attempting to bring about systematic, planned change. Norms influence how we act in a social setting and quite often are communicated informally by other members of the organization. Structures refer to the formal chain of command, and procedures are the policies that make the organization run on a daily basis. Each of these three points may influence a person's attitude toward change.

Attitudes are broken into three components by social psychologists: affective, cognitive, and behavioral. The interplay of these feelings, beliefs, and thoughts about action influence our perceptions of the world around us. Hellriegel, Slocum, and Woodman (1986) note that understanding the difference between the perceptual world and the real world is critical in explaining organizational behavior. Perceptions, therefore, provide clues to how people interact with each other.

When perceptions focus solely on the characteristics of the person perceived because of a particular group they belong, judgment errors can occur. One such way is stereotyping. For example, we may attribute characteristics of enthusiasm to young, inexperienced teachers and characteristics of detachment to older, veteran teachers. Projecting this bias is know as fundamental attribution error. Steers (1991) explains that

"this error is a tendency to *underestimate* the effects of external or situational causes of behavior and to *overestimate* the effects of internal or personal causes (p. 76). Hellriegel et al. (1986) believe that in organizations, employees often "assign blame for conflict, political behavior, or resistance to change on the individuals involved, and not recognize the contributions made by the dynamics of the situation" (p. 106).

Age Stereotyping

Stereotyping is the act of making assumptions about what a person ought to be. According to sociologist Erving Goffman (1963), the acceptance or assignment of a "virtual social identity" (p. 2) to individuals can result in reducing someone from a whole person to a less than adequate or discounted person. This discrepancy between the virtual identity and actual identity can become a stigma. Stigma, as defined by Goffman, is "an attribute that is deeply discrediting" (p. 3) but only in term of relationships. In other words, the attributes of age and experience of a group of teachers may be stereotyped as a stigma but only as these attributes relate to the activity of change in schools. These same attributes may not be stigmas as they relate to seniority issues in the school or personal relationships outside of the school. Once an individual is stigmatized, the group of people Goffman refers to as "normals" begin to exercise various forms of discrimination and "effectively, if not unthinkingly, reduce his life chances" (p. 5). Normals [individuals assigning the stigma] may also define behaviors of the stigmatized person as expressions of his or her "defect." As an example, an older experienced teacher asking many questions about a proposed change would be defined as a resister and no effort would be made to determine the origin of or reasons for the questions.

Goffman also provides insights about the stigmatized individual. He suggests they respond in various ways to the stereotyping ranging from self-hate to victimization. Responses are enhanced when "normal" and "stigmatized" are required to interact. At that point, the stigmatized individual may engage in "stigma management" (p. 99), maintaining a strategic distance from colleagues, declining opportunities for intimacy, or connecting only with other like-minded individuals. In any case, communication and connection is blocked for both parties.

Finally, Goffman points out that stigmatization and stereotyping has a mediating social function: it provides formal moral social control by marginalizing people with bad moral records; it narrows courtship decisions by devaluing certain physical and mental features; and it narrow avenues of competition by stigmatizing various races, religions, and ethnic groups. Though Goffman does not include age in this latter category, other authors (Loden & Rosener, 1991; Maskow, 19485) view ageism as an equally severe stereotype or stigma.

In their work as organizational development specialists, Marilyn Loden and Judith Rosener report that within the workplace stereotypes are deeply embedded. Drawing on research and consulting practice, they conclude that stereotypes and stigmas have enduring power which is reinforced and maintained by socialization and mass communications (p. 62). They specifically identify ageism as one of those stereotypes. According to Schmuck and Runkel (1985), educators who have spent a lifetime understanding how people interact in organizations undergoing change:

> Staff members behave toward one another according to their images of their roles. School staff members typically develop rather stable role images of one another, so it can be difficult . . . for one person to take on new behaviors unless others also alter their role conceptions and behaviors. (p. 39)

Findings and Discussion

In his discussion of workplace democracy, political scientist E. E. Schattschneider (1960), notes that it requires a shared value for equality and participation and, to be successful, the scope of the conflict must be as broad as possible. Schattschneider describes this conflict as everyone being comfortable with being an expert and being ignorant. The findings that emerged from the analysis of our case study data suggests that when the conversation in schools becomes open and egalitarian, how people are *expected* to view expertise and ignorance begins to interfere with how they have socially stereotyped these notions in the past. Building on Goffman's (1963) notions of stigma, the evidence suggests that behavior expectations for older, experienced teachers are fairly embedded in mid-career educators' minds. However, our findings do not support Huberman's (1988) view of experienced older teachers as less willing to invest in a school improvement effort; rather, the findings suggest that Huberman's view matches the stereotyped version of behaviors frequently described by mid-career teachers.

The analysis of our data resulted in five emergent understandings about change and resistance to change. Each of these understandings is strongly supported by the follow-up interview data.

1) Stereotyping or stigmatization of older experienced teachers is equally prevalent in schools whether the school is beginning a change effort or is well-into a change effort.

The study yielded responses from 55 participants with over 20 years experience in education. Within that group, 17 respondents were 50+ years of age. In all sites, "older, experienced teachers" were discussed using language that labeled them as resistors to change. This group of educators was described by colleagues as being jaded, having seen it all:

> a passive traditional role, you know, 'you tell me'

and

> How long someone has been teaching makes a difference--we've seem
> things come and go. Work, work, work, and nothing happens, and a lot of
> older staff because of previous training, experience are more apt to say
> 'prove to me [that] it can be done and I'll change', or the older ones are
> more realistic, they know their limitations.

Respondents at the site in the mid-level of change and participatory practices described their older teachers as those who saw this as another fad . A former site chair noted that there were not a lot of young people on the staff: *Our staff was very comfortable with their role, isolated, used to doing things their own way.* Older, experienced teachers were described as counting down to retirement: *a lot of teachers say 'two more years'*; *It's not fresh and new anymore. The older a person gets, closer to retirement, the more they start looking at covering their trail*; and *many older teachers are just counting the days.*

Colleagues saw these individuals as very structured and inflexible people: *the old drill and repeat is the only way of teaching*; *older teachers are very set in their ways*; *they have hum-bug attitudes.* Still others saw these colleagues as carrying the tradition of the school: *Some of the real resisters were former students here. They have a personal sense of the school's culture and traditions of excellence. This is personal to them.*

In the case of the schools engaged in long-term participatory practices, an examination of membership rosters for site committees showed that older, experienced teachers were elected less often to serve on these new school governance committees.

2) How older experienced teachers describe their own attitudes toward change is different than mid-life teachers describe the attitudes of the experienced older teachers.

The first finding was most prevalent in interviews with teachers who were over 55 years old and had over 25 years of experience. In sorting data from sociogram interviews, Rusch (1992) found that the people most frequently described as resisting the school improvement efforts were quite perplexed at their inability to find a voice in the process. These older, experienced colleagues described themselves as avid questioners, but supportive of change. Experienced colleagues indicated they knew they were defined as resisters but insisted that was a misperception. They openly expressed enthusiasm for the reforms they saw in their school. For example, a veteran teacher said,

> In 33 years I've never seen anything like this. People are motivated because the conversation is open. We've had out share of open conflict, but it's okay. I know some staff see me as a real roadblock, but I don't see myself that way.

Another said,

> It's kind of refreshing. I know lots of people think I'm not interested, but they'd be surprised. Actually, it's the most exciting time of my career.

Still another respondent indicated that despite upcoming retirement the next year, he planned to participate in a pilot program for block scheduling. *I'm going out blazing*, he said with a grin.

These very experienced teachers were dismayed that their colleagues weren't interested in reviewing and researching all their past experience. One teacher talked about everything he'd learned in previous reform movements and lamented:

> They don't see the commotion they will cause, don't really understand all the work involved and they don't want to hear about it.

Another noted,

> I really don't think it's always resisting because of the word change. We may seem to be resisting because we haven't had a chance to put our feeling into it. I know there isn't only one way to do things. We don't need to change for the sake of change.

Findings related to the views about the older, experienced teachers were overwhelmingly concentrated in the comments from mid-life teachers. Most of these respondents had 15-25 years of experience and were 40 - 48 years of age. Gould, Levinson, and Krupp all described this career stage as a period of questioning, filled with concern about fulfilling potential. Yet how these individuals discussed resistors was overwhelmingly about other people: older colleagues.

3) Older experienced teachers frequently engage in a learning experience with a new, younger teacher in order to understand new methods and current theories.

The 17 respondents in this study who were 50+ years old with over 25 years' experience in education did not match other researchers worn out, skeptical (Huberman, 1988), despairing people (Erikson, 1968) in constriction and decline (Deloz, 1986). The participants in this group frequently referred to upcoming retirement but did not see their learning years as over. Five of six older experienced teachers in the high school in mid-stage change identified the newest, youngest member of the department as an individual that influenced their thinking and described specific changes they were making in their work because of this individual. *People would be surprised at who I listen to.* A long-standing department chair in the same school gave a new teacher singular credit for turning his attitude around about the effectiveness of shared decision-making among the staff. He noted *I'm beginning to see the development of real personal power among people who never felt it before.*

The principal of the early stages elementary school described an older teacher on her staff who had formed a relationship with two new young teachers: *She transferred here with 30 years experience and is marvelous. She would say to each of those young people, 'Oh you have so much to contribute.' And she would come in and report to me regularly about the progress she was making with those two people.* Another very enthusiastic new teacher described a similar relationship:

> Like I know one teacher, she's going to retire next year. She's begging me to come down and share what I'm doing. She wants to know everything about it. She wants to try some of it in her classroom and still wants to grow personally. Nobody has told her she has to. She wants to see things better for kids.

Another teacher one year away from retirement in the advanced-stage school was in the process of developing a new block schedule program with a new staff member. His colleague commented on the obvious enthusiasm he had for this new project during his last year of teaching.

4) Increased democratic or participatory practices in schools do not necessarily modify stereotyping behavior. However, in schools with five or more years of democratic practices, mid-career teachers acknowledged, without any prompt, that they may be prejudiced about age and experience. When asked to discuss specific people and resistance, they expressed knowledge of and surprise at the commitment of older, experienced teachers to professional growth.

Respondents in all sites and stages of change commented on *older teachers who have seen it all before,* or teachers *who questioned everything,* but in buildings with advanced stages of participatory practices, interviewees added caveats to their comments: *I guess my expectation going in--you could call it a prejudice, was that experienced people would resist. But I don't see that.* Another teacher began describing resistors and then changed his mind:

> The blockers are stuck. They say this is a new name for an old idea. Not to say that there isn't some legitimate criticism. You know, people are willing to change. They are energetic. There are a lot of young minds in this school--some are in older bodies! We are willing to do what we want students to do.

He went on to describe the participatory decision-making process that his school has engaged in for seven years: *In general people are open to listening. We encourage conversation and disagreement among staff. What they say may influence what staff decides to do. Sometimes when we reach consensus, I'm not sure where the decision has been made.*

Asking many questions about new ideas was viewed as resistance in all sites, but in building with consistent participatory practices, colleagues of older teachers rethought some of their positions: *To be fair, there was strength in their teaching, they were successful with kids. The questions about why they should change were legitimate questions. Those questions were only helpful. We needed to look at and consider those viewpoints.* A site chair in the building with five years of participatory processes recalled a particularly difficult time with an older teacher:

> A math teacher calculated class size increases if trimester was adopted. Nobody paid attention. That person wasn't trying to resist. He was just trying to deal with the ideas in his own way. As I think about resistors, I

think we really have to examine them and respect them. There's so much
literature on how to deal with "them" [his emphasis].

Participation and open conversation was described as a key factor in changing
perceptions about resistors. A site-committee member, after describing older teachers as
resistors modified his view:

> You know, I haven't seen much resistance. I think its because we are
> making the decisions. I find it very reassuring--So frequently in education
> we hear if you have an aging staff, its hard to implement change. People
> are set in their ways. I haven't found that to be true.

5) The conversation about change and resistance to change is confused because current age
and stage theory does not match current demographics in schools.

When the data were sorted by experience in education, patterns emerged that
confused the conversation about change even more. Although literature and professional
conversations frequently describe an "aging" teaching staff, a fair-sized number of the
aging are new to the profession. In all schools participating in this study, staff members
with less than 10 years experience in education were frequently over 40 years of age. The
age and experience demographics (see appendix) indicate that stages of career and ages of
individuals in schools are no longer parallel pathways. Applying age and stage theories to
people's attitudes toward change in these organizations may no longer be appropriate and
indeed, may add to the stereotyping of their behaviors.

Conclusions

Goffman suggests that stigmatizing is a form of social control that governs the
marginalization of people for various reasons. If we view older, experienced teachers as a
marginalized group, we are forced to ask why? What would be the advantage of socially
controlling an increasing population in our teaching force? Who benefits?

Current understandings about career stages (Gould, 1978; Krupp, 1986) suggest
that mid-career teachers become concerned with controlling their personal world in order to
mediate between their historical assumptions and their uncertain future. It may be possible
that part of this control is to define the behaviors of other people in ways that control the
conversation about change in a school. By labeling colleagues as resistors, mid-career
teachers may deflect their own concerns about changing behaviors within a school reform
effort. Because research and theory has provided a variety of labels and definitions for
older, experienced staff members, the stereotype is not only accepted as truth, it is
legitimized by a formal and informal professional conversation.

At the same time that we make new observations about mid-career teachers, we are
cognizant that our data show a dramatically changing workforce in schools. This may be a
critical time for educators, both in schools and universities, to highlight this critical
difference when considering teachers' attitudes toward change. First, teachers must be
understood as individuals, not members of a particular group categorized by their personal
characteristics. They can no longer be blamed for the state of education today. It is
unhealthy to see them as the illness instead of the cure. Second, their position within the
organization and events that influence their attitudes must be the focus of attention. Third,
the concept of embedded notions must be explored to further explain attitudes. Finally,
factors seen as resistance to change need to be evaluated within the spectrum of internal and
external causes to determine if the concept of fundamental attribution error is in effect and if
so, to make adjustments in leadership thinking and actions.

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APPENDIX

CHARACTERISTICS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS
n=129

Yrs in Educ.	Age 22-27	28-32	33-38	39-44	45-50	51-56	57+
1-5	2 females 3 males	1 female 1 male		3 females	1 female		
6-10		1 female 4 male	3 males	3 females 1 male	3 females	1 female	
11-15			3 females 5 males	1 female 3 males	3 females 1 male	3 females	1female
16-20			2 females	6 females 6 males	4 females 6 males	6 females 1 male	
21-25				5 females 3 males	11 females 6 males	1 femaie 6 males	2 females 3 male
25+					1 male	1 female	1 female

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