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                Preparing educators for the challenges of an
empowered school community demands collaboration among teacher
educators, practitioners, and the community. This paper proposes a
theoretical model of empowerment which supports
university-school-community ventures. The model, which embraces
intra-university collaboration and university-school-community
initiatives, is designed to build empowering school communities and
respond to the challenges of diversity through site-based management.
Collaboration among teacher educators, leadership trainers,
practitioners, and community agents is emphasized. Building
empowerment could begin by finding ways to integrate the principles
of empowerment into current programs, such as a principal mentor
program, student teaching, cooperating teacher workshops, faculty
exchange programs, field service and student teaching centers, and a
course on empowerment. The potential benefits of collaboration
include: improved teacher morale, staff renewal, an expanded
knowledge base, and improved performance for the university and
school community. (Contains 35 references.) (ND)

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"Empowering the School Community: Meeting the Challenge Through University, School, and Community Ventures"

A paper presented at the 74th Annual Meeting of
The Association of Teacher Educators
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Atlanta, Georgia

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ABSTRACT

Preparing educators for the challenges of an empowered school community demands
collaboration among teacher educators, practitioners and the community. A
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university-school-community initiatives, is designed to build empowering school
communities and respond to the challenges of diversity through site-based
management. Collaboration among teacher educators, leadership trainers,
practitioners, and community agents is emphasized.   An operational example of how
empowerment is currently promoted within a school is presented.

ABSTRACT

Preparing educators for the challenges of an empowered school community demands collaboration among teacher educators, practitioners and the community. A theoretical model of empowerment which supports university-school-community ventures is proposed.

SESSION OBJECTIVES

To present a model of teacher empowerment based upon the results of a two-year ethnographic study. The model reflects a teacher's definition of empowerment and describes how empowerment is accomplished. Observed actions of empowered teachers, empowered leaders and community agents are discussed.

To identify how the empowerment model can be used to support intra-university collaboration and promote university-school-community initiatives designed to build empowering school communities.

To provide participants an opportunity to reflect and share examples of how they are addressing issues of empowerment within and among their organizations.

To encourage participants to explore ways of expanding opportunities for empowering their organizations and its members.

INTRODUCTION
RESTRUCTURING SCHOOL DISTRICT ROLES

Ten years after *A Nation At Risk*, the demand for change in schools seems to have reached critical dimensions. Across the country it would appear that change is happening piecemeal or systemically, enthusiastically or grudgingly, superficially or genuinely. Unrelenting scrutiny of education from the national to the local level has made it impossible for schools to remain the same or even to question the necessity or scope of change being made.

A major stumbling block in restructuring efforts has been the reliance on people's roles rather than on their abilities. Too frequently within schools tasks are assigned on the basis of title, not on the individual's interest in the task or ability to perform it. Human beings are reluctant to abdicate role divisions because of fears about losing

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power or prestige, but they can learn to share power and to accept leadership based on competence and personality when an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect exists (Gainey, 1993). To foster that kind of atmosphere people must be involved in making the decisions that affect their organization.

Shedd and Backarach (1991) claim that American teachers and administrators are in the midst of reconceptualizing their relationship with one another. They are searching for a perspective (new leadership roles) that allow teachers to work and develop as professionals without compromising the legitimate and traditional roles of principals and superintendents.

Albert Shanker has called for " a complete restructuring" of the schools. William Glasser, author of Control Theory in the Classroom (1986), is recommending a redistribution of power in the schools with more given to the teachers and students. Glasser states,

certainly if business has discovered what has been known for centuries--the more people have power over their own destiny, the harder and more creatively they work--it is time for schools to make this discovery too.

Teacher educators and those responsible for preparing school administrators must impart the need for teachers and administrators to exercise leadership - to harness the energy of themselves and others and to accomplish fundamental change in the structure of the educational system (Moen, 1991). Education leaders must provide the opportunities for people to channel their energies in the same direction.

One problem with standard leadership courses is that they focus exclusively on skills and produce managers rather than leaders, when they produce anything at all (Bennis, 1989). Principals and superintendents must become instructional leaders not just building managers. Teachers must be authentically involved in making decisions toward curricular and instructional efforts.

Management style must change from result-oriented to process-oriented. A style which will help people, not control people. Teacher and administrator preparation programs should enhance the attributes of this new style of leadership. Far more potential for school improvement exists in what teachers and administrators do daily, provided that policy makers focus on altering the basic design of schooling to tap

hidden sources of leadership (Cuban, 1988). If teachers and administrators are given more autonomy, discretion, and control in conducting their work, they will feel a greater sense of ownership of and responsibility for its quality.

INTRA-UNIVERSITY AND UNIVERSITY-SCHOOL DISTRICT COLLABORATIVES A RATIONALE FOR EMPHASIZING EMPOWERMENT

While much has been written both supporting and criticizing the second and third waves of reform and the goals these reforms are to achieve, the empowerment of teachers is seldom questioned. Most maintain that the focus of reform should be driven by a desire to empower our nation's teachers and the urgency to attract and maintain quality candidates to the teaching profession. Recently, these goals have been coupled with the desire to assist administrators in cultivating their visions of building an empowering school culture.

Accomplishment of these goals demands that faculty and administrators at both the university and school district work together to ensure that the principles, knowledge and behaviors necessary for building, promoting and sustaining empowerment become a continuous process--a process that begins during preservice education and extends throughout one's professional career.

The central proposition advanced here is that preservice, mentoring and inservice training and experiences of teachers and administrators be organized to foster empowerment.

EMPOWERMENT AND THE INTRA-UNIVERSITY COLLABORATIVE

If teachers and administrators are to develop the teacher-leader behaviors and skills necessary to promote an empowered teaching profession, then changes in teacher and administrator preparation programs must occur. Program outcomes will have to focus on the principles and behaviors which support the teachers'-theorists' model of empowerment. In any situation this will require that university faculty redesign curriculum and student experiences to include the principles of empowerment into their preservice, inservice and graduate programs.

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The process of infusing the principles of empowerment into new and existing programs will require an exchange of discourse and ideas between faculty from the teacher education and administration programs. This collaboration will not only facilitate articulation of mutual goals for those responsible for leading the schools, but it also assists both preservice and intern teachers and administrators in understanding the other's role in the empowerment process.

This modeling by faculty of these department collaboratives will also provide an exemplar for students to emulate. Presently in most universities, a student in teacher education may occasionally find his or her way into an administrative course, but rarely do administration students take a teacher education course. Most administrative certification programs simply require a certain number of years of teaching experience, rather than requiring aspiring administrators "to repeat what they already know." In some instances, the attitude of those directing administrator preparation programs is that to become a successful administrator one must cease thinking like a teacher. Some even believe that the knowledge that enables one to be a successful teacher may be counterproductive in the realm of administration. These individuals regard teachers' knowledge and practice as too narrow, focusing only on their students, classrooms, content, whereas administrators must maintain a broader perspective and concern themselves with decisions and practices which affect the entire school community.

These beliefs conflict with the teachers' theory of empowerment which espouses that administrators must first remain teachers, and that teachers and administrators share in maintaining the norms of empowerment via shared decision making and leadership, open and honest communications, seeking collegial and administrative support, etc.

In contrast to unrelated outcomes and preparation curricula for administrators and teachers, the teachers' theory of empowerment introduces teachers to administrative issues early in their training, while at the same time requiring administrators to keep abreast of pedagogic and curricular issues which support and facilitate teacher empowerment.

The establishment of an intra-university collaborative based upon an empowerment-driven curriculum would not only bridge the schism that exists between

those responsible for teacher and administrator preparation, but it would also promote and empowered faculty. As professors, department chairpersons, and administrators begin to share in leadership, decision-making and goal setting, they too would begin to experience the benefits of an empowered culture.

EMPOWERMENT AND THE UNIVERSITY-SCHOOL DISTRICT COLLABORATIVE

The discourse on empowerment among teacher educators and those responsible for preparing school administrators suggests that universities and public schools work together to train teachers and administrators (Brandt, 1989; Griffiths, 1988; Sergiovanni, 1989). Joyce and Showers (1988) suggest that appropriate organizational structures do enhance student outcomes. They write that "schools can structure the workplace so that collaborative work is possible and rewarded, training is provided that maximizes the opportunities for skill, mastery and implementation, and attitudes and norms that support experimentation are communicated" (p. 78). Thus, efforts to build and promote teacher empowerment must be shared by teacher education and school administration faculty and those in the public school arena. These collaborative efforts will enhance opportunities to attain the goal of empowering the teaching profession, a goal which universities and public schools share and one that is at the center of recent reform.

University-school district collaboratives require that principals, classroom teachers, and university faculty become equal partners in building empowering school cultures. The opportunities for establishing working partnerships already exist at most universities and schools. There are numerous programs in which universities seek to work with school districts and in turn there are partnerships developed in which school districts seek university assistance. For example, students in preservice and graduate preparation programs are assigned to clinical and intern experiences in order to apply the knowledge and theory they have acquired in their respective programs to actual on-site experiences. In turn, school districts often call upon university faculty to assist in training administrators and faculty in the latest pedagogical and curricular issues.

Establishing a university-school district collaborative that emphasizes empowerment of teachers may best be accomplished by practicing the principles that are espoused (i.e., setting high expectations, accessing the knowledge bases,

maintaining honest and open communications, seeking collegial and administrative support, and sharing leadership and decision making).

At our university, we have begun to explore opportunities in which this model of empowerment might be integrated into existing school partnerships.

1. The Principal Mentor Program assigns a university faculty to advise both newly appointed and veteran administrators.

2. The Student Teaching, Principal and Superintendent Internship Programs assign preservice students to school sites for internship or field episode experiences.

3. The Student Teaching Program's Teacher-Administrator Advisory Council advises and recommends revisions in existing preservice teacher education.

4. Cooperating Teacher Workshops provide training and in-service in clinical supervision of student teachers.

5. The Teacher Enhancement Program provides opportunities for teachers from area school districts to spend three weeks on campus in which they are exposed to a variety of pedagogic, curricular issues, and collegial experience sharing.

6. The Faculty Exchange Program provides opportunities for university and school faculty to exchange positions for two weeks. These faculty exchange duties of teaching and other aspects of committee and school related activities.

7. Field Service and Student Teaching Centers operate to provide a central location for the field experiences of preservice teachers. These centers also operate to provide an exchange of teaching techniques and strategies and to promote ongoing communications between practitioner and university faculty (Seminar Semesters in Urban and Multicultural Education).

8. The Empowerment Course, *Empowerment and the School Culture* (EDP 654) will provide opportunities for a shared discourse in decision making as administrator and lead teacher candidates seek to resolve issues related to current trends in education. Students will also be exposed to theories of transformative leadership, teacher empowerment, and the research on building empowering school cultures.

Perhaps these programs are not unique to our institution, other universities and schools may have similar or even more extensive collaboratives in place. Therefore,

those interested in building empowerment should begin by exploring what currently exists and begin to find ways of integrating the principles of empowerment into their programs.

THE FUTURE OF COLLABORATION FOR EMPOWERMENT

What is the future for collaboration designed to promote teacher empowerment? Certainly, there will be many goals as individual universities and school districts bring their unique qualities to the joint venture of preparing teachers and administrators for an empowered teaching profession. What may emerge, however, is that university faculty will remain motivated by idealistic and theoretical conceptions that conflict with the utilitarian and pragmatic orientation of teachers and administrators. All we can do is contemplate these contentions and continue to uphold a commitment to developing and maintaining lasting relationships, that will withstand these competing claims. Over time these struggles and joint ventures will mold our beliefs into a common goal for school improvement and increased teacher professionalism.

The potential benefit of collaborations might include improved teacher morale, staff renewal, an expanded knowledge base, and improved performance for the university and school community.

Achieving these benefit requires a vision since institutional changes in universities and schools are slow; however, a model that reflects both the meanings and practices espoused by teachers and theorists alike presents the best promise for reform of teacher education and empowerment.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Although public school systems need to enter into collaboration commitments to deal with the elaborate contexts and changing conditions, it is equally appropriate that academicians and teacher education and administrator preparation programs abandon their isolationist tradition and work in a congruous fashion. We will experience more success in empowering our teachers and reform through mutual commitments, encouragement, and cooperation than through partisan criticism and traditional separations between administrators and teachers. The process is clear for

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programs, teachers and administrators at all educational institutions; to discover and implement new forms of collaboration, to create new designs for organizing schools, curriculum, and programs, and to seek out new understanding as common visions and mutual goals are realized.

In closing, we note the following recommendation which supports our position. In November, 1992 with the support of the Dewitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund and with the assistance of 42 exemplary practitioners, representatives from business and industry and legislators, the Administrators Standards Working Group of the Commissioners of Education in the New England States and New York, and The Regional Laboratory for Educational Improvement of the Northeast and Islands, made several recommendations for the improvement of administrator training and in-service.

One recommendation coming from the working group was cross-role preparation for teachers, supervisors, principals and superintendents. The working group believes that exchanges between teachers and administrators; cross-institutional and cross-cultural experiences would add depth to school leader's preparation and in-service. "Cross-role preparation and teacher/administrator exchanges would allow candidates or practitioners to gain an understanding of the professional needs and lives of their colleagues" (The Dewitt-Reader's Digest Fund Study Conference, 1992).

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