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The midlife quest for meaning as revealed in critical reflective journals of midlevel community college academic administrators participating in a continuing professional education program: A phenomenological analysis

Roberta Albom Liebler

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THE MIDLIFE QUEST FOR MEANING AS REVEALED IN CRITICAL REFLECTIVE JOURNALS OF MIDLEVEL COMMUNITY COLLEGE ACADEMIC ADMINISTRATORS PARTICIPATING IN A CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAM: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

by
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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirement for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
Education

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May 1997

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY DISSERTATION

OF

ROBERTA ALBOM LIEBLER

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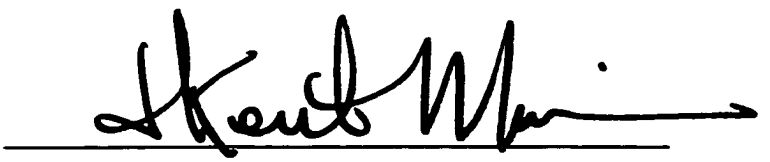

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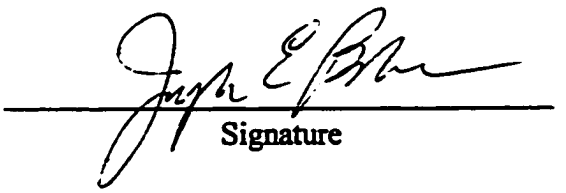

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Abstract

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to discover the phenomenology of a particular cohort of midlife professionals who explored their professional life through an inquiry of critical reflective practice. Propelled by career advancement, the complexity of the workplace, and their inner drive to find meaning at the mid-point of their lives, the midlevel North American community college academic administrators enrolled in a year-long continuing professional education program. During the practicum phrase, they recorded their impressions of their own quest for meaning through critical reflective practice. Reflective passages, extracted from the unstructured journals of a cohort of 13 self-selected participants, were analyzed and interpreted using the phenomenological research model.

The theoretical framework was the existential-phenomenological view of situated freedom. Therefore, the phenomenon was first explored by delving into midlife development theories and the search for meaning in midlife. Second, the cohort was situated within the context of late 20th century higher education organizational structure and culture.

The study found a pattern of reflective learning among those who lived the same phenomenon. Having achieved mastery as teachers in first adulthood, they sought meaning in the transformation to second adulthood by channeling their need for generativity into the facilitation of productive change at their community college.

Since their primary source of information was the solitary process of critical reflective practice, they perceived of their limited success as unique, resulting in a heightened sense of personal responsibility for progress. A community of peers, who share

the same experience, would have enabled these advanced professionals to view the phenomenon of the midlevel change agent not as symptomatic of personal deficiencies but as indicative of systemic dynamics.

For midlife professionals to achieve their goals, solo introspective self-examination and peer community need to be supplemented with increased knowledge of organizational dynamics, consensual agreement with superiors on role of the midlevel change agent, and a balance between elements of personal and professional life. Both institutions and continuing professional education programs would contribute to increasing the productivity of dedicated midlevel administrators by treating them as holistic people with unrealized potential.

Dedication

To Harry, Raizel, Clarissa, and Shayna.

You continue to bring my quest for meaning affirmation, achievement, and joy.

Acknowledgments

Thanks to members of my family. To my grandmother, Rose Roth Albom, who struggled with hardship in the dream of a better life for her children and their children. To mother, Lillian Albom Spector, for her example of life-long learning. To my husband, Harry, for keeping the home fires burning and patiently editing yet another edition.

Extraordinary thanks to my precious children who always reminded me of what is truly important. To Raizel, whose joyously anticipated arrival interrupted my doctorate studies and whose keen intellect enriched their completion 21 years later. To Clarissa, whose ceaseless quest for perfection, inspired me to search deeper. To Shayna, whose wit and tenacity, serves as reassurance that life's injustices can be overcome with grace. In a world on the verge of chaos, I wish my children a sense of meaning that will shape futures for them full of joy, love, purpose, and sharing.

Lasting gratitude to the chair of my dissertation committee, doctoral advisor, role model, and friend Catherine Marienau, whose skill as a genuinely involved mentor and astute scholar nurtured my studies into a truly transformational learning experience. To my dissertation committee members Caroline Bassett, V. Wayne Leaver, and Joseph Barbeau for asking questions which allowed me to stretch.

A particular note of appreciation to the staff of the Kankakee Community College Learning Resource Center, especially to Stephen Bertrand and Barbara Loudy for their extensive support in the acquisition of source material and interest in my work.

A special thanks to the participants of this study for generously sharing their journey. I wish them a future worthy of their aspirations.

Recognition to my students for teaching me humility.

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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Introduction

Educational systems are continuously battered by the chaotic pressures of heightened expectations, constricted resources, social pressures, and demographic shifts. "The challenge of managing change and complexity comes to advanced professionals from two directions--career advancement and a world that daily becomes more complex" (Kolb, 1988, p. 80). Yet in this nonlinear world of unpredictable change and undeterminable results, the educational leader makes decisions that affect lives and shape the future.

Along with the constant change in the environment in which educational institutions operate, the role of the leader is undergoing significant shifts. No longer the powerful general, the new leader

> attempts to be ahead of the flow--or at least a part of the flow . . . encouraging the right movements, restraining the less beneficial currents, adjusting and anticipating and alerting others to the dangers and the opportunities, always guiding and always participating. (Walling & Ryan, 1994, p. 530)

Creativity and new visions are frequently stifled by rigid managers with one-dimensional thinking (Wheatley, 1992). Instead of focusing on the shadows of past *realities*, the scanning of the horizon brings into view new factors such as consequences of changing family structures, shifts in the demands of the workforce, and altering demographic patterns. Detachment from old structures enables the formation of new processes that change interpersonal relationships. The control and uniformity of fixed seating is transformed into cooperative learning. The oppositional tensions of *us* and *them*

become a search for shared meaning. The grasping for stability moves towards an appreciation of flux.

As Wheatley explains in Leadership and The New Science: Learning about Organizations from an Orderly Universe (1992), change is not linear but a mutual transforming process because "to understand and act reflectively in academic environments administrators need to view the institution as a culture where organizational members both shape and are shaped by the symbols and rituals of the institution" (Rhoads & Tierney, 1992, pp. 4-7). In this responsive process of change, changing the environment in which the change agent is stimulating change, stability is an impossibility and the search for control is pointless.

No formula can determine which leadership style or which organizational law will work in a particular situation. Only principles for interpretive behavior are useful. An investigation of academic culture will never unravel the web. Instead it focuses on the intricacies of the weave. "For administrators and academic leaders, viewing academic institutions as observers of organizational cultures goes beyond the obvious and commonplace occurrences and looks at the deeper underlying meanings that organizational participants construct" (Rhoads & Tierney, 1992, pp. 73-74). The web of culture is interdependent and interwoven. To change one aspect influences the entire fabric. No system follows a straight-line pattern of development. Administrators who understand the function of the strands and the uniqueness of the cultural weave are better able to thrive on chaos. Higher education is at a bifurcation point in its evolution. Administration has the greatest incentive to explore new ways of viewing itself and its place in the world--that of survival.

Reflective practice is a mighty tool for integrating experience, knowledge, and action to change institutions by changing individuals. This positive change perspective views the members of organizations as powerful agents for transformation. In educational institutions the product is the learner. In response to the needs of the learner, the institution should change. Yet despite the repeated failure of entrenched practices, despite the advent of new theories, despite the volumes of research, the behavior of college administrators remains largely the same.

Educators are probably members of the most acculturated profession. Since early childhood, they have experienced the consistency of educational practice. Assumptions, standards, values, and beliefs of the purpose and process of education are deeply driving practice. However, adults, especially professionals with a history of successful practice, seldom question their behaviors or underlying assumptions. The schools of today are remarkably similar to Dewey's description of transmitters of information, and "since the subject matter is handed down from the past, the attitude of 'pupils' must . . . be one of docility, receptivity, and obedience" (1938a, p. 18). Educational administrators, similarly, assume the role, behaviors, and tone the hierarchical system expects of them.

Reflective practice is a gentle, yet powerful, means to break the logjam of resistance to change. For a decade "reflective practice" has been encouraged in professional continuing education spurred on by the works of Schon (1983, 1987). In Educating the Reflective Practitioner, Schon (1987) revolutionized the means used to construct an epistemology of practice. He said the central question is: "What do practitioners need to know?, reflection on the understandings already built into skillful

actions of everyday practice" (Schon, 1991a, p. 5). Schon's epistemology of practice offered a rigorous means of examining knowing-in-action and reflection-in-action.

In this tradition, this study investigated the reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action of community college academic chairpersons who are participating in a year-long continuing professional education program by analyzing their reflective journal entries using a phenomenological methodology. Since this reflective practice was occurring as the participants were of the age when the chief development task is the choice between generativity versus stagnation (Erikson, 1978, 1982), the reflective passages were analyzed to gain insight into the midlife quest for meaning.

Background of the Problem

Henry David Thoreau wrote in On Walden Pond (1854/1941) of the insights that blossomed during his period of contemplation. "What he wrote strikes us today as characteristically adult. It reflects the common experience of highly educated and accomplished professionals who, after the struggles of establishing their careers, became aware of opportunities and challenges beyond those of everyday practice" (Francis, 1990, p. 37).

Mid-career professional training programs attempt to take advantage of the middle-aged practitioner's quest for something more in their work. These adult education experiences aim to update the skills and revitalize the commitment of middle age adults to their life's work. Today when the window of opportunity for success is narrowing and the gulf of expectations is widening, professionals seek to learn how to do what works. To be persuaded to invest precious time and limited resources into professional education, the

participants must be convinced of the probability of immediate, achievable, and recognizable improvement in practice. The demand for hard solutions is perhaps even more important for administrators, whose practice requires prompt and effective responses to complex and ambiguous technical, environmental, organizational, and interpersonal problems. Despite the demand for solutions, professional education programs frequently encourage reflective practice (Brookfield, 1994, p. 203). This personal and introspective technique may seem soft and even self-indulgent to those responsible for making the hard decisions in assailed organizations.

If reflection were limited to the peaceful introspection of voluntary solitude in a safe wood, then the practice might be reasonably dismissed as an uneconomical luxury. However, far from being idle navel gazing, reflection serves the essential process of using thought to integrate knowledge and action. The integration of the three ways of knowing (theoretical, empirical, and experiential) strengthens the administrator's ability to make more informed and consequentially better choices. In How We Think (1933), John Dewey contended that reflection will improve action. More recently an experienced adult educator argued

> that thinking well, especially developing the habit of reflection on what one knows before and while acting, improves the quality and creativity of choices and eventually contributes to the knowledge available in subsequent choices. In this way, administration is improved. From this expanded perspective, reflective practice can provide a key to more effective administration. (Hart, 1990, p. 153)

Statement of the Problem

The community college administrator's work is making decisions in a heavily value laden environment with conflicting stakeholders and ambiguous guidelines for

success. Though social science theories and empirical studies provide a useful source of information, they are abstractions which can never fully explain or guide resolution or explicate a specific situation. Traditional professional education and research are helpful in illuminating the circumstances, in offering options, and in evaluating consequences. "But, in the end, a professional is 'condemned' to take action in a state of ambiguity and uncertainty" (Osterman & Kottkamp, 1993, p. 86).

In a workplace environment buffered by the winds of the post-industrial upheaval, waves of technological innovation, and rains of social dislocation, the advanced professional will feel that the supports of standard practice are crumbling. A more responsive, flexible, and dynamic mode of operation is required. Critical reflective practice has been suggested as the means by which the mighty oak of the advanced professional will practice the flexibility necessary to not break in the storm and in the process transform the surrounding forest so that it can survive (perhaps even thrive) in the unknowable future shaped by the greenhouse effect. To some extent, the choices of the reflective professional will influence the forces of change in the immediate and global environment. The supposition goes on to promise that not only will this reflective practice increase the variety and fine tune the selection of appropriate responses to sifting environmental stimuli, but that the exercise of the mutually reciprocal process will give a sense of purpose and meaning to the advanced professional.

If the highly praised practice of reflection is indeed instrumental in providing a useful mechanism for professionals to synthesize information from a variety of sources and produce a uniquely appropriate solution to a discrete problem while advancing the individual's sense of meaning and the shared organizational mission, then the practitioners

should reveal their insights in their own words. Practitioners, involved in a year-long practicum which strongly encourages reflective practice, are a likely testing ground to determine how the individual's quest for meaning is impacted by the realities of the workplace. Since "there is almost universal admission among practicing educators of never having systematically inquired into their own belief systems in a disciplined way requiring a product that then can be carefully examined, modified, and used over the years to come" (Osterman & Kottkamp, 1993, p. 110), professionals introduced to the promising technique and intensely exercising critical reflective practice might be expected to view themselves differently.

Therefore, this study sought to uncover what actually occurred when administrators were asked to experiment with reflective practice. Using the participants' own words, the researcher sought to answer: What do midlevel community college academic administrators, who participate in a continuing professional education program, reveal in their reflective journals of critical professional practice about the midlife quest for meaning?

Purpose of the Study

This study described the results of an investigation into the reflective journals written by midlevel community college academic administrators who participated in a year-long program. The intent of this research was to discover if a predictable pattern exists of how the midlife quest for meaning is influenced by critical professional practice. The guiding expectation was that, should such a pattern emerge, then the pattern principles

might direct the design of learning experiences that are responsive to the development of mid-career professionals.

Theoretical Basis for the Study

This research used Marton's (1988) concept of phenomenography, the examination and description of how learners experience and interpret learning. The research sought to find a phenomenography of critical reflection as it related to one group of adult learners who are higher education administrators.

As a response to a disillusionment with positivism, various research approaches developed in order to discover meaning in human activity. With a variety of names (such as naturalistic inquiry, hermeneutic phenomenology, constructivism) and with fuzzy boundaries, they are all concerned with how people create meaning in their lives and how they record the meaning with language. What is captured in words is not "reality" but a construction of human singularity through language.

> Phenomenology is the study of
>
> phenomena, of things or events, in the everyday world. Phenomenologists study situations in the everyday world from the viewpoint of the experiencing person. This experiential view helps phenomenologists understand people and human life so that they can work effectively with them. (Becker, 1992, p. 7)

In accordance with this model, the researchers design studies that investigate phenomena as people actually experience them. The researcher uses data collection instruments that enable the participants to explain the lived experience in their own words using such open ended instruments as interviews, self-reports, and journaling.

The use of nonstructured written reports enables the participant to contemplate a personal experience within a self-defined context. Narrative text is a continuous revamping of an individual's perception of events.

> The self-story serves to "employ" life events with meaning and to create followable narratives. These narratives foster a sense of well-being through their integration of the presently understood past, the experienced present, and the anticipated future. Self-narratives draw on the templates provided by other stories in a culture. It is a characteristic of the life course in contemporary western societies that there is a single master template which emerged in the Renaissance and continues to the present: the idea of the centrality and sovereignty of the individual. (Berman, 1993, p. 294)

As the storyteller develops the story, it is reinterpreted, supplemented, and revised as identity is transformed.

Going to these self-reports is important for "a large gap exists between what researchers produce as reconstructions of teachers' knowledge, even when this work is carried out explicitly 'from a teacher's perspective' . . . and teachers' accounts of their own knowledge" (Elbaz, 1988, p. 172). There is no reason to think the gap would be any narrower with educational administrators.

Significance of the Study

A nation, disillusioned with the ubiquitous failure of public education to fulfill expectations, is demanding results while limiting resources. Placed in this vise grip of rising expectations pulling against disillusionment, the reflective administrator realizes that the failed "fix-it" model of the past must be replaced by a far deeper examination. The public community college educational administrator willing to take the leap from the secure, if failed, search for a solution to the shaky ground of re-assessing personal and

institutional beliefs, values, and assumptions is in for an earth-shaking experience. "An appreciation of the phenomenography of learning critical reflection is one of the few hedges critical adult educators have against a morale-sapping sense of professional failure when we see learners experiencing the dark side of critical struggle" (Brookfield, 1994, p. 215).

This study attempted to give others faced with this challenge the strength and perseverance to take their own journey into critical reflection, being inspired by the quest of their fellow practitioners.

Definition of Terms

Meaning is "the verbal productions of participants that define and direct action" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 61). Therefore, meaning is "a subjective interpretation of experience. . . . Meaning is both reflective and intentional; meaning acquired as a result of reflection provides a basis for intention in further action" (Kolb, 1988, p. 169).

> In finding meaning . . . we are perceiving a possibility embedded in reality. . . Since each situation is unique, with a meaning that is also necessarily unique, it now follows that the "possibility to do something about a situation" is unique also as it is transitory. . . . For what then counts and matters is to bear witness to the uniquely human potential at its best, which is to transform a tragedy into a personal triumph, to turn one's predicament into a human achievement. (Frankl, 1978, pp. 38-39)

Metacognition refers to:

> the knowledge individuals have of their own thinking processes and strategies, and their ability to monitor and regulate these processes. This requires learners to analyze, reflect on and monitor their own learning. Metacognition, i.e. knowledge, awareness and control of cognition, is an outcome of conscious reflection (Wilson & Jan, 1993, p. vii).

Phenomenology is

> in the 20th century, mainly the name for a philosophical movement whose primary objective is the direct investigation and description of phenomena as consciously experienced, without theories about their causal explanation and as free as possible from unexamined preconceptions and presuppositions. (Spiegelberg, 1973. In Stanage, 1987, p. 327)

Reflection is

> a cycle of paying deliberate, analytical attention to one's own action in relation to intentions--as if from an external observer's perspective--for the purpose of expanding one's options and making decisions about improved ways of acting in the future, or in the midst of the action itself. (Kottkamp, 1990, p.183)

Reflective action "entails the active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the consequences to which it leads" (Zeichner & Liston, 1987, p. 24).

Routine action "is guided primarily by tradition, external authority, and circumstance" (Zeichner & Liston, 1987, p. 24).

Transformational learning "shapes people; they are different afterward, in ways both they and others can recognize" (Clark, 1993, p. 47).

Assumptions of the Study

The researcher made the following assumptions based on questions asked in The Reflective Turn, which Schon warns can only be avoided "at the researcher's peril" (1991a, p. 9):

1. "What is it appropriate to reflect *on*?" (Schon, 1991a, p. 9).

The experience of professional development stimulated the participants to question and reflect upon how they practiced their profession in the past and present and how they wish to change in future practice.

This study assumes that the participants will not limit their journal entries to recordings of issues of a technical, rational, and discrete nature. Instead, participants will delve into how their professional practice contributes to their self-perception, sense of meaning, and worldview. Since professionals spend more time working then any other activity and their work is more than a livelihood, then their perception of the value of their work and the meaning of their life will be intertwined.

2. "What is an appropriate *way* of observing and reflecting on practice?"(Schon, 1991a, p. 9). The journals contain reflective information about practice.

Journal writing was strongly encouraged by the faculty of the continuing education program. The researcher asked students in the professional development program to volunteer to send to the researcher the journals they were writing for their own self-investigation. The only additional requirement the researcher placed on the participants was that they photocopy and mail their journal entries. Therefore, the researcher assumes that the journal entries were not contaminated (or only minimally) by the fact that they were studied.

3. "When we have taken the reflective turn, what constitutes *appropriate rigor*?"(Schon, 1991a, p. 10). The analysis of self-reports of reflective practice proceeded with sufficient rigor to adhere to standards of scholarly research.

The researcher followed research procedures to minimalize subjectivity in the analysis of the journal entries. Though the researcher was involved in the continuing professional education program, the researcher strictly followed procedures to enable distancing from the entries. For example, the researcher did not write a journal of the experience, the journal entries were presented to the researcher only after another person

removed the names of participants and substituted a code, and the researcher did not discuss the journals with the participants. The researcher assumes that these procedures contributed to the rigor of the study.

4. "Finally, what does the reflective turn imply for the researcher's *stance* toward his enterprise--toward his 'subjects,' his 'subject,' his research activity, and himself?" (Schon, 1991a, p. 11). The researcher's stance in gathering and analysis of data were appropriately close enough to the participants to make sense and reveal understanding of their self-reports while sufficiently academically distant to assure that issues of subjectivity were confronted.

The researcher assumed that procedures to enable sufficient distancing from the data were followed. The categories emerged from the data and not from the researcher's predetermined bias. The researcher assumes that another investigator, given the categories, would find a similar pattern.

Limitations of the Study

Limitations of this study are:

1. The researcher's "bias is clearly toward a belief that patterns of practice would make sense if one could only discover the sense" (Schon, 1991a, p. 6).

2. The sample studied is small and opportunistic. The results may be applicable only to these individuals at this time. Further research will be needed to assess the generalizability of the findings.

3. As a fellow participant in the continuing professional education program, the researcher, despite a vigilant effort, may lack the distance from participants that a more detached researcher could offer.

4. Being newer to the profession than many of the participants, the researcher may lack the depth of background to fully understand the experiences shared by more seasoned practitioners.

Organization of the Remainder of the Study

Chapter 2 contains a review of relevant scholarly literature on the topics of adult development and learning, reflective professional practice, the midlife quest for meaning, and the roles and responsibilities of the community college academic chairperson. Chapter 3 explains the research methodology. Chapter 4 presents the analysis and interpretation of the data. Chapter 5 offers implications of the findings and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER 2 - REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This study's purpose was to uncover how practitioners perceive of their own critical reflective practice. The researcher sought to uncover the intelligence that guides what the participants actually say they are practicing. This knowledge can improve the quality of continuing professional education programs seeking to stimulate reflective practice. By discovering how practitioners actually question and analyze their practice, the continuing professional education programs will better understand what is most meaningful in practitioner self-reflection. In addition, the continuing professional education programs can respond by adapting means to encourage critical reflection on values, beliefs, assumptions, and areas of practice that practitioners do not explore independently. "Any program of advanced professional studies should be based on careful study of how integrative judgement is learned from life experience and how this learning is stimulated by the contextual challenges of adult life" (Kolb, 1988, p. 84).

The purpose of the research explored in this chapter was to help in the construction of a conceptual framework for the primary research. The review of the literature grounds this research in the exploration of related inquiry. Experiential learning theory is the framework in which transformation learning is located. Critical reflective professional practice is a component of transformational learning. The inquiring practitioner is a midlife adult engaged in life stage tasks. The professional practice of community college academic midlevel administrators is the specific location where the theory is explored.

To investigate this framework, this chapter is divided into two principal sections. An introduction of the midlife adult's quest for meaning is explored with theories of experiential learning and how they flow into transformational and then professional critical reflective practice. Second, in order to provide context, a review of descriptive literature on the system of higher education, especially the roles and responsibilities of the community college academic department chairperson, is explored. People can only be understood within a setting or what Heidegger (1962) called "being-in-the-world."

Researchers accept that practicing a profession requiring critical decisions about novel and ubiquitous issues requires high level and varied thought processes (Osterman & Kottkamp, 1993). The academic middle manager is required to continuously bring together information from a multitude of sources (frequently incomplete information) in order to resolve strained and unique tensions. As higher education is increasingly being required to fulfill more educational and societal needs with fewer resources in an environment with shifting demographic, economic, global, technological, and cultural pressures, the person responsible for 80% of the college's decisions (Tucker, 1992) must be resourceful. Critical reflective practice is a powerful method for reaching an innovative decision by examining not only the impact of theoretical, empirical, and experiential information but, in addition, deeply analyzing how one's own values, beliefs, assumptions, and self-perception shape one's action.

From Meaning To Behavior And Back Again

All research begins with a question. Qualitative research asks questions about the motives and intentions behind the behaviors of those being studied. This shift in the paradigm of inquiry from the measurable to the meaningful is the result of the change in worldviews during the last century.

At the Chicago World's Fair some of the greatest thinkers of the end of the 19th century prophesied "a century of progress" resulting from scientific marvels. Yet before the end of the 2nd decade of this century, people "observing the contrast between the order existing in the separate sciences and the utter confusion in the world outside . . . called on the scientists for principles that would serve them as guides through chaos" (Cowley, 1938, p. 252).

In the field of education these principles were offered by John Dewey. In contrast to the positivistic scientific method of predetermined hypothesis, controlled content, and segregated variables, Dewey espoused an inquiry into the motives of humans in the real world. Though logical, quantitative inquiry does provide an abstraction of experience, alone the results, stripped of content, are mechanical (Dewey, 1930). A human experience, like a work of art, is more than the combination of the parts. Meaning is only understandable within the context of the holism of life. Experience is bounded by content. According to Dewey's theory of inquiry, "'the problem' unifies theory and practice. Where inquiry is motivated by a problem, there is no question about the relevance of this product--knowledge or theory--to practice" (Sherman & Webb, 1988, p. 16). For Dewey the test of any inquiry or resulting theory is practice (Dewey, 1938b).

In an autobiographical statement written late in his life, Dewey (1930) commented:

> If I read the cultural signs of the times right, the next synthetic movement in philosophy will emerge when the significance of the social sciences and arts has become an object of reflective attention in the same way that mathematical and physical sciences have been made the objects of thought in the past, and when their full import is grasped. (p. 17)

Leaving behind the behaviorist, who studied what output an organism produces when given a controlled stimuli, the new paradigm researcher is concerned with the far more complex area of what happens between the measurable in and out. What is happening inside the *black box* when the input and output occur in the real world of people trying to make sense of it all? How does the person at the pinnacle of life's potential make sense of self when ambiguity and chaos are swirling around yet judgment is required?

In midlife the professional practitioner frequently has achieved a level of competency which can lead to a plateauing. For many this stability in practice is sufficient. For many others, driven by external forces or internal motivation, midlife is a time to reconsider the meaning of one's life and act in accordance with this deeper understanding. The review of the literature that follows is an exploration of this reflective, midlife, professional practitioner.

Adult Learning and Reflective Practice

Middle Adulthood Stage Theory

Chronological age is viewed as a useful lens to explore the organization of human life. Stage theories describe the typical person who follows the culturally defined role sequence. Crucial themes in adulthood have been explored by scholars, though many (most notably Freud and Piaget) concluded their exploration of development with

adolescence. Freud (1949) explored love and work. Erikson (1963) divided adulthood into three stages, each with a dualistic choice leading to a different successful resolution at each stage: for young adults intimacy, for middle adults generativity, for elders integrity. The accomplishment of a blended personality concerned Jung (1960). Levinson (1979) explored how the progression of crises and commitments develop into life structures. To these essential issues of adulthood, phenomenologists add another outlook. Though coming from differing perspectives, contemporary theorists are realizing that the trajectory of development thrusts into the adult years. The demands of the postmodern world require "of adults a quantitative transformation of mind every bit as fundamental as the transformation from magical thinking to concrete thinking required of the school-age child or the transformation from concrete to abstract thinking required of the adolescent" (Kegan, 1994, p. 11).

Though developmental theories vary, they seem to agree on some basic perceptions. Middle adulthood is generally demarcated as the period between 40 and 65 years of age. Change during this period is usually gradual as opposed to the sudden changes experienced in earlier years. For example, the inevitability of aging becomes apparent during midlife but generally does not have a significant impact on normal functioning. Yet the noise of the biological clock becomes impossible to ignore even if it was never expected. In interviews of white, professional adults between the ages of 50 and 60, David Karp (1988) found that "the fact of aging seems to be one of life's great surprises, a surprise that is most fully sprung in the fifties" (p. 729).

In contrast to the confrontation with one's own demise, midlife is also the period of heightened potential. For those who followed the typical pattern of marriage in the early

twenties followed closely with offspring, the responsibilities of parenthood are waning. In midlife, the career has probably reached its peak or a last push for achievement is soon to decrease. Middle life is frequently the best of times for work and relationships. The increased level of competency and control, along with the decrease in role responsibility and need to prove oneself, enables many a middle-aged adult to have more options than any other time during life. Yet unlike in the past when the competent professional was able to coast on previously acquired and frequently practiced skills, contemporary life affords no such luxury. The demands of the postmodern world not only recognize adult development but also demand accelerating competencies of the adult mind. For

> if in the last few hundred years we have succeeded in recognizing a qualitative distinction between the mind of the child and the mind of the adult, it may still remain for us to discover that adulthood itself is not an end state but a vast evolutionary expanse encompassing a variety of capacities of mind. (Kegan, 1994, p. 5)

Erik Erikson's Stage Theory of Identity Development

Erik Erikson's (1959, 1982) theory of identity development postulates three stages of adult development, which he assumed are a product of universal experiences of adulthood: (a) the need to establish a lasting relationship with a spouse, (b) the need to procreate and raise children, (c) the need to do useful work, and (d) the need to recognize one's own mortality. As a result of satisfying these needs, adults make choices that determine their placement in a continuum that define the critical issue of each life stage. The young adult faces the choice between intimacy and isolation. The middle adult is concerned with generativity versus stagnation. The older adult's central issue is between integrity and despair.

Generativity, to Erikson, includes not only the biological and nurturing functions of one's own parental responsibilities but also the creation of ideas and products. As used by Erikson (1978), generativity is an externally focused quality; yet much of the research indicates an intense focus on individuality in the middle years (Levinson, 1979; Loevinger, 1984).

Jane Loevinger's Stage Theory of Ego Development

According to Erikson (1959, 1963, 1978, 1982), as people travel through life they will inevitably come to developmental forks in the road. In contrast, Loevinger (1984) does not assume that all adults pass through all stages but instead proposes that in the event that an individual undergoes personal changes, the change will follow a prescribed sequence. When there is a developmental pattern, the movement is from dominance by social roles and conventionality decisions, to increasing individuality and autonomy, ripening into accelerating insightfulness of the inner self.

Young adults understand and measure themselves in relationship to their social group in the conformist stage. For some adults the conformist personality remains throughout life. Yet others, who never fit in with their peers, or through traumatic experience are torn from the norm, or are driven by a need for further self-understanding, move beyond external confirmation. This transition is wrought with the struggle to create internally defined self-knowledge and goals. In the conscientious and individualistic stages, adults searching for a self determined understanding may turn from what feels like binding relationships. In the process of making and understanding unique individuality,

the adult may strive to make a mark in the world. The middle-aged person may be driven to succeed while there is still time.

In middle age this shift from the externally toward the internally defined self is called *detribalization* by Daniel Levinson (1979). In midlife

> the adult becomes more critical of the tribe--the particular groups, institutions and traditions that have the greatest significance for him, the social matrix of which he is most attached. He is less dependent upon the tribal rewards, more questioning of tribal values, more able to look at life from a universalistic perspective. (Levinson, 1979, p. 242)

Those who achieve sufficient confidence in the form of self-understanding and reliance are able to look beyond personal needs and focus outward toward contributing to "humanitarian" needs.

Since the choices the individual has are impacted by social roles and responsibilities, one can expect certain patterns in development. For example, young men and women are pushed into different conformist roles. A man might begin young adulthood by conforming to an expectation for workplace achievement, while a young woman might concentrate on nurturing a family. Along comes midlife exploration and the neglected components of personality are emphasized. The man becomes more family oriented, while the woman seeks achievement beyond the home. The midlife adult concentrates on achieving in the unexplored areas.

If the level of achievement is personally satisfying, the autonomous stage of later life enables an acceptance of self or what Erikson (1978) terms ego integrity. Yet though Loevinger found that almost all adults reach the individualistic stage, each subsequent stage is achieved by a progressively smaller number of people.

Other Research on Midlife Changes

The middle-aged adult seems more open to recognize, explore, and evaluate underdeveloped parts of self and critically evaluate unexamined assumptions. In the transition from young to middle adulthood the "openness to self" increases considerably as measured by "insightful", "introspective", and "think unconventionally" as found in the 1981 Berkeley Intergenerational Study (Haan, 1981). Haan found "cognitively committed" adults reported experiencing a midlife peak as indicated by openness, achievement, and independence. In extensive interviews middle-aged adults stressed that their self-perception of well-being was dependent on self-confidence, self-acceptance, and self-knowledge, a correlation not found among older adults (Ryff, 1989).

Women in their 40s were more likely to reveal that they are extremely involved in exploring their inner selves than college age women (Helson & Moane, 1987). The same study in comparing men and women at ages 27 and 52 found an increase in self-assurance and a sense of competency along with age. Paradoxically this same study that found "increased openness" also found "decreased flexibility." A large study of adults in Germany found that "tenacious goal pursuit" peaked at age 50 to subsequently decline, yet flexible goal adjustment rises at the same age (Brandtstadter & Greve, 1994). These adaptive strategies are a recognition of the declining biological abilities and lessening social expectations of older adults.

This incomplete, and at times contradictory, information leaves much to explore. Midlife adults can probably safely be described as more complex and more individualistic then their younger counterparts. Yet greater variability in development is found than in earlier stages (Christensen, Mackinnon, Jorm, Scott, & Korten, 1994). In the Berkeley

Intergenerational Study the average score on *openness to self* was higher for midlife adults and the range was greater than for younger adults.

The research indicates that though personality may change with age basic constitution remains fairly stable. McAdams (1994) suggests that personality is best understood as layers. The first layer is *dispositional traits*, which because of a powerful genetic component remain stable in the individual. The second layer is far more variable since individual, social, and peer expectations play a major role. Included in this second layer are motivation, defense mechanisms, coping strategies, beliefs, and implementation tactics. Both layers interact resulting in unique and far from predictable humans midway through life.

Transitions in Midlife Development

The popular belief in a midlife crisis is probably more accurately described as a transition for most people. Levinson (1986, 1990) assumes that the wide scope of midlife adjustments--including acceptance of physical, biological, and psychological decline, approaching death, adaptation of gender, work, relational, and achievement expectations--frequently results in tumult, anguish, and depression. Opinions vary on the severity of midlife changes. In Midlife Myths (Hunter & Sundel, 1989) researchers looking at the same evidence come up with different conclusions. Convinced of widespread evidence of midlife crisis, Tamir finds this period of life filled with "deep-seated self-doubts or confusion" (1989, p. 161). Yet, the evidence of crisis is only found in between 2% and 5% of midlife adults, according to Chiriboga (1989, p. 117). Other evidence supports that the universality of a midlife crisis is a myth. For example, severe depression is more prevalent

among young adults than midlife adults (Regier, Boyd, Burke, Rae, Myers, Kramer, Robins, George, Karno & Locke, 1988). Crisis is more related to changes in major life roles (Costa & McCrae, 1988) and for women status in family role (Harris, Ellicott & Holmes, 1986) than a specific age. Additionally, analysis of both the Berkeley and Oakland longitudinal studies indicates that many people having midlife crises also experience upheavals at other times of their lives, indicating a personality component (Haan, 1981).

These contradictory interpretations of the commonly accepted midlife crisis can partly be explained by looking at the population to which many studies are normed. White, professional, males between the ages of 45 and 49 in a cross-sectional study were found to have increasing rates of suicide, substance abuse, depression, and lethargy (Tamir, 1989). In middle age these aspirants of high achievement may be confronted with the limitations of their lives. As more women and minorities aim for high goals, they may too join the crisis of unfulfilled expectations in middle age. Other societal constrictions such as downsizing organizations, which lower the possibility of advancement, and the lessening value of experience due to ever changing technology, may also force future midlifers to feel like failures. Until this research is available, the midlife crisis seems to be more dependent on circumstances than an inevitable stage of life. When the shifts are gradual they are transitions, but when personal resources and support systems are overwhelmed they become crises.

Summary of Midlife Stage Theory

Though no stage development theory neatly provides a structure for research findings, they do provide a broader conceptual framework for understanding adult change. Even contradictions further the field by stimulating further research, such as Schaie's empirical research (1983) finding of increased personal rigidity with age, which contrasts with the theoretical expectations of Erikson, and Loevinger's prediction of receptivity. The theoretical perspective enriches quantitative measures by placing them within a context of social expectations, role patterns, and personality variations. What becomes of people is far more complex and varied than measures will ever reveal.

A Phenomenological View of Adulthood

Though knowledge of life stages is helpful in organizing human growth and development, time and sequencing are not the only frameworks of a life. Traditional life stage theory lacks information on how the people experience their lives. The living person experiences continuity and change in a particular context. "People realize and actualize themselves--develop--in an ongoing, dialectical process of being-in-the-world-with-others" (Becker, 1992, p. 50). Using a variety of perspectives, phenomenologists seek to understand people in the dynamics of living. For adults development means achieving goals, clarifying values, and acquiring understanding of life's meaning.

Developmental phenomenology is a youthful methodology exploring a diversity of possible ways of viewing human change. Phenomenologists study human development with the assumption that people are "experiencing, diverse, intentional subjects who co-create meaning and exercise situated freedom" (Becker, 1992, p. 52). Because human

action is shaped by not only time and place, but also individual differences, situated freedom, and prereflective and reflective motivated actions, the individual's actions can never be entirely predicted or known. To the generalized developmental theories, phenomenologists add a dimension of the unique, dynamic individual co-creating a particular life.

Existential A Priori

To be human is to confront individual responsibility while paradoxically acknowledging vulnerability. An existential existence is a negotiation between the inevitability of determinism and situated freedom. The midlife adult is attempting to create a meaningful life in conjunction with other humans who are negotiating their own path.

> On the dark side of life, we confront fundamental issues of life as we grow older--loneliness, anxiety, death, meaninglessness, and unfinished actualization. The opposite of these--relatenedness, security, vitalized living, meaningfulness, and actualization--are equally prominent dimensions. (Becker, 1992, p. 92)

Loneliness, the empty feeling of isolation from the understanding of others, is an inevitability of being human. Existential loneliness (Moustakas, 1961) is the realization that human uniqueness prevents the possibility of anyone truly understanding another's inner being. The person confronting existential loneliness trembles at the sight of the void (Kierkegaard, 1954). Sharing is the only possible remedy for the disease of loneliness. Intimacy requires that a component of individuality be forsaken. To escape isolation by melting into a uniformity of others is an impossibility to which we are both attracted and repelled. So life is a tension between the contradictory desires of being unique while being part of another.

Loneliness can be expressed in two different ways, that is by fearful anxiety or by courageous confrontation. Loneliness anxiety (Moustakas, 1961) is a fleeing from the fear of isolation by a panicked race toward action and acceptance. In the process the individual's uniqueness is abandoned in a futile attempt to connect. A different path, that of embracing the ontological fact of human loneliness, is ironically a route to inner peace. Through confrontation of one's unsheltered being, one grows by self-revelation, self-repentance, and eventually perhaps self-appreciation. The renewed adult is better equipped to relate to self and others. By connecting with others, the gulf of isolation is bridged. By accepting the uniqueness of each human, adults open themselves to the sharing and empathy available in honest relationships.

As adults pass into the stage that is not youth nor youthful adulthood, the death of parents and peers and one's own decline become increasingly evident. The middle-aged person is confronted with creating meaning as the afternoon shadow of death elongates. The existential question of how to live in the face of death is answered by some with the fatalism of despair, or by others with the denial of mortality by escaping into the trappings of youth. Yet those who search for meaning "struggle to craft a meaningful course through life, we confront our freedom and responsibility" (Becker, 1992, p. 94).

Like the ancient heros, the authentic life involves taking the risks to live the life unique to the individual (Heidegger, 1962). To use one's freedom and responsibility to chose to neglect ones' individual potential is to live "in bad faith" according to Sartre (1956). To live "in good faith" is to actualize all that one can be. In accepting one's destiny, all people have the potential for heroism. Adult educator Malcolm Knowles defines adults by the acceptance of agency. "We become adult psychologically when we

come to perceive ourselves as being essentially responsible for our own lives" (1989, p. 48). In summarizing the cross-cultural myths of heroism studied by Joseph Campbell, Bill Moyers in The Power of Myth tells how the quest for meaning is not a release but an embracing of responsibility. According to this definition, the role of the reflective practitioner sounds heroic:

> No one with a will to the service of others would permit himself such an escape [as the striving for release]. The ultimate aim of the quest must be neither release nor ecstasy for oneself, but the wisdom and the power to serve others. (Moyers, 1988, p. xv)

The Midlife Adult's Quest for Meaning

As adults move into midlife, they interpret experience through a different filter. The search for the meaning beyond the clutter and confusion of life events is an essential quest of adulthood. Many developmental psychologists emphasize the centrality of meaning for human existence. "One characteristic all human beings have in common is that we can't live without some sense that life is meaningful" (Fowler, 1983, p. 58). Victor Frankl says that a crucial motive is the "will to meaning" (1984). The drive to make sense, to find a deeper meaning in existence, is a definition of humanness.

The exploration of a progression of meaning in adults has been explored from several perspectives. Lawrence Kohlberg (Kohlberg, Levine & Hewer, 1983) and his colleagues, and those he inspired (Gilligan, 1982) explored stages of moral reasoning from various perspectives. James Fowler (1983) investigated the development of faith. Robert Kegan (1982) delved into the "evolving self." Peak experiences are explored as means for optimizing adult potential (Czikszentmihalyi & Ratgunde, 1990). Certainly the

exploration of meaning is not just the domain of the social scientist. The poet, the journalist, the autobiographer, and the artist share their own inner journey.

The consistency of these theories is the assumption that humans progress through life but few achieve their full potential. Maslow (1971) places at the zenith of the pyramid of needs the seldom-reached self-actualization or self-transcendency. Loevinger (1976) speaks of the heights of an integrated personality. Fowler (1981) aspires towards universal faith. Kohlberg et al. (1983) postulated a stage seven of self-transcendence.

Though life stage events may have a certain uniformity, the interpretation of the meaning of these events is far more variable as is the level of competency. What factors influence the adult's destination in the journey toward meaning?

Robert Kegan's Theory of the Evolving Self

In The Evolving Self Robert Kegan (1982), building on Piaget's (1972) legacy, presents the lifelong meaning-making experience as a transformation of the consciousness. He perceives of human development as an unresolvable tension between the opposing drives for individuality and connection. The opposing desires are so forceful that compromise is impossible, but a series of "evolutionary truces" do occur at different life stages. Development is marked by the dominance of one stage, followed by the magnetism of the other, which subsequently, though only temporarily, switches the prominence. The cyclical switch from integration to separation and back again is metaphorically a journey up the sides of a cavern by means of series of ascending shaky bridges. On one side of the cavern of meaning is the perception of independence, while the other side is the viewpoint of inclusion.

Life is a cyclical journey between the dualities while developmentally ascending. Leaning on the side of one's present ledge and gazing across the gulf, the opposite side becomes increasingly attractive. Eventually the tug of the opposite is so powerful that the bridge is forded. The infant enters life on the primary level of union. By 2 years old, the child is taking clumsy steps toward independence. The adolescent's desire for membership in the peer group results in conformism. The young adult attempts to establish a sense of individuality until joined with a partner and the creation of the unity of family. By midlife the adult is searching for the self beyond others. Levinson's (1990) concept of the detribalization of the middle years supports the concept of movement from the external confirmation of earlier years towards dependance on an internally generated system. The swing back to unity is similar to Kohlberg's stage of universal ethical principle or Fowler's conjunctive faith stage.

Yet the genuinely intimate adult relationship is as close to an integration of the opposing forces as possible for it entails reciprocity, "a matter of both holding and being held, a mutual protection of each partner's opportunity to experience and exercise both sides of life's fundamental tension" (Kegan, 1982, p. 254).

Kegan suggests a pattern but does not predict a climax. The journey varies in length. Each ascending stage is reached by fewer individuals. Yet as Dante told Virgil in Canto 4 of Purgatory

> The summit was so high, my sight fell short;
> the slope was far more steep than the line drawn
> from middle-quadrant to the center point.
> I was exhausted when I made this plea;
> "O gentle father, turn around and see--
> I will be left alone unless you halt."
> "My son," he said, "draw yourself up to there,"

while pointing to a somewhat higher terrace,
which circles all the slope along that side.
His word incited me; my body tried;
on hands and knees I scrambled after him
until the terrace lay beneath my feet.
There we sat down together, facing east,
in the direction from which we had come:
What joy - to look back at a path we've climbed!
(Dante, 1302. In Caws & Prendergast, 1994, p. 888)

The spiritual height Virgil speaks of is Paradise. Few have the fortitude or integrity to ascend to the peak where the awesome luminescence of unity is contemplated.

The pressures to evolve the consciousness to lofty heights are accelerating in contemporary culture. Whereas in The Evolving Self, the unselfconscious progression of the consciousness is investigated, in In Over Our Heads Kegan (1994) explains how the collective culture claims advancement of the mind. The postmodern world demands *schooling* in intricate and multifaceted thinking competencies--"the forms of meaning-regulation, the transformation of consciousness, the internal experience of these processes, the role of the environment in this activity" (p. 7).

Experience is organized for the child according to three principles: the young child's principle of independent element with temporary, atomistic qualities; the older child's durable, permanent, logical classification; and the adolescent's cross-categorical knowing of abstract interrelationships between categories. For the adult two additional "claims on the mind" are possible, though not frequently achieved. The fourth order of consciousness is complex systems. The fifth order of consciousness is trans-system structures.

These organizational principles share crucial commonalities. First, the constructs of thought shape experience "including one's thinking, feeling, and social-relating"

(Kegan, 1994, p. 32). Second, the stage explains thought process, not content. Third, the mental organization principle is an internal logic or epistemology of the subject-object relationship. "'Object' refers to those elements of our knowing or organizing that we can reflect on, handle, look at, be responsible for, relate to each other, take control of, internalize, assimilate, or otherwise operate upon" (Kegan, 1994, p. 32). The object is distinct enough from the individual as to be capable of manipulation. " *Subject* refers to those elements of our knowing or organizing that we are identified with, tied to, fused with, or embedded in. We have objects; we are subjects" (Kegan, 1994, p. 32). Fourth, the relationship between each mental model is "transformative, qualitative, and incorporative. Each successive principle subsumes or encompasses the prior principle. That which was subject becomes object to the next principle" (Kegan, 1994, p. 33). Each level of thinking subsumes previous principles. Kegan uses a geometric metaphor to explain the relationship. A point, a line, a plane, a multidimensional figure contains elements of the previous construction. Fifth, the potential of humans to progress to higher level principles indicates a shifting reality.

> In fact, transforming our epistemologies, liberating ourselves from that in which we were embedded, making what was subject into objects so that we can "have it" rather than "be had" by it--this is the most powerful way I know to conceptualize the growth of the mind. (Kegan, 1994, p. 34)

The complexities of the world have made corresponding demands on the human consciousness. While the abstract level of stage three was sufficient for the traditional society, and abstract systems thinking of stage four was required for the modern world, dialectical, trans-ideological, post-ideological thinking is demanded of the postmodern culture. This fifth level thinking requires self-transformation through self-authorship, self-

regulation, and self-formation. The fourth order appreciates the diversity of differences, while the fifth order perceives of the differences as components of an all encompassing whole. The fifth-order person is able to select among the available perspective lenses for viewing the various interrelationships between particulars. This high order thinking closely corresponds with Kohlberg's suggestion of a universalist moral stage, Fowler's top level of faith, or the Gaia organic interrelationship of mother earth. Jung (1960) also wrote of a midlife transitional stage leading to composite integration. Yet the demands of the postmodern age are out of synchronization with the inhabitants' ability. Empirical evidence shows that few people reach level five and none before midlife (Kegan, 1994, p. 317).

Kegan suggests that the answer is a new curriculum beyond the mutually respectful, win-win strategy of the modernists. Senge suggests the constantly changing learning organization of The Fifth Discipline (1990). Kegan proposes the always questioning, rearranging, seeking-the-larger-picture thought process for the professional who functions in the complex, globally competitive postmodern world. What Chris Argyris (1989) is requesting of organizational leaders is a level of complexity beyond the fourth level, which in itself is achieved by few.

> Refusing to see oneself or the other as a single system or form, regarding the premise of completeness as a tempting pretense, constructing the process of interacting as *prior* to the existence of the form or system, facing protracted conflict as a likely sign of one's own identification with false assumptions of wholeness, distinctness, completeness, or priority--all of these ways of constructing reality require that the epistemological organization of system, form, or theory be relativized, moved from subject in one's knowing to object in one's knowing. They all require a "trans-systemic," "multiform," or "cross-theoretical" epistemological organization. (Kegan, 1994, p. 321)

This fifth order of consciousness is required for today's complexity.

Transitions in Meaning Development

If the search for meaning is a journey to a lofty pinnacle, then developmental psychologists have been more interested in the way stations than the shaking bridges of transitions. Yet those who do depict the alteration from one stage to the next frequently describe a death of the previous self-concept, value system, and stability and a rebirth into a transformed consciousness (James, 1902/1958; Kegan, 1980, 1982, 1994; Perry, 1970). The stasis of the present stage is shaken by a flash, glance, shadow of the next possibility. For a time the traveler tries to balance the previous and the next stages. This period, of undetermined duration, is confusing, disjointed, and burdensome. The instability may be manifest in depression, doubt, anxiety, and other physical and psychological problems. The disquietude of change is painful.

> Development is costly--for everyone, the developing person and those around him or her. Growth involves a separation from an old system of meaning. In practical terms this can involve both the agony of felt meaninglessness and the repudiation of commitments and investment . . . . Developmental theory gives us a way of thinking about such pain that does not pathologize it. (Kegan, 1980, p. 439)

The transitions may be stimulated by life-stage transitions, guidance (therapy or spiritual), or peak or traumatic life experiences.

When the instability is too great the individual reaches a point of bifurcation. Some escape the tensions of growth by escaping to the comfort of the previous stage. The more adventuresome take the leap toward a new equilibrium, a new insight, a new consciousness. This phase of the life journey has been described as starting with an end, proceeding to a middle, and concluding with a beginning (Bridges, 1980).

Though some predictable life cycle changes are more likely to stimulate change, the perception of the event causes transformation, not the event itself. Though going off to

college, joining with a beloved, parenting a child, or mourning a parent's death may stimulate insight to a new consciousness, many people just continue marching to the same beat. "Only when people give meaning to their experience in a situation does it actually have meaning" (Jarvis, 1988, p. 166). Perhaps predictable, shared change seems to most people to have external causation. Unique, off-stage changes may stimulate more reflection since internal responsibility is heightened. Though most adults look for meaning, a lesser number intentionally and avidly take on the quest.

Though the journey metaphor is prevalent in developmental psychology, the hero cycle of mythology as expressed in the archetypes of Jung (1954) and the interpretations of Campbell (1988) is the appropriate metaphor. The young person is initiated into the responsibilities of the society, then has a choice to accept or reject a unique destiny. If accepted, the quest leads to a series of challenges requiring increasingly more toned and broadened skills, until the hero returns home with the wisdom to help the next generation venture forth. The cost of the growth is substantial, especially in the postmodern society when the burden may be beyond the individual's ability.

Transformational Learning

The process of these life-altering insights is the domain of the study of transformational learning. The metamorphosis of a human into a different and unpredictable one has always fascinated poets, philosophers, and psychologists. More recently educators have investigated the process. Transformative learning

> produces more far-reaching changes in the learners than does learning in general and that these changes have a significant impact on the learner's subsequent

> experiences. In short, transformational learning shapes people; they are different afterward, in ways both they and others can recognize. (Clark, 1993, p. 47)

Proceeding continuously or in leaps, as part of education or in daily life, transformational learning is intricately woven into human development. Transformational experiences are the pivotal life events that determine a person's self-perception, value system, and life course.

Mezirow

Transformational learning is a reciprocal process of internal formation of meaning and communal testing; reality interpretations are constantly being formulated, tested, revised, and replaced. Critical reflection is a highly rational process of testing and evaluating the undergird of individual interpretations. Through rational discourse, the individual seeks to validate interpretations of reality. Without an objective criterion for reality, only consensual validation can increase a sense of truth.

The theoretical underpinnings lie in the works of constructionism. Reality is not out there to be discovered, but a subjective construction of individuals and societies. In this interpretive or constructivist framework, knowledge is a human creation. Drawing on the works of Habermas (1972), two kinds of knowledge are considered. The broader instrumental knowledge is for problem solving, while communicative knowledge searches for the meaning of experiences. Far from an objective reality, knowledge is always being interpreted by people constantly seeking the meaning of their experiences. Knowledge is in flux as individual and collective construction responds to events and interpretation.

Under ideal conditions, the rational dialogue process is based on Mezirow's interpretation of Habermas' (1972, 1974, 1979) conditions of full information, objective discourse, and openness to rational persuasion. "While Mezirow never clearly explains how rational discourse functions under less-than-ideal conditions, it is clear that, in his view, cogency of argument is the final arbiter on the validity of constructed knowledge" (Clark, 1993, p. 51). Personal development is the goal of Mezirow's vision of transformational learning.

Freire

The emphasis on emancipatory or transformative learning is most powerfully expressed in the works of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1970), who champions adult education as the means to transform oppressed people into critically aware forces of liberating change.

The goal of adult transformational learning for Paulo Freire is social action leading to the change necessary for a more just society. Begun as a literacy education for Brazil's poorest, Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1970) developed into a means of awakening any oppressed people to inequities in the power structure. The problem solving, dialogic pedagogy confronts adults with the stifling social mechanisms, which limit their actions and control their thoughts, and empowers them to work for an equitable society. In accordance with the goal of moving adults from a passive, traditional "banking education" and towards a liberated, freedom seeking education, the pedagogy encourages autonomous, self-directed learning. The "conscientization" process combines both action and reflection, or praxis.

Accepting that no education is politically neutral, Freire (1972) readily admits and encourages the social change agenda of his work. The transformational learning is a means to transform education from a domestication of workers for the benefit of the powerful, toward an educated populace collectively working towards a respectful, equitable society.

Freire describes the human creation of knowledge in spiritual language.

> Human existence cannot be silent, nor can it be nourished by false words, but only by true words, with which men transform the world. To exist, humanly, is to *name* the world, to change it. . . . Men are not built in silence, but in word, in work, in action-reflection. (Freire, 1970, p. 76)

In this nonlinear dynamic process, reality is always being redefined, with rationality being the final arbitrator. The construction of truth results in the creation of action for a just society.

Freire's revolutionary education principles are grounded in a belief that adults have the capacity to reflect on their experience which will motivate transformative action. Animals, says Freire, live in the world, while humans live with the world. Through our ability for praxis, the mutual coupling between reflection and action, people can change the world to their vision.

Daloz

Unlike Freire, for Daloz the construction of knowledge is individual. In a holistic process, adults recreate reality as they develop. Whereas Mezirow theorizes about personal development and Freire teaches for societal liberation, Daloz concentrates on adult transformation in a nontraditional classroom (Daloz, 1986, 1990). Building on the theories of the developmental stimulation of education, Daloz (1988) explores the change process.

Educationally induced change is a terrifying and precarious experience for learners fearful of relinquishing current practices and leaping into unknown terrain. A caring, dependable, and knowledgeable teacher or mentor mediates the fear and provides a bridge into new understanding. Daloz encourages teachers to transform their self-perception from that of deliverer of competencies to one of facilitator of personal development. Daloz encourages adult educators to optimize the developmental capacity of learners.

Summary of Transformational Learning

Mezirow, Freire, and Daloz view transformational learning through their own lens of meaning. Yet their deeper philosophical underpinnings regarding learning and its desirable function for individuals and the greater society are similar. All three are confident that adults are endowed with an inner drive towards progressive development. All agree that transformational learning requires a form of instruction different from direct, didactic instruction. "Whenever more complex human performances are involved, especially those requiring judgement, insight, creativity, planning, problem solving, self-confidence and the like, I think that self-directed learning is appropriate" (Knowles, 1989, p. 49).

Ways of Knowing

Faced with ambiguous, complex problems demanding accurate and prompt decisions, the educational administrator needs diverse sources of information. The three ways of knowing are theoretical, empirical, and experiential. Reflection is a means of

integrating all three methods for an expansive knowledge base essential for a multifaceted repertoire of actions.

Theoretical Ways of Knowing

Theoretical knowledge organizes existing knowledge and provides generalizable principles or framework to explain and categorize phenomena. "Within broad categories, theories, like maps, provide guidelines that assist administrators in defining problems and identifying choices for action in the social world of schools" (Hart, 1990, p. 157). Like a map, theory is helpful in evaluating the usefulness of the abstract representation to the particular task. A careful evaluation of the appropriateness encourages improvement in accuracy and adaptation of perspective.

Educational administrators frequently complain that a universal theory is useless for concrete practice. The generalizability of theory requires a clarity of simplification several steps removed from the rich complexity of reality. Through the necessity to use such distancing devices as metaphor, theories can only interpret reality. To be useful in the messiness of the real world, other ways of knowing must be incorporated.

Empirical Ways of Knowing

Empirical ways of knowing require evidence supporting or discounting supposition. Given a map of theory, the voyager checks the landscape for accuracy.

Empirical evidence is available from a wide variety of formal and informal research methods. Empirical investigations test beliefs, ideas, suppositions, and theories by comparing them with reality-based evidence. Through this rational process, the quality

of beliefs is determined. Only those guidelines that have withstood the evaluation are retained. An elegant theory, a comforting belief, a cherished idea is only valuable if supported by evidence. A map is only as good as its ability to accurately direct the traveler to the desired real destination.

The higher education administrator seeks to confirm or disconfirm theories with concrete evidence of assessments of student learning, retention figures, cost-per-unit-hour numbers, enrollment figures, community support testimony, faculty qualification documentation, and a multitude of other information. These data allow the administrator to test theories for fit, draw conclusions, build support, and make reasonable decisions. Beginning with the outline map of theory, empirical data overlays the rich details of a particular case. With this information, administrators are better able to make decisions in response to how the general theory applies to specific circumstances.

Experiential Ways of Knowing

The source of experiential learning is individual experience supplemented with the vicarious experience of others. While academics emphasize theoretical knowledge, practitioners depend on experiential knowledge. Though attractive for its timeliness, clarity, and pertinence, experiential knowledge is limited in breadth and usually depth and frequently becomes habitualized (Kolb, 1988). For the educational administrator, the quality of experiential knowledge is determined according to applicability to the particular circumstances including such issues as precision and range. A traveler might confidently proceed down a familiar road disregarding the new map in the glove compartment warning of 2 months of road closure. Dependence only on experience is limiting and shallow.

When a person is confronted with a novel experience, "The stock of knowledge acquired through the process of living is not able to provide an automatic response" (Kolb, 1988, p. 167). The awareness of a deficiency of experiential knowledge stimulates the individual to learn. When

> there is disjunction between individuals' own biographies and the socio-cultural-temporal world of their experience, then a potential learning experience has occurred. In order for that experience to become meaningful, people have to think about, reflect upon it and maybe, seek other opinions about it. (Kolb, 1988, p. 167-168)

Donald Schon's (1983, 1987) investigation of the reflective practitioner revealed how "selective inattending" focuses the individual's attention on familiar and unexamined information while disregarding peripheral and never-considered data. Selective inattentiveness is most prevalent in familiar, routine tasks where assumptions, procedures, and solutions are never examined. The failure to broaden the scope of possibilities results in naive and limited responses.

Reflective Practice

An openness to the experience of others, theoretical knowledge, and empirical knowledge enhance the administrator's ability to make effective decisions based on sources of information far more fertile than what any one person can individually experience or create. Reflective practice is a means to integrate the multisource information for deeper decision making. "Reflective practice involves cycles of thought and action based on professional experience viewing the practitioner as a creator rather than a technician" (Rose, 1992, p. 5).

Reflective Practice Grounded In Experiential Learning

Reflective practice is a component of the legacy of Dewey (1933, 1938), Piaget (1969, 1972), Lewin (1952), and other experiential learning theorists, who stressed that experience (especially perplexing experience) results in the most effective learning with the greatest potential for behavioral changes. The most profound and significant learning takes place when the learner is engrossed in a process of personal relevance. In professional training programs, the advent of productive learning parallels job placement.

Reflective learning also fits into the more current viewpoint of situated learning. Situated learning is concerned with both the process and content of learning. Adherents of situated learning (Brown, Collins, & Duguin, 1989) assert that the most effective learning takes place when the learner is actively participating in a real learning experience. In addition, social aspects reinforce learning. For example, solitary learning is weaker than collaborative, social learning. A problem-based learning emphasis also increases impact.

The cyclical process of experiential learning begins with a bothersome situation with no preordained solution (Dewey 1938b). This enigmatic, ambiguous predicament stimulates the reflective practitioner to proceed to the next step of a 4-stage process (Kolb, 1984), which inextricably links reflection with action. Disturbed by the disquietude of the unresolved predicament, reflective practitioners become critical observers of their own actions. Prompted by the tension between expectations and actuality, the reflective practitioner searches for additional information, solutions, and tactics. In step four, the learner, boosted by new information, reframes the problem into a new or revised theory and proceeds to experiment with reconceptualization strategies. The unsettling problem stimulates a learning process concluding with a behavioral change. Reflective practice is "a

dialogue of thinking and doing through which I become more skillful" (Schon, 1987, p. 31). Practice is integrated with theory. Thinking and action interplay. As the demands for the consciousness threshold are expanded by the postmodern world, many will join with Kegan in his "hope that all those who are interested in the individual, the culture, or the historical evolution of cultural mentality will find room for reflection" (1994, p. 10).

Reflective Practice and Action Theories

The individual's perceptions, choices, and actions are based on personal action theory. These personal theories are composed of the ideas, values, beliefs, and assumptions that drive daily existence. The range of behavioral stability and change can be understood by a differentiation between the two discrete kinds of personal action theory: espoused theories and theories-in-use (Argyris & Schon, 1974).

Espoused theories--the reasoned, professional theories professionals learn in graduate school--are supposedly the driving forces for practice. "Espoused theories have two distinct characteristics: (a) They exist at a conscious level, and (b) they change with relative ease in response to new information or ideas" (Osterman & Kottkamp, 1993, p. 9). Yet, though professionals say espoused theories guide practice, evidence indicates an inconsistency between intention and action.

More strongly guiding practices are the far more illusive, yet prevailing theories-in-use, which "are so deeply ingrained in our consciousness that we cannot easily articulate them" and therefore are not easily changed. "Theories-in-use become so habitualized in practice and so reinforced by acculturalization that they "disappear from our conscious 'foreground' and become 'background'" (Osterman & Kottkamp, 1993, pp. 9-10). Though

known-in-action modes of behavior are implicit in most behaviors, they are seldom recognized or examined (Schon, 1983). Theories-in-action contribute to stable and shared cultural norms. Yet, in times of explosive change, they inhibit adaptation with an invisible, inflexible boundary of assumptions.

Reflective practice stimulates an examination and reflection of the discrepancies between what the practitioner claims to believe (espoused theory) and actions (theory-in-use) by exploration of the contrast between desired and actual consequences of action. This inconsistency between the exemplary and the tangible becomes an incentive to explore underlying assumptions, propose different solutions, and try alternative behaviors (Dewey, 1938b; Getzels, 1982; Senge, 1990). The cycle process continuously monitors actions for examined results and experiments with potentially more desirable behaviors. The professional takes responsibility for self-improvement of practice.

Differentiating Critical Thinking from Critical Reflective Thinking

Dewey (1933, 1938) differentiated between two kinds of problem-solving. Formal logic is used to arrive at definitively correct answers to clear cut problems: What is the force of water on the hull of a submarine at 40 leagues? Where is the least expensive place to buy tomatoes within a one-mile radius? How many calories of food are needed by four explorers in the Antarctic for 2 summer months? What is the shortest route to grandmother's house? Though the solutions to these problems require an intelligent manipulation of knowledge, and perhaps even a level of critical thinking, they are solvable formulaically. When agreement occurs on the underlying assumptions about what solving

the problem entails including, the appropriate method to solve the problem, formal logic thinking occurs.

Reflective thinking can only take place after the realization that no certainty is available for obtaining a correct solution. Therefore, according to Dewey, reflective thinking can only take place after the acceptance that the issue is controversial, pervasive, and problematic. If the problem is viewed as solvable with certainty, reflective thinking will not be called into play.

When the ubiquitous nature of the problem is realized, the reflective judgement procedure entails the application of pertinent theoretical and empirical knowledge while evaluating the significance and soundness of the approach. The potential solutions are evaluated regardless of insufficient and inconclusive data. Since formulaic proofs are impossible, the solution is judged with criteria of coherency of argument and consistency with information (Dewey, 1933, 1938). Reflective thinking is not closed with the comforting resolution of correctly using mathematic formulas. The imperfect resolution is never finished. The assumptions, beliefs, hypotheses, and information are reexamined, while newly revealed information is incorporated. Though never finalized, the reflective solution is rigorous because it involves critical self-evaluation. The reflective thinking process is based on far more than narrow reasoning, authority, hunches, or emotional thinking (Dewey, 1933, 1938). Reflective thinking begins with the acceptance of uncertainty and proceeds by carefully considering a wide variety of alternatives until a strenuously argued, temporary solution is proposed.

Reflective practice in education is grounded on Dewey's (1933) principle of developing learners with both components of reflective action: orientations (in the direction

of adaptability, obligation, and commitment); and skills (of rational analysis based on ardent examination).

As opposed to routine action, which is controlled by traditional power structures, reflective action "entails the active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the consequences to which it leads" (Zeichner & Liston, 1987, p. 24).

Stage Theory of Reflective Thinking

Stage theory of learning is applied to reflective thinking by several theorists. Three "levels of reflectivity," each with different action options, were discussed by Van Manen (1977). The first level of technical rationality seeks ways to operate effectively within accepted structures. In the second level of practicality, the reflective practitioner delves into the assumptions underpinning practical actions so as to behave according to a value system. The third, critical reflection, scrutinizes all actions, processes, and environments for their ethical ramifications.

Another stage theory of reflective thinking was developed by King & Kitchener (1994) and adapted from Mezirow (1990, 1991). In a model reminiscent of Perry's (1970) stages of moral and cognitive development, the model moves from the concrete to the relativistic to an individual commitment in the face of ambiguity.

Pre-Reflective Thinking (Stages 1, 2, and 3)

Stage 1

"Knowledge is assumed to exist absolutely and concretely; it is not understood as an abstraction. It can be obtained with certainty by direct observation" (King & Kitchener, 1994, p. 14).

Stage 2

"Knowledge is assumed to be absolutely certain or certain but not immediately available. Knowledge can be obtained directly through the senses (as in direct observation) or via authority figures" (King & Kitchener, 1994, p. 14).

Stage 3

"Knowledge is assumed to be absolutely certain or temporarily uncertain. In areas of temporary uncertainty, only personal beliefs can be known until absolute knowledge is obtained. In areas of absolute certainty, knowledge is obtained from authorities" (King & Kitchener, 1994, p. 14).

Quasi-Reflective Thinking (Stages 4 or 5)

Stage 4

"Knowledge is uncertain and knowledge claims are idiosyncratic to the individual since situational variables (such as incorrect reporting of data, data lost over time, or disparities in access to information) dictate that knowing always involves an element of ambiguity" (King & Kitchener, 1994, pp. 14-15).

Stage 5

"Knowledge is contextual and subjective since it is filtered through a person's perceptions and criteria for judgement. Only interpretations of evidence, events, or issues may be known" (King & Kitchener, 1994, p. 15).

Reflective Thinking (Stages 6 or 7)

Stage 6

Knowledge is constructed "into individual conclusions about ill-structured problems on the basis of information from a variety of sources. Interpretations that are based on evaluations of evidence across contexts and on the evaluated opinions of reputable others can be know" (King & Kitchener, 1994, p. 15).

Stage 7

> Knowledge is the
>
> outcome of a process of reasonable inquiry in which solutions to ill-structured problems are constructed. The adequacy of those solutions is evaluated in terms of what is most reasonable or probable according to the current evidence, and it is reevaluated when relevant new evidence, perspectives, or tools of inquiry become available. (King & Kitchener, 1994, p. 15)

The first four stages concern an active, conscious reflection on actual experience. The remaining three, uniquely adult stages are critical consciousness. "Meaning is, therefore, a subjective interpretation of experience . . . . Meaning is both reflective and intentional; meaning acquired as a result of reflection provides a basis for intention in further action" (Kolb, 1988, p. 169).

The Two Sides of Reflective Thinking

Most discussions of reflection share the underlying assumption that logical, sequential, language-based analysis is best for educational practice. Yet this conceptualization of reflection based on the works of Dewey (1933) is but one means of processing information and selecting action. The duality of human consciousness is expressed in a variety of terms. Ornstein (1972) describes the polarities of *rational* and *a-rational* with the words *analytic* and *holistic*. Other terms expressing the dichotomy are *explicit knowledge* and *tacit knowledge*, *analytic* and *gestalt*, and *verbal* versus *perceptual*. In learning theory *rational* is equated with *left-hemisphere* brain functioning, while *nonrational* is considered *right brain*. Several techniques to promote nonrational reflection are the use of metaphors, drawings or other graphic representations, guided fantasies, or games. The "integration of both types of reflection (the mirroring of non-rational processes and rational analysis . . . make a personal, creative, and innovative contribution to education" (Korthagen, 1993, p. 324).

The Integration of Knowledge and Action Through Reflective Practice

With continuous use, the feedback process of reflection expands to a multiplicity of options. This extended variety of alternative choices stays with the learner (Dewey, 1933, p. 4). With a broad understanding of criteria and repercussions for alternative choices, the learner is equipped with a wide variety of options to address complex and novel issues. "The progression of thought that links and expands complex elements contributes to complexity, creativity, and surprise as ideas are sometimes followed to unexpected conclusions" (Hart, 1990, p. 163).

Reflective administrative practice provides the structure of understanding with the flexibility of response that Karl Weick (1978) compared to a carpenter's tool with short, flexible rods dangling on a rigid frame. When pushed against the object to be improved, the rods create a three dimensional mirror image. Weick compares the rods to the many components the educational administrator must consider. The more sources of information, the more integration of knowledge, the more choices accessible to the administrator, the more rods available and flexible to respond to the issue, the better possibility of a creative and germane reaction. The framework of the tool is comparable to the language-based focus of vision, mission, goals, and organizational culture. The rods are the probing of the environment through a wide spectrum of filters. This integration of knowledge and action through the use of reflection enlarges the repertoire the administrator has available to deal with the multifaceted, ambiguous, and precarious educational environment. Active seeking, analyzing, and reflecting, through many screens, lessens the sloppiness of selective inattentiveness.

The administrators, who are constantly scanning their own repertoire and environmental opportunities, are better equipped to deal with surprises.

> When the phenomenon at hand eludes the ordinary categories of knowledge-in-practice, presenting itself as unique or unstable, the practitioner may surface and criticize his initial understanding of the phenomenon, construct a new description of it, and test the new description by an on-the-spot experiment. (Schon, 1983, pp. 62-63)

Conscious and critical reflective thinking is a vast improvement over the undisciplined "going through the mind," which Dewey (1933, p. 4) warned results in definitive but often unsuitable decisions. Hart (1990) explains Schon's concept of thinking-in-action as reflective practice, which "is a deliberate effort to improve the quality of results

by influencing the method of problem defining and resolution" (p. 167). The reflective administrator, through a continuous feedback process of examination, works towards the incorporation of all three ways of knowing.

> The reflective practitioner is someone in whose mind multiple sources of knowledge and multiple ways of knowing are made to interact, shaping action congruent with what the administrator knows and seeks to accomplish. Reflective practitioners must be attentive to patterns in their organizations, be skilled at describing what they observe, be inclined to put forward bold and sometimes radically simplified models of experience, and be ingenious in devising tests of these new models compatible with the constraints of an action setting. (Hart, 1990, p. 167)

Whereas reflection-on-action is a logical, sequential, and intentional process to solve a problem, reflection-in-action is initiated by circumstances beyond our control and proceeds using nonlogical strategies. While reflection-on-action logically analyzes familiar data, reflection-in-actions enables a novel approach of viewing data (Schon, 1983, pp. 61-62). Reflection-in-action enables the practitioner to "change the outcome of the event upon which reflection is occurring" (Kolb, 1988, p. 169). A degree of control is possible only by another step of distancing, that of systematically reflecting on the inventively framed data presented through reflection-in-action. This ability to suddenly see data in a different way Schon calls *reframing*. The process parallels, on a smaller, scale, what Gestalt psychologists call gestalt shifts and what Kuhn calls *paradigm shifts* (1962).

Reflective Professional Practice

Based on the work of Dewey (1938a) and Schon (1983), Kennedy (1987) describes "professional expertise" as a conglomeration of distinct complex skills, application of models and theories, critical examination, and intentional action. The rigorous application

of all these ways of knowing is expected of those assuming expertise. For "professionals are 'supposed to be' more knowledgeable, ethical, socially oriented, and independent in their judgements then are nonprofessional" (Baskett & Marsick, 1992, p. 7).

To be a member of a profession assumes an acceptance of continuous investigation and improvement of practice. "Continued learning within the professions is not only a mandate of many certifying agencies but a necessity if practicing professionals are to maintain competence in fields where obsolescence can occur rapidly and with devastating consequences" (Lovin, 1992, p. 61). Yet competency is far more than a body of knowledge; it is also a stringent process of self-examination. "Professional knowledge is created in use as professionals face ill-defined, unique and changing problems, and decide on courses of action" (Sergiovanni, 1986, p. 28).

Educational administrators are disillusioned by yet another set of quick solutions superimposed on an anachronistic, bureaucratic, mechanistic system operating under the limited flexibility of rules and regulations. The system described by Weber in 1947, and discounted by Toffler in 1991, requires a third wave shift exemplified in The Learning Organization (Senge, 1990) and the flexibility Wheatley describes in Leadership and The New Science: Learning about Organizations from an Orderly Universe (1992).

Reflective professional practice is an optimistic acceptance of the knowledgeable individual's power to stimulate change on a personal and organizational level. Departing from Weber's bureaucracy, the reflective practitioner reconfigures (at first perhaps only conceptually) the organization to an organic model with shared responsibility within a framework of meaning (Schon, 1983).

The reflective practice process was summarized as:

1. Question what, why, and how one does things: ask what, why, and how others do things.
2. Emphasize inquiry as a tool of learning.
3. Suspend, judgement, wait for sufficient data, or self-validate.
4. Seek alternatives.
5. Keep an open mind.
6. Compare and contrast.
7. Seek the framework, theoretical basis, methods, techniques, programs.
8. View from various perspectives.
9. Identify and test assumptions (theirs and others) seek conflicting evidence.
10. Put into different/varied contexts.
11. Ask "What if . . .?"
12. Ask for others' ideas and viewpoints.
13. Adapt and adjust to instability and change.
14. Function within uncertainty, complexity, and variety.
15. Hypothesize.
16. Consider consequences.
17. Validate what is given or believed.
18. Synthesize and test.
19. Seek, identify, and resolve problems "problem setting," "problem solving".
20. Initiate after thinking through (alternatives, consequences) or putting into context.
21. Analyze--what makes it work; in what context would it not?
22. Evaluate--what worked, what didn't, and why?
23. Use prescriptive models (behavioral models, protocols) only when adapted to the situation.
24. Make decisions in practice of the profession (knowledge created in use). (Roth, 1989, p. 32)

The reflective practitioner is not frozen in the use of scientific management but adapts in response to situation. The process is one of investigation, reflection, decision making, and dialectics. The process is accumulative, with each decision being built upon previous experience. "The reflective practitioner is always becoming" (Roth, 1989, p. 35).

In experiential learning theory, the highest intelligence is integrity, which Kolb (1988) defines as "encompassing moral judgment, creativity, intuitive and emotional skills as well as rational, analytical powers" (p. 68). In an extensive study of 70 professionals in midlife transition, Kolb found that the specialized professional training though appropriate

for their early career, ill-prepared them for the integrated skills demanded of their present positions. What was needed at midlife was the craft for achieving further development and balancing the generative priorities of home and work. "The anguished cry of the midlife crisis is a cry for wholeness. Like a symptomatic fever, it is a painful but healthy cry, awakening one's self to the full appreciation of life" (Kolb, 1988, p. 71). The work of the advanced professional emphasizes holistic synthesis of a multitude of components.

The growth includes "centering" or the comprehension and admiration of diversity, which Kegan (1994) calls the fourth stage. But as Kegan predicts the demands of the postmodern leaders thrust them into the fifth stage, the shift from functional problem solving of early years to that of issue formation requires a conscious selection of worldview perspective choice. "A strong, choiceful self and a deep sense of personal authenticity emerge." A self-confidence tempered by humility emerges from the self-knowledge along with "a sense of purpose, a sense of calling, in which one's past, present, and future are integrated into a meaningful life plan" (Kolb, 1988, p. 74). A grasp of personal stance in the timeline of humanity may culminate in accepting that "[t]he generative social contract is: Accept responsibility for the world and you are given the power to change it" (Kolb, 1988, p. 75). The acceptance of the generativity (Erikson, 1978, 1982) is actualized in moral leadership and shared vision (Drucker, 1990), and emancipatory learning orientation (Kegan, 1982, 1994; Kolb, 1984, 1988; Senge, 1990; Wheatley, 1992).

This integrity is stimulated by self-insight and conversely, "the absence of opportunity for self-examination and dialogue with others about integrative challenges and the appropriate responses is a significant barrier to integrity development" (Kolb, 1988, p.

83). For advanced professionals to advance in integrity, time is required for retreat and reflection.

Reflective Practice in Educational Institutions

Reflective Practice for Teachers

Reflective practice is encouraged by many educators of teachers. The reflective process is clearly to change both the individual and the system.

> The concern of teacher educators must remain normative, critical, and even political--neither the colleges nor the schools can change the social order. Neither the colleges nor the schools can legislate democracy. But something can be done to empower teachers to reflect upon their own life situations, to speak out in their own ways about the lacks that must be repaired; the possibilities to be acted upon in the name of what they deem decent, humane, and just. (Greene, 1978, p. 71)

The University of Wisconsin, Madison, in its elementary student-teaching program emphasizes

> the preparation of teachers who are both willing and able to reflect on the origins, purposes, and consequences of their actions, as well as on the material and ideological constraints and encouragements embedded in the classroom, school, and societal contexts in which they work. (Zeichner & Liston, 1987, p. 23)

In a study of the reflective practices of teachers Russell and Munby found that reflection "involves resolution of puzzles about how theory can be played out in practice, as actions generate new meanings for theory" (1991, p. 185).

More reflective professional development is proposed as an alternative to the narrowly defined models resulting in teachers functioning as technicians. The integration of information (theory), data collection (empirical), and analysis (reflection) results in teachers who are their own best critics (Gensante & Matgouranis, 1989, p. 28).

Reflective Practice for Educational Administrators

"Most executives, even those in educational institutions, know about learning only what they experienced as students in traditional schools and colleges" (Knowles, 1989, p. 46). This limited perspective reverberates in the hollowed sounds of many halls of learning by the continued barrage of tightening rules. For learning to improve, administrators need to not only learn new skills but also new "theories of action" (Argyris & Schon, 1974). The skilled reflective practitioner evaluates and adapts theories of action to develop specifically tailored action strategies (Schon, 1983).

Reflective practice is a potentially useful tool for the organization of knowledge from educational administration on solutions to problems encountered in practice. As in other service professions, the systematic development and dispersement of careful records from educational administrators is a perfect mechanism for advancing the profession (Silver, 1986, p. 167). Reflective practice challenges the administrators of "educational institutions to establish a learning environment in which educators can develop and utilize those skills, those habits of reflection and agency, which are so critical to continuing professional growth and organizational change" (Osterman, 1990, p. 151).

Cautions about Critical Reflective Practice

Though critical reflection is touted as a valuable tool for integrating learning, discovering culturally bound bias, uncovering oppressive practices and getting closer to a personal value system, among other virtues, the practice is far from harmless. One does not leap cognitively, scale walls of prejudice, nor illuminate dusty corners without muscular soreness or blinking eyes. Especially when the enthusiastic novice espouses the virtues of

practicing continuous questioning to cognitive coach potatoes, the results are hurtful. Freire (1970, 1972, 1973) explains dialectical relationship between being able to perceive the situation coupled with an inability to solve the problem. Kegan writes of the terror of the dialectical psychologic who until a "new balance comes into being . . . is left on the dangerous, even terrifying, side of transformation, glimpsing a whole new way of composing himself and his world, but overrun and exhausted by its motion" (1988, p. 239).

In an extensive analysis of journals, conversations, and autobiographies of hundreds of adult learners, Stephen Brookfield (1994) uncovered what he calls tales from the dark side of the phenomenography of adult critical reflection. The five themes that emerged were

> impostorship (the sense that participating in critical thought is an act of bad faith), cultural suicide (the recognition that challenging conventional assumptions risks cutting people off from the cultures that have defined and sustained them up to that point in their lives), lost innocence (the move from dualistic certainty toward dialectical and multiplistic modes of reasoning), roadrunning (the incrementally fluctuating flirtation with new modes of thought and being) and community (the importance of a sustaining support groups to those in critical process). (Brookfield, 1994, p. 203)

A sense of connectiveness with colleagues experiencing the same sort of disillusionments, especially with widely accepted theory and practice, enables the critical thinker to take the revolutionary seriously.

In a discussion of the reflections of practicing teachers in Israel, Elbaz (1988) found similar connection among reflection, action, and fatalism. The proposed mechanism to prevent teachers from being robbed of their task is to broaden the scope of their reflection and subsequently their action by exposing teachers to examples of both positive and negative change. The *cases* enable the teachers to detach themselves to analyze and

uncover underlying assumptions. The positive stories of successful reform, while in sharp contrast with the teacher's experience, reestablish a hope that change is possible. The critical analysis of environmental impediments shifts the blame from the individual teacher's lack of ability and understanding to that of creating systematic reform by uniting with like-minded people.

Another practice to build community is the sharing of colleague journals as a staff development tool. The reciprocal process of commenting on each others reflective journals advanced changes in "attitudes, opinions, and feelings" (Killian, 1991, p. 45).

The literature indicates that the explosive power of reflective thinking is best not handed over without a careful examination of the consequences. A continued community affirming the potential enrichment for the individual and betterment of the society buffers the resistance to change. A lone revolutionary can soon become disillusioned, desperate, or depressed by the intransigency of the unenlightened.

Narrative as a Reflective Professional Practice

From earliest times humans told stories to explain and share events of practice: how the elk was hunted, where berries are found, why a weak child became a mighty hunter, what powers the healer reveals. In the telling of the tale, in the sharing of the experience, an interpretation is exposed which was hidden during the doing. At the point humans began recounting the experience of living, they transcended the sphere of other animals. For storytellers shape events into meaning. The act of sharing autobiography has

> the connotation of courage, which we now feel to be an indispensable quality of the hero . . . [Heroism] is the fact already present in a willingness to act and speak at all, to insert one's self into the world and begin a story of one's own. And this courage is

> not necessarily or even primarily related to a willingness to suffer the consequences; courage and even boldness are already present in leaving one's private hiding place and showing who one is, and in disclosing and exposing one's self. (Arendt, 1958, p. 186)

The motivation for recording one's story is to strive for meaning beyond the routine of living.

The process of writing enriches thought by stimulating a search for fresh information, a definition of values, and the accession of a new outlook. Stories enable the practitioner to explore, in context, the underlying assumptions and moral consequences of practice. "One motive for telling stories is to wrest meaning from experiences, especially powerful or disturbing ones. Even everyday experiences are continuously imbued with meaning, rendered more coherent, more vivid, even more real, through storytelling" (Mattingly, 1991, p. 237).

An entire literature explores adapting journal keeping for different purposes (Fulwiler, 1987; Holly, 1989; Progoff, 1975). Professional logs are espoused as an instrument for reflection on practice in many disciplines. Social workers are urged to use professional journals as a means to "reach for imaginative, synthesizing, metaphoric perspective" (Swenson, 1988, p. 311). Teachers find that their use of journaling to reflect on their students' journals enables an understanding of their parallel experiences of learning (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 5). Two professors of educational administrators find that writing stimulates reflective practice: "I try to use journal writing as a means to focus attention on congruities and discrepancies between the espoused platform and actual behaviors and as a source for the extrapolation of one's theory-in-use" (Osterman & Kottkamp, 1993, p. 100).

The writing of the diary may transform the diarist by "providing data and synthesizing information, reflecting the diarist's developing sense of self, and giving the writer access to his or her personal voice" (Cooper & Dunlap, 1991, p. 69).

Professional Journals as a Research Tool

The study of journals as a tool in understanding meaning is grounded in the analysis of narrative. William Perry (1970) and Lawrence Kohlberg (1984) each developed stages of meaning and moral development from analyzing the structure beneath the language. More recently, feminist scholars used the words of women as the source of understanding underlying assumptions that direct women's actions (Belenky, Blythe, Clinchy, Goldberger, Tarule, 1986; Gilligan, 1982).

In Women's Ways of Knowing (Belenky et al., 1986), college women use stories about themselves as a means of weaving together their personal and intellectual lives into a coherent whole. The *constructed knower* blends together the intuition, theory, logic, first- and second-hand knowledge. Following this example other investigations have delved into the words of learners to understand the meaning they derive from the experience. In her dissertation Class Pictures, Horwitz (1994) used journal writing to understand the experience of women reentering the community college. Vera John-Steiner studied "experienced thinkers" by interviewing "individuals who devote many hours each day to intellectual labor, the success of which is dependent upon their self-knowledge" (1985, pp. 1-2). For these verbal thinkers the desire to express experience in language was always tantalizing.

Narrative inquiry is becoming an increasingly popular tool in studying the educational experience. "Education and educational research is the construction and reconstruction of personal and social studies; learners, teachers, and researchers are storytellers and characters in their own and other stories" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 2). Educational narrative research "brings theoretical ideas about the nature of human life as lived to bear on educational experience as lived" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 3).

The study of personal narrative is an exploration of the inner self, which leads to a deeper understanding of the human existence.

> When taken seriously and self-reflectively, that is, with a critical eye to our prejudices and distortions, our perceptions constantly lead us toward self-understanding, and thus a more complete understanding of the reality of the world. Our quest, therefore, is not for self-criticism but for self-understanding that is enhanced by some criticism of self and some skepticism of the world. (Krall, 1988, p. 478)

The Impact of Reflective Journals on the Educational Administrator

For higher education administrators, whose chief responsibility is solving problems in "messy, interminate situations" (Schon, 1983, 1987), journal writing can provide availability to an integration of emotions and past experiences, present information, and future planning. Higher education senior administrators who have kept journals for a year or more revealed that the process helped them sort through administrative chaos by providing a tool for discovery (Cooper & Dunlap, 1991, p. 73). Further, journal writing served at least five problem-solving functions. First, journaling was a strategic planning tool by a means to frame the problem, identify and evaluate goals, determine action strategies, and monitor and adapt progress. Second, journal keeping provided a framework for managing the problem by providing an *instant history* which can be evaluated as object.

Third, the journalist is forced to deal with feelings, emotions, and assumptions that influence actions. Fourth, "if the diarist is able to capture and articulate possible solutions to problems on paper, these problems can be contemplated, manipulated, and understood in ways that are more complex, efficient, and clear than if they simply float around in one's head" (Cooper & Dunlap, 1991, p. 75). Finally, the journal provides an important space to interface the private and professional aspects for people who do not have the room to fail in public. The administrators use "journal keeping as a reflective tool to sort through administrative chaos, generate possible solutions to problems, and to document both past decisions and past 'selves'" (Cooper & Dunlap, 1991, p. 77).

The publication of reflective journals allows the reader to learn through the experience of another, as in "Surviving the first year: Diary of a new college president" (Levine, 1984).

Summary of Reflective Professional Practice

Professionals analyze their practice for two reasons with differing dynamics. The first kind of search, for a correct technical decision, results in a greater sense of competency. The consequences of the second kind of analysis, critical reflection, frequently results in not reassurance but disequilibrium. Critical reflection on practice prods and explores the raw topics of choices, power, mishaps, alliances, oppositions, and motivation. Exposed and dissected, these sensitive usually avoided issues demand action.

Self-disclosure exposes the sores of vulnerability. No longer the reasoned and calm professional, the emotional frailties of humanity are exposed. The consequences, are disturbing, if not dangerous. Not only are storytellers self-consciously revealing their role-

in-action, but they are questioning their own practice. The continuous prodding of the bedrock of one's own professional practice results in placing oneself on ground that is, upon each successive examination, looking less stable, while self-generating the demand for a stance.

Reflective narratives do not allow the distancing of case notes nor the self-indulgence of complaining to a friend. The stories told to oneself require assuming responsibility for past and current actions while requiring future betterment. The process encircles the liberation of individual thought combined with the burdensome responsibility entailed in the consequences of knowing what needs to be done.

> Further, Dewey suggests that judgement which is "appreciation" is a constituent of value judgement. Having been motivated by some interest, concern, or value, inquiry, if we are sincere and consistent, terminates in action. Something is done with our interests and values. Experience is re-qualified; it now functions satisfactorily as a whole. (Sherman & Webb, 1988, p. 16)

The process of professional narrative reflection is a developmental process with consequences to individuals and those they touch.

> The movement from introspection to self-understanding through the written word is difficult to achieve as well as to explicate. . . . We are asked to examine experiences from various perspectives: to recall significant educational experiences and to describe and order them; to stand back from these experiences in a state of critical self-awareness; to look at them from the viewpoint of others and to draw meaning from them by relating them to the larger social context. Finally, we are asked to take a new stand and to act intentionally upon the knowledge gained. Interpretation coming to this understanding, is embedded throughout. (Krall, 1988, p. 468)

In a world that is becoming both increasingly democratic and complex, the reflective practitioner assumes the responsibility of citizenship. For as Rabbi Abraham Heschel said over 30 years ago, "In a democracy few are to blame, but all are responsible."

The Juxtaposition Between The Reflective Practitioner and The Workplace

The review of the literature, to this point, discusses the reflective process for individuals. Humans may undergo reflective experiences that enable them to view themselves from a different perspective; however, this personal transformation takes place within a context. The situations in which people find themselves limit their options. Heidegger (1962) said each person is *thrown into* a particular context, an inevitability he termed *throwness*. Though people have the capacity to transform their perceptions, the setting in which they are situated limits their ability to activate a change.

The existential-phenomenological view is that of situated freedom, which lies somewhere between the continuum of absolute freedom and total determinism. Within social, biological, interpersonal, and constitutional boundaries the individual has options determined, at least in part, by the individual's meaningful choices directed by personal goals. Life is composed of a long series of choices, some active, some haphazard, and some by default. For if freedom is sought or avoided, humans are condemned to freedom (Sartre, 1956).

Therefore, now that the seeking, determined, dedicated, introspective middle-age professional practitioner has been explored, this mighty force must be thrown-in to the operational setting. "To separate person and world is false; to be a person is to be in a world" (Becker, 1992, p. 13). The "being-in-the-world" (Heidegger, 1962) of this study is situated in a particular organizational setting , the community college, by those playing a particular role of the academic midlevel administrator. The remainder of the review of the literature will deal with the context by which the reflective practitioner is situated.

The Higher Education Academic Chairperson

Introduction

Still in its infancy, research is already unlocking previously unimagined and unexamined complexity in chaotic systems. This understanding is leading to new methods appropriate for work within some chaotic systems. By applying small forces at precise times, a chaotic system can be nudged into regular, periodic motion. Though the principles of chaotic systems are being discovered, the leverage points are far less obvious. However, chaos theory is more than a set of principles; more importantly it is a different way to perceive of our turbulent world. "As we move away from scientific management theories, we see an opportunity for new patterns to be created out of chaos" (Holayter & Sheldon, 1994, p. 25). The scientific chaos theory can provide educational leaders with new ways to view the disorder of higher education by channeling energy to create new and responsive ways of learning.

Academic institutions can only be viewed as open systems with indeterminate boundaries (Birnbaum, 1988). Educational systems are continuously battered by the chaotic pressures of heightened expectations, constricting resources, social pressures, and demographic shifts. Yet in this nonlinear world of unpredictable change and undeterminable results, the educational leader makes decisions that affect lives and shape the future.

Although change is a constant in the environment in which educational institutions operate, there are significant shifts in the role of the leader. No longer the powerful general, the new leader "attempts to be ahead of the flow--or at least a part of the flow . . . encouraging the right movements, restraining the less beneficial currents, adjusting and

anticipating and alerting others to the dangers and the opportunities, always guiding and always participating" (Walling & Ryan, 1994, p. 530).

Creativity and new visions are frequently stifled by rigid managers with one-dimensional thinking (Wheatley, 1992). Instead of focusing on the shadows of past "realities," the scanning of the horizon brings into view new factors such as consequences of changing family structures, shifts in the demands of the workforce, and altering demographic patterns. Detachment from old structures enables the formation of new processes that change interpersonal relationships. The control and uniformity of fixed seating is transformed into cooperative learning. The oppositional tensions of *us* and *them* become a search for shared meaning. The grasping for stability moves towards an appreciation of flux.

In the perspective of chaos theory the world is not divided into discrete objects but into fluid connections. Are connections the critical determinate in decision making? How will connections created in colleges influence student learning? What are the educational implications of administrative decisions? Though the long-term results are beyond our prediction, some very small changes can pressure the system into totally new directions.

In order to understand the context of the reflective midlife practitioner explored in the first part of the Review of Literature, this section will divide the context into three parts. In the first section, theories of organizational management and culture are applied in higher education, especially in the community college. Organizational management theory will be discussed and then applied to research on the academic setting. Next, theories of organizational culture will be applied to the academic middle manager--the department

chairperson. This exploration will enable the researcher to place the research participants' journal entries with the actual context in which they are operating.

How Higher Education Administration Differs From Business Models

Seemingly, business organizational models do not comfortably transfer into higher educational administration. The ASHE Reader on Organization and Governance in Higher Education (Baldridge, Curtis, Ecker, & Rileet, 1984) proposed five characteristics that delineate the differences. Firstly, the goal of higher education is ambiguous.

> Most organizations are goal oriented, and as a consequence they can build decision structures to reach their objectives . . . . By contrast, colleges and universities have vague, ambiguous goals . . . . They rarely have a single mission. On the contrary they often try to be all things to all people. (Baldridge et al., 1984, pp. 11-12)

Secondly, client orientation results in "people-processing institutions"(Baldridge et al., p. 12) attempting to serve disparate needs. Thirdly, academic institutions are vague about their product and consequentially their process. "If at times colleges and universities do not know clearly what they are trying to do, they often do not know how to do it either" (Baldridge et al., p. 13). Fourthly, the producers of the vague product (education) from the sensitive raw material (students) are themselves a rare breed of professionals who "undercut the traditional norms of a bureaucracy rejecting its hierarchy, control structure, and management procedures" (Baldridge et al., p. 14). Lastly, higher education is vulnerable to environmental forces of demographic and societal changes, public policy and funding priorities, governmental mandates, and associational regulations in a way different from the capitalistic forces of business.

The organizational model of higher education is best termed "organized anarchy" (Baldridge et al., p. 14). The proposed model of "organized anarchy" includes components of three previously suggested models: the "academic bureaucracy", the "university collegium", and the "university as a political system."

In the "academic bureaucracy" the hero scholar rules the hierarchical structure by determining fixed criteria of competency, status, salary, and rank. Academics are expected to ally their priorities and careers exclusively with the college.

Under the "university collegium" model, the community of scholars argues against a hierarchical process and for full participation in decision making. Professional authority rests with self-regulation. A crusade is made for an academic community. "The collegial model functions more as a revolutionary ideology and a utopian projection than a description of actual governance processes at any university"(Baldridge et al., 1984, p. 19).

In the third model, "university as a political system," a confrontational model from interest group theory is proposed. Conflict is a creative force for change in this system. The idealized leader mediates with dedication to group process.

The "organizational anarchy" seen by Baldridge et al. (1984) has elements of all three of these models. For example, faculty associations may desire to be seen as collegial (theory Z), yet practice the confrontational conventions of the political process during collective bargaining (theory Y), as they confront the bureaucratic administration (theory X) (Silverman, 1987, p. 9).

Organizational Models in the Community College

Concurrently all the organizational theories are frequently present at the community college. Theory X is similar to the academic bureaucracy model of the hero-scholar with centralized power. Theory Y fits well with the political system model of a negotiator-leader with a commitment to the democratic process of interest group dynamics. Theory Z has similarities with the university collegium model.

The ordinary occurrences of community college decision making illustrate how all three theories of organizational management are operating. For example, reappointment of nontenured faculty and promotion of tenured faculty are frequently evaluated by a faculty team (theory Z) and by the chairperson or dean (theory X). The granting of tenure is based on an evaluation's team recommendation (theory Z) but only with the president's approval (theory Y). The granting of tenure or lifelong employment closely parallels Ouchi's (1981) theory Z Japanese organization. Also parallel with theory Z are the department meetings, multileveled committees, and faculty senate. However, though budgets and long-term strategies are developed with faculty advice (theory Y), the final decision is made by the president (theory X).

"Conflicts may develop on the community college campus due to the very fact that theories X, Y, and Z are all operating, pulling the community colleges in different directions at the same time" (Silverman, 1987, p. 6). Different segments of the community college perceive occurrences from opposing managerial perceptions. For example, faculty view their consensual decisions as final (theory Z), while administration view them only as advisory (theory Y).

In addition, external factors influence the managerial style.

> The imposition of state mandates upon community college campuses may mute the debate over which management theory is most vital and may lead some to conclude that major decisions will employ theory X (the state mandates) and secondary decisions will use theory Y and Z (the community department functions). (Silverman, 1987, p. 6)

None of these models is nor probably should be used exclusively in the community college. The theory X bureaucratic model's strength of speed and efficiency is diluted by a depreciation of democratic principles and the benefits of valuing professionals. A theory Y political system would empower interest groups to fight for their version of justice but might very well destroy the college's community attributes. A pure theory Z collegium model of empowerment for individual opinions would be so slow and inefficient that the organization would self-destruct in the global marketplace.

Under pressures of the postmodernist world, the community of scholars idealized in the medieval university is being eclipsed by the corporate entity. In an environment when external forces are gaining power and influence on the college campus, an uneasy blending of these models is necessary. No one model is the best for all situations. No positivistic scientific model will be discovered. The system is thrown into a chaotic state. Slight variations in external forces will bifurcate the system into an unpredictable state. Community colleges are increasingly vulnerable to such environmental variables as mandates, funding, demographics, competition, and style. Each community college will be confronted with a unique blend of factors which will result in a unique pattern of priorities. Though required paradoxical changes are confusing, they are essential for the continuation of the system.

Organizational Culture

With all these external demands facing institutions of higher education, organizational culture is a web that provides structure. Members of the organization share a collective ideology of how recurring problems and uncertainties are confronted. This organizational culture develops as groups of people struggle together to survive and make meaning of their surroundings. When threatened by new uncertainties, an inflexible culture can channel its interests internally for self-preservation oblivious to the encroaching external forces of disorder. Though often as invisible to the unwary as a spider's web on a cloudy day, the assumptions of the organizational culture become apparent to the close observer of institutional norms, attitudes, ideologies, language, and often repeated tales.

Humans are not rational or predictable. "Even between ostensibly similar organizational structures, human agency will enable differing outcomes beyond the ability of leaders to manage or control" (Cooper & Kempner, 1993. p. 422). According to chaos theory, the impossibility of measuring all the variables makes prediction unobtainable. By failing to consider human agency, organizational functionalist theories assume organizational behavior is predictable, yet actual case studies illustrate how the system can be tipped into disorder by irrational forces.

The Culture of The Academy

Though institutions of higher education vary greatly, encompassing values are inculcated in those who chose an academic career. Sociologist Burton Clark names these core values, which overarch all of higher education, "super ethos" (Clark, 1985). Most academics believe the aim of higher education is "to discover, produce, and disseminate

knowledge, truth, and understanding" while "serving society" (Austin, 1994, p. 49). Academics were socialized to the value of "intellectual autonomy and academic freedom as norms that support creativity, inquiry, and excellence" during their graduate education (Austin, 1994, p. 49). Colleges are normative organizations where the motivational force is a sense of the important work being achieved. An extensive educational process socializes faculty to a commitment of drawing conclusions after a rigorous peer examination process. As a result faculty are unique among employees.

Academic Cultural Paradoxes

Due to their acculturation, faculty display three behavioral ironies (Tucker, 1992, p. 107). Faculty demand collective decision making, similar to the peer review process. Yet though they insist on a collegial style of deciding, they also demand extensive debating in order to sustain a high level of rationality and consistency on every decision. "This is directly analogous to their interest and skill in the construction and elaboration of theory, but it is also exasperatingly pure for conditions that are changeable, chaotic, and lacking in hard information" (Tucker, 1992, p. 107). The resulting irony is imposing high intellectual standards on some decisions that are more appropriately dealt with quickly and pragmatically. The second irony is that faculty who espouse "collegiality, consensus, and democracy also thrive on autonomy and competition" (Tucker, 1992, p. 107). Though faculty demand solitude and independence to concentrate on their work, they are constantly comparing achievements with their peers. The third irony involves a high respect for the peer review process in evaluation and promotion in which the rational goal of high

scholarly standards is often undercut by the invasion of politics, self-interest, and the extension of disciplinary schisms.

Cultures of Institutional Types

The type of higher education institution influences the relationship faculty have with discipline, socialization of new faculty, status of tasks, and standards of excellence (Austin, 1990). In research universities, discipline alliances are strongly displayed in a cosmopolitan atmosphere with an emphasis on research and a valuing of autonomy. In comprehensive institutions, which emulate research universities, a tension develops between the expectation of research coupled with limited resources and heavy teaching responsibility. The top liberal arts colleges stress teaching excellence while encouraging a limited research agenda. In less prestigious colleges where the job is teaching, disciplinary alliances are weaker. Community college faculty are busied by large numbers of needy and diverse students filling their many classes.

Though institutional type explains much of the cultural similarities, factors such as history, location, governance, staff composition, and leadership styles produce unique profiles (Peterson, Cameron, Jones, Mets & Ettington, 1986).

Culture of the Disciplines

In research universities, comprehensive colleges, and liberal arts colleges, disciplines are "the primary units of membership and identification within the academic profession" (Clark, 1987, p. 7). Even in community colleges full-time faculty of traditional

academic disciplines identify with their area of specialization more than part-time or vocational and technical faculty.

Culture Wars

Academic institutions are composed of several, often competing cultures (Austin, 1990). "These faculty cultures include the culture of the academic profession, the culture of the academy as an organization, the cultures of particular disciplines, the cultures of institutional types, and the culture of the particular department or unit where the faculty member has a position" (Austin, 1994). Organizations with more than one strong cultural order are often the site of culture wars. Vying groups compete over which values and beliefs will dominate (Kempner, 1990).

Much management theory is unconcerned with organizational culture. Yet case studies into the inner workings of higher education have uncovered how the irrational, manipulative, and undemocratic forces of opposing organizational cultures can wreak havoc. Leadership theories should consider the impact of organizational culture on the ability of the leader to transform. For the

> formal structure of an organization can be easily changed, but the webs of meaning --the culture--are not so easily altered. Leaders who fail to understand that participants in any organization are concurrently members of outside cultures, as well as conflicting subcultures, risk becoming entangled in those external webs if they are not wary. (Cooper & Kempner, 1993, p. 421)

Academic Identities

In a classic study in organizational culture, two organizational identities were uncovered--the cosmopolitans and the locals (Gouldner, 1957).

> Cosmopolitans are those individuals who are low on loyalty to the employing organization, high on commitment to specialized role skills, and likely to use another reference group orientation. Conversely, "locals" rely on an "inner reference group orientation," are high on loyalty to the organization but low on commitment to specialized role skills. (Cooper & Kempner, 1993, p. 421)

Later research found that dual loyalty was present in some employees. Employees who perceived of competing alliances stimulated by an organizational climate of conflict between vying groups are more likely to view a dichotomy (Angle & Perry, 1986).

Case Studies Of Organizational Culture

As a reservoir of societal knowledge, higher education is a major beneficiary of a stable societal and organizational culture. Research indicates that "strong, congruent cultures supportive of organizational structures and strategies are more effective than weak, incongruent, or disconnected cultures" (Tierney, 1988, p. 7).

A framework of organizational culture suggested by Tierney includes core components of environment (physical and demographic), mission (purpose), socialization (interpersonal relations), information (what is important and who controls it), strategy (decision making procedures), and leadership (formal and informal).

The frailty of many a higher education institution results in a questioning of what are the binding forces. "Even the most seasoned college and university administrators often ask themselves, 'What holds this place together? Is it mission, values, bureaucratic procedures, or strong personalities?'" (Tierney, 1988, p. 3).

Destructive Cultural Clash

This question was explored in a case study of a community college in the process of self-destruction. The thin veneer of civilization was so shredded that the researchers called the location of the disintegration "Lord of the Flies Community College" (Cooper & Kempner, 1993). The social collective of the community college produces and preserves a shared response and shared experience of uncertainty and chaos. When cosmopolitan leadership attempted to institute change, the entrenched local staff resisted. The tension between the organizational needs of both loyalty and expertise accelerated until the new cosmopolitan leadership fled. According to the researchers' analysis, both groups were unaware of organizational dynamics which must respond to the needs of all constituents. "Understanding the culture in which the faculty, administrators, and students find themselves is critical if these insiders are to help each other adapt to environmental contingencies and if outsiders are to assist in this process" (Kempner, 1990).

Critical theorists are not the only ones who are conscious of the ways organizations can oppress workers. The implications of this study are three.

> First, higher education leaders must understand the critical role culture plays in their organizations. Second, leaders must also realize that although they are important change agents in the institution, they are nonetheless merely participants in the organization's reality. And finally, recognizing that their role within the organization is not managers of culture but as participants, leaders must understand their moral obligations in a democratic society. (Cooper & Kempner, 1993, p. 433)

Using Dynamic Tension

The reducing of the higher education personnel into an insider and outsider dichotomy is detrimental to a sense of community and ultimately to the institution itself. Another in-depth case study uncovered how a regional university used the dynamic tension

between two perspectives to implement positive and sweeping changes. From in-depth interview Millar (1992) heard two salient perspectives voiced at Cody State University--the "corporate" and the "democratic" voice.

The corporate voice. The corporate voice is concerned with justifiable achievement. Efficiency and individualism are valued by the rational, hierarchical manager. "In short, it is a strategic manager, using either linear, adaptive, or interpretive strategies" (Chaffee, 1985) and "functioning in either tightly or loosely coupled systems" (Weick, 1976, in Millar, 1992, p. 4).

The democratic voice. The democratic voice carries on a two-way communication of one's own and other's presumptions, awareness, and integrity. The motivation is the widening of social justice. Actions are evaluated by their impact on the lives of people. "These 'outcomes' include personal transformations experienced using dialogical interactions (both during face-to-face encounters and during encounters with texts), and improvements in social justice and overall quality of life within the communities in which these changed people act" (Millar, 1992, p. 7).

The leadership of this state college was able to develop a creative resolution between these two voices.

> These resolutions resulted in both the improvements in "output" measures of academic "quality" sought by their corporate voices, such as the size of academic support budgets and numbers of degrees conferred, and improvements in social justice sought by their democratic voices, such as increased participation of under represented peoples. (Millar, 1992, p. 33)

A Culture of Meaning

In a single case study of one state college, Tierney concluded that the critical factor in sustaining a positive organizational culture in this one state college was a "management of meaning . . . . By invigorating old roots and values with new meaning and purpose, the president of Family State has largely succeeded in reconstructing tradition and encouraging a more effective organizational culture" (1988, p. 9). Yet he warns against applying the winning strategy of one institution to another without understanding the unique institutional context.

Findings

These case studies emphasize that a strong academic culture is particularly important when academic institutions face declining resources, increasing demands, conflicting demands, or changes in leadership.

> During these periods the social fabric of the community is under great strain. If the common academic culture has not been carefully nurtured during periods of prosperity, the result can be destructive conflicts between faculties, loss of professional morale, and personal alienation. (Dill, 1982, p. 304)

Faculty Culture's Influence on Student Learning

Several studies of the role of community college faculty culture on student learning are discouraging. A 1972 study (O'Banion) uncovered a teaching staff generally unprepared to further student learning. Subsequent research (Cohen & Brawer, 1982; Deegan & Tillery, 1985; London, 1978) found an insular, static, irresolute community college faculty. The generalizability of these findings is questionable, yet the continued legislative and professional calls for increases in learning productivity indicate continued problems.

Clashes between the dominant societal culture and minority cultures are being played out within the community college campus. An extensive ethnographic study (Weis, 1985) of an urban community college with a large minority student body found dissension between the majority faculty culture and alienated students who rejected the dominant culture as both racist and classist. The wide diversity of demographics and location of community colleges limits the generalizability of these findings.

A more recent case study (Kempner, 1990) sought to uncover the effect of faculty culture on student learning in a predominantly middle class, suburban community college.

> The faculty culture hinders learning for students because of the contradictory nature of instructor's independence and faculty uncertainty over the college's purpose and mission. The administration hinders student learning because of its poor instructional leadership and ineffective communication with faculty. The students themselves hinder learning by setting a "lethargic pace" and by the energy drain of unavoidable conflicts in their domestic and vocational lives; however, they are more likely to contribute to learning than the students in the London or Weis studies because they generally accept the messages of the dominant culture. (Kempner, 1990, p. 230)

When faculty want to teach and students want to learn, the college culture stimulates student learning.

Department Cultures and Teaching Quality

In response to Scholarship Reconsidered (Boyer, 1990), attempts have been made to improve undergraduate teaching and learning through faculty incentives. In a study at two universities, administrators and faculty voiced different perceptions of the value of incentives. While administrators believed annual merit pay was important in stimulating faculty performance, faculty perceived incentive policies as more of a pressure than a motivation. The quality of faculty work is influenced by a complex interaction of "other

policies . . . with university missions, department values, available resources, and individual goals and preferences" (Colbeck, 1994, p. 20).

In an effort to improve undergraduate education, organizational culture factors need to be further investigated. A recent study of 20 colleges and universities found "faculty do indeed encounter conditions that hinder their ability to work together on issues of undergraduate teaching and learning" (Massy, Wilger, & Colberk, 1994, p. 11). Three factors discouraged the ability of faculty to work cooperatively on teaching. First, faculty were unable or averse to interact about undergraduate education. The five factors contributing to fragmented communications were "autonomy, specialization, civility, generational splits, and personal politics" (Massy et al., p. 11). Second, limited resources and heavy workloads increase a sense of competition and discourage cooperation. Third, institutional reward and evaluation mechanisms discourage faculty interaction. Yet sprinkled unpredictably were departments that formed methods to encourage quality undergraduate instruction. These exemplary departments created a culture valuing undergraduate education, provided frequent opportunities for faculty interaction, tolerated differences, and provided equity in workload and rotations. The effective chairpersons encouraged group consensus and mutual self-respect.

In the community college, critical for organizational success was "cohesive elements and patterns of behavior from faculty, administrators, and students that helped them define the mission and teaching function of the college" (Kempner, 1990, p. 221).

The Ethics Of College Culture

The changes in academic culture discussed in this paper point to a shift from a traditional to a postmodern paradigm in academic behavior and ethics. As Clark Kerr discusses in "Knowledge Ethics and the New Academic Culture" (1994) and in Higher Education Cannot Escape History: Issues for the Twenty-first Century, the inner ethic of the professorate is dissolving. Though attacks on the work ethic of academics is not new, the current examination of accountability frequently reveals professors with little interest in their students' progress. Kerr places the change in the larger context of a general collapse of the social contract with its devaluing of public virtue.

In the traditional academic culture, citizenship in one's academic community was the focus of one's professional life. The expectations were clear and reinforced by the community of peers. The new academic culture has less commitment to the local academic institution, along with decreased citizenship obligation. Using the campus as a temporary homebase, faculty and administrators frequently seek financial and professional gains off campus. Instead of valuing the college as a self-governing community, the new academic assigns more importance on individual rights in the form of gender, race, and status identification and group rights in the form of discipline and ideological specific professional association. Alliance with the college community is further loosened by externally funded prestigious research grants, lucrative consultation contracts, and national competition for esteemed positions. The college administration further alienates faculty by hiring large numbers of itinerant adjunct teachers, rewarding celebrity researchers while neglecting fine teachers, and taking over many of faculty's previous self-governing responsibilities.

The open society of the college "faces the dilemma of how to protect itself without using means that contradict its own essence" (Kerr, 1994, p. 10). Kerr compares the traditional college with the norm-based, guild-like organizations operating with a strong legislative process, less effective administrative process, and near absence of a judicial mechanism. "Ironically the organizations in Western society which most approximate the essential characteristics of Japanese firms are academic institutions. They are characterized by lifetime employment, collective decision making, individual responsibility, infrequent promotion, and implicit, informal evaluation" (Dill, 1982, p. 307). As peer-based norms weaken, the need for a judicial process increases. In many locations governmental mandates and accreditation regulations are filling the void. Preferable to external regulations is an internally consistent and widely accepted code of conduct to establish and maintain trust.

Hidden from scientific and scholarly scrutiny, teaching quality is most problematic. Dedication to discipline, pride in workmanship, and commitment to excellence motivate informed, unbiased, responsive teaching. Yet the dynamics are changing. "The ethics of the cultivation of knowledge were in better condition before they became so subject to the inducements of money from the outside and to the intrusion of politics inside" (Kerr, 1994, p. 10).

The very nature of academic culture presents four obstacles to the process of self-government and consensus that is the cornerstone of excellence in American higher education. First, in opposition to industry's drive for efficiency, academics seek knowledge.

> The pursuit of knowledge means that everything is open for reconsideration at all times, that the conflict of mind with mind is of high value and can even be pursued

> acceptably with intense personal commitment, and that the individual is at the heart of the enterprise and not the collectivity. (Kerr, 1994, p. 14)

Second is a reluctance to participate in activities apart from one's own interests. "The price of shared and delegated academic self-government is the willingness to take on the corresponding responsibilities that it requires" (Kerr, p. 14). Third, a weakening of rules against personal gains for college related activities works against contributions for the common good. Fourth is a tendency to ignore or excuse academic misconduct.

The ability to earn the reputation for highly ethical behavior is critical. The 1915 words from "Declaration of Principles" of the American Association of University Professors is even more true today: "If this profession should prove itself unwilling to purge the ranks of the incompetent and the unworthy. . . it is certain that the task will be performed by others" (Kerr, p. 15).

Higher education can learn from corporate and nonprofit organizations' use of "reflective openness" as a means of producing a creative resolution of tensions. In The Fifth Discipline, The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization, Senge (1990) discusses how communication, learning, and creativity can be increased in an organization. The tension is used to enhance both the democratic and moral fiber of the participants and ultimately the larger society but also the accountability factors demanded by external forces. Democratic societies and their democratic institutions generate more disorder than authoritarian systems. As an open system, higher education is susceptible to the agitations resulting from input from diverse stakeholders.

Understanding the dynamics of chaotic systems boosts an adherence to democratic values. Only open systems have the flexibility capable of change and survival. The stake

the democratic society has in the change process "must be made to help citizens become full and functioning members of society regardless of their current academic and economic status" (Seidman, 1995, p. 251).

Using The Lessons Of Chaos Theory To Change Academic Organizational Culture

For organizations to respond to internal and external pressures, organizational cultures have to change. Most useful for this discussion is the definition of organizational culture as

> a pattern of basic assumptions invented, discovered, or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration that has worked well enough to be considered valid, and to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to these problems. Schein, 1985, p. 9)

In light of this discussion of academic organizational culture, the problem is with the phrase "worked well enough". A higher standard than sufficiency is essential.

As higher education is reacting to revolutionary forces, good enough in the past is detrimental to the future. Yet higher education is in a paradoxical situation. The ivory towers are important because their high standards slowly evaluate the worth of innovation before implementation. Before the old is discarded, the new undergoes stringent investigation. As equilibrium-seeking institutions, higher education is valued because the knowledge dispersed is stringently tested. Trendiness has little value.

In past times of change, an obvious and dependable higher education organizational culture was viewed as a stabilizing foundation for employees, as other change processes swept through. Traditionally the boundaries of institutional citizenship served as an essence

to self-regulated quality. The disruption of the common core of values may lead to a reshaping of higher education. Yet a solid culture which promotes stability can also inhibit the fluctuations and instability that stimulates change. Organizational culture does more than foster a sense of belonging, it also dictates norms of behavior, processes, and thought. This preciseness lacks the flexibility required by new strategies to deal with tempestuous demands. The evolutionary process most responsive to turbulence requires a flexibility often inhibited by a stable culture. The linearly operating organizations become vulnerable to fatal shock when confronted with huge demands.

Yet because organizational culture serves to maintain a powerful sense of community in a college, it has an important value. The trick is not to destroy culture but to configure it to be responsive to change. A culture based on a common set of values has the commonality of purpose joined with the responsiveness of diversity. A college with a vision that is shared at all levels has strength and the flexibility to respond to instability. The fractal pattern of meaning reflected throughout the college is coherent without being cohesive. The goal is the bounded instability of renewal driven by a consensual purpose. The purpose gives direction to the decision making process. Within the boundaries of purpose new strategies and procedures are encouraged. The standard of accountability is determined by the common purpose. Many community colleges have senior faculty who have taught in the same position for over 20 years. Though experience is a valuable asset, faculty who have repeatedly taught the same classes are resistant to change. Two proven avenues for faculty renewal are to hire new faculty with diverse backgrounds and to "refresh and reinvigorate current faculty" (Campion, 1994, p. 167).

Higher education is undergoing the fluctuations necessary to respond to unstable and variable demands. Chaos theory teaches us that tinkering around the edges is a waste of energy. Only a comprehensive vision will provide the stability of quality services along with the flexibility of process. In a world where instability is the norm, continuous renewal in higher education is the only sustainable response. To facilitate renewal the college must be open to a multitude of internal and external feedback sources. The college self-organizes in response to the constant flux. Only with continuous self-organization is the college able to survive discontinuous change with meaningful transformation.

Skills for Effectiveness In Higher Education Administration in Times of Change

The study of higher education reveals a culture with professionals who "give their hearts and minds to their life's work" (Mullin, 1993, p. 41). Out of a long tradition of rigor, peer evaluation, pride in craftsmanship, discipline-specific values and procedures comes the culture of the academe. From other directions comes the pressures of economic constraints, legislative mandates, global marketplaces, violent pressures, and raging skepticism. When two or more forces are out of synchronization with one another, nonlinear dynamics take over. Clearly the autocratic leader demanding obedience in order to continue the status quo is doomed to failure in this environment. The effective leader, of professionals who value both knowledge and independence, will achieve much more by remembering:

> You can buy a person's hand, but you can't buy his heart. His heart is where his enthusiasm, his loyalty is. You can buy back, but you can't buy his brain. That is where his creativity is, his ingenuity, his resourcefulness. Treat employees as volunteers, . . . because that is what they are. They volunteer the best part--their hearts and minds. (Covey, 1991, p. 58)

Leaders bring forth the best in themselves and others by:

1. Challenging the process

Leaders "search for challenging opportunities to change, grow, innovate, and improve" (Kouzes & Posner, 1988, p. 31). The challenge is to be better, more inclusive, more stimulating, more sustaining, more humane. The ultimate challenge is to leave the world a better place. The academic leader needs the courage to ask "If we were creating this university administration today, given what we know and given current technology, what would it look like?" (Guskin, 1994, p. 25).

2. Inspiring a shared vision

The leader first defines a collective reality of what is and what can be. Leaders "envision an uplifting and ennobling future" (Kouzes & Posner, 1988, p. 81). When the vision makes sense, each participant receives satisfaction and self-respect by contributing meaningful work for an important social good. Vision provides the foundation upon which "constant evolutionary, opportunistic change can take place" (Peters, 1987, p. 493). Yet the vision itself must be fluid enough to adapt to the changes to come.

Even though "heavily value-laden images" have "maintained a strong sense of cohesion, organizational definition, and professional boundaries over time" (Amey & Twombly, 1992, p. 133) in the community college, new challenges require conceptualizing alternative images of success.

3. Anticipating Change

Technological change means that higher education no longer has a monopoly on postsecondary education. Therefore, to succeed colleges must "recognize that learning is not isolated from the needs of society and the objectives of students" (Plater, 1995, p. 24). As Peter Drucker reiterates, the purpose of every organization lies outside of itself.

"In a time of drastic change, it is the learners who inherit the future. The learned find themselves equipped to live in a world that no longer exists" (Eric Hoffer cited in Bennis, 1989, p. 189).

4. Acting to Empower

"Ruthless management may succeed in holding change at bay for while, but only visionary leadership will succeed over time" (Bennis, 1989, p. 179). Leaders "foster collaboration by promoting cooperative goals and building trust" (Kouzes & Posner, 1988, p. 133). By gathering information from listening to many sources, the leader collects and disseminates information. Leaders "strengthen others by sharing information and power and increasing their discretion and visibility" (Mullin, 1993, p. 43).

5. Acknowledging the Right to Fail

Leaders seek to learn from the experiments that succeed and from those that fail. Without risk, improvement is impossible. The bureaucratic model was

> developed in a slower-paced society, when change proceeded at a leisurely gait. It developed in an age of hierarchy, when only those at the top of the pyramid had enough information to make informed decisions. . . .
>
> Today all that has been swept away. We live in an era of breathtaking change. We live in a global marketplace, which puts enormous competitive pressure on our economic institutions. We live in an information society, in which people get access to information almost as fast as their leaders do. We live in a knowledge-based economy, in which educated workers bridle at commands and demand autonomy. We live in an age of niche markets, in which customers have become accustomed to high quality and extensive choice. (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992, p. 15)

Leaders provide the freedom and opportunity for participants to reach their highest potential.

6. Modeling the Way

Kouzes and Posner's research found that credibility is the most critical characteristic of effective leadership. Leaders "set an example for others by behaving in ways that are consistent with their stated values" (Mullin, 1993, p. 189).

7. Encouraging Passion

Leaders "recognize individual contributions to the success of every project"(Kouzes & Posner, 1988, p. 24) and "celebrate team accomplishments regularly" (Kouzes & Posner, p. 259).

Conclusion of Academic Organizational Culture

Each institution is unique. Though some components of the organizational culture appear similar, they can vary greatly in subtle but significant ways. Mission, curriculum, perhaps even environment might be the same for two community colleges, but how information is communicated to internal or external stakeholders could be different enough to result in vastly divergent community perceptions of the two different institutions. The two systems develop different organizational cultures. As chaos theory predicts, actions and results do not have a one-to-one correlation.

As Wheatley explains in Leadership and The New Science: Learning about Organizations from an Orderly Universe, change is not linear but a mutual transforming process because "to understand and act reflectively in academic environments administrators need to view the institution as a culture where organizational members both shape and are shaped by the symbols and rituals of the institution" (Rhoads & Tierney, 1992, pp. 4-7). In this responsive process of change, changing the environment in which the

change agent is stimulating change, stability is an impossibility and the quest for control is pointless.

The agile leader dances lightly on the web so as not to be caught and always to be able to glide to another strand. "I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of the web to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning" (Gars, 1973, p. 5).

No formulas can determine which leadership style or which organizational law will work in a particular situation. Only principles for interpretive behavior are useful. An investigation of academic culture will never unravel the web. Instead it focuses on the intricacies of the weave. "For administrators and academic leaders, viewing academic institutions as observers of organizational cultures goes beyond the obvious and commonplace occurrences and looks at the deeper underlying meanings that organizational participants construct" (Rhoads & Tierney, 1992, p. 73-74). The web of culture is interdependent and interwoven. To change one aspect influences the entire fabric. No system follows a straight-line pattern of development. Administrators who understand the function of the strands and the uniqueness of the cultural weave are better able to thrive on chaos. Higher education is at a bifurcation point in its evolution. In order for their institutions to survive, higher education administrators must explore new ways of viewing themselves, their institution, and its place in the world.

The Academic Chairperson In Higher Education Organizations

Introduction

The public and their governmental representatives demand greater accountability, quantifiable learning outcomes, and responsiveness to societal needs. Academic institutions search for ways to answer student demands, address community needs, adapt new technologies, fulfill workplace needs, tighten budgets, reallocate resources, and modify faculty and administrative workloads. In the center of pressures for educational transformation sits the middle manager, the department chair. The degree of success of educational transformation will to a large extent depend on the leadership skill of higher educational middle management. An estimated 80 % of academic decisions are made at the departmental level (Roach, 1976). Deans and divisional/department chairs serve as the critical link between executive officers and faculty. As change agents, deans and chairs are pivotal in the transformation of higher education (Gmelch & Miskin, 1993; Tucker, 1992).

A review of the literature on the academic chairperson will provide a context for understanding the role, responsibilities, and complexity of this critical but only recently defined position.

History

The academic department came into being in 1825, when Thomas Jefferson persuaded the governing body of the University of Virginia to establish eight departments of knowledge, each headed by a professor. Impressed by the structure, Harvard University reorganized the same year into nine departments of instruction, each with a governing

board of full professors. Shortly after the department model was adopted by the University of Vermont (1826), Wisconsin (1836), and Michigan (1841) (Tucker, 1992).

With the advent of the land-grant university at Cornell in 1868, the department became an organizational unit. In 1870 Harvard organized administratively into departments, followed in 1870 by John Hopkins University's graduate departments and in 1876 by Clark University. Driven by the development of specializations, graduate organizations, and the relationship between professors and students, the department structure was well established by the end of the 19th century. During the 20th century the department became the key unit in colleges and universities. Much of faculty governance and academic work takes place within the confines of the department (Tucker, 1992).

The development of the role of the academic chair is less well documented. Probably the original responsibilities were academic, including responsibilities of discipline expertise, scholarly guidance, and instructional support. The administrative responsibilities are no more than 50 years old. The heavy paperwork created by institutional, budgetary, and governmental regulations are about half as old. In universities, department faculty have similar educational background and teach the same discipline (Tucker, 1992). In community colleges the unit is usually the division, composed of faculty of similar academic disciplines (Tucker, 1992).

Description Of The Academic Chairperson

Profile

Academic middle managers, most frequently called chairs or chairpersons, are less frequently named heads or department executive officers. The units they lead are usually

called departments, though such terms as *divisions*, and *colloquia* also occur (Seagren, Creswell & Wheeler, 1993). More than 80,000 department chairs work in 3,500 higher education institutions with each year approximately 20,000 new chairs beginning their service with little or no formal preparation for the position (Kinnick, 1994, p. 1). After serving an average 6 years, 65 % of chairs return to faculty positions (Carroll, 1990).

In an extensive survey of one-third of Canada's and United States' 9,000 community college chairs and department heads, a comprehensive profile was developed. The average instructional unit, usually called a department, served between 400 and 600 students with from 11 to 20 instructors (Seagren & Miller, 1994). "The composite profile of the chairs who responded indicated a group of middle-aged, highly experienced, well-educated professionals who received extra compensation, spent long hours at work, and planned to stay at the same institution" (Seagren & Miller, 1994, p. 10).

As academic institutions become increasingly more complex, the kingpin in the structure of higher education, the academic chair's role becomes, increasingly involved and multifarious (Middlebrook & Trail, 1986).

Selection

Authorities generally agree that department chairs are not adequately prepared or educated for their administrative responsibilities. In a 20-year old survey of over 1,000 chairs in state and land-grant institutions, almost all lacked any administrative experience (McLaughlin, Montgomery, & Malpass, 1975). Extraordinary scholarly achievement is frequently the determining factor of selection rather than administrative expertise (Bennett,

1982). Department chairs are generally selected from faculty. Usually the chair is ill prepared for the actual responsibilities.

The lack of grounding in essential skills for success as an academic chair is ironic in higher education, whose primary responsibility is the preparation of graduates for social and professional roles.

Centrality

The role of the academic leader is central to the success of higher education institutions. In 1975, the department chair was called the key administrator in higher education (Corson, 1975).

The effectiveness of the academic chair is crucial to the success of the college achieving its mission. Working in the trenches, the department chair provides direct leadership in instruction and research (Bennett, 1983). The department chair is an essential position in academic institutions (Ehrle, 1975). Perhaps the strongest comment was made by Tucker in his seminal book, Chairing the Academic Department: Leadership Among Peers, that a college could survive for a long time with an inept president but not long with inept chairpersons (1992).

Current demands being placed on higher education accentuate the pivotal importance of the position.

> The climate for chairs and deans includes the increased demands for accountability and assessment, an emphasis on quality, the need to reallocate and reduce funding, changing demographics of the academic workforce, challenging student ethical and legal issues, and the need for a trained pool of academic leaders. (Creswell & England, 1994, p. 15)

Responsibilities

Generally the higher education chairperson is responsible for daily departmental operations. Yet, the chair's responsibilities are frequently vague and often not defined in a job description. In a survey at a major university, most new chairs were given neither orientation nor goals (Bragg, 1981).

The operational responsibilities of chairs were divided into academic, leadership, and administrative (McLaughlin et al., 1975). Chairs were most satisfied with academic tasks such as teaching, research, counseling students, and developing curriculum. Also gratifying was serving as an academic leader in areas of faculty development, curriculum development, and disciplinary quality. McLaughlin divided administrative responsibilities into departmental and institutional. Department responsibilities included record keeping, budgeting, and management of support staff. Institutional administration included liaison, advocacy, and information transfer responsibilities. The three most disliked tasks were maintenance of accurate student records, managing facilities and equipment, and budgeting. Not surprisingly chairs enjoyed tasks related to the reasons that attracted them to academic life and least the paper-pushing. Finding time to complete all the required tasks is always a problem (Dockery, & Seagren, 1995).

Responsibilities by Institution Type

An extensive survey of community college chairs found that serving as a communication liaison among and across layers, providing a positive work environment with ample feedback, maintaining educational quality through faculty selection and

development and curriculum development, and developing strategies coordinated with institutional goals were viewed as the most important tasks (Seagren & Miller, 1994).

Of the multitude of a chairperson's responsibility, selection is only partly determined by type of institution. The individual sitting in the chair retains the human choice to concentrate on the tasks matching individual interests and strengths while expending as little energy as possible on distasteful options. In addition, the dean probably delegates tasks commensurate with the chair's ability (Tucker, 1992 , p. 30).

Regardless of their institution type, most chairpersons agree that included in their top 10 responsibilities are fostering of good teaching, maintenance of faculty morale, recruitment and selection of faculty, communicating needs to the dean, interaction with upper level administration, and updating curriculum courses and programs. Yet the ranking of the other roles reflect different priorities. University chairpersons tend to place faculty related activities as most important. Community college chairs consider administrative and bureaucratic tasks as more important (Tucker, 1992, p. 31).

The position of the community college chair is determined by role definition and type of institution. The "first among equals" status of a faculty member serving as chair is rife with ambiguity. The fixed authority of the administrative status results in decision-making, which "may or may not be collegial in the department chaired by administrators, but accountability is clearly fixed at the administrative level and cannot be shared collegially" (Goldenberg, 1993, p.17). Secondly, the "community" aspect of the community college chair determines the emphasis. "The demands of a very diverse student population, the challenges of open enrollment, the continuing increase in remedial courses, the problems of the multi-age classroom all combine to alienate faculty commitment to the

discipline" (Goldenberg, 1993, p. 18). The chair is faced with a department lacking the disciplinary coherency and stimulation of the university. The community college chair attempts to motivate disciplinary excellence by faculty who extensively confront under-prepared students from a community with little regard for the instructional profession.

The community college is an integral part of the community. The mission of the community college is to serve the community. The symbiotic relationship results in an "omnipresent public" (Goldenberg, 1993, p. 18) on and off campus making demands and expecting results. The community college chair is on duty whenever in the community.

The top rated roles of community college chairs are planner, information disseminator, motivator, and facilitator (Seagren & Miller, 1994).

Primary Roles

The role expectations of academic chairs vary according to anticipations of others (superiors, peers, and subordinates) and individual interests and priorities (Bragg, 1981; Gmelch & Miskin, 1993; Seagren, Creswell & Wheeler, 1993).

The academic chair has five primary roles which take place in various combinations according to task, institution, and individual. First, the academic chair leads faculty development by recruiting, selecting, evaluating, and upgrading the skills of faculty. The chair motivates, bolsters, mentors, supports, provides, facilitates, directs, and encourages faculty to improve their professional knowledge, skills, and commitments (Creswell, Wheeler, Seagren, Ergly & Beyer, 1990). Second, the chair is a manager. Scheduling workload, budgeting, recording, supervising, requisitioning supplies, and maintaining equipment and facilities are performed or overseen by the chair. Third, the chair leads the

unit in envisioning purpose and determining priorities (Gmelch & Miskin, 1993). Revising curriculum, representing and advocating for the department, and developing interdisciplinary strategies are some of these tasks. Fourth, the chair's role as a disciplinary scholar is a model of excellence in teaching, content knowledge, and peer networking. Maintaining academic vigor while serving many other functions is a frequent source of stress (Gmelch, 1991a, 1991c). Fifth, the chair must respond to external factors such as student demographics, community and business educational needs, grant funding opportunities, and departmental opportunities for building support. Also, the chair serves as both "translator and spokesperson" for the department (McDade, 1987, p. 14).

Faculty Development

Confronted with the necessity for pivotal change, colleges are faced with upgrading the skills of their staff. Academics who remain in the same area frequently become bored and stagnant (Menges, 1985). The department chair can stimulate rejuvenation with appropriately placed professional development opportunities. Guiding faculty to break boundaries of method, approach, and discipline will widen the teaching possibilities.

Most acute is the problem that the American community college "has thus far declined to make critical and substantial investments in its future" (Scott, 1990, p. 12). The American Association for Higher Education encourages institutions to improve faculty performance across intellectual, professional, personal, interpersonal, and institutional arenas (Menges, 1985). The crucial person in the effectiveness of professional development is the direct supervisor. With strong support from the department chair, faculty members are encouraged to become involved in renewal and rejuvenation activities.

Human resource efforts are most successful when they are strongly supported by involved upper management and are responsive to the concerns of faculty (Boice, 1982). Deans, who frequently viewed themselves as defenders of the faculty, were found to be supportive of faculty development programs. The limited administrative and interpersonal training of chairs may account for their lack of understanding of the role of professional training. Yet with the decreasing status, compensation, and working conditions of faculty, more recently chairs have come to accept their responsibility in stimulating programs for faculty growth and renewal (Boice, 1985).

Several strategies are suggested by Tucker (1992) for initiating continuing professional education programs for faculty. First, set the groundwork by building cooperation from administration, chair, and faculty. Comprehensive planning is fine, but begin with a small yet committed group of volunteers. The chair should involve as many faculty as possible in the planning and implementation process. Begin faculty development when it is likely to be successful. Use a variety of approaches. Institutionalize faculty development as soon as momentum is built.

Nine kinds of faculty development opportunities are available to the chair (Creswell, Seagren, Wheeler, Vavrus, Grady, Egly, & Wilhite, 1987). In the redirected faculty category are members of the instructional staff who are changing status into full-time, tenure track, just tenured, or pursuing degrees. At these opportune times, the chair can encourage professional development by rearranging work loads or providing resources. Deadwood faculty, with low performance, might be reinvigorated by encouragement to delve into an area of interest. Difficult team players, who disrupt departmental coherency, given opportunities to experiment with innovation, or teamed with a well-respected and

more inclusive senior faculty member, may improve their interpersonal skills. Faculty with personal problems need guidance from the chair in establishing goals along with resources to help them during the crisis. Poor research performers benefit from help in networking and establishing a relationship with a respected mentor. Poor teacher performers with weak teaching strategies need frequent visits of their classes, specific suggestions for improvement, team teaching with a skilled instructor, and encouragement to visit classes of fine teachers. "The vitality of faculty training has the capacity to continue to improve the overall effectiveness of the college and produce positive reactions" (Scott, 1990, p. 15).

Internal Management

The bulk of the chair's day is occupied with solving routine problems: making due with ancient equipment, mediating conflicts between student and faculty or between two faculty members, writing more reports, making adjustments for sick staff or leaky roofs, and evaluating requests for resources. Harassed chairs might well ask themselves how will time be freed

> to consider the importance of maintaining high teaching standards, improving the faculty reward system, developing imaginative student recruitment plans, making our programs highly visible within the university, and fostering cooperative relationships with the Dean's Office? (Pappas, 1989, p. 36)

In addition to the routine internal management responsibilities, chairs are also accountable for internal planning. Unfortunately, few chairs have any training or experience with budgeting prior to assuming their position (Stevenson, 1995). With higher education experiencing financial constraints and reallocations, the lack of knowledge in preparing, monitoring, and interpreting a budget can be detrimental to the unit and the

institution. In order to achieve both effectiveness and efficiency, resource allocations should be aligned with the mission and the goals of the department and the institution (Stevenson, 1995, p. 2).

Leadership

The most critical task for the current chair is finding balance in leadership despite declining resources (Durrant, Call, Weide, & Keyworth, 1995). Just as the management gurus suppose, the key to competent academic leadership is openness to information, especially by "careful listening, learning to see what is important, distinguishing the crucial from the trivial and what is beyond our domain, and finding an effective voice to confront the issues worthy of attention" (Pappas, 1989, p. 34).

The two behavior attributes considered by both faculty and deans as being most indicative of an effective chair are a high level of consideration and structure (Knight and Holen, 1985). Leadership involves setting useful boundaries and encouraging faculty to use their unique skills and perceptions to create innovative solutions. "Administrators and chairmen who are effective leaders pass on to their teachers the personal conviction that each of them does make a difference" (Mullin, 1993, p. 42).

The increasing demands on the academic chair draws attention away from the key role of higher education, the sustaining of quality teaching. Faculty receive the bulk of their encouragement, recognition, and stimulation from their disciplinary colleagues; therefore, a departmental discussion of teaching excellence has the greatest impact (Swain, 1994, p. 510). The academic chair can do much to encourage, stimulate, and nurture excellence in instruction. The chair can

> act as a catalyst for providing undergraduate programs that develop student-centered competencies in critical thinking, leadership empowerment, intellectual curiosity, ethical values, human compassion, and most important, lifelong discovery--by developing forums for discussion, dialogue, and debate between students and faculty. (Stevenson, 1995, p. 2)

An academic culture that values quality teaching and learning will advocate for innovative teaching responsive to the needs of more diverse students who need preparation for the global marketplace.

These goals cannot be implemented by departmental leadership only; they must be part of an institutional program. Yet even though most administrators in Tennessee community colleges using strategic planning understood the process, they were skeptical that it actually drove the decision making (Riggs & Akor, 1992). As community colleges become increasingly more segmented, a conscious communication process is necessary to inform all stakeholders "of the institution on progress with implementation of the strategic plan and seek advice on areas where adequate progress is not being made" (Riggs & Akor, 1992, p. 71).

Scholarship

Having the dual responsibilities of administration and faculty places the chair in a paradoxical position. Chairs report more stress than faculty in trying to stay current in their discipline. Though administrative tasks are always pressing, the current chair knows that return to teaching is likely. Over two-thirds of chairs will return to faculty status (Carroll, 1990). Therefore, for long-term competency, intellectual satisfaction, and scholarly leadership integrity chairs should protect their time and resources to maintain disciplinary competency (Gmelch & Burns, 1993).

External Management

The comfortable boundaries of the college campus must be broached in order to strengthen support in times of conflicting institutional demands for limited resources. The wise chair will follow advice to "facilitate active alliances between people in business, industry, government, and education and guide them toward the mutual benefits of the academy and the economy, using skills in consensus building, participatory leadership, and conflict resolution" (Stevenson, 1995, p. 2).

Conflict Management

The change and progress required to respond to the major changes facing higher education will create conflict and tension. Resolving these conflicts in a way that strengthens interpersonal relationships while advancing institutional goals is possibly the most important task of academic leaders. Unlike past conflict management theory which either attempted to eliminate conflict (the traditionalists) or control inevitable conflict through behaviorist techniques, the current principles approach accepts and even encourages conflict as a necessary element in a productive organization. The needs of both the individual and the organization are considered in the principles developed by the Harvard Negotiation Project (Fisher & Ury, 1983).

Applying the framework of the recognition, response, and resolution of conflict into the academic department is important in these tense times. The goal is not to learn how "to win in the battle against faculty, but how to deal with differences such that all parties find a satisfying resolution, enjoy mutual respect, and maintain positive and productive relationships" (Gmelch & Carroll, 1991, p. 121).

The problem most frequently cited by community college chairs "is the dilemma of being trapped between faculty demands/concerns and administrative priorities/decisions" (Canfield, 1994, p. 13).

Career Path

Return to Full-Time Faculty

Many chairs return to their full-time faculty position, especially in four year colleges and universities. Of the nine reasons for resigning from their position, seven are administrative, including dislike of administrative tasks, incompatibility with professional value system, low status, frustration, insufficient time and resources, lack of adequate authority, and limited advancement options (Heimler, 1976). Leaving after the expected time in office with operations going smoothly enhances the individual's reputation for reliability, commitment, and ability to work under pressure (Tucker, 1992, p. 554).

Only a small number (11%) of community college chairs intended to return to faculty positions; over half reported an intention to remain as chairs, while nearly three quarters intended to stay in the same institution (Seagren & Miller, 1994).

Move into Higher Administration

The entry point into higher education administration is most often the department chair. "Most academic vice-presidents and provosts once were deans, and most college and university presidents have gone through the ranks, from chair to dean to vice-president to president" (Tucker, 1992, p. 555).

The Self-Perception Of The Academic Chair

Role Orientations

Several researchers proposed a framework to explain how chairs view their positions. Department chairs view their role from four different orientations: faculty, external, program, and management (Creswell et al., 1987). A chair with a faculty orientation concentrates on internal, especially interpersonal, relations in order to stimulate quality teaching and professional development. The externally oriented chair emphasizes representing the department to external stakeholders and obtaining external resources such as grants. The program-oriented chair stresses developing quality, current curriculum, and programs. The chairs with a management orientation see themselves as leaders, administrators, and effective managers of resources. A similar orientation was found by Booth in 1982.

Satisfaction

Not surprisingly, chairs dislike most administrative responsibilities including record-keeping, maintaining facilities and equipment, budgeting, evaluating faculty, managing support staff, and financial planning (McLaughlin et al., 1975). Even though administrative tasks are burdensome, 80% of chairs surveyed found enough satisfaction in contributing to the challenge of advancing the department mission through the development of curriculum, program, and faculty to be willing to serve another term (Bennett, 1983). Chairs receive the most satisfaction from nurturing growth and development activities for faculty and department (Creswell et al., 1990). Yet, stress is produced by inadequate time

for administrative responsibilities, disciplinary exploration, or personal activities (Gmelch, 1991a, 1991b, 1991c).

Stress

Department chairs in research and doctorate-level universities were found to have similar levels of stress regardless of age, gender, or discipline. The one factor that discouraged these chairs from continuing in their positions was conflict mediating. Chairs report suffering excessive stress from resolving interpersonal conflicts with their colleagues (40%), supervisors (17%), and students (5%) (Gmelch & Burns, 1991). "Those chairs unwilling to serve again had higher stress dealing with rules and regulations, obtaining program support and approval, and resolving differences with and among colleagues (Gmelch & Burns, 1991, p. 15).

A chair of 15 years found a consensus among his peers about the "thankless job."

> Chairs are compelled to deal with limited budgets, faculty grievances, administrative interferences, lawsuits, and threats of lawsuits by students and offended and troubled faculty. . . . And now with all the problems we face in administration, we are asked to theorize and plan for the future. . . . Most of us are trying simply to survive this academic year. (Pappas, 1989, p. 34)

Community college chairs, asked which strategies would assist them in performing their roles and responsibilities, included on the top of their list concerns about curriculum, balance between professional and personal life, networking with professional peers, and keying into long-term trends (Seagren & Miller, 1994).

Management Theory

In these changing times higher education uses an eclectic mix of management styles. In Chairing the Academic Department, the paradoxical demands on the department chairperson are described.

> The chairperson is a leader, yet is seldom given the scepter of undisputed authority. He or she is first among equals, but any strong coalition of these equals can severely restrict the chairperson's ability to lead. Deans and vice presidents look at the chairpersons as those primarily responsible for shaping the department's future, yet faculty members regard themselves as the primary agents of change in department policies and procedures. The chairperson, then is both a manager and a faculty colleague, an advisor and adviser, a soldier and a captain, a drudge and a boss. (Tucker, 1992, pp. 32-33).

Community college management incorporates components of management theories X, Y, and Z. Expected to be a leader (theory X), the chairperson lacks uncontested superiority (theories Y and Z). As "first among equals", the chairperson has limited power (theory Y and Z). Yet superiors expect the chairperson to "shape up the department" (theory X). Tucker refers to the department like a family (theory Z).

> The dean and vice president . . . do not have to say good morning--every morning to their colleagues in the department. . . . [T]hey do not have to maintain a family relationship with their faculty members. The department chairperson, on the other hand, does. . . . This intimate relationship is not duplicated anywhere else in the college or university because no other academic unit takes on the ambience of a family, with its persona interaction, its daily sharing of common goals and interests . . . and its concern for each member. (Tucker, 1992, p. 33)

At the same time the chairperson is caring for the institutional "family" (theory Z), superiors are expecting the implementation of their dictums (theory X). The "paradoxical" chairperson is expected to switch management styles among three contradictory theories.

> Clearly, the chairperson must be an advocate for the department. . . . But turnabout, as college deans are fond of saying, is fair play and sometimes the chairperson must be the advocate of the dean or the central administration. . . .The chairperson must

> be able to share the institution's perspective and try to implement an unfavorable decision. (Tucker, 1992, pp. 36-38)

Most day-to-day operations occur according to theory Y and Z (class assignments, schedules, textbook selection). Faculty workloads are usually a result of collective bargaining (theory Y).

Though organizational type frequently gives a generalized picture of the organizational culture, a multitude of other factors prevents the cloning of identical cultural norms and values (Kempner, 1990).

Departmental Culture and Climate

Department Cultures

The culture of an academic department, sometimes called an institutional subculture, comprises

> the departmental mission and goals, the leadership style of the dean, department chairperson, or other administrator, the governance structure of the unit, the characteristics of the students and faculty, the physical environment, and the relationship of the department or unit to other units and to the institution as a whole. (Austin, 1994, p. 51)

As the center of daily activity, the department is where the five faculty cultures (profession, academic organization, discipline, institutional, department) converge. At this cultural crossroads, tensions, accommodations, conflicts, and compromises frequently arise (Austin, 1990). Faculty with a strong commitment to disciplinary excellence may feel conflicted when they are obligated to serve students by providing remedial courses. Which are they to value most, duty to profession or institution? These decisions require faculty to reevaluate their beliefs, values, assumptions, and norms.

The way the faculty views the chair and the chair's self-perception are influenced by department culture (Tucker, 1992, p. 106). For example in colleges granting four-year degrees, the chairpersons view themselves as a faculty with some administrative responsibilities. In the two-year college the chairperson is perceived of as an administrator with some teaching responsibilities. The difference is the tradition of self-government-fostered commonality of disciplinary mind set. A collegial atmosphere encourages the chair to be thought of as a peer. With divisional members from diverse disciplines, the community college tends to function more bureaucratically than four-year colleges. Consensus is more difficult. In order to resolve conflicts, the chair works with upper administration in a more business model. As a result the chair is viewed of as an extension of the administration. In addition fewer community college chairs have doctorates or receive them after they are acculturated to the community college norm. Unlike the university chair, the community college chair is less oriented in the ways of the discipline and has stronger organizational alliances (Tucker, 1981, p. 30).

A healthy department culture has a sense of coherency and pride in a commonly respected value. "A healthy department culture is strong enough to give people a reason to commit their energies and talents to a collaborative enterprise, but not so strong that they suppress their individuality and creativity" (Tucker, 1992, p. 11).

Department Climates

"Whereas, *culture* pertains to the embedded and stable beliefs, values, and norms of a group, *climate* refers to the members' assessment, views, perceptions, and attitudes toward various aspects of organizational life" (Austin, 1994, citing Peterson & Spencer,

1990). Components of climate are perceptions of institutional aspirations, governance, process, association, dynamics, and attitudes. The temporary nature of perception results in a changeable climate. "If culture is the 'organizational value,' 'climate' is the 'atmosphere,' or 'style'" (Peterson & Spencer, 1990, p. 8). Climate is often studied at the department level where daily weather tends to be most variable (Moran and Volkwein, 1988).

Basis for Chairs Exploring Organizational Culture

An academic chair with an understanding of organizational culture is better able to achieve departmental and institutional goals while sustaining interpersonal relationships. Key factors to consider when assessing departmental culture follow.

Shared meaning within the department.

The primary responsibility of an academic leader is "interpreting or defining reality for organizational participants" (Bensimon, 1990, p. 77). By understanding the evolution and the symbolic representations of the shared meaning, the organizational leader is able to develop "a more connected 'we' relationship" to replace a "separate 'they' and 'I' relationship" (Bensimon, 1990, p. 78).

The exploration of culture and climate enables leaders to better understand how communications are interpreted. With this information the content and presentation of messages can be adjusted to lessen tensions and to produce the desired effect. Academic chairs, who understand the symbolic meaning of endeavors, can make productive choices (Tierney, 1988).

Better communications among units.

The academic leader with an understanding of organizational culture has a better comprehension of the relationship of the department to the whole organization. A deep understanding of departmental values helps in explaining tensions caused by conflicts in perceptions of faculty from other departments (Kuh and Whitt, 1988).

Assessing achievement.

An understanding of organizational culture helps explain obstacles and opportunities in achieving goals. In the conclusion of a community college case study, Kempner (1990 advises academic leaders to question, "How does our faculty culture facilitate or hinder learning?" (p. 22). An understanding of how values, interpretations, and symbolic actions enables the academic leader to develop adaptive strategies.

Alleviating problems.

At times of crisis the underlying departmental tensions are accelerated. The chair with an understanding of department culture is better equipped to cope with difficulties. An adept administrator is able to use problem definition and clarification to resolve faculty concerns about department culture (Tierney, 1988).

Managing change.

Departmental culture can be either an impetus or an encumbrance for change. To successfully implement change the chair must consider the implications on organizational values, interpretations, and behaviors. Sensitivity to the impact of a proposed change on the

existing department culture enables the chair to assess the feasibility, extent, and consequences of the change (Peterson & Spencer, 1990).

Future Directions

Though change may be necessary and exciting, it is never easy. When a successful community college made the transition from centralized to participatory leadership, the process was invigorating and fulfilling, but it was also stressful. As the changes were made, new organizational systems were also evolving. In the transition, organizational vacuums resulted in difficulties of unclear deadlines, limited resources, confusing goals, redundant projects, and uncertainty. Yet those who thrive on chaos allowed the meaning to direct the process. Leadership skills considered essential especially for chairs during periods of major transition are project management, budget management, group facilitation, and strategic planning. Also important are a high goal orientation, a high tolerance for ambiguity, and a powerful work ethic (Shugart, Berry, Ellington, Fleming, Franks, Richards, & Dolezal, 1995).

Ethical Issues

Serving as the academic person in the middle, the department chair is called up to make decisions with ethical implications. Yet, the chair is not detached from the process. Constantly placed in the center of the action, the chair can never be "outside the text" nor value-free (Rooke, 1993). Acting as a midlevel administrator, what choices are ethically defensible? How does one guide without coercing or build consensus without stalling decisions? For a new administrator, untrained in management yet an experienced and

thoughtful teacher, the analogy of the classroom is helpful. Though postmodernist theory has illuminated holes in the armor of intellectual objectivity, most educators adhere to a commitment to the principle of respecting the intellectual benefits of allowing, even encouraging, disagreement. A mutually respectful exchange of ideas provides the mind with a healthy stretch and an opportunity to grow. By stimulating a respect for difference within the department, the chair is "modeling and fostering of good will, which is needed most urgently when differences are most extreme: good will, that can coexist with a passionate attachment to ideas" (Rooke, 1993, p. 31).

Vital Signs of a Healthy Department

In a robust academic department, realism is the guiding principle. An understanding of internal capacities and external demands results in focusing on achieving within accepted boundaries. Conflicts are minimal when a common vision motivates joint and individual effort.

> A healthy department is one whose faculty and staff are motivated, productive, appreciated, secure in their jobs, work well together as a group, and are able to reach consensus on issues concerning the governance and welfare of the department. A healthy department has well-defined operations and visionary goals that are attainable and contribute not only to the mission of the department but to that of the university as a whole. They are understood and accepted by the faculty, and provide direction for both collective and individual decisions. (Tucker, 1992, p. 3)

Able to visualize their common future in concrete terms, each member determines an individual path to the shared destination. Change is frequently welcomed though not always anticipated. Information sources are constantly scanned for departmental and institutional implications. Opportunities are chosen according to a realistic set of criteria.

This strategic planning occurs collaboratively with a wide variety of information sources and opinions. Once the group goals are reached (boundaries) each member is informed, aware, and motivated (attractors) sufficiently to contribute unique skills and perceptions to the achievement of the common goal (factual).

Summary of Academic Chairperson

Chaos happens when several cycles are out of synchronization with one another. The process is moved from stability to chaos. "Dissipative structures demonstrate that *disorder* can be a source of *order*, that growth is found in disequilibrium, not in balance. The things we fear most in organizations--fluctuations, disturbances, imbalances--need not be signs of an impending disorder that will destroy us" (Wheatley, 1992, p. 20). Leadership, creativity, and innovation can push the system to new levels of growth and excitement.

The underlying function of the academic chairperson is to provide stability through the establishment of processes and systems that sustain self-renewal. The boundaries of the systems are far from arbitrary, but emerge from the meaning of the venture. Leaders "enlist others in a common vision by appealing to their values, interests, hopes, and dreams" (Kouzes & Posner, 1988, p. 106). This common vision is the frame in which experimentation is encouraged.

The acceptance of the fundamental nature of change, variation, order, and information results in the courage to let go of the illusion of security. The only security in nonlinear higher education administration is the certainty of change. Only frustration, wasted energy, and eventual defeat result from grasping stability. When the world is in a

whirlwind, the vessel to stay in one place will surely be destroyed. Though linear administrators are doomed to a future not of their liking, nonlinear administrators are exhilarated (or at least reconciled) to a future of many rides down the rapids. With the acceptance of the dynamism and uncertainty of the ride comes a new perspective. From this new consciousness previously unimagined possibilities emerge. What could be more exciting for those who have dedicated their lives to the advancement of knowledge than the cognitive dissonance of a new worldview?

Conclusion Of The Review Of The Literature

Before the advent of social policy based on objective research "so thin as barely to count as moral at all" (Rorty, 1982. In Sherman & Webb, 1988, p. 17), Dewey urged that social scientists investigate narratives, because "[i]t's always wise to ask what the subject thinks it's up to before formulating our own hypotheses" (Rorty, 1982, p. 200). While the positivistic or behaviorist scientist uses explanations to learn how to control the subjects, the qualitative social scientist seeks to interpret so as to improve conversation.

The ethical ramifications of each approach are inherent in the philosophy that drives the methodology. Rorty proposes that Dewey's "middle ground" of rigor in inquiry associated with a respect for the humanity of participants "inspired the social sciences in American before the failure of nerve which turned them 'behavioral'" (Rorty, 1982, p. 18). For the purpose of inquiry is not just to dissect, prod, and control; the other reason, perhaps the deeper more noble purpose, is to use our skills to understand so as to improve.

> If we get rid of traditional notions of "objectivity" and "scientific method" we shall be able to see the social sciences as continuous with literature--as interpreting other

> people to us, and thus enlarging and deepening our sense of community. (Rorty, 1982, p. 18)

Accepting the legacy of Dewey and other pragmatists, Rorty in Consequences of Pragmatism (1982), differentiates between philosophical and real theories. Philosophical theories can endlessly be debated with no hope of a "correct" resolution and consequentially are viewed as relativistic by pragmatists. Yet, real theories concerning alternative action options are not seen as relativistic by pragmatists. Serious pragmatists (as well as most professional practitioners) resist sloppy, fuzzy thinking. In its place they value multifarious disciplined judgment. Aristotle declared long ago that the method of inquiry must be appropriate to the type of investigation (Sherman & Webb, 1988, p. 6).

The question of this study, exemplified by a review of previous research, suggests a "concomitant portrayal of an account of thought and inquiry rooted not in abstraction, deduction, and formalism, but rather in the dynamics and demands of judgement, argument and lived conduct" (Giarelli, 1988, p. 25). This rigorous, dynamic, demanding analysis is found in professional practice.

> The professions are always practices in response to some fundamental human need or social good whose advancement is already a moral aim. . . . The professions, in short, are practices related to the central life giving, life sustaining, and life fulfilling events of human existence. (Green, 1984, p. 30. In Giarelli, 1988, p. 25)

In this vision of professional practice, ethics is not an abstract search for truth and beauty, "but rather involves the study of how human actors settle moral disagreements and attempt to secure cherished values . . . [in] our attempts to create quality . . . and possibilities for excellence" (Giarelli, 1988, p. 26).

Perhaps this review of the literature is best concluded with the same tale from the Kabbala (tales of Jewish mysticism) with which Kegan ends his In Over Our Heads.

According to this story the world was created because God loves stories. Freed from the obsolete belief in an all-knowing creator of a world where all is predictable if only we had enough information, the inhabitant of the postmodern world may find comfort with a creator fascinated with what will happen in our ever-changing world. This spiritual model is inspiring to the researcher of meaning.

> Better perhaps for us to emulate this kind of God, whose pleasure in us comes not from our obedience to God's laws and regularities, however subject we may be to them, but from God's sheer fascination with how we live.
>
> For a God like this one, we ourselves are the objects of passionate engagement, endlessly let go of and recovered for a purpose God himself (or God herself) may not yet know. (Kegan, 1994, p. 355)

CHAPTER 3 - METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study examined how middle-aged adults perceived their own quest for meaning. What were the midlife adults' perception of the role critical reflective practice had on their internal journey towards a meaningful life? Objective tests can only evaluate the end result of selected stimuli. Another mechanism is required to uncover how participants view the process they are undergoing. The purpose of this study was to reveal how a sampling of mid-career, midlevel higher education administrators, participating in a continuing professional education process report, in their own words and in their own way, their own journey to meaning.

This chapter is organized to explain the research design, the context (researcher's role and description of participants), the methodological theory, the collection of data, the analysis of data, and the reporting process.

This study utilizes a phenomenological design analysis of the reflective journals of a small sample of community college academic midlevel administrators in order to explore their journey to meaning, which occurs during a mid-career continuing professional education program.

The conceptual framework is adult development theory. "Central to that change process is critical reflection, where the underlying assumptions of the meaning perspective are identified, critically assessed, and reformulated to permit the development of a more inclusive and permeable meaning perspective" (Clark, 1993, p. 47). This study analyzed the

self-reporting of the transformational process "a crucial sense of agency over ourselves and our lives" (Mezirow, 1990, p. 375). Participants reported the essential adult learning experience of "the way we control our experiences rather that be controlled by them" (Mezirow, 1990, p. 375).

Design of the Study

The design of the data collection and analysis is patterned after Qualitative Data Analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994). As the authors suggested, the process was conceptualized before implementation, but in the process of actually doing the research changes evolved.

The conceptual framework of adult development theory, especially reflective practice and the midlife search for meaning, shaped the research question, sampling plan, and documentation. The research question was:

> What do midlevel community college academic administrators, who participate in a continuing professional education program, reveal in their reflective journals of critical professional practice about the midlife quest for meaning?

The sources of data were the reflective journals of participants of the continuing professional education program.

The Researcher's Role

The researcher, along with the study participants, was a student in the same National Community College Chair Academy year-long training program. As a peer to the other students, the researcher underwent the same educational process. The students were

aware that the researcher was a participant-observer. The researcher solicited study volunteers during the initial week of training. Though the researcher took part in all other aspects of the professional development process, the researcher did not write a journal of the experience. The fear was that had the researcher written a journal the likelihood of comparison between the researcher journaling experience and that of the study participants' journals would be unavoidable. Also to increase the researcher's distance from participants, a research assistant (not involved in the continuing professional education program) initially received the journal entries, removed the name of the participants, and placed an identifying code on each entry. Thus, the researcher did not know the correspondence of participant's name with identifying code.

Periodically the researcher wrote to participants encouraging them to send their journal entries. Occasionally the researcher would talk on the phone to a participant. At no time did the researcher discuss with a participant information revealed from journal entries. Regular professional development activities and research information gathering took place distinctly separate from each other. During the second week of the residential training (a year later), researcher and the participants met again. On the first day of the training, the researcher requested that participants complete a short demographic questionnaire. These questionnaires were also coded by the research assistant before the researcher examined them.

The researcher, along with the Academy students, is an academic midlevel administrator in a community college. The responsibilities and setting of the researcher's position was comparable to that of the study participants.

Participants

During the initial 1 week session of a year-long mid-career leadership training program, community college deans and chairs were given the opportunity to take part in the study. This convenience sample was self-selected for participation in the training program and in this study. The training program is open internationally to working community college deans and chairs. The study participants represent an opportunistic sample of community colleges midlevel administrators participating in a year-long continuing professional education program.

Though 28 individuals initially agreed to participate in the study, 13 actually followed through. The participants represent a wide variety of midlevel community college academic administrators: 1 program director, 9 department chair, 2 associate deans, and 1 dean for academic affairs. They also represent a variety of disciplines--business, health, human services, science, math, and English. The sample is limited to academic areas in which transfer to a 4-year college degree is possible. All of the administrators are serving in academic roles in degree granting programs.

Characteristics of the Participants

All of the participants are midlevel administrators in North American two-year colleges: eleven of the participants are from the United States, two are from Canada. The demographics of the participants were compared to national norms. Overall, the chairs tended to match the North American norms. As a group they resembled the demographics of the national chair study conducted by Seagren and Miller in 1994. Their age range follows the mean age for the national survey of 45-54 years. More females participated in

the current study than in Seagren's national findings--59% male and 41% female (Seagren & Miller, 1994). In this study seven of the participants were women and six were men. With regard to the experience in the chairperson role, the national mean experience as chairs from Seagren's survey (1994) was 6 to 10 years; nearly 45 % had served under 5 years. The participants in this study generally followed this pattern. The national norm was for minorities was 11 % of the chair population (Seagren & Miller, 1994). In contrast, this study was under-represented with minority participation, having only 1 minority participant.

Seagren's study revealed that only a small number (11%) of community college chairs intended to return to faculty positions. Over half reported an intention to remain as chairs, while nearly three-quarters intended to stay in the same institution (Seagren & Miller, 1994). The participants in this study followed a similar profile. The average instructional unit, usually called a department, had between 11 to 20 instructors (Seagren & Miller, 1994), an amount comparable with this study's participants. Even though administrative responsibilities are burdensome, 80% of chairs in the national survey were willing to serve another term (Bennett, 1983). Such was the case with the group in this study. In a survey conducted more than 20 year ago of over a thousand chairs in state and land-grant institutions, almost all lacked any administrative experience (McLaughlin, Montgomery, & Malpass, 1975). In contrast, nine participants in this study had previous administrative experience either in or out of higher education.

Description of Methodology

The qualitative research type is reflective phenomenology (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 11). The method is "an uncompromising interpretive enterprise focused on everyday subjective meaning and experience, the goal of which [is] to explicate how objects and experience are meaningfully constituted and communicated in the world of everyday life" (Holstein & Gubrium, 1994, p. 264).

The methodology is based on Marton's *phenomenography*, which is a way of "'mapping' the qualitatively different ways in which people perceive, conceptualize, and understand - in a word, 'experience' - the world around them. Such observations are analyzed into categories, derived from the experiences themselves, from which one can assess the appropriateness of educational strategies" (Sherman & Webb, 1988, p. 3). Pivotal education transforms the learner's self-perception and awareness.

Phenomenography is interested in the relationship between humans and their world. The area of concern is not what is occurring but the individual's perception of reality. Though many people can experience the same occurrence their understanding, conception, or meaning of the event can be markedly different. The description is of the world as viewed by the individual or what phenomenographers call a *second-order* perspective (Marton, 1981). "Phenomenography provides descriptions that are relational, experiential, content-oriented, and qualitative" Marton, 1988, p. 146).

The qualitative phenomenology methodology is appropriate when authentic, current events are to be studied as they unfold naturally by diverse individuals. The qualitative phenomenological study methodology allowed the participants to explore what the events mean to them as they consider the life they were living.

Purpose

The purpose of the research was to uncover what takes place during reflective practice. Quantitative research can link the causal relationship between before and after. The qualitative analysis of reflective journals is to understand how and why the search for meaning takes place inside the "black box".

The narratives were analyzed to find what meaning the participants found in practice and to investigate underlying values and assumptions. Storytellers are usually only slightly, if at all, aware of the underlying deeper meaning of their stories. But the researcher

> can construct an underlying story from the data of a manifest one, by asking why the manifest story includes some features and ignores others, why it begins and ends when it does, why it is couched in terms of certain categories and not others, what accounts for its trust and direction. (Schon, 1991b, p. 346)

Description of Instrument

In accordance with the phenomenological method, the researcher analyzed written material produced by participants without imposing a structure. The researcher desired to observe organically developed written materials. In this nonobtrusive method, the form and frequency were determined by the participants' need.

The participants wrote stories about their work experience and analyzed the stories in order to seek understanding and meaning. Storytelling is a valuable tool to reveal tacit knowledge. Michael Polani (1966) and Donald Schon (1983, 1987) agree that tacit knowledge is an important component in professional practice. Yet this practical knowledge is not readily revealed. "One motive for telling stories is to wrest meaning from experiences, especially powerful or disturbing ones. Even everyday experiences are

continually imbued with meaning, rendered more coherent, more vivid, even more real, through storytelling" (Mattingly, 1991, p. 237).

The writing process has the potential to stimulate depth in reflective thought (Emig, 1977; Kottkamp, 1990).

> When writing, we often pause, cycle back, reread, and rethink the very descriptions and ideas we are formulating, and we capture our thought processes in a product to which we may return to reassess, search for options, and plan for the future. (Osterman & Kottkamp, 1993, p. 88)

The unstructured nature of the writing requires the writer to create an individually meaningful structure to present an internal dialogue. After teaching a course in reflective practice to educational administrators for over twelve years, Kottkamp declared a preponderance for favor "an open-ended platform because students tell me they spend a great deal of time formulating their statements. Without a template, they must think long and hard about what is of greater and lesser importance, what is central and what peripheral" (Osterman & Kottkamp, 1993, p. 88).

Narrative research enables investigation of thoughts which are otherwise unavailable for investigation.

> One purpose of narrative research is to have other readers raise questions about their practices, their ways of knowing. Narrative inquires are shared in ways that help readers question their own stories, raise their own questions about practices, and see in the narrative accounts stories of their own stories. The intent is to foster reflection, storying, and restorying for readers. (Clandinin & Connelly, 1991, p. 277)

Data gathered from these journal entries, supplemented by a brief questionnaire, were organized around the following research question:

What do midlife, community college academic midlevel administrators, participating in a year-long continuing professional education program, report about their own transformational process?

The study participants volunteered to send their journal entries to the researcher on a monthly basis. Within a short time, it became evident that the size, format, and frequency of the entries would vary according to the needs of the participants. The length of the journal entries varied between 7 and 263 primarily single-spaced pages. Eleven of the participants contributed between 12 and 63 pages of journal entries.

Validity and Reliability

Validity is "accuracy of measurement. The degree to which an instrument measures that which is supposed to be measured" (Sproull, 1995, p. 74). Reliability is "consistency of measurement. The degree to which an instrument measures the same way each time it is used under the same conditions with the same subjects" (Sproull, 1995, p. 74).

When professional practice is investigated to reveal the practical, how-to-do knowledge, the methodology of technical rationality is an appropriate epistemology. Yet though this methodology is rigorous, the questions asked are limited to procedural applications (Schon, 1983). "To observe and study practice, in order to discover the understandings already embedded in it, is to forgo a particular conception of rigorous research" (Schon, 1991a, p. 10). To address more relevant and disorderly issues necessitates a rigor based on the linked criteria of validity and utility. Yet the researcher does strive for accuracy and consistency. The intent is to produce study results, which are useful to the scholar and practitioner.

The researcher, who is a member of the cohort from which the sample is taken, must continuously measure the degree of personal objectivity and consistency. Yet the insight resulting from the shared experience is an asset. "Practitioner/participant and researcher/participant have different goals in narrative inquiry. These goals are meaningful only within a larger social narrative shared by both" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1991, p. 276). A researcher must look past an interpretation of data that only confirms that the participants echoed the researcher's personal conclusions of the experience. Uncritical reciprocal empathy devalues the results.

The researcher is required to filter the data through a screen of critical intelligence, which is able to look past one's own personal experience, and the limited perspective of individual participants on to inclusive understandings. Though the researcher lived an experience parallel to that of the participants, the researcher took deliberate measures to assure that, as much as possible, these insights did not influence the interpretation of the narratives. The researcher did not write a journal of her experience during the practicum so as to be able to examine the narratives without comparison to her own experience. The researcher only examined the narratives that were previously coded by an assistant to prevent contamination of information the researcher had about participants from sources other than the narrative.

The journals were read to extract reflective passages, that were also coded, then classified without regard to context. Only classifications that were found in at least 70% of the participants' journals were included in the aggregate that was used for the analysis and the subsequent interpretation. The actual words of the participants were the pool of data used in understanding the phenomenon.

In a similar fashion, the theoretical information discussed in the Review of the Literature, was disregarded during the initial analysis. The data were first interpreted without predetermined ideas.

In evaluating how research rigor can be maintained in studies of reflection, Schon (1991b, pp. 356-357) advises

> The reflective turn calls for a paradoxical stance toward many things, and especially toward those who question objectivity. The researcher must recognize . . . that there is no give, preobjectified state of affairs waiting to be uncovered through inquiry. All research findings are someone's construction of reality. And yet the researcher must strive to test constructions in the situation by bringing to the surface, juxtapositioning, and discriminating among alternative accounts of that reality. If there is a problem with the objectivist stance, it does not lie in the striving for objectivity but rather . . . in the belief that it is possible to establish the validity of a claim to objective truth with finality.

Therefore, the researcher has a responsibility to examine the assumptions of her own story and uncover blindness and bias that narrows the focus of analysis. The researcher "must be careful to distinguish preconceptions from evidence" (Baum, 1991, p. 137). An openness to viewing the data from multiple perspectives is required. The researcher must understand actions from the perspective of the participant. "These interpretations demand testing against alternatives in order to construct the most coherent, comprehensive, truthful accounts of organizational--and other--experience" (Baum, 1991, p. 140). Accepting that pure objectivity is impossible, the researcher needs to consider alternative explanations and critically refute all but the final conclusion.

Phenomenology is based on the process of discovery, "and discoveries do not have to be replicable. On the other hand, once the categories have been found, it must be possible to reach a high degree of intersubjective agreement concerning their presence or absence if other researchers are to be able to use them" (Marton, 1988, p. 148). The

researcher took precautions to enable that the categories emerged from the data. Given the categories, another researcher should be able to place the same data within these categories and see the same patterns.

Analysis of Data

From June 1995 to June 1996, the reflective journals of 13 midlevel community college administrators, who were participating in a year-long continuing professional education program, were collected.

The reflective journals are an unobtrusive, nonmanipulative instrumentation. The analysis of the content of the journal entries enabled the researcher to observe the internal reflective process without distorting the procedure by the act of observation. The researcher wrote periodically to participants encouraging the forwarding of journals. Program instructors do not require but strongly recommend reflective journaling as conducive to the professional growth process fostered by the program. No form was required for the journaling, though suggestions were made by program instructors.

Journal entries were copies of the participants' originals. Participants were asked to also send a computer disk along with the hard copy if the journals were written on a computer. An assistant to the researcher removed the participants' names from the entries and entered an alphabetic code as the only means to identify the participant.

Each participant's journal entries were placed in chronological order. This was facilitated by the customary practice of dating journal entries. Each participant's entries were categorized according to classifications emerging from the entries. Relevant passages from journals were entered into the computer. The passages were categorized and analyzed.

At the second week-long training session, participants were asked to complete a short questionnaire about demographics and attitudes. This exercise was given at the beginning of the session, to lessen the impact of course content on the responses.

Data Analysis Methodology

The very nature of qualitative data analysis prevents and discourages a strictly orchestrated plan of action.

> The core requisites for qualitative analysis seem to be a little creativity, systematic doggedness, some good conceptual sensibilities, and cognitive flexibility--the capacity to rapidly undo your way of construing or transforming the data and to try another, more promising tack. (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 309)

Precise techniques are not prescribed in phenomenographic research. Discovery is used to uncover the qualitatively different ways people experience or understand a phenomenon.

The phenomenological mode of analysis is open to discovering the meaning of the data.

> An important difference between this way of proceeding and traditional content analysis is that, in the latter case, the categories into which the utterances are sorted are determined in advance. The former kind of analysis is dialectical in the sense that meanings are developed in the process of bring quotes together and comparing them. (Marton, 1988, p. 155)

While avoiding exact directions, Marton (1988) does suggest an analysis process. The analysis is based on "a criteria of relevance" (p.154). Selections, dealing with the research question, are chosen and marked.

According to phenomenographic practice, the researcher is searching for the singularly unique ways that people understand phenomena; in this case how community college chairpersons perceived of their own search for meaning. Therefore, the data analysis were a mapping of this hidden area of human understanding.

The researcher's analysis of the journals began by first reading through all the journals and marking reflective passages, narrative that expressed the writers' contemplation of the meaning beyond the events. For purpose of this study reflection was considered to be:

> A cycle of paying deliberate, analytical attention to one's own action in relation to intentions--as if from an external observer's perspective - for the purpose of expanding one's options and making decisions about improved ways of acting in the future, or in the midst of the action itself. (Kottkamp, 1990, p.183)

The passages dealing with meaning, "the verbal productions of participants that define and direct action" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 61), were extracted, analyzed, and categorized. "Phenomenographers 'categorize their subjects' descriptions, and these categories are the primary outcomes of phenomenographic research" (Marton, 1988, p. 146). Therefore, when the data are read, selected, and sorted, the researcher looks for the most distinguishing aspects found in the data, which explicate how persons define a particular occurrence. The coding scheme was revised in response to the content, narrative remarks, and pattern coding.

The research focused on both the context of the community college and the participants. Considering both aspects, the search was for the most crucial and extraordinary structural components of the relationship between the individual and the phenomenon.

The selected quotes were the "data pool" for the process of analysis. The researcher's interest shifted from the individual participants "to the meaning embedded in the quotes themselves. The boundaries separating individuals are abandoned and interest is focused on the 'pool of meanings' discovered in the data" (Marton, 1988, p. 155). Though

the categories of description originate with the context, they were decontextualized. The individual categories were components of a larger structure.

The interpretation process was an analysis of the interplay between the two contexts of the quotes: the individual journals and the "pool of meaning" in which the quote joined those of other participants.

Quotes were placed into groupings, demarcations are explored, and the grouping and regrouping process proceeded. The definitions of categories were evaluated using the data. Adjustments were made, retested, and adjusted again, until narrow categories were found that defined a core meaning. Eventually the criteria attributes of each group became explicit and the system stabilized. Articulate quotes from each category were used as illustrations.

> It is a goal of phenomenography to discover the structural framework within which various categories of understanding exist. Such structures (a complex of categories of descriptions) should prove useful in understanding other people's understanding. (Marton, 1988, p. 146)

The approach was heuristic, allowing the reader to become an active participant in forming generalizations to other colleges and situations. The researcher agrees with Dewey (1938b) that the outcomes of inquiry are not final judgements but "warranted assertions." Though judgements are required for action, they are never calcified. Judgement drives inquiry to move towards a conclusion. The tentative conclusions were supported or revised in accordance to its fit into the actual experience.

The final report was written. Included in the final report are ramifications for theory, practice, policy, and further research.

CHAPTER 4 - ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

The analysis that follows in Chapter 4 was built on the use of a rich, descriptive narrative from the journals of the 13 participants. On a monthly basis, the participants sent to the researcher their reflective journals of the 12-month practicum component of the continuing professional education program. Reflective passages in the journal entries were extracted. The extracted reflective passages were examined in search of categories. As with any phenomenological study, a variety of patterns were considered. Eventually, common patterns were found that ran across reflective passages from all the participants.

The pattern finally selected seemed to the researcher to best express what the experience meant to the participants. At the center of the scheme is how the individual perceives of self. Self is placed between the two elements of professional responsibility. On one side are those that the midlevel administrator is responsible for--the faculty. The reflective passages dealing with faculty consider how the actions of faculty compare and contrast with the midlevel administrator's values, priorities, and responsibilities. On the other point are those holding more power in the organization--primarily upper administration. The reflective passages dealing with upper administration consider how the actions of those in power assist, or more frequently impede, the ability of the midlevel administrator to carry out meaningful actions consistent with their value systems. Some of the passages discuss the interaction between the polarities of faculty and upper administration, but they always return to what this all means to the journalist.

The researcher's analysis is liberally sprinkled with quotations from the journals. The quotations are used in the text without editorial corrections of grammar or mechanics. When quotations are used, they are not differentiated by individual writers, but are viewed as an aggregate pool of data. Quotes were selected which best represented the feelings of those experiencing the phenomenon. In many cases a near uniformity was found in how a common issue was framed. In instances where at least 70% of the journalists expressed essentially uniformity in the meaning of a common event, the most articulate quote or quotes were used in the analytical narrative. The brevity of some of these explanations reflects the commonality of thought. In instances where at least 70% of the participants reflected on the same phenomenon, but with a greater variety of responses, samples of the kinds of responses are explored in the narrative. The analysis of the journal entries investigated categories of self-exploration that occurred in all the midlevel administrators' journals.

The bulk of the midlevel administrators' journal entries concerned self-perceptions. They reflected on how their work role supported or was incongruent with their value system. They desired to use work as the vehicle for actualizing a meaningful life. The first section of the analysis began with an exploration of what they said about themselves. The second section moves on to their area of responsibility. The third section comments about their superiors and concludes with a few comments about external forces.

Following the analysis is an interpretation of the findings as they relate to theories discussed in the Review of the Literature. The interpretation begins by examining the individual, then situates the individual in their role. Finally a holistic interpretation of those who live the phenomenon studied is offered.

In the sections that follow, the research question "What do midlevel community college academic administrators, who participate in a continuing professional education program reveal in their reflective journals of critical professional practice about the midlife quest for meaning?" is discussed first as analysis of the data then as interpretation of the results.

Analysis

Reflections on Self

Ambiguity of the Position

Since almost all community college midlevel administrators accepted their current position as an interruption of a satisfying teaching career, they have the ability to return to the classroom full-time. This option is frequently considered, especially when the burden of the job is paramount: "these [administrative] tasks never cease & I can always improve upon them. My day does not end at 4. Everyday I take work home, even on the weekends. How much longer do I have to be chair?"

Confident of their previously acquired skills, they question their competency in the present role. One person spoke for many of the others: "The job is hectic, I know I am a good teacher, researcher, and program director but I wonder if I am 'cut out' for administration?"

Yet the answer continues to be illusive, as one person queries:

> Is administration for me? This is a question I ask myself every day but I am no closer to an answer.
>
> What gives me most satisfaction out of my work?
>
> 1. Teaching and doing [my discipline], I draw energy from the teaching learning process.

2. I find great satisfaction in designing research projects. . . . This is very exciting because it is creative and the possibilities are unlimited.
3. Structuring faculty development activities.
4. As for administration--I have no answer. I feel flattered when people ask my advice. I feel annoyed when people complain. I feel frustrated when a good plan goes nowhere.

They sense that the disappointment may be overcome with better self-management:

> I must be careful not to have all these new projects overload my system or it will be very easy to fall back into a pattern of feeling inefficient and frustrated. I believe I am in transition phase as a Chairperson. Will such a transition be reason enough to ask for a second term as chair?

Though frustrated now, the position is seen as having such potential: "When I'm tired of the extra work I'll turn over the job to someone else, but I have some things I want to do first."

The experience of midlevel administration has broadened the participant's perspective:

> So what have I gained by being chair? Well, I have a new/different way of looking at the institution. Problems are now challenges and impossible situations call for strategic planning. I now see a bigger picture and I handle problems in a different way than I did in September.

Fluidity of the Role

The responsibilities of the person in the middle are far less defined than the expectations of a faculty member. "Instead of trying to fit into the role, make the role fit into what you do otherwise so that it makes sense within your jar of rocks and principles."

The openness of role enables the individual to shape the boundaries according to personal priorities.

> I find that other than staffing classes, my job responsibilities are whatever I make them. Certainly there is input and requests from others, but most of what I do is

> what I choose to do. . . I'm doing more than many Chairs . . . what ever I choose to do I require of myself that I do it well by my standards and I always have lots of ideas.

As the individual defines the role, the skills acquired over a lifetime all come into play. "While the leader does not perform all the task clusters, she/he certainly needs every one of the skills clusters to perform the tasks and to meet the challenge clusters." Eventually, each individual shapes the job according to their personality:

> The official job description feels far more comfortable now. While I had formerly seen it as too large, I now realize that the tone of the institution has shifted enough that no one is using it as a checklist of duties to be done annually, a left-over impression from our previous division dean. . . . The majority of the items in the official job description are task clusters related to professional development and communication, faculty selection and feedback . . . curriculum and students, and to some extent planning tasks.

The leadership position opens additional opportunities as the implications of midlife are analyzed: "Principles keep the same, mission statement and roles changes when you're getting older." At this life junction, being a member of a competent team is not enough, "Most of us [chairs and coordinators] take pride in doing a good job so we strive to do our best. The additional responsibilities that I have assumed as Department Chair are because I have a vision of a better Department and a better College and I see it as my role to help implement this improvement." Success in the role is connected to one's sense of pride in accomplishments.

Yet despite the best of intentions "Managing my role--still the most impossible [task] . . . I'm doing what I can & trying not to feel guilty about what I can't." Even with much hard work, "I often felt I am barely keeping my head above water."

Tensions in the Middle

Being in the middle, between faculty and upper administration, causes the midlevel administrator to feel conflicted much of the time. Times of crisis are especially trying. When the tension comes from inside, the midlevel administrator's role becomes even more confusing:

> [A] storm of controversy [between departmental faculty] and much anger (and charges of racism) . . . the experience has been uncomfortable for me . . . while I can see the Dean's points and agree with many of them, I also see the pain of the discord.

Despite sympathizing with the points of view of the combatants, the professional role requires a certain stance.

> The inevitable conclusion for the chair, no matter what, is that he has been dragged through the mud. The management's counter argument to the union rarely gets all the mud off, as it is not in our best interests to answer some of the union complaints, even though there are understandable reasons for why the chair does what he does. So, in the context of the hearing, it does look as if the chair has been malicious/incompetent in some respects. . . .
>
> My morale certainly suffered. . . . Not sure what to do. Hard to avoid these things, unless I am prepared to permit things I do not agree with or that I feel do not reflect the collective agreement, which I am not. Am I being obstinate and/or failing to listen to faculty point of view in these matters? Must bear this possibility in mind and see.

When upheavals from external pressures cause systemic changes, the middle is a mighty uncomfortable place to be. What are the appropriate professional and ethical decisions for the holder of confidential information from upper administration, who feels an obligation to faculty, while all the while having to preserve self-interest?

> [I am having difficulties] with my role. . . .The draft action plan has the S program ending. I did help them in every way I could, but at times I also had to have a management perspective on the whole thing, which meant not being entirely forthcoming in every way [to faculty]. It was a fence walking exercise that I don't think anyone could emerge from without felling somewhat dirty. Not necessarily wrong, but awfully tangled. . . .

> Was complicated further by my meeting with the Vice President to talk about possible chairing assignments once the college is restructured. It was necessary to have the meeting now, but it felt like a betrayal to be talking about perhaps having some new responsibilities when some faculty that are part of my current responsibility are still in jeopardy.

Neither their continuing professional education program nor management books adequately prepare the midlevel administrator with a strategy in time of crisis.

> My role was supportive . . . the whole process has been moving quickly and has been bathed in the threat of the program abruptly ending. I don't think that the transformational end of the model can be explored here. . . . In the concluding chapter to Improving Organizational Effectiveness, Bass Avolio writes that "there are times [for individuals and organizations] to improve and there are times to back off." This was a time to back off.

Having come from a faculty position, the midlevel administrator has difficulty in finding a stance. The role requires acquiescing to positions of questionable usefulness.

> [I am feeling] in the middle and trying to see (and explain) the bigger picture. My biggest surprise about the complexity has been the Dean for Academic Affairs . . . . has some firm ideas about making the environment of the division more hospitable to students and faculty, a needed "C" change, he also has some methods that seem incongruous with those ideas.

Limited Attention to Teaching

The sacrifice for the common good means limiting what enticed them to join higher education--teaching. "Because this is the first week of classes, my time seems to have been devoted to them instead of department chair duties. Will have to put in some extra time this next week on chair responsibilities."

Clearly, administrative responsibilities limit the time and energy available for teaching. Yet the pride in one's teaching ability and need for constant improvement is evident: "The students were amazed that a . . . professor 'cared' about improving their instruction."

The administrative responsibilities limit the time and energy available for teaching. "Teaching is the reason I am in higher education. I really like the challenge. However, I feel differently after the time I spend doing administrative tasks. I do not like it." For the midlevel administrator, administration is not an escape from the burdens of teaching. On the contrary, they express a wistful longing to return to the pleasures of the classroom.

New trends in education are evaluated according to their teaching experience. "I don't know how to go with this idea of a student like a customer. In some ways they are but in many ways they are not because they don't know the whole picture."

Own Attitude Toward Change

The dedication to improvement is reflected in an acceptance of change.

> The chair's role continues to be ambiguous and perhaps this is how it should be for our role is constantly changing. How could we put together a job description when each semester there are different things to be done. We need to always be searching for the new plan to make things better and constantly assessing and changing.

Approval of requested changes involves for the college leader "a mixed blessing . . . because of the vast amount of additional work."

A commitment to change requires acceptance of inconvenience. "Of course, these changes require extra work (timetable, faculty and student work issues) on my part--it would be easier to maintain the status quo." Despite the extra effort change demands, the college leaders are "not really afraid to get on with it. . . ."

Change offers the possibility of professional growth:

> I think this is a great idea because the lines of communication are open. They are open from the faculty to the president and every place in between. I feel very good about my responsibilities. I am going to represent faculty interest, the faculty knows that it will be handled in an up front and honest way. No games. As I think about

> this situation, a situation that I was dreading and thought about every step of the way, I see leadership qualities emerging from me.

More often, they are disappointed that their openness to change is not accepted by others:

> Some reactions to T's white paper re changes that must be made across the system to meet less funding, industry demands, etc. have been surprisingly negative. I found his paper exciting and most of the points to be, upon reflection, self evident. The reaction is distressing in that it means many faculty have not yet thought through the approaching reality enough to realize the truth of the solutions the paper suggests--more flexible, learner-centered education, different responsibilities for professors, more independent student-directed work and therefore some reliance upon technicians, etc. They have to be brought up to speed in this respect.

Another participant explains that the purpose in life is defined by change:

> Personal mission statement: I'm aiming at a change in organization, especially in attitude of faculty and staff. We should work more customer centered (internal and external) and work more as a team than as different hierarchic oriented people. . . . For myself it means that I will be working in a better way and feeling better at the end. You have to break some barriers and be loyal to each other and the system you work in, in order to get a good organization and feel good in it and so in all. Principles keep the same, mission statement and roles changes when you're getting older.

An optimistic attitude is voiced in the face of forced change.

> We just can't continue with the standard classroom model or, for that matter, with the current model for field placement that involves faculty visits. I have absolutely no doubt that, with some re-packaging of curriculum, parts of subjects could be offered differently--in many cases, the new delivery might be more effective.

Even after major disruption, the commitment remains. "Where am I? I still believe in the College & what it does. I believe we will rebound, despite the personal losses."

For changes are "challenging though and I like that too." The standard way lacks interest as conveyed by these metaphors. "It's true, the quickest way from one place to another is a straight line, but it's often the side trips in life that provide the scenic views.

This month, I have taken a number of side trips." The unceasing disequilibrium is thrilling. "My work is like a seagull . . . on the cliffs of time . . . without a pause."

Journaling

Deeply reflective, these community college leaders not surprisingly comment extensively about their own journaling process. Early reluctance to journaling is the result of a desire for achievement. "While my subconscious tells me that [the journaling] process will be beneficial, my heart says there are more gratifying things to be done with the time." Soon the process is found as a source of useful information, "I am trying to 'stand outside myself' and take a look at me . . . trying to see myself as others do." Then the task is accomplished with the customary dedication. "I can tell this isn't going to be one of my favorite things to do. I'll work at it maybe it will grow on me." Finally the journal becomes an instrument for self-exploration even if it is shared. "May not be clear in Journal. Could make it clear, but then I would have feeling of writing journal for outside audience, which would defeat purpose."

Demands and priorities limit journaling, "Pressures of expanding workload greatly reduces ability to provide written documentation." Eventually, even reluctant and limited journalists find the process productive. "I still find this a chore but it does seem to help organize some of my thoughts. When I go back and read some of the earlier ones I can see what changes I have made more clearly."

Though journaling was viewed as beneficial, "I did find the task of putting these goals on paper very effective and it organized my thinking . . . and kept me more

focused. . . ." The change agent and the institution are mutually changing each other in the process of change. Most would not continue the writing process because of concerns about security or time. "I want to keep [my entries] to reflect upon my reflections but, in written form, this is too dangerous, especially since my journal entries were uncensored and real (to me)." Yet a continuing commitment to reflection was voiced. "I will not be journaling anymore, even though I will continue to reflect, mentally, on my actions, responses and problems." "I don't think that I will be taking the time to write these out in the future but I certainly will continue this type of reflective-thinking to help me evaluate plans and procedures and think though problems."

By reading through previous journal entries, the writer gained self-knowledge. "Journaling . . . has given me a positive avenue to vent and to reflect without doing any harm. I was amazed when I read some of my previous journals. Not only did they give me an opportunity to vent and reflect but they also provided me with positive feedback regarding my accomplishments and appropriate methods of handling stressful situations."

Recognition of Own Achievements by Others

The participants' ambition may lead to recognition. Additional responsibilities on campus may be the result of an invitation. I was "asked to chair the committee on assessment." A request to expand the role,

> since the word got out that my department is in the process of planning, the president now is talking about having me facilitate the planning for the college. What did I get myself into? I am struggling with this process in my department, I do not want to facilitate the process for the entire college.

An award may be received, such as being awarded "teacher of the year" or "named the outstanding leader of the [community leadership] class and received a nice plaque."

Volunteering for an extra-college committee brings the excitement of new challenges.

> I have jumped into it in a very big way. The politics associated with constructing a state-wide description will be interesting and challenging. . . . I am also chairing a [multiperson] comprehensive [state-wide committee] to a college [where] a new president who has alienated a number of faculty and staff, the academic dean has filed a discrimination lawsuit and a vote of no confidence is surely close at hand. I am supposed to lead a statewide team into this environment and conduct a review of the institution and its effectiveness.

Yet the new view of one's own competency may threaten others, which the team-building administrator wishes to avoid: "I do not want to create a situation where they think I am going for a salary raise and they are not. I am trying to help them along this chair pathway."

The success in being seen as competent by others changes one's own self-perception. "I think what is happening is that people at the college are seeing me in a different light, a leadership role. And that is the reason that I have been asked to do these things. I feel that my career is moving forward and I am changing. "

External influences can suddenly limit one's prospects.

> As for any possible applications of the full-range leadership model on my part? I don't think so, except on the most mundane level, which exists from day to day in any case and is not worth exploring. My own role was supportive, and certainly there were opportunities for individualized consideration. But the whole process has been moving quickly and has been bathed in the threat of the program abruptly ending.

As a result many apply for advancements at their own or other colleges. Frequently, applying for advancement is precipitated by forced changes. "There has been some

indication that I can continue as chair if that's what I want. . . . My fate is not a great concern really--at least comparatively speaking. Sooner or later I'll land on my feet." The application for advancement is kept in prospective. "(Of course, I do believe I would do the best job). But I am in a good 'place'--that is my job is intact & 99% of the time, I do enjoy it."

The results are frequently disappointing, despite increasing one's skills, long hours, and readiness to move forward. Colleagues vote against many study participants, who are seen by others as the pushy candidate. Selection committees choose someone with more experience.

Personal Versus Professional Priorities

At midcareer, the balance between professional and personal priorities has shifted towards the professional. Sensing that one's time and energy will have to be focused to have a greater impact and make a meaningful difference, most of the journalists have decided at some level to divert attention away from private to public involvement. All the journalist's family lives are impacted by dedication to work. They assume that family will understand the need now for self-investment.

Family's needs are recognized but with reluctance. "I've been at this for about 30 minutes. I feel as though I've barely begun to talk about some of the things I encountered today, but it's past 5:00 and my wife and children are waiting." Yet family does not always share in the priorities of the one who refocuses attention to work. A few pages later the previous writer admits, "I am struggling with my personal life. My wife is filing for divorce. . . . I don't think my job is the reason our marriage is failing, but I know the long

hours don't help things." Yet even now, the primary concern is not family: "It hasn't affected my work in any significant way, but I know that it will be very difficult to continue to concentrate and focus on my duties while this occurs." The only other time the pending divorce is mentioned, it is a distraction: "I have begun to notice that my personal life is having a big impact on my job performance. I find myself spending a large amount of time thinking about my wife and children when I would normally be concentrating on my job."

Even when a personal crisis requires a reordering of priorities, the commitment for change remains conditional.

> My husband became ill which influenced my own situation. It's time to think some things over. Is it necessary to use all of your time to work, without taking breaks? That's what we do indeed and it turns out negative. . . . So now I'm trying to get home in time, cook dinner and don't work longer than 1.5 hours during the evening. On Saturday we take a real break: going some place every week. On Sunday limited work (Max 2 hours) I can tell you that is a great difference! I hope we will maintain it.

Only occasionally is a vacation viewed as "a welcome change" or "a time to shift focus" such as "I plan to catch up on rest, reading, and family." Instead, frequently vacations are viewed as optional interruptions from work.

> I think the time I put in during the summer getting all the adjunct faculty and doing some student advising really pay off in making this busy time run smoothly. I'll continue to do this even though I am not paid to work in the summer because this is my fall semester responsibility and its easier to me to do a better job with the work done earlier.
>
> Family doesn't appreciate work always taking priority.
>
> I'm supposed to be on winter break right now but instead I'm in my office working to get caught up on all I have to do. My husband wants to know why I want to be department chair when I'm working much harder for the same money. . . . I have lots of ideas that I want to implement so I guess the hard work is worth it.

A mother of school-age children tells of "another vacation where I need to leave to return to work for 1 day . . . only to return to the vacation condo to leave for V the next day to present research at a conference. I think my family is used to this and do not mind." Vacation is not seen as time off but rather as an opportunity for deeper thought about the job. "Spring break is one reason I love this job. It is truly a time to reflect and plan."

Technology enables further invasions of home time. Computers allow access to E-mail before going to bed and even laptop report writing while watching the kids on a much-delayed vacation.

Not only are family needs deferred, but one's own well-being is also postponed. "Spring break is coming up in two weeks and I plan to go to the gym everyday and use the day reading and cooking for my family." Though they fear the pressure of the job may have lasting effects, "I do hope I'm not internalizing to the extent that I become physically ill." They wonder how long they can continue at this pace, "The important thing is that I am still 'ok'--although everything new I have to do now makes me wonder if this will be my 'breaking point'."

Some progress is noted over the course of the journals to some balance in the spheres of life. From an early question of, "I cannot continue to do this. How to balance my responsibility at the college and my responsibility to my family (2 teenagers & husband) & myself?" to a conclusion of "I have a better outlook than I did 12 months ago. Recently, I have been able to work out. . . . I never go into the office on the weekends, even though I bring some work home. I have even found time to assist [my child]. . . . Life is good when you have your priorities straight."

Most telling about the primacy of work is infrequent mention of family even though only one of the participants lives alone. References to family or friends as a positive or enriching facet of one's life are lacking from the journals. Personal relationships are almost exclusively referred to as obstacles to achieving what is truly important--work. The consequence of the shift in life's priorities comes as a surprise. "It's ironic that it seems that for the first time I am really excited about my career and I'm spending a lot of time and energy on it, but my personal life, which had always been good, suddenly falls apart."

Doing More

If one word describes the department leaders it is "more." Repeatedly they write, "It would be nice to be able to do more."

Even with expanding workload, "I have more students than ever before, I have more new faculty, more faculty turnover, and I have more part-time staff than the department has ever seen in its 20 plus year history." More could be achieved if only the solution is found. "I need to be more effective." "If I can make them [faculty meetings] really worthwhile maybe we can even have more."

The college administrators are aware of their zeal: "I planned so intensely for and worried so well." Yet, they never question the appropriateness of their commitment passion. "But, in the spirit of TQM I know that I can do them better and more effectively." However, when the means by which the passion is played out is deemed ineffective, an analysis may result in a desire to amend behavior for the sake of doing more. "What I see is a 'driven person' that does what she needs to do despite the obstacles. Even though I do

accomplish the things I set out to do I probably need to do it in a more 'gentle' way. I will work on that." The process by which they operate is determined by their goal:

> My personal style of work, personal work ethic, is typically to try and do more and complete as many tasks as possible, hence, the typical trap that I fall into as chair is to continue to take on more and more of the duties . . . trying to work harder, trying to work quicker, requires a lot of mental energy. This process can result in a loss of time and adds stress and reduces efficiency rather than increases this factor . . . . I need to get more effective in delegating work and more importantly, empowering those around me to do these jobs.

Despite the dedication, the job is overwhelming. "It's not that I'm not doing a good job, there is just so much to the job to do." Yet so much more remains undone. "We have accomplished much this year . . . and I am pleased with that, but we have not. . . ."

Can everything ever be done, or do systemic constraints limit the ability to succeed through sheer determination?

"I'm learning to fly, But I Ain't got Wings.

How to be effective with winds of change.

How to be visionary when time controls daily work."

Nurturing of Faculty

> These midlevel administrators view themselves as nurturers.
>
> The food I ordered was important in that it provided initial energy for the process. As I reflect on the setting, I am glad that I reserved the President's family room for the meeting away from the college classrooms and to begin the process in a comfortable and warm setting.

Both process and product are adapted so that the faculty will want to like doing what needs to be done: "I have tried very hard to make the meetings worthwhile when we do have them

so that everyone will think it is valuable to make the effort and spend their time this way. I try and bring food too."

Time Management

The community college leaders are constantly trying to find ways of accomplishing more. They are constantly trying to reconfigure time in a more productive manner. Efficient time management is sought as a solution to "not enough." "Objective #1 - To make better use of my time, that is to accomplish more in less time."

The demands of this job require improved skills.

> I am planning to use the missing of the deadline yesterday as an impetus for improving my time management skills. I have not had a job of this type that requires a large number of deadlines. I am used to meeting deadlines imposed either by myself or by my supervisor, but this job requires I meet deadlines imposed by many different people. I have made this kind of mistake two or three times in the last couple weeks.

Too many tasks have to be completed in too little time, "I find that I get very little done during my office hours because I am always talking to students & faculty and helping them solve immediate problems." As a result, "I have to take work home to get it done."

Fault is found in one's lack of time usage skill: "My natural inclination is often to concentrate on only one role and goal for an extended period of time at the expense of the other roles and goals." The use of time is out of control:

> I spend hours at school each week in which I talk to people, check on things but have nothing substantial to show for the time. Some of this has to do with the fact that people rely on me for many different things. I end up doing many little odds and ends instead of focusing on a major project.

A method is sought to manage time:

> I need to separate those items of work that keep the day to day operation flowing smoothly as compared to those items that build the program's future. . . . It would likely be ideal to subdivide each day or each week into these different tasks. That would be a good exercise for an analysis of time management.

Even previously developed solutions are questioned:

> I like to organize a number of jobs that require a 'walk-around'. . . . This approach deserves analysis. Often these walk-arounds can take 45 minutes to an hour. There are often distractions along the way. And often upon return to the office, I have to refocus my activities to deal with phone calls and students which makes it hard to return to effective project work.

With each success the goal is expanded,

> Daily goals are being met; need to concentrate on setting some weekly goals; extend to monthly goals; incorporate personal as well as work oriented goals; improving. . . . Give more thought to importance of goals--don't just make it a "to do" list and look ahead to some long-range goals.

Solutions from experts don't always work. "I didn't get to work on Covey's first-things--first time management. Couldn't spend the time need to plan, reflect, etc. There is some irony in this. . . ."

Most changes they imposed on themselves. "I need to think through my scheduling of work better. I must say no to more projects, something I do not like to do." Occasionally time management is imposed on others. "Lesson--make students 'wait' for an appointment when other critical tasks exist. No open door next year."

Yet the process is not as successful as hoped.

> During this first week I was more aware of what I was doing and of where my time was going. I wasn't altogether displeased with my use of time either. It seemed to me that most of the time I was doing what needed to be done. But I didn't feel any surge of relief because my physical, mental, social or spiritual needs were suddenly being met in a more complete way. A long way to go with this.

The weakness in oneself is accepted and solution is sought.

> What my analysis has shown me to date is that I am not as disciplined as I had suspected, and I allow myself to move off one task on to another. . . . One of my mottos is 'handle it once' which means when a decision is required, make the decision and move on to the next job. . . . Time budgeting is an excellent method to detect this type of shift from hour to hour and more typically 5 minutes to 5 minutes moving from one task to another.

Eventually the lack of elasticity of time is accepted, sometimes with frustration. "I can see nowhere, I can gain valuable time to do all the things I planned to do this year." Often with resignation. "Other things seem to be more important at this time and there are only 24 hours in a day." Occasionally with acceptance.

> I feel that I am really making headway in many areas but I never get as much accomplished in any given time frame as I plan to. That's OK. Pray--do it, if I have time do some more. If not do it tomorrow.

Own Education

These academic leaders have great faith in the transformational power of education, not only for their students and staff, but most strongly for themselves. However, unlike in earlier years when education was for love of discipline, now it is for their own professional development.

> I am beginning to see things differently and I realize I have much more reading to do. I feel if I am taking the lead I need to be informed. I look forward to the . . . conference, I need to be infused with more information.

When faced with a problem, they seek workshops, conferences, and books.

> I have been to a two-day session on faculty evaluation, I'm signed up for a four-session workshop on conflict management, I'm one of two college representatives to [go to the] . . . Community College Leadership Initiative Consortium, I'm taking a twenty-hour workshop on process education, and I'm tentatively planning on taking a four-hour workshop on priority management.

> Popular management books are studied independently. Covey is often cited:

> One point in particular really struck home. In the to live, to love, to learn, to leave a legacy section, he talks of the four needs, which he calls mental, physical, social and spiritual. He points out that they all overlap and that you can't bring about change in one area if you ignore the others. In fact, change in one area may be affected best by a concentration on the other areas. Must remember this. My reaction has always been to drop everything and concentrate only on the one area that needs work.

The written work is analyzed according to experience.

> I also like [Covey's] maxim, 'exercise integrity in the moment of choice . . . As we learn to pause in the moment between stimulus and response' . . .Very good to keep in mind for many professional and personal situations, although if applied overall it might kill spontaneity. Also, some flying off the handle is OK. Nevertheless, we usually know well enough when the pause should be exercised.
>
> Yet even the best professional development takes its toll.
>
> It is a Saturday and I had to come to my office to catch up on some work. I was out of the office the last two days attending a workshop. . . . I hated to miss the two days at work, but the experience was worthwhile. Almost everything we discussed has direct bearing on my effectiveness. I am learning very much, and at a tremendous rate. . . . Anytime there is any opportunity to participate in an activity that will increase my ability to do my job effectively I sign up. However, I seem to be taking on so much that it is increasing my work load almost to the point of my being swamped.
>
> Though working a demanding job while participating in professional education is

demanding, the results are encouraging,

> I am convinced that without the help of the [training], these accolades would not have been voiced. I am glad that I took this practicum seriously and tried to learn everything that I could from as many people I encountered.

More professional development is happily anticipated,

> In conclusion, I feel what I have grown a great deal during this year-long practicum process. Because of what I have learned and accomplished this year, I can learn and accomplish more next year and the year after that.

Renewal Outside of Institution

Though the work at the college may be grueling and often frustrating, their faith in higher education is unfailing. An unusually enriching event at the college can stimulate enthusiasm.

> Sometimes amid all the demands on me, as a Department Chair, I see each day as a new beginning, I wake up renewed and ready to get going. . . .
>
> Dr. Alan Seagren alluded to the fact that a fundamental aspect of educational leadership is to foster interinstitutional cooperation and social interaction. This principle appears to be reflected in a collaborative effort provided by [this community college and colleagues from abroad].
>
> All in all, it turned out to be a most memorable day. . . expressed by a colleague. . . . "This was truly an inspiring experience and one that makes me proud to be a member of this staff."

They find satisfaction and renewal at conventions and off-campus meetings. "I always learn a lot and come back energized from these meetings." The conferences remind them of the unmet potential. "I hope to get lots of good ideas to bring back to our department. I always meet so many terrific people and get energized at this convention."

Overview of Major Points Concerning of Reflections on Self

(In this and in subsequent overviews, the major points were found in the reflective journals of at least 70% of the participants.)

Ambiguity of the Position

- Questioned degree of own competency for this position.
- Wondered if should stay in administration or return to teaching.
- Needed better self-management.
- Enticed by promise of potential of position.
- Enthused by broadened perspective of position.

Fluidity of the Role

- Defined much of own role's responsibilities.
- Used skills acquired over life.
- Allowed additional opportunities.
- Sensed being overwhelmed.

Tensions in the Middle

- Felt conflicted between faculty and upper administration.
- Tried to understand all sides.
- Felt uncomfortable in making a decision between disagreeing sides.
- Forced by role to be viewed as enemy.
- Anguished over need to make a decision not consistent with own values.
- Retained sympathy to faculty but now sees other views.
- Ill-prepared for making hard decisions.

Limited Attention to Teaching

- Longed for joy of teaching.
- Receptive to innovative teaching.

Own Attitude Toward Change

- Dedicated to improvement.
- Accepted inconvenience of change.
- Disappointed by intransigency of others.
- Optimistic about progress.
- Enjoyed challenge of change.

Journaling

- Reluctant to journaling at beginning.
- Distanced from self as subject by journaling.
- Retained faith in progress of journaling.
- Limited use of journaling because of other priorities.
- Helped in problem solving.
- Provided prospective.

Recognition of Own Achievements by Others

- Appreciated occasional recognition.
- Improved own self-perception.
- Volunteered for challenging work.
- Felt tension between own achievement and being a team member.
- Limited by forces did not fully understand.
- Disappointed by lack of advancement.

Personal Versus Professional Priorities

- Shifted focus from personal to professional.
- Dedicated to achievement through work.
- Attended reluctantly to family needs.
- Made limited amends to work schedule in times of personal crisis.
- Viewed vacation as optional interruption from work.
- Disappointed that family doesn't appreciate importance of work.
- Invaded at home by work-based technology.
- Deferred own health needs.

- Moved toward balance.
- Perceived of personal relationships as obstacles to achievement at work.

Doing More

- Desired to do more.
- Aware of zeal for work.
- Determined to achieve more
- Overwhelmed by amount of work.
- Frustrated by limitations to achievement.

Nurturing of Faculty

- Viewed self as nurturer.
- Attempted to provide nurturing environment.

Time Management

- Tried to configure time to be more productive.
- Blamed self for lack of time management skills.
- Experimented with time management approaches.
- Disenchanted with expert's suggestions.
- Imposed time management on self.
- Faulted self for lack of self-discipline.
- Realized the limited elasticity of time.

Own Education

- Retained faith in the transformational power of education.
- Sought education to improve own skill in the role.
- Read to become more informed.

- Encouraged by continuing professional education program.

Renewal Outside of Institution

- Remained enthusiastic about indications of renewal at own community college.
- Renewed at conventions and off-campus meetings.
- Energized by meeting like-minded people.

The Midlevel Administrator and The Faculty

Most of the reflective journal passages deal with self-analysis. The second most addressed area is relationship with faculty. This is not surprising since all of the midlevel administrators come from and have the option of returning to faculty ranks. The nature of their position is structured so most of their administrative responsibility concerns faculty. This section is organized to first explore what the midlevel administrators think about the ability of full-time faculty to fulfil their educational mission. Second, the midlevel administrators reveal their desire to improve the competency of adjunct faculty. Seeing room for improvement, the midlevel administrators take seriously their role to improve the quality of individual faculty by understanding each person's uniqueness by empowering them to work towards self-improvement. Despite their attempts to help faculty, the administrators were disappointed to find many of the faculty remained unresponsive to what the administrators perceived as the necessity for change.

The next sections move from attempts to improve individual performance to improving group interactions by community building and effective meetings. Conflict resolution techniques are used to constructively resolve confrontations. Finally, the

midlevel administrator attempts to understand why changes are so strongly resisted by the faculty.

Competency of Faculty

With teaching as their self-professed area of expertise, the middle managers view quality control of instruction as a top priority. Therefore, evidence of faculty incompetency is disturbing. "I can't believe how poorly some of the faculty write and how little they understand of the curriculum." Uniformity of instructional quality is essential for educational integrity.

> I have some concerns that S is making his classes too easy and may not be sufficiently preparing students for the next level. I've recently had two complaints from students that did very well in his classes last semester but do not seem prepared for the class that they are currently taking.

Despite a long history of intractability, positive change can be achieved.

> This will be a very tenuous task for many of the people [who] . . . have been employed for a long time, much longer than I. Furthermore, they have not upgraded their skills . . . for many this change will create anxiety, possibly even fear and that is to be expected. However, creating future directions, in concert with our mission, we must find a way to translate this need into a functional reality based on sensitivity to the individuals involved as we move toward a shared vision.

Adjunct Faculty

Though adjunct or part-time faculty are responsible for much of the teaching in community colleges, they frequently have a shadowy existence. "Community college students need good, dedicated teachers, not good researchers or famous professors. . . . We need to ensure that we understand the mission of our institutions and that this is conveyed when hiring and evaluating adjunct faculty."

Against this existing norm, the midlevel administrators in this study work for more inclusion. They request that faculty procedures include adjuncts. "I plan to develop the major components . . . to have all adjunct faculty evaluations made available to me . . . that all adjunct receive a copy of their evaluation." They consider how the part-time instructional staff need to be included in innovation.

> I would like the college to provide each [adjunct] with [portable equipment] . . . so they may use it to demonstrate the [content] in their course. . . . [I]nstruction is changing a great deal and it is difficult for even those of us who are full time to keep up. We need to help adjuncts in order to maintain their level of excellent instruction.

They request recognition of adjuncts by upper administration. "I am pursuing with Dean the idea of a reception for all new adjunct faculty at the beginning of each year."

> Adjunct faculty are only served if the middle-level manager makes a commitment.

> Many adjunct faculty in our division have complained about feeling isolated and lack of knowledge about general policies and practices of the College. . . . My general approach was to present myself as a "resource person" available to answer questions and provide ideas and resources.

Help to these academic outsiders is an integral part of professional mission.

> My philosophical commitment to involving adjunct faculty in construction of shared knowledge. . . . This partnership will become a natural support network for all of us. Furthermore, I anticipate that our sharing will give the instructors feelings of greater confidence and the opportunity to develop more effective educational experiences and systems of delivery for the students in our division.

Though the results are important, the process is lengthy. "I see the possibility of developing long-term collegial relationship based on mutual trust and respect. I know that trust building and change take time, measured in years. There is no quick fix." Despite the best intentions so much more needs to be done. "I'll continue to try and help as many adjunct as possible but I haven't the time to be a good mentor for all of them."

The quality of instruction by the itinerant adjunct workforce is a continuous concern.

> I have not had time to read the student evaluations or do any class observations. This is not something that the colleges see as necessary for a chair to do but I feel it needs to be done to ensure quality of instruction and to provide the needed support for adjunct faculty.

Feedback is essential but only if it is productive.

> I hesitate to do any evaluations this year. I first want to develop the system. . . . It is important that the evaluations be done in a way that is helpful and as non-threatening as possible. I would like adjunct faculty to see me as Covey's servant leader.

With all that needs to be done, "I hope this goes okay with the part-time faculty I've had problems with before."

Personality Types of Faculty

The midlevel administrators believe that many faculty problems can be resolved if only the appropriate place can be found for each faculty member to express unique attributes. "I think it is a matter of matching talent to task." Each gathering is an opportunity to learn about faculty personalities. "Hopefully the meetings will help me get to know each person individually." Every process of conducting a meeting reveals individual differences. "Department meeting went well once everyone arrived--was like pulling teeth to get E there, but he did show. Am sure he thinks these are a waste of time. He's such a loner."

Once personality differences are uncovered, where to go next is not always easy. "I'd like to encourage him to do more work and be more involved but I'm not sure how to. I

think it may be a personality trait. . . . I hope things will settle down and be running smoothly soon." Understanding personalities does not mean they can be changed.

> The problem is that she has several "personality quirks" and does not get along well with the faculty. I worry that the faculty will dismiss her if she facilitates this very important meeting. (She has irritated faculty in the past. . . . I think in her excitement she is perceived by others by being obnoxious. . . . [I] fear that the faculty will not want to meet again to strategic plan if she is unbearable at the meeting. Attempts are made to utiiize faculty according to each's style.

If only everyone could find their "place." "We have very different personalities within the department. I've tried to let each one play the role that best suits them."

Development and Evaluation of the Faculty

After spending years toning up their own instructional skills, the administrators are eager to improve the quality of faculty in their area. "Have set up individual meetings with department members to help them set their objectives." Individual faculty are mentioned. "Have to help C deal with students--she needs to realize that being firm with them is not being mean to them." Evaluation is framed as a learning process.

> I am in the process of conducting faculty pre-evaluation conferences. I have to do thirty in all. . . . It is nice to get a chance to talk with the faculty in a one on one setting. I do think it is somewhat artificial, though.

For some faculty, this is a meaningful process, but for others it is forced. "Have stressed to her the importance of being on time for classes--this year's schedule is better for her." Help is offered in the essentials. "T also needs some help in class discipline."

Faculty are encouraged to view the evaluation process as not a supervisory responsibility, but as professional development "focus with ownership of the process by the faculty." Faculty are empowered to find a variety of means for self-assessment. "If it

works, with faculty participating and taking the process seriously, it could be the best thing to happen to the college in a long time."

Professional development is coaxed. "Am encouraging her to find a Masters program she and G agree on and begin classes. Stressed to her the importance of making progress on the degree before she is up for tenure." At times professional development has diametrically opposing meaning. "Some faculty chose setting the contract as their sole professional goal for the year and boycotted all professional development on campus. I would like to begin the discussion about long-term professional [development]." But the need is too great with all the other responsibilities. "New full-time instructors need more help than I can give them."

Difficult Faculty

With a commitment to quality education, the midlevel administrators place a premium on quality instruction. However, being in the middle means being responsible for quality control without a clear direction from either faculty or upper administration. A frequent example of ambiguity is how the person in the middle is supposed to respond to accusations of discrimination versus quality criteria.

> Adjunct faculty member H continues to be a thorn in my side. . . . He is very unhappy with me and I suspect feels that I have racist motives. The dean has asked me to be careful in stating reasons for rehiring adjunct due to a recent lawsuit but I have discussed all complaints that I have received with [administrator] . . . and feel we can and should hire better adjunct. The President seems to be backing me on this, this time but he told the dean to be sure and continue hiring the [problematic adjunct]. [The other chair] says he doesn't do a good job for her either. Why does the dean want to continue with this individual?

Without clear-cut guidelines, the investigation meetings are just another burden. "I was asked to serve on a committee to review the NAACP charges of discrimination [against an adjunct faculty member not asked to return]. Just what I needed (something else to do during my time off)."

Even with their commitment to conflict resolution, some confrontations seem intractable:

> I got word Friday that I will be in five different second-level grievance hearings. I can hardly remember what they are about now. It is going to be a distraction that I can do without. Not sure what I could have done to avoid this situation, other than giving in to their demands, which seemed unreasonable. One of the four is crazy, three of the four hate administrators, and all four need reality checks. Pursuing their complaints seems like a tremendous waste of taxpayers dollars, especially now.

Without any hope of a solution with a faculty member who "will not change. I think that my only strategy is to isolate her, as well as minimalize and neutralize the effects of her comments."

Upper administration would rather not deal with the ramifications of taking a stand against an incompetent instructor.

> A new faculty member here has had trouble this past year adapting to community college instruction. She has been resistant to advice and has generally not "played the game" correctly. In our conversations (we've had several) I have always been supportive of her style, but have tried to get her to agree to make minor changes in her approach. She views me as one of her stronger supporters. While [I was away], the students in her summer course decided to vote to her performance with their feet. Of the 13 students in the class, six went to the division chair on the second day of classes with drop slips saying the either she changes or they drop. [The chairperson] went to the president and recommended that the class be taken away from her and given to another faculty member. The president, not usually noted for his decisiveness, agreed and the deed was done. The faculty member was called at home and told that she had lost the class, that she would only be paid for the portion she taught, and that she could expect a terminal contract when contracts are issued next Spring. . . .

Yet even when a decisive stand is made upholding educational quality, the unanticipated consequences breed more problems for the midlevel administrator. "It is ironic how higher education is so regularly accused of protecting incompetency and yet, when a stand is made, how upset [faculty] become over the unfairness of an administration taking action."

Building Faculty Community

Teaching does not prepare an administrator to lead cooperative peer work. Yet team work and community building are the watchwords of current administrative theory. These administrators are excited by the new possibilities opened by the process. "In the past I have been used to doing everything myself. This team format for grant writing is giving me practice in working with people--something I need to get used to going." The administrator monitors new skills. "I facilitate by moving the group along the items set in the agenda but I did not feel that I ran the show."

The degree of success varies. Though some are resistant, "building cooperative effort with rest of dept. has really been a success." For some the innovation is rejected, regardless of the initiator or the gentleness of the suggestion.

> S, who is new, wanted to have more department meetings or at least go out to eat together every so often which I thought would be nice but there is no way to get D & E to agree to this so we have given up.

Movement towards community may be positive. "The level of enthusiastic interaction and questioning was high, with less suspicion and standoffishness we had experienced in previous meetings."

Expert approaches are considered but not without criticism.

> Covey's solution to resistant staff members is hard to accept. He says that the team should compensate for the weak link. . . . [W]hen one person failed to write his part of a chapter the other team members wrote it for him and asked him to edit it. In this way the work gets done, the resisted member did a small bit of work but it is not fair to the team.

This same principle is found unacceptable by another midlevel administrator. "Covey says that members of a team help each other & cover each other's weakness. I am tired of doing everyone's job because of their apparent weaknesses. I don't think of it as a weakness. It's incompetence."

The route to cooperation isn't easy:

> We don't yet like all of the others, but for now we have started to listen to the voices of others. We sit near to each other in meetings and colleagues smile and say, "Professor?" when they pass in the hall. Most of us pretend to respect each others' work and worth--so we're cordial. But not yet, not yet, we've not quite a department yet.

Working towards a common vision may be productive. "The entire department seems to have bought into this idea and everyone participated enthusiastically." Cooperation aids the educational process. "Sharing of leadership, in this process, was contagious and active dialogue with each other about quality teaching and working conditions solidified our common interest--the students we teach."

In these turbulent times faculty cooperation is necessary for survival. "It is clear to me that, if the W faculty do not start working together and stop attacking each other . . . the program will fall to the rationalization measures brought about by the . . . cuts."

Faculty Committees

The proof the success of team-work is the functioning of faculty committees. Faculty are given the opportunity to make their own decisions; the administrator waits for

the results. "We'll see how responsible the committee chairs are." Even the most basic commitment to the committee process may be missing.

> Minor problem. . . . E scheduled an office hour and a class during the Tues/Thurs meeting time. He doesn't seem to understand why it's important that he not do that. . . . Maybe I'm not doing a very good job explaining the reasons to him. Will have to make an extra effort to be sure I'm communicating successfully with him.

The dedication towards working together is not widespread. "Still trying to figure out how to get faculty to accept responsibility for committees. . . . (What's with people?) How do you turn those things around?"

Untrained in meeting planning, the best intended midlevel administrator feels like "I really need to learn how to use my committee better. I don't know how at this point." Aware of their shortcomings, they don't know how to gain the necessary skills:

> I really should use my committee members. But they have no idea of statistics & the few things I have asked them to do were not thorough enough.
>
> I don't know how to manage my staff better. I do know what if I am responsible for something, I want to do a "great" job. Since I have people on my committee who are responsible to assist me. But I do not have the expertise needed to do the job, it seems useless. This is something I need to work on.

Conflict Resolution

The midlevel manager frequently presides over feuding between faculty members. "The program according to the majority of their faculty, they've had no leadership for 8 years (last 2 chairs). And I believe it I am doing a balancing act to keep faculty from 'killing' each other." The anger can spring up unexpectedly.

> I really thought [my leadership] was going very well until 2 faculty got into a screaming match . . . another 2 faculty are constantly complaining about each other and another . . . and 2 faculty in the "new department" require a referee. In truth, they cannot meet without a third party present.

Conflicts between faculty and the midlevel administrators are frequent, time consuming, and frustrating. They frequently are grounded in the different perceptions of mission. "We cannot have faculty doing their own thing without any commitment to the department's needs." Even with improved application of conflict resolution techniques in place of visceral reactions, conflicts run deep.

> Normally, I do not handle these things well, but this time I was in control [of myself]. . . . And I did not lose it or rather was able to turn around her reaction to what really was a non-issue . . . the meeting was emotional and positive. We ended without a hug, but I don't even have a headache! . . . . It is amazing what jealously can do. The big problem for me now, is to figure out how to keep her from becoming productive and less vindictive. She's been doing things like this to others for years.

Despite working for a win-win resolution, the administrator frequently finds instead a temporary withdrawal.

> It was the first time the faculty member and I had ever managed a compromise about anything, and suggested this may be the beginning of a better working relationship, she said that I should watch my back. Yes. Hatred born from union-management struggles runs deep.

Though committed to transactional leadership, authority, at times, is the final arbitrator. "I had to deal with a number of conflicting factors here: the lesson I've learned that you cross your co-ordinators at your peril; the need to remain flexible and to adjust when it seems right; the fact that I assign [classes] not the co-ordinator."

Mediating conflicts between faculty and student brings in further dynamics. The administrator may know more then can be divulged. Short-term problem solving must be balanced with long-term relationships.

> I know she is having a lot of personal problems, yet I can't allow her to take it out on students . . . how can I help her change her behavior (can she do it??) And maintain her self-worth? All told, this was a busy and distressing (3-day headache) week!!

Resolution is easier when detachment is possible. "In this dispute, I tried to do it by the book. Since I was not personally involved in the conflict, it made it easy. . . . During the mutiny I remained neutral. . . ."

Attempting to improve their negotiation skill, the midlevel administrator tries to be analytical.

> I will be going ahead with a meeting with the E folks this week to begin to discuss the budget crunch ahead. I, of course, would like to leap right in to discussing solutions. However, if there is one thing I have learned from my present faculty group it is that discussion of process comes first.

They apply the principles of dealing with difficult faculty:

> K baited me in a meeting to engage in a discussion that was off topic and that put me on the defensive. . . . What did I learn? The next time K attacks me (it will happen again soon) I will 1) summarize her comments in my own words before responding to them, to clarify her comments as well as what I am responding to 2) ask the others if they are concerned with K's issue and would like me to take meeting time to address it (if not, I will suggest to K that we meet after the meeting) 3) I will take pains to clarify that the reasons for my actions or the colleges actions are clear to everyone.
>
> What did I do well? I avoided a direct confrontation with K by steering my answers to her questions to the whole group. I was forceful when I needed to be.

But regardless of the best intension, they can be pushed over the edge.

> B stopped by my office to complain about two recent developments and again lodged the additional complaint that I did not support her when she was the W co-ordinator. It was the end of a bad week, and I wasn't willing to sit and take it. I said that I supported her more than she realized, that her two complaints were not the least bit valid, and that I hoped this wasn't a forecast of the year to come. She stormed out. I did meet with her again to sort things out as it was necessary and I suppose my behavior was not appropriate.

When a conflict between the midlevel administrator and a faculty member is brought to the union, the initial issue is lost in a larger power play.

> Have been through a few second level grievances. This one was the worst. The union attempted to paint me as incompetent, malicious, unable to listen, uncaring, as a villain who went out of his way to make life miserable for the faculty member

> at every turn. M then spoke for the management side and attempted to paint a picture that was quite the opposite. What a procedure. For a murder trial maybe, but workload?

Placed in the middle of two warring factions, the midlevel administrator's interests are forgotten.

> The inevitable conclusion for the chair, no matter what, is that he has been dragged through the mud. The management's counter argument to the union rarely gets all the mud off, as it is not in our best interests to answer some of the union complaints, even though there are understandable reasons for why the chair does what he does. So, in the context of the hearing, it does look as if the chair has been malicious/incompetent in some respects. . . . Am I being obstinate and/or failing to listen to faculty point of view in these matters? Must bear this possibility in mind and see.

When times get tough the midlevel administrator wishes that the faculty could concentrate on solving the real problem and put petty issues aside.

> I think I was trusted as being on their side in this, and was in fact told as much, which was gratifying I guess. . . . It appears they have been managing to deliver a good program despite the disagreements that cripple their attempts to work together. If that is the case, imagine how it would be if they could work together. I don't think the sum of their abilities has ever actually been greater than the parts for any stretch of time. Their synergistic possibilities remain unrealized for the most part.

Improved Skills in Interpersonal Relationships with Faculty

With a determination to improve their conflict resolution skills, many of the midlevel administrators find a degree of success, though the conflicted feeling remains.

> This week did not bring much conflict. . . . Is this because I am avoiding it or is it because I have as Covey advises, stepped out of myself and looked at how I come off with people?
>
> I think it may be a combination of both. Because it is true that I have been choosing my words to people more carefully & it is also true that since this takes up so much of my limited energy, I am doing more tasks myself.
>
> As I become better practiced with choosing my words when I request tasks of people, I will ask more of my staff at the time. I choose to do a little more work and have less conflict.

> I find that with conflict issues, I become angry. This anger clouds my judgement and the choice of words I use. . . .
>
> I think this "I am helping you before the Dean tells you about it" was appreciated by this faculty member. Was this cleaner, deceitful or a strategy plan to rededicate the situation?

Sometimes the application of conflict resolution strategy brings in a transformation of the midlevel administrator's behavior that gives a sense of inner power.

> What made the difference in getting the agreement? I think it was my approach, even temper and pace I didn't push but I followed up, when problems arose I acknowledged the problem & asked for her input and help with the solution instead of deciding on a solution myself.
>
> I am learning to work with people & not to make decisions on my own. I think this behavior problem is in the past. Absolutism is not the answer. I have always been an either/or person. Now I am seeking advice (it is not a sign of weakness) & trying to compromise.

Faculty's Resistance to Change

The potential for positive change is often frustrated by faculty's resistance to change. Inertia is strong. "A & R are so attached to their schedules." Change is not even considered by many faculty. "Meeting with faculty about proposed curriculum changes was not very productive. It was just a formality and decisions had been made and were not about to be changed just because others had some questions." If faculty would realize that participation is far better than denial, they might have some impact in the decision.

> If my faculty decide not to participate in the decision-making about how to meet a substantial reduction in the operating grant it would be pretty rough. Without their involvement I'd have to make many important decisions more or less myself and could decide incorrectly. . . . And no matter what I decide, it would be held against me.

Even when changes are implemented, participants slip back to old ways.

> Our intent is to have a list or "bank" of acceptable people . . . for openings now. . . . However, the movement in this direction has not been smooth. This spring when

> openings occurred, individual coordinators did not consult the file . . ., preferring to continue to use their own older files. . . . We have been unable to agree.

The administrator attempts to energize the resistant faculty. "I am struggling to come up with some way to motivate these (disengaged?) faculty." Faculty often see their role very narrowly. "I have trouble getting all the faculty to participate. . . . Some of them look at anything other than teaching and preparing for class as make-work." Though the administrator's perspective has changed, the faculty's remained stable.

> The faculty's general view of meetings is that they are a waste of time and get in the way of doing "real" work. I think when I was faculty I probably felt this way as well, but now I view meetings as generally good and I think a lot of useful work is done in meetings. I am trying to be conscious of the conflict in paradigms regarding meetings when I schedule a department meeting, but it is frustrating to hear faculty react so negatively whenever the subject of having a meeting comes up.

> Inertia is combined with institutional obstacles.

> Communication remains a major problem.

> With the help of L interacting weekly with the faculty, I hope we can resolve this problem. . . . S and the rest are so overloaded with classes that it's hard to stay in touch and they're not programmed to do so.

Notwithstanding all the efforts made, "Maybe I'm not doing a very good job explaining the reasons to him. Will have to make an extra effort to be sure I'm communicating successfully with him." Perhaps the problem is in the very nature of faculty culture.

> Why do teachers need to talk incessantly? And usually in circles? We talk all day in the classroom and can't seem to turn it off once we leave/ And we also seem to talk AT each other, not WITH each other! Almost all of my colleagues (myself included) seem more determined to prove their own point(s) in a discussion rather than focus on solving the real problem(s)! This lack of real communication between all of us is the source of many perennial problems.

Years of teaching experience may convince faculty that change in instructional technique may be detrimental: "It's really as ideal a learning situation as I can imagine. It wouldn't surprise me if professors choose to protect it, even at great costs to other areas of the curriculum." Yet, different modes may be required.

> It became clear that it will be difficult to convince this group to buy into less expensive delivery modes for some subjects. They are married to the idea that effectiveness of teaching in their subjects relates directly to the amount of time they have with their students.

External forces are requiring severe changes, especially budget cuts, in many community colleges. The retention of the participatory model is advantageous in these situations, but also extremely difficult.

> It's also a great relief that virtually everyone is involved in planning for the budget cut. I know some will drop out as we move into the harder decisions, but I think some will stay. I will work with whoever wants to stay involved. I know it will be divisive if eventually only some are involved, but it wouldn't be right to deny faculty the right to help with such important decisions.

The midlevel administrator tries to balance the requirements of stability by faculty and the demand for change from leadership: "As a group they seem resistant to the idea. I didn't force the issue. Perhaps I should be stronger by insisting that this be done but I am sure I will alienate them further."

After cultivating a new way of thinking with faculty, the advent of crisis turns the process upside down.

> In some ways, during the present crisis, we are sliding back to the old non-participative way of doing things. . . . There are some things I know about possible college re-organization that would be great news to some of my faculty but that I can't mention, etc. Two observations: no matter what, there are limits to participative decision making; some faculty don't mind the old ways because the ways are familiar and therefore comforting in troubled times. I worry somewhat about going through a participative process with my group--I fully intend that our decisions will be as participative as possible--that will be school focused, and then

> having our plans overridden by college plans that are college or system focused. The college solutions may very well be better for some programs in the school than our own solutions, but still a lot of very agonizing work on the part of all involved in the school may add up to nothing. . . . Does senior management still regard the participative process they put in place with any seriousness?

Sometimes, though the faculty would never admit it, an end to the ceaseless discussion is a consolation.

> President's decision to change . . . met with predictable complaints. President had not followed the new participative process, had pre-empted the task force, etc. However, such reaction sounded hollow to me. I think many of my folks are relieved that he took some action.

Faculty may be inventive in the classroom, but they demand stability in their role:

> Each time a small change might affect someone's schedule, course preferences, tradition, history, or life, he or she can become testy. . . . Even though I have seen such techniques in class as part of collaborative learning and unknowingly used them in meetings last spring, I question whether the faculty would continue to accept
> them. . . . The current president [is attempting to] change the role of faculty significantly--from a reactive group responding to a former president's dictates to a proactive group, but there is much distrust and suspicion. Is it a pipe dream for this college?

Summary of the The Midlevel Administrator and The Faculty

Competency of Faculty

- Disappointed with incompetency of faculty.
- Determined to improve teaching quality.

Adjunct Faculty

- Recognized adjunct faculty as critical for student learning.
- Committed to assist and upgrade skill.

Personality Types of Faculty

- Believed that each faculty's unique attributes can be utilized.

- Searched to identify personality types.
- Attempted to find the right location to utilize each different person.

Development and Evaluation of the Faculty

- Eager to improve quality of faculty.
- Encouraged faculty to use evaluation as learning tool.
- Coaxed professional development.
- Frustrated by faculty disinterest in self-improvement.

Difficult Faculty

- Attempted to improve instruction with role's ambiguous power.
- Restricted in regulating quality control.
- Found resolving accusations of discrimination difficult.
- Caught between incompetent faculty and inflexible administration.
- Blamed for problems can not solve.

Building Faculty Community

- Desired to build community but limited by lack of experience.
- Attempted to delegate responsibilities.
- Skeptical of expert suggestions.
- Worked toward a common vision.
- Demanded by turbulent times to change methods.

Faculty Committees

- Empowered frequently disinterested faculty.
- Needed training in meeting planning.

Conflict Resolution

- Presided over feuding faculty.
- Attempted win-win strategies.
- Mediated conflicts between faculty and students.
- Tried to solving immediate problems while balancing need for establishing long-term relationships.
- Attempted to improve own negotiation skills.
- Applied negotiation theory to conflicts.
- Pushed into anger sometimes.
- Over-powered by union, upper administration, and external forces.
- Frustrated by faculty's pettiness.

Improved Skills in Interpersonal Relationships with Faculty

- Conflicted feelings remain.
- Improved conflict resolution skills provides a degree of competency.

Faculty's Resistance to Change

- Frustrated by faculty's resistance to change.
- Watched as faculty slipped back to old ways.
- Changed insights met by faculty resistance.
- Aware communication remains a problem.
- Disappointed with faculty's resistance to instructional innovation.
- Attempted to balance faculty's need for stability and external forces demand for change.
- Cultivated cooperation sabotaged by upper administrations' harsh demands for change.

Upper Administration and External Forces

Midlevel administration has a conflicted role with leadership, which in this case is defined as the next higher hierarchical levels. Depending on the level of the participants, leadership includes the job titles of dean, vice president of academic affairs, and president. Midlevel administrators are dependent on leadership for direction, resources, and support. What they receive is often interference, contradictory messages, and assignments which place them ill at ease between warring camps.

Expectations

Upper administration is admired for being informed and accessible. "He is extremely insightful and up to date. The faculty really admire and respect him because he is honest, unpretentious and extremely helpful to all of us."

Unfortunately, instead of fulfilling their own responsibilities, leadership often misplace their energies in micromanagement.

> I even gave the dean and her assistant due credit for assisting in these [professional development] workshops, even though I was quite capable of handling this myself and I thought all along that she should be using her energies on more important things like the vision and leadership of Academic Department. At this time I see none of these.

Instead of fostering a coherent policy they are interfering,

> More student/teacher conflict!! It's difficult enough to work with student and teacher to resolve problems at the instructor level but now some upper level administrators are getting in on the act. To head this off, we have to all work together but that isn't happening.

Upper administration is not function according to the transformational model that the midlevel administrators espouse. "The administrators here seem to take little initiative

with ideas of their own. If everything is running smoothly nothing new is accomplished. They only, 'Put out fires,' as Covey would say."

What the midlevel administrators want from their superiors is allocation of resources to solve instructional issues. "I hope the administration will give monetary support to the technology seminars. Accomplishment of this proposal will ensure better instruction for our students and therefore help to develop excellence for the College." Receiving more resources to support their own development is a problem.

> How do you get the administration to support professional development? I feel so helpless! . . . It seems like it will be either [the continuing professional education program or the accompanying conference] but not both. I'm at a loss as to how to show that both are important. Should I just be glad I'm being supported for June or should I set up the battle stations?!!?

Accommodations

What they get is more meetings. "[The vice president] wants to put together a committee next year to study it more fully. Agh! Another committee I will have to be on." Meetings often seem worthless. "The President has told all of the administrative group that these meetings are the number one priority, but actually meetings haven't been substantial so far." Instead of solving problems the meetings shift the emphasis away from what they consider the important issues.

> Curriculum Committee--Must find a way to head off some of the unimportant (at least I think they are not important) things that are brought up by a Committee member. Although, it will keep me on my toes. I don't think he will be brushed off so easily.

Attempting to build leverage, they seek ways of managing leadership:

> I have given considerable though to [my dean's] behavioral style which is very different from mine and have adapted my behavior toward him so that I can still achieve my objectives. I have been very successful at this. He will never be a person

> with whom I will sit and chat about concerns and ideas. I would like someone like that for a dean. Also, If I were dean I would do many things very differently. But, since that is not the case, I have been able to adapt to his style.

They may even try to build support for a supervisor in trouble.

> I think I should invite the dean to one of our sessions. She is having a difficult time with the new president and faculty. Perhaps, if I show her support she will feel better. I am not happy with the leadership direction in the Academic Affairs Department and I am trying to do something about it. I plan to speak to the other chairs about this before it affects department morale.

Even when confronted with a supervisor without a semblance of vision, they learn to adapt.

> [The vice president and I] will never be friends and I have learned that he does not want to spend time formulating new plans and discussing educational issues. However, when I come to him with my ideas of what I want to do he supports my decision and has even been complimentary, no more angry phone messages.

This has been a very positive result of efforts on both our parts. Disappointment is moderated with survival skills.

> [I]t has been my experience that if you have a good idea, put it in writing, and offer to do all the work yourself the administration usually goes along with it. It would be nice to have more support than this but the only administrator that I have found who will help accomplish a good idea is leaving because he is so frustrated with the focus of the college away from the educational needs of the students.

Change and commitment renews promise.

> With the hiring of a new VP over instruction, we hope many of the communication problems we've been having are over. The College President is also actively involved. She is scheduling brown bag lunches with groups of faculty, administrators, and staff.

When lines of communication are opened, progress is possible.

> President seems warmer and more readily answers questions. . . . We probably should have tried to do a better job communicating with her to begin with. She seems to be trying to interact with us and establish a better working relationship with the people on the other campus.

Disappointment and Danger

Yet despite attempts to be accommodating, the person in the middle is frequently required to follow commands they consider unethical.

> [The dean left me] instructions to hire [the incompetent, minority adjunct instructor] unless I can put in writing my objections. I need to do that in a memo to him this week. Then if he still wants to hire [the adjunct member] I will give him a class but make him one of the first faculty members that I will observe. I need to begin working on my material for adjunct faculty evaluation soon.

Again the danger of being in the middle surfaces:

> [Conflict between faculty and administration] one of the biggest difficulties in performing my job. I feel as though I'm caught it in the middle. The faculty want me to go to the wall for them, but I feel a strong need to satisfy the VP. Sometimes I get into a problem with my conscience when I say I'll take something to the VP but I don't personally support it. I don't want to alienate the faculty, and it is tempting to blame the VP for refusals and rejections. I am trying to be careful here, because I know the VP wants me to deal more with issues at my level. He would prefer I make decisions and take the heat, if necessary.

No matter what the effort on the part of the midlevel administrator in trying to play by the rules, the ultimate results are outside their control.

> Has gone well to this point. . . . Faculty . . . generated 35 ideas for increasing revenue or reducing funds and have weighed the pros and cons of each. . . . After going through this process, the . . . faculty . . . present at the last meeting decided that they had given their input and that choosing the measures to be used was a management function from that point--understandable in that many measures meant fewer faculty or lab school positions. . . .
>
> There will likely be resentment that the work so far appears to have been for very little purpose. . . .

When the ultimate disaster occurs, "only to build [the President's] own power base," the midlevel administrator is helpless.

> Black Friday--All rumors came true--despite avowed "rumor control" efforts by faculty senate and staff council, Presidents. Are they naive?. . . Positions, "not people" were eliminated. . . . LOYAL, HARDWORKING EMPLOYEES. They were "helped" by their supervisors to pack their personal belongings and leave the campus. We all cried. A very sad day!!!! . . .

> As far as I know, nothing is in place to pick up the loss of these people who will do the work they were in the middle of? When will we "regroup"?

When what the midlevel administrator has seen as a procedural agreement reflecting organizational principles is swept away, "I see that I am not uncomfortable with the duties as much as I am with the fact that it was drafted from the top down without input from the dept." The experience devalues both the process and the participants. "Planning--Down the tubes--the administrative changes have totally negated previous plans."

External Forces

These midlevel administrators seldom mention factors about issues or forces off-campus. They view their job and responsibilities almost exclusively within the walls of the college. Some references are made to maintaining the quality of distance learning facilities.

A few venture forth to recruit students for career programs. Marketing as a responsibility of academic midlevel management seems to be in the early stages. "Began the semester with a discussion of marketing the department as well as the College." The process may be accepted enthusiastically.

> Department members are working together to coordinate Open House for potential students. Ideas are flowing back and forth between them and the recruitment officer. Counselors and teachers at local high schools have been very cooperative. Another source of students that have been very cooperative are the public service agencies.

Talking about one's life work to a receptive audience can be quite affirming. "[Speaking to high school students, parents, and high school teachers] was an uplifting experience with a lot of positive feedback."

Yet the results can be disappointing.

> Held open house. About a half dozen people came out to campus. What a disappointment! Our expectations were too high. Should we do this again next year? We have written down all kinds of questions to be answered before next year.

With all that needs to be done expectations can soon be lowered.

> More needs to be done in other areas; probably not visits this year; bring teachers and students to campus to look at facilities; set up planning meetings.
> Need to keep on top of this to make sure faculty members follow through.

Only twice is there a reference to the Board of Directors: once to support a pro-faculty Board candidate, the second time to resolve a protest about hiring an adjunct faculty member only four days before classes began. Except for these instances, the midlevel administrator's journals present the community college as an isolated island.

Summary of Upper Administration and External Forces

Expectations

- Admired upper administration for being informed and accessible.
- Needed upper administration to allocate resources.
- Received from upper administration inadequate funds for professional development.
- Realized that upper administration often micromanage instead of fulfilling own responsibilities.
- Disappointed that upper administrators does not function as transformational leaders.

Accommodations

- Frustrated that upper administration requests unnecessary meetings.
- Worked around upper administration's frequent lack of vision.
- Accepted reluctantly that only moderate change is possible.

Disappointment and Danger

- Forced by upper administration to compromise ethical and quality standards.
- Exasperated with conflicts between faculty and upper administration which places midlevel administrator in middle.
- Recognized that outside forces limit choices.
- Saw how own plans are venerable to massive budget cuts.

External Forces

- Ignored external forces to a large extent.
- Found limited success in recruitment.

Interpretation of the Data

This section is organized to interpret the participants' search for meaning from the perspectives introduced in Chapter 2--Review of the Literature. The interpretation begins by placing the participants within the frameworks of developmental psychology--first the middle age life stage, and second, the cohort of the Baby Boom generation. Next, the phenomenology is interpreted by considering the participants in their role as middle managers, especially as midlevel administrators in the community college. Having situated the individual within a work environment, it is possible to explore how the two elements interact in the midlife, midlevel administrator's search for meaning. In an attempt to better achieve their goals for a meaningful work experience, the participants sought professional development. The next section explores from the participants' perspective the meaningfulness of the continuing professional education program they all experienced.

Human Development Perspective

Paul Bates offers a trifactor model of adult development: age-graded, history-graded, and non-normative influences (1987). Age-graded influences are experiences that usually happen at a corresponding chronological age within the same culture. Generally, age-graded influences are viewed as the most important factor in explaining development (Bates, 1987). Age-graded influences are frequently implied according to a life stage theory. History-graded influences are related to the biocultural context of the development. Individuals who experienced the same major historical and cultural events tend to have a more similar profile that those whose lives are played on a background of different culturally significant events. Those who experienced the same history-graded influences are called a cohort (Schaie & Hertzog, 1983). The small number of cohort effect studies find that history-graded perspectives explain generational behavioral differences (Schaie & Parham, 1979). Both age-graded and history-graded influences may have biological and environmental causation. Whereas an age-graded perspective is useful for judging normative behavior for a specific age group, and a history-graded perspective is useful for judging normative behavior for a those whose life journey occurred during the same span of years, nonnormative influences may have a great impact on an individual but do not represent the group (Bates, 1987).

This paper will interpret the phenomenological results from the age-graded human development perspective by considering how the phenomenon is related to middle-age development. Next, the phenomenon will be examined from the framework of the cohort group in which the participants fit historically. The issue of non normative influences is outside the scope of the phenomenology being studied.

The Midlife Search for Meaning

The phenomenon of the introspective, intelligent midlife quest for meaning was perhaps most eloquently recorded 700 years ago by Dante Alighieri in The Divine Comedy.

CANTO I

> Midway on our life's journey, I found myself
> In dark woods, the right road lost. To tell
> About those woods is hard--so tangled and rough
>
> And savage that thinking of it now, I feel
> The old fear stirring; death is hardly more bitter.
> And yet, to treat the good I found there as well
>
> I tell what I saw. . . . (Dante, 1302/1994, p. 3)

The words "I found myself" place the speaker as both subject and object of the poem's first verb. The first person singular of "I found myself" emphasizes the personal, particular experience of Dante, while the words "our life" suggest the general shared human experience of finding oneself spiritually lost. Dante writes the poetic fiction in the first person, so others may learn from his struggle to understand the deeper truths.

Having forsaken the path of his youth, Dante partakes of a new route towards midlife meaning. While descending into the depths of hell and struggling up the steep slopes of purgatory, Dante seeks answers to the most profound question: What is the meaning of life? In spurts and starts, he progresses through a frightful terrain remembering every detail so as to share his insights with readers, who are proceeding on their parallel quest of living a meaningful life.

The far less spectacular, but no less meaningful journey of the participants of this study is recorded in their journals. The interpretation begins with the quest in midlife for meaning.

Developmental Theory--Middle Life Stage

The participants in this study have completed their young adulthood, also called "first adulthood" (Sheehy, 1995), with a sense of competency. They perceive of themselves as successful teachers, inquisitive thinkers, responsible citizens, and caring family members. They have completed the tasks of what Erikson (1959, 1982) calls "intimacy versus isolation" and Sheehy (1995) calls "first adulthood."

They accepted, perhaps reluctantly at first, a professional responsibility with potentially more encompassing impact. Instead of only influencing the students in one's classroom, the midlevel administrator may be able to improve the practice of many teachers and, through them, better learning experiences for a far greater number of students. In addition, sitting at the midpoint with a view in all directions, the midlevel administrator might serve as a conduit of valuable information among all constituencies.

The acceptance of the position may be related to a classic midlife crisis.

> My mother['s] . . . death . . . fully confronted me with the ultimate reality of life--we are all quite mortal and death is a reality we must all deal with eventually. The last four months as Chair has certainly dispelled any of my residual lethargy. . . . Being elected chair will probably prove to be very beneficial in the long run.

Many professional practitioners, satisfied with their current level of competency, plateau at midlife. For others, external demand or internal motivation transforms midlife into a time of introspection on the deeper meaning of one's existence. Though "openness to

self" reaches its highest average score in midlife, the range is also greater (Haan, 1981). A bifurcation of the interpretation of the options remaining takes place in midlife. The journal entries voice an excitement in the potential of their work. The writers of the journals do not understand the resignation they find in much of the faculty. In contrast, they are stimulated by the responsiveness found in some students and adjunct faculty.

Confident in their past achievements, they are ready for the next life stage choice--generativity versus stagnation. As Erikson explained, generativity is not limited to the biological caring of one's biological offspring but also the nurturing of the next generation. As predicted by Erikson's theory (1978), these professionals express their generativity by expanding their focus from personal achievement to external impact. No longer are they satisfied by competency in their classrooms. Now they want to use the knowledge attained in the first half of their life to improve the practice of a larger group of educators and through them a larger group of students, perhaps even the college.

Peeking beyond the comfortable walls of the classroom, a new horizon appears. The potential is exhilarating. With little orientation, and no formal training for the new responsibility, the midlevel administrator runs off intuition, conviction, and determination. Their tenacious goal pursuit (Brandtstadter & Greve, 1994) is peaking.

In midlife, they are no longer seeking peer approval. They are comfortable with their internally moderated value system (Levinson, 1979; Loevinger, 1984). Daniel Levinson (1979) called this midlife shift from the externally toward the internally defined self "detribalization." Adults with ample self-defined self-reliance and self-understanding are able to see past their individual needs and focus outward toward contributing to "humanitarian" needs. Having reached midlife with a sense of competency, they are open

to the vast developmental potential of cognitive and professional development (Kegan, 1994, p. 5). However, as the journals reveal, the expansive, wide-striving traveler is confronted by many obstacles.

Cohort

Almost all of the participants were born near or after the conclusion of World War II. Their cohort group is commonly called the "Baby Boom Generation." Gail Sheehy calls the leading edge of this group, in which most of the participants fit, "the Vietnam Generation" (Sheehy, 1994, p. 33). Growing up in the financially prosperous and socially stable 1950s, they were raised by parents who, having survived both the depression and the Second World War, felt formidable and created an irrepressible generation. The early Baby Boomers entered adolescence expecting continuous progress; after all, they were so much better off than their parents and grandparents. Opportunities inconceivable to earlier generations were offered to them. Vague stories of recent family histories of poverty and hardship were in contrast with their realities of comfortable homes in the suburbs and open doors to colleges. The optimism led to an idealistic crusade to right the wrongs they found hard to believe still existed--the imperialistic war in Vietnam, the limitations on women, the repression of minorities, the pollution of the environment.

The sense of collective responsibility instilled in their formative years remains a critical factor in their middle years. Whether they participated in the social change movements of the late 60s and early 70s or not (and this was not asked in the survey), the cultural dynamic of the times is still prevalent in their choices. The doctrine of "the personal is political" is evident in the midlevel administrators voicing a personal

responsibility to right the wrongs of their college. The organizational culture of the Vietnam protest movement laid responsibility for each napalm-burned baby on the back of the dedication of each member of the movement. In a world where anything is possible, the delay of the inevitable improvement was the result of the inadequacy of those who should know better. The responsibility lay on the shoulders of the enlightened. "I do not have the time and energy to do everything. My further discussion with the Dean led to his saying that I did not need to do everything; however, I remain uncomfortable with it."

This sense of personal responsibility for progress and self-induced guilt as a motivational force is prevalent throughout the participants' journals. Anything is possible if only enough dedication, time, and organizing expertise is focused on the issue. As children of the 60s, they still view the academy as an important locus of social struggle. This commitment is part of this generation's hazy, recurrent desire to make social change.

Organizational Role In Middle Management

In addition to being viewed developmentally, the phenomenon the participants describe can also be viewed from where they are situated (Becker, 1992). The "being-in-the-world" (Heidegger, 1962) of this study is the organizational setting of the North American community college. The midlife professional practitioners are situated in the role of middle managers in community colleges during the momentous changes at the end of the 20th century. Where the midlevel administrator sits the demands for change include an emphasis on the accountability of limited resources, the assessment of learning of an increasingly more diverse and less prepared student body, the need to renew and replace a maturing academic workforce, and unanticipatable problem-solving in areas of diversity,

ethics, and law-- all in an environment of quality (Creswell & England, 1994, p. 15). The same historical and cultural forces, which are demanding of these professional practitioners value-laden choices to ambiguous issues, paradoxically devalue their role. At the point where all these forces are clashing is where the participants are searching for meaning.

To be in middle management today is to be automatically in low esteem. Corporations became "lean and mean" by "downsizing," largely by "leveling" the organization. Whereas, the on-line workers actually deliver the service or produce the product, and leadership is essential for creating the vision and keeping the ship on course, middle management is deprecated as paper pushers.

In community colleges, the middle management gets a double whammy. As in the rest of higher education, faculty perceive themselves as the essence of the institution, and bureaucracy is to be avoided (Kerr, 1994). In addition, in the community college the faculty are the workers, the leadership perform the overarching tasks, but the middle management is a bother to both. Whereas in the university, middle management are considered prestigious academics with administrative responsibilities, in the community college middle managers are considered administrators with teaching responsibility. Even with heavy teaching loads (frequently between half and three quarters of a full-time faculty member), community college midlevel managers are considered administrators first (Tucker, 1992).

In the university, the middle management is insulated from constant second guessing of leadership by an organizational structure that recognizes their disciplinary expertise. This transparent shield is missing in the community college, where the decidedly antielitism downplays disciplinary expertise. The organizational structure of the community

college groups together faculty from diverse disciplines into organizational units. The lessening of coherency by discipline in instructional staff makes consensus more difficult, subsequently encouraging more bureaucracy.

In order to resolve frequent conflicts, with no disciplinary resolution, the midlevel administrator works with upper administration in a more business model than that found in the 4-year college or university. In the community college, chairs are viewed as an augmentation of the administration (Tucker, 1981, p. 30).

The midlevel administrators in this study were only three or at most four levels from the top administrators and only one (or perhaps one half) level removed from faculty. They are close enough to leadership to perceive they could actually make a change in policy. Yet the dealings of the midlevel administrators are almost exclusively with second-level administration, who want them to keep things quiet. This closeness to the organizational top breeds a false sense of accessibility to the decision making process. At the same time, the proximity to the top enables the upper administration to micromanage the administrative turf of the midlevel administrators. The middle managers' concept of a little kingdom where their vision and creativity can be played out is swept away by the declarations from above.

At the same time, the faculty are far more interested in being left alone than being empowered. Though of questionable universality, numerous studies find many insular, static, irresolute community college faculty members (Cohen & Brawer, 1982; Deegan & Tillery, 1985; London, 1978; O'Banion, 1972). These midlevel managers attempt to improve undergraduate teaching as called for in Scholarship Reconsidered (Boyer, 1990) in the face of the dissolving inner ethic of the professorate (Kerr, 1994). Though dismayed by

despondent faculty, the midlevel administrator is encouraged by faculty who "give their hearts and minds to their life's work" (Mullin, 1993, p. 41).

Yet, regardless of the willingness of individual faculty to accept the responsibility of organizational citizenship, the organizational culture of the academy sustains obstacles to the process of self-government and consensus required for excellence. The pursuit of knowledge places the individual faculty's openness to inquiry into a chosen field far above the functioning of the collective (Kerr, 1994). The emphasis on faculty to delve into their own scholarly interests discourages their commitment of adequate time or interest to participate in academic self-government (Kerr, 1994). Demanding the autonomy to pursue their own interests, faculty are reluctant to judge possible academic misconduct of their peers. This tension between faculty's demand for independence and their unwillingness to accept the corresponding self-government responsibility places the midlevel administrator in a difficult position. Faculty want the midlevel administrator to take care of the problems so that they can retain the freedom to independently pursue their work, while they bristle at directives not reached by consensus.

Meanwhile, students, encouraged by examples of academic questioning, enticed by the discourse on individual and group rights, empowered by the rhetoric of a customer orientation, and spiced with their ever present youthful bravado, demand of the midlevel administrator the correction of what they view as faculty injustices. On top of the internal demands, external forces regulate articulation agreements, student transfer contracts, safety and environmental regulations, licensing requirements, outcomes assessment procedures, workload guidelines for full-time and adjunct faculty, affirmative action, and the amount and allocation of resources, the midlevel administrator attempts to do the right thing.

The midlevel administrative position in the community college is defined by role definition and type of institution. The status of serving as midlevel administrator is replete with ambiguity. The faculty desire for a collegial atmosphere conflicts with the demand for administrative accountability (Goldenberg, 1993). In addition, the "community" emphasis of open-door enrollment adaptation to under-prepared students; a diverse and multiaged student body with educational needs varying from basic literacy, to remediation, to job-training, to academic preparation for the university and professions; all dilute any sense of uniformity of purpose (Goldenberg, 1993, p.18). The community college midlevel administrators in this study are attempting to motivate instructional excellence by faculty who have a history of disillusionment and negotiate with an upper administration trying to respond to external demands in a community with small appreciation for the professional educator.

Faced with contradictory demands from individual faculty members, upper administration, students, and external forces, and finding slim interest in consensus building, even the midlevel administrator with a commitment to transformational leadership eventually has to make a decision, which is frequently condemned by all. The participants in this study would probably agree with their peers that their most frequently cited problem "is the dilemma of being trapped between faculty demands/concerns and administrative priorities/decisions" (Canfield, 1994, p. 13). In this unfocused and insular environment the midlevel administrator is trying to find a deeper purpose for work.

Role in the Organization

Midlevel administrators have considerable choice on how their time is allocated. Since unappealing tasks can be minimalized and tasks reflecting individual interests and strengths expanded, how the job is actually performed reflects to a large degree the priorities of the practitioner. In addition, upper administration assigns responsibilities, at least in part, with regard to the midlevel administrator's aptitude (Tucker, 1992, p. 30). Since finding time to complete all the required tasks is always a problem (Dockery & Seagren, 1995), the areas the midlevel administrator bemoans as incomplete are those of greatest value within the individual's scale of meaning.

The midlevel manager may view their position from several frameworks. The four orientations of faculty, external, program, and management were suggested for department chairs (Creswell et al., 1987).

In a recent dissertation, Watwood (1996) found that community college chairs approached change from three major roles: change leader, administrative manager, and college professional. First, the "change leader was proactive, worked change with others in a collaborative fashion, facilitated the change process at his or her college, focused on quality, and ensured open communications existed and were used" (Watwood, 1996, p. 204). Change leaders used transformational leadership methods. According to Birnbaum's (1988) criteria, they did make a difference. Second, chairs function as an administrative manager, who focuses "on planning, standards, coordination, and stabilization." In this function they are supportive of the status quo, and typically only react to change. Finally, chairs function as if a college professional were "an educator first and foremost, but also acted as a mentor, modeling the change process" (Watwood, 1996, pp. 204-205).

The results of this study can be framed according to the same role responsibilities. The participants in this study indicated that their greatest success is as educators. Their passion is teaching, be it with their students or with those they supervise. They consciously plan their actions to be models of professional excellence. They know they are being watched, so they attempt to take advantage of all teaching opportunities. They model excellent teaching, supportive counseling, affirmative dialogue, cooperative committee operations, constructive partnerships, and openness to innovation. They are usually thrilled with the progress of their students and often frustrated by the intractability of the faculty. They would be most pleased if their midlevel administrative job contained more elements of the master teacher.

As an administrative manager, the participants have little training and small interest. They learned the procedural mechanics on the job. From their continuous concern about getting more done and improving their time management, the job seems to entail mostly administrative tasks. To upper administration, the most important responsibility of midlevel management is to complete their managerial responsibilities so well that the bosses don't have to hear about them. In contrast, the midlevel administrator considers these tasks a necessary evil to support the educational function of the college. In these diametrically opposing views lies much of the tension between mid and upper-level administration. The midlevel administrators want to get these routine tasks completed so they can go on with what they consider important--improving the college in ways commensurate with accelerating student learning.

What is exciting for these midlevel administrators is the opportunity they perceive their role affords to stimulate, or better, implement change. They write extensively about

their desire to becoming transformational leaders. They read with excitement about new management techniques. They spend huge amounts of time at work, off work, and on vacations thinking of solutions to job-related problems. What they dream of is making a difference.

Midlevel administrators are in a decisive position to implement significant change in higher education (Gmelch & Miskin, 1993; Tucker, 1992). The problem is that the participants of this study have taken on the self-appointed charge of instituting pivotal change without consulting with their superiors. In most organizational cultures, the upper administration expects middle management to wait until they are directed to enact change. The journals contain few examples of upper administration empowering the midlevel managers to enact change. So the midlevel managers are aggressively seeking to stimulate change without the consent of their superiors. Without this consultation, the midlevel managers are handicapped by a lack of support and an inability to integrate their portion into the larger picture which remains invisible to them.

Though the midlevel administrator is closer to both the faculty and the leadership, and therefore more sensitive to each other's needs than each of the other group is to the others, their view is far from inclusive. Those on the top of the community college hierarchy, with their extensive contact with groups external to the college, feel the winds of change and attempt to respond. The conflicts between the midlevel manager and the faculty and between the midlevel administrator and leadership are largely due to each minutely examining the vista from extremely different perspectives. The faculty focuses on the needs of the classroom; the midlevel administrator sees the interconnectiveness of the academic unit; leadership looks at the organization's place in the larger community.

Tension Between the Individual's Needs and the Institution's Demands

What is frequently recorded in the reflective passages of the participants' journals is the tension between the internally motivated midlife person's developmental impetuous for making an impact and the limitations imposed by organizational convention and societal dynamics. They are exhausted by attempting to do everything.

> One thing--whenever this happens, there is the commitment to go through a hellish week on the assumption that going the extra mile now will be a one-time price to pay that will make things manageable from that point on. What an assumption. Must stop myself from thinking that way again. Something more effective than a grueling week is needed to change the pattern of slowly getting behind until another grueling week is necessary.

Situated in a midlevel role in an organization with a long history and complex culture (of which they know little), the study's participants are perplexed when their long hours and selfless dedication bear little fruit to their liking. Though instances of success are sprinkled through all the journals, the poignant cry is the anguish of reminding oneself that the output is not commensurate with the expenditure of time, effort, determination, and most importantly commitment. Having committed half a lifetime of competency, made sacrifices in other spheres of their life, and chosen this venue for leaving a legacy, they are not satisfied with the results.

Continuing Professional Education Programs

After having served in their current midlevel administrative position for between 2 and 10 years, the participants felt the need to participate in a year-long continuing professional education program. Though falling under the category of continuing

education, for all participants this was their first professional education for the role they were now playing.

They discovered that the voyage from faculty to administration was more difficult and complex than first imagined. The distances between points is much further than calculated. The paths are constantly shifting in the unpredictable storms of change. The hiking boots are not suited for the journey. The backpack was never adjusted properly, so it cuts into the shoulders and sways the back, especially as the load grows increasingly heavy.

The weary yet still enthusiastic traveler reports being relieved to discover a way station, called continuing professional education, where the secrets of success on such a journey will be revealed. For an extended, one- week period other travelers with similar burdens converge to hear words of what each hopes is wisdom. Meeting fellow travelers is comforting and reassuring. Suddenly one is surrounded by people who share the vision, who appreciate the drive for meaning and understand the frustration of unachieved goals. Without this meeting place those traveling parallel paths would have probably never met each other, so the mutual support, the heartfelt sympathy, and the exchange of remedies for the traveling wounds is surprisingly self-affirming. The tour guide presents rousing pep talks, collaborative problem-solving sessions, and bibliographies of source material. Refreshed, the traveler resumes the solo voyage furnished with new techniques and boasted enthusiasm.

Equipped with a large looseleaf book of key points, the midlevel administrator returns to actualize the improvements so carefully visualized. The traveler opens the book to sing along with tunes learned during the continuing professional education program. The

chorus is always the same: "How can I fail now? My task is truly important. The means for success are available."

Though mentors are promised throughout this leg of the journey, they seldom appear, and even when they do the time together is brief. The midlevel administrators who wrote the journals were almost exclusively dependent on their own resources during the time period examined. They did read from a small sampling of management theory books. Little evidence is revealed in the journals of discussing their experience with peers. What remains are individuals who are dependent on their own interpretation of their own experience as the source of most of their knowing. Their learning is largely limited to their insights into their own experiences. Their way of knowing is almost totally experiential, thinly supplemented with a slim scattering of written theory. The journals do not reveal any use of empirical knowledge. Though some references are made to general discussions with a mentor assigned to by the continuing professional education program or sought on-campus, they seem neither sustaining nor targeted to current issues. Therefore, the next area to be explored is the effectiveness of critical reflective practice as a tool in finding meaning in one's work.

Cautions about Critical Reflective Practice

Prompted by the works of Schon (1983, 1987), continuing professional education programs have encouraged "reflective practice" for over a decade. They herald reflective practice as a pliable, yet forceful instrument for self-directed growth. The disciplined habit of reflecting on previous experience and present goals before and during practice is promised to advance the caliber and originality of current choices and expand the

knowledge bases accessible for future choices. From this expanded perspective, administrative reflective practice is improved (Hart, 1990). The instrumentation for this study was the reflective journals written by the educational administrators. The analysis of the journals is a test of how the theories of reflective practice actually operated for a group of educational administrators partaking in a continuing professional education program.

The participants found the process of writing and the use of language a useful tool in stimulating innovative solutions, exploring their value system, and extending their horizon. They found writing helped them delve through the surface of their habitual responses. The discovery process assisted in the organization of messy, administrative chaos (Cooper & Dunlap, 1991). Journaling served as a tool to frame the problem, strategize solutions, and regulate progress. The writers became more in touch with their own depth of feeling through producing and exploring a written account of their lives. By substantiating events into "instant history" (Cooper & Dunlap, 1991), the concepts could be manipulated and analyzed with greater depth and seemingly more objectivity. Reflective practice stimulated these committed educators to look inwardly for means toward organizational change (Osterman, 1990). The journals took on some of the qualities of a patient, caring friend for professionals hampered by confidentiality and personality in sharing their anxieties and passions with others. The journaling helped them consider how the boundaries between their own identity and their role were permeable. Writing helped them find their personal voice (Cooper & Dunlap, 1991). Journaling assisted them in detaching themselves from the events of their lives and moving the examination of their lives from the perspective of subject to object (Kegan, 1994). The reality of seeing their story on paper assisted them in their search for personal meaning (Mattingly, 1991).

They experienced the depth of personal exploration Ralph Waldo Emerson found when he wrote about his own journaling experience: "This Book is my Savings Bank. I grow richer because I have somewhere to deposit my earnings; and fractions are worth more to me because corresponding fractions are waiting here that shall be made integers by their addition" (Emerson, 1833/1994, p. 2356).

Meaning of the Role--Underlying Assumptions

The analysis of the journal entries reveal underlying assumptions that the midlevel administrators used to shape their self-perception and their interaction with others. These assumptions are not explicitly stated in their writing, but are revealed in their framing of issues, their perception of their choices, their decision making process, and their actions.

PROGRESS IS A CREATION.

- A better way can be found.
- Problems have solutions.

DETERMINATION AND HARD WORK LEAD TO PROGRESS.

- Hard work makes a difference.
- More time and effort will eventually improve the situation.

PROCESS INFLUENCES RESULTS.

- Model behavior will lead to others following.
- People need to feel important--listening to them is a preliminary step in getting them to move in the right direction.
- Transformational leadership is better than transactional.
- Building community is essential.

- Collaborative teams are more productive than isolated individuals.
- People want input on actions which will lead to better decisions.

PEOPLE ARE MALLEABLE.

- Irrational, emotional actions can be corrected with rational discourse.
- Disruptive, negative people are misguided.
- People problems are solvable.
- The perfectability of human interaction is possible through compassionate enlightenment.

BEING IN THE MIDDLE AFFORDS A BROAD PERSPECTIVE OF THE ENTIRE OPERATION.

- In the middle, I may not be able to make much policy, but I can stimulate an environmental dynamic that is open to positive change.
- Teachers are focused on their own self-interest including their teaching assignments and personal convenience.
- Upper administrators are concerned with broad issues, while frequently sacrificing such important concerns as building community and kindness to individuals.
- I am responsible for implementing policy by empowering the workers.
- My intentions are misunderstood by both sides.

WHAT I AM DOING HAS VALUE BEYOND ME.

- My drive is for the common good.
- The goal is more important than the individual.
- I am willing to sacrifice my academic disciplinary love for the larger good.
- I can make a difference for the future.

- The motivation is helping the young, weak, and inexperienced.
- The weak must be protected.
- My personal needs should be subsumed by the cause.
- I am not sure this job is right for me, but I am the best person for the job.
- Those who love me appreciate why I am spending so much effort at work.

DEDICATION IS SELDOM RECOGNIZED; INTRINSIC REWARDS ARE EXPERIENCING A JOB WELL-DONE.

- "Far and away the best prize that life has to offer is the chance to work hard at work worth doing." Theodore Roosevelt

Consequences of the Year of Critical Reflection

In the course of the year in which they wrote reflective journals, the midlevel administrators explored their sense of meaning through a personal development process called transformational learning (Mezirow, 1990). Through analyzing their self-perception, value system, and life course, they changed in ways recognizable to themselves and at least by some others (Clark, 1993). By reflecting on the world they live with, they have been motivated to transform their environment. The continuing professional education program deepened their self-perception of themselves as change agents. Revolutionary educator Freire (1970, 1972, 1973) believes that through our ability for praxis, the mutual coupling between reflection and action, people can change the world to their vision.

The participants accepted the principle of themselves as instigators of change. One of the elements they wrote about is their desire to transform a shift in their academic unit from transactional to transformational leadership. They were puzzled when the faculty was

not interested in being empowered. They were disturbed when many of their transformational plans were not welcomed. The participants viewed themselves as heroic change agents. Their goal during the year, reflected in their journals, was to channel their insights into a force to transform their workplace. At best, the results are ambiguous. Having placed so much hope and energy into their goal, they were not prepared to coldly, objectively, and with detachment accept the extent of their frustration.

Perhaps this is the place to acknowledge and offer a methodological explanation for what seems like a discrepancy between findings in the two sources of information. The demographic questionnaire completed by participants at the beginning of the second week of training, which corresponded to the end of the year-long practicum, revealed a range of job satisfaction almost uniformly distributed between "Extremely satisfied" (2), "Very satisfied" (4), "My job is okay" (3), to "Frustrated, but I'm going to keep trying" (2). None of the participants indicated "I am so unhappy, I want out." In contrast, the reflective passages, which were extracted from the journals for the analysis and interpretation of this study, paint a darker self-assessment of job satisfaction. Since the stated vision of the participants was to use the place of work as the arena to actualize the quest for a meaningful life, a correspondence between degree of achievement of the goal and job satisfaction would be expected. Instead it seems a discrepancy is found.

Several hypotheses can be offered in explanation. First, the journal entries were written as a tool in self-exploration and self-support. Self-censorship is not apparent in the journals. The participants seem sufficiently comfortable with the anonymity of their journals to "let it all hang out". However, the questionnaire was completed at the start of the second week of the continuing professional education program soon after reuniting with

peers and when expectations were high of discovering solutions to problems of the previous year. In this uplifting atmosphere respondents may have felt a sense of competitiveness in being optimistic. The discrepancy in self-perception may be another example of how the continuing professional education program continued to be viewed as the source of the fountain of "what can be," which refreshes the vacationers from the parched workplace of "what is." Second, the journals may mirror the tendency of highly internally-motivated professionals to be more analytical of unresolved concerns which cry out for intensive attention while successes are quickly recorded as fact. For the purpose of exploring phenomenology, the unstructured journals, which were recorded when the individual's defenses were down, are more revealing than the structured questionnaire, completed when the participants may have felt vulnerable, perhaps even competitive. The methodological choice of depending on the journals as a more accurate source of information about the phenomenon does not disregard the possibility that the selection of the instrumentation of the journals may sway, to some unknown degree, the gestalt of the results.

Though the participants were motivated by such humanistic goals as building community, supporting the weak, empowering the service providers, and promoting higher level thought, the results of their actions are often counterproductive. Seeking cooperation, they accelerated their own isolation. As Freire (1970, 1972, 1973) explains, the dialectical relationship occurs when the individual is caught between a clear perception of the necessary changes to alleviate grievous problems and systemic obstacles. Kegan (1982) writes of the cognitive leaps required by the complexity of the postmodern world. Individuals unaware of the impediments to the success of their mission frequently turn inward in search for the source of failure.

The journal entries analyzed in this study confirm what Stephen Brookfield (1994) calls tales from the dark side of the phenomenology of adult critical reflection. The participants are committing cultural suicide. They cut themselves off from much of their organizational culture when they challenge the conventional assumptions of their colleagues. The supportive professional development community of the week-long initial session launched them into perceiving themselves as change agents. Yet returning to their home campuses, they were provided sparse support from an external continuing professional education program sponsored mentor or an internal college mentor. In addition, the restraints of time and convention prevented much sharing with those going through parallel journeys.

By almost exclusively concentrating introspection on their own role, the midlevel administrators omitted other critical factors. What is not contained in the journal is also revealing. They did not report seeking approval from superiors nor support from respected or influential individuals within the college. No entries interpret hard data such as institutional budget, strategic plan, demographic shifts, environmental surveys, or external regulations.

The impetus for change came from an outside continuing professional education program. Nowhere in the journals is there any indication that the college president or other upper administrators initiated nor condoned the changes the midlevel administrators were attempting to implement. The vision of a proactive, transformational midlevel leader was held by the continuing professional education program not by the community college. In effect, the midlevel administrators were given a package and "told to run with it," but not warned to check with the game plan of the home team coach first. In fairness, the midlevel

managers were told to obtain a local mentor during the practicum. However, the mentors are seldom mentioned in the journal entries. In no case in the journals is the mentor indicated to have told the mentee to be aware of organizational culture boundaries or to have reminded the midlevel manager to "remember your place." Instead, the mentor seems to play a limited role, one more of an occasional supportive colleague than a disciplined "reality checker." The limited access of most mentors to the core of the institution is best illustrated by the fact that several mentors either left the institution or had their responsibilities decrease over the course of the journals. No journal entries indicate an increased responsibility of the participant's mentor.

The journals illustrate an industrious, determined, visionary toiling to do "the right thing" within a bounded area. Shielded from the decision making process of those in leadership, the midlevel administrator diligently proceeds with only a small sector of the picture.

The midlevel administrator is busily "empowering" the troops without ever finding out if the general has empowered this corporal. The result is a massive mismatch of expectations and assumptions. Not only does neither side mesh their tasks, but at least as indicated in these journals, they never even think about talking to each other about the "vision thing."

Donald Schon's (1983, 1987) exploration of the reflective practitioner found how "selective inattending" centralizes the practitioner's concentration on accustomed and unscrutinized information while neglecting outlying and previously ignored information sources. Selective inattentiveness is widespread in customary, habitual activities where presumptions, operations, and resolutions remain unexamined. In the case of the

participants, selecting limits consideration to self as change agent. Other factors are ignored.

Though effective learning occurs for these midlevel administrators in active, experiential real-life situations, the social aspects can not be ignored. Solitary learning is considered by experts of situated learning to be weaker than collaborative, social learning (Brown, Collins, & Duguin, 1989). Discussions with peers facilitated reality checks.

Brookfield stresses the importance of sustaining support groups to those in the critical process of self-directed growth (1994, p. 203). A sense of connectiveness with colleagues experiencing the same sort of disillusionments enables the critical thinker to view the process of change in less heroic and more revolutionary terms. The sharing of stories of successful reform, even those in sharp contrast with the individual's experience of failure, deters movement towards the stagnation of fatalism (Elbaz, 1988) and increases the sense of hope. The broadening of the scope that the shared experience provides, enables the lone reflective thinker to view the position from a broader perspective. Without this sharing of the struggle of change, the participants interpreted their lack of success only in terms of their own faults instead of a critical analysis of environmental impediments. For this shift from individual responsibility to the possibility of creating systematic change to take place, a sharing process that unites like-minded people must occur.

The literature warns that the volatile potency of reflective thinking is most constructive when combined with a supportive persistent peer community, which affirms the laudableness of the goals of the quest for the betterment of both individual and collective. The supportive community also shares battle stories with those who understand the extent of the resistance to change and the exhilaration of the good fight. A lone

revolutionary can soon become disenchanted, despondent, or as self-delusional as Don Quixote.

The Limitation of the Hero in the Middle

The conflict between the expectations of the continuing professional education program and realities in the workplace bred false expectations. The continuing professional education program presented the message, "You are a leader who can make a difference." Meanwhile, back on campus, the college leadership told the midlevel administrator, "You are a technician to keep the wheels running quietly." This tension in role definition is also accentuated by the primary tool of professional growth used during the year-long practicum-- reflective journaling. For "reflective practice involves cycles of thought and action based on professional experience viewing the practitioner as a creator rather than a technician" (Rose, 1992, p. 5). With each flood of insights, practitioners widen the chasm between themselves and the surrounding walls of the hierarchy.

The middle is perhaps the most difficult place to effect change. Leadership has the ability to demand, mandate, institutionalize, restructure, organize, vision, empower, optimize, reengineer, or encourage change. The power of reward and punishment and the ability to allocate resources strengthens leadership's ability to control the direction of change. At the other extreme, the service providers, in this case the faculty, are the grassroots of the organization. By their sheer numbers, similarity of their concerns, and solidarity of mission, they have a far greater ability to force change than the midlevel administrator. However, the midlevel administrator, pinched on both sides and isolated by situation and choice, may have as much impact as King Lear shouting into a storm. Truly

caught in the middle, the midlevel administrators are pushing for transformation while faculty has every intention of retaining the status quo and leadership is concerned with smooth running of the clogs so they are free to deal with the bigger picture.

Astute people may have the capability to alter their cognizance and develop an ingenious solution; nevertheless their situation may hinder their ability to activate a change. The determined individual is neither impotent nor indestructible in face of environmental limitations. Yet, the image of the midlevel community college administrator as a crusading hero seems inappropriate in the modern world, run by the forces such as multinational corporations, governmental regulations, raging technologies, and burgeoning social changes. In face of these forces, the individual's impact is not determined by sheer will power.

Even though the journey metaphor is used extensively in developmental psychology (and in this study), elements of the archetypal hero cycle (Jung, 1954; Campbell, 1988) seems unconsciously embedded in the meaning framework of this study's participants. Having long since accepted the adult agency of taking responsibility for their own lives (Knowles, 1989, p. 48), at midlife they take on the additional responsibility of generativity (Erikson, 1978, 1982). They lived the year, explored in the journals, attempting to actualize their individual potential, to live "in good faith" (Sartre, 1956). By taking the risks to live their unique life (Heidegger, 1962), they have paid a substantial cost in their own health and well-being, their separation from friends and family, and their sacrifice of enjoyable activities.

The Limitations of Solitude

The journal entries document an inner exploration of how the choices these midlife professionals made correspond to their value system and their sense of meaning. The journals offer moments of solitude, in which they allow themselves the luxury to talk to themselves about what is truly important to them. They are attempting to balance their knowledge of their individual responsibility while paradoxically trying to accept their own limitations.

Yet, the demands of their role are constantly impinging upon these quiet moments of reflecting about what is truly meaningful to them. They are always searching for ways to find more time to fulfill all the responsibility of the job. The analytical narrowness of the modern corporate mentality with its cost/benefit analysis and cold rationality denies the need for meaning in life far deeper than the results of the spreadsheet.

> [M]odern society attempts to do this by suppressing the dialectic of solitude. . . . Contradictions and exceptions are eliminated, and this results in the closing off of our access to the profoundest experience life can offer us, that of discovering reality as a oneness in which opposites agree. (Paz, 1985, p. 2273)

The search for an inclusive, spiritual, internal validation of one's life is appropriate for the midlife pilgrim, but is it effective for the midlevel administrator?

The introspective nature of the participants' reflective journals allows for self-insight, but it fails to expand the range of their thought to the point where sufficiently complex responses to the postmodern problems they confront can be generated. Even the most basic external evaluations in the form of yearly performance review, salary appraisal, peer consultation, or superior preapproval of changes are not mentioned in the journals.

Though the midlife quest for meaning is not satisfied by external evaluations but by internal validation, success can only be approached by considering the reaction of others.

Within the messy, ambivalent context of midlevel administrative work, few objective criteria are available for assessing the individual's perception of reality. The only "reality check" is the consensual validation, which comes from rational discourse. The absence of "dialogue with others about integrative challenges and the appropriate responses is a significant barrier to integrity development" (Kolb, 1988, p. 83).

The Meaning of the Collective

The midlife seekers confronted their existential loneliness (Mouskakas, 1961), the awareness that human singularity excludes the prospect of anyone else genuinely connecting with their inner quest (Kierkegaard, 1954). Isolation has no cure. The only treatment is sharing. Yet, in order to benefit from community, the human has the side effect of decreased uniqueness. The midlevel administrators demonstrate their contradictory desires for autonomy and juncture by devaluing intimate relationships, while seeking to cultivate a significant influence in the lives of the individuals at their workplace. The participants in this study, living through their generativity stage, made the existential choice to create meaning through their professional activities. Meaning transcends the personal dimension and is found in connection with the larger reality. They concentrated their demonstration of service to society and humanity through service to their college. Understanding how important their work is in the lives of others, they commit themselves to doing their best.

> Abraham Joshua Herschel provides us with an account of this aspect of human reality in his book, Who is Man: "Animals are content when their needs are satisfied; humans insist not only on being satisfied, but also on being able to satisfy, on being a need not simply on having needs. . . . [I]t is a most significant fact that . . . life is not meaningful to us unless it is serving an end beyond itself, unless it is a value to someone else." (Lerner, 1996, p. 29)

Their message of caring is frequently met by others with a narrow self-interest without a concern for the well-being of others, or with dictums from distant governing bodies. They seem lost in a repetitive cycle of attempting change, meeting with disappointment, reflecting on the experience, trying again from another angle to once again face frustration.

The terminology of critical reflective thinking offers an explanation for the stalemate. To truly understand how to institute change, the practitioner must move beyond reflection-on-action, which is a rational analysis of familiar data, into the realm of reflection-in-action, which capacitates an extraordinary outlook of viewing information, called reframing (Schon, 1983). Though the promise of reflection-in-action is the ability to "change the outcome of the event upon which reflection is occurring" (Kolb, 1988, p. 169), the experience of the participants in this study points to a far more complex process.

The reflective, dedicated midlevel administrator's ability to attain change is limited by not only the visionary goals of the person in the middle but a great deal of other factors such as organizational culture, often fuzzy organizational visions (both explicit and implicit), and the complexity of the postmodern world.

Colleges, as well as other organizations, restrict, some even say oppress (Cooper & Kempner, 1993) their workers within their sticky web of culture. Even the most determined

change agent is just one of the participants in the dynamics of the organization. The change agent and the institution are mutually changing each other in the process of change.

Summary of Interpretation of the Data

Midlife Developmental Stage

- Experienced midlife choice of generativity versus stagnation.
- Accepted in midlife a professional responsibility with potentially more encompassing impact.
- Refused to accept a professional midlife plateau.
- Excited by new goal pursuit.
- Motivated by need for self-validation.
- Sacrificed personal life.
- Driven by desire to leave a legacy.

Cohort

- Grew up as baby boom generation cohort.
- Expected continuous progress.
- Accepted collective responsibility and "the personal is political."
- Motivated by self-induced guilt to make social change.
- Saw the academy as locus of social struggle.

Organizational Role in Middle Management

- Situated in historical time of great disruption.
- Demanded to make value-laden choices to ambiguous issues.
- Placed in devalued midlevel management.

- Depreciated by organizational culture.
- Felt loyal to no powerful hierarchical layer.
- Conflicted by own vision of position and others' narrower focus.
- Discouraged by faculty's desire for an unobtrusive problem-solver.
- Requested to solve student problems quietly.
- Diluted sense of purpose in community college.
- Demanded by different factions to make contradictory decisions.
- Trapped between faculty and upper administration.
- Searched for meaning in unfocused, insular environment.

Role in Organization

- Prioritized role according to own interests and strengths.
- Viewed self from several frameworks.
- Perceived self as successful educator.
- Under-prepared as manager.
- Interested in improving own program.
- Restricted understanding of external forces.

Tensions Between the Individual's Needs and the Institution's Demands

- Caught between own desire for meaningful achievement and organizational limitations.
- Anguished by inability to achieve meaningful change.

Continuing professional education program

- Expected information to heightened professional competencies.
- Revived by meeting like-thinking professionals.

- Encouraged by information and techniques.
- Empowered to be a change agent.
- Isolated from most peer or mentoring interactions during practicum.
- Learned through own experience and reflections.

Cautions About Critical Reflective Practice

- Accepted growth potential of reflective practice.
- Stimulated by exploring own experience in writing.
- Helped by journaling to find personal voice.
- Shifted from subject to object of own experience.

Meaning of the Role--Underlying Assumptions

- Progress is a creation.
- Determination and hard work lead to progress.
- Progress influences results.
- People are malleable.
- Being in the middle affords a broad perspective of the entire operation.
- What I am doing has value beyond me.
- Dedication is seldom recognized; intrinsic rewards are experiencing a job well-done.

Consequences of the Year of Critical Reflection

- Underwent transformational learning.
- Motivated to transform their work environment.
- Aspired to achieve praxis.
- Appointed self change agents.

- Puzzled by those unwilling to be empowered.
- Motivated by humanistic goals.
- Acted counterproductively.
- Accelerated own isolation.
- Unaware of strength of impediments.
- Turned inward for source of failure.
- Experienced dark side of phenomenology of adult critical reflection.
- Alienated themselves from organizational culture.
- Separated from supportive peers outside of institution.
- Concentrated on introspection.
- Sought no support from others in institution.
- Referred to no data affecting issues.
- Failed to reconcile own vision with that of superiors.
- Limited by solitary learning.
- Lacked connectiveness with colleagues.

The Limitations of the Hero in the Middle

- Expected to achieve as change agent frustrated by workplace.
- Appointed as change agent by continuing professional education program but not by workplace.
- Restricted leverage for change by person in center of institutional hierarchy.
- Caught in center of institutional pressures.
- Hindered by situation to actuate change.
- Accepted agency for own life expanded by midlife desire for generativity.

- Paid heavy toil for being a lone hero.

The Limitations of Solitude

- Explored their value system and sense of meaning.
- Journaled to explore own truths.
- Attempted balance between individual responsibility and limitations.
- Short-sighted by concentrating on self-insight.
- Excluded understanding of forces outside of themselves.
- Missed consensual validation.

Meaning of the Collective

- Confronted their existential loneliness.
- Desired contradictory needs of autonomy and connectiveness.
- Expressed generativity through professional activities.
- Caught in repetitive cycle of failure without input of insights from others.
- Restricted by complexities of postmodern world.
- Circumscribed by web of culture.

Closing

The final chapter will summarize the results and suggest implications of the results to theory and practice for the three interested groups: midlevel community college administrators, community college leadership, and designers of continuing professional education programs. The chapter ends with suggestions for further study.

CHAPTER 5--CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of the study was to explore the quest for meaning of midlife, midlevel community college academic administrators participating in a year-long continuing professional education program. Using the phenomenological research model, the researcher analyzed and interpreted the reflective passages extracted from the unstructured journals written by a self-selected, self-analytical cohort of midlevel, midlife community college academic administrators from North America, who choose to participate and to record their impressions of their quest for meaning during a year-long continuing professional education program.

The first phase of the study, a review of related literature, is divided into two sections. The first area discussed the individual by delving into midlife development theories and the search for meaning in midlife. The second section of the review of related literature placed the individual within the context of late 20th century higher education by reviewing literature on the culture and climate of higher education, especially in how it applies to the role of the community college midlevel academic administrator. This review provided a conceptual framework to focus and bound the collection of data.

The second phase consisted of a phenomenological study of the reflective journals of participants in a continuing professional education program, who were encouraged to write journals during the practicum phrase. The data were analyzed through lenses similar to the framework used in the Review of Related Literature.

This section interpreted the data of the reflective passages extracted from the journals written by midlevel community college academic administrators participating in a year-long continuing professional education program. The intention was to determine if a pattern of search for meaning in midlife is revealed by those who are living the same phenomenon. The rationale was that if a pattern emerged, then the discovery would assist three groups of professionals concerned with assuring that the experience of midlevel managers is meaningful. The interested groups are the midlevel managers, the organizational leadership, and continuing professional development educators.

This chapter provides a summary of the approach taken and the findings that resulted. A summary of results and their application is offered. Finally, the implications and recommendations are made for both practitioners and researchers interested in the quest for meaning, the functioning of higher education, and the development of continuing professional education programs.

Research Question

The research question for this study was: What do midlevel community college academic administrators, who participate in a continuing professional education program, reveal in their reflective journals of critical professional practice about the midlife quest for meaning?

This study sought to discover the phenomenology of a particular cohort of midlife professionals who explore their professional life through an inquiry of reflective practice. The intention was to determine if a pattern of search for meaning in midlife was revealed by those who are living the same phenomenon.

Approach

Design

The phenomenological methodology is preferable when the researcher wants the data to reflect current, authentic events, which naturally emerge during the course of the study. Therefore, the phenomenological methodology was the fitting methodology for a study of the midlife search for meaning of a cohort of midlevel administrators in a community college setting. The methodology allowed themes to emerge from self-structured recordings of the participants' experience in the form of journal entries. Since the process of journaling was strongly encouraged by the faculty of the continuing professional education program in which the participants were involved, the data collecting process for the study had minimal impact on the results.

The subsequent analysis emerged from the rich, descriptive narrative found in the journals. The researcher used the participants' own words to explore the question. The interpretation placed the data analysis within the context of theory and creative exploration of the midlife search for meaning. As with all phenomenological research, the emphasis was on the common patterns that emerged from those who are living the experience. The approach was heuristic, allowing the reader to become an active participant in forming generalizations to other midlife professionals, colleges, and situations.

Data Collection and Analysis

Journals were the principal source of data. A total of 13 individuals contributed copies of their journals to the researcher. The other source of data was a short

questionnaire. The questionnaire revealed that the study participants, for the most part, reflected the demographics of the national norms (see Appendix C).

The researcher read each participant's self-exploratory, unstructured journal. Reflective passages, those revealing insight into life experiences, were coded for each participant. The passages from one participant at a time were extracted and given a category defining the individual's search for meaning. The reflective passages from all participants were sorted and resorted to discover common categories. Redefined categories were created to organize the data. Categories that were explored in a minimum of 70% of the participants' reflective journals were analyzed. The reflective passages were then folded together into an aggregate in which the individuals blended together. The analysis began with what was closest to the participants, how they perceived of themselves. The second major category was the administrators' greatest responsibility, their relationship to the faculty. The third category was the midlevel administrators' relationship to those in power, the upper administration. The analysis ended with their sparse comments on forces external to the community college.

Findings

This study sought to discover what is the phenomenology of a particular midlife cohort who explored their professional life through journaling about their critical reflective practice. The research revealed:

The participants in this study were a self-selected group. In middle age they chose to take on the challenge (a word they used frequently) of expanding their horizons by taking part in a year-long continuing professional education program. Of this larger group,

only some chose to record their thoughts as a tool in rehearsing their development. Even a smaller number of the journal writers were willing to share this record with the researcher in the hope that others might benefit from their experience.

The journals of the participants in this study reveal how professional development stimulated midlife community college administrators to search for significance in their lives through meaningful work. During the year of their middle-age lives explored in this study, the participants became acutely aware that much of their self-concept revolved around their perception of the degree to which they were able to instigate (or facilitate, as they would say) productive change at their community college. Having achieved mastery as a teacher in first adulthood, they were seeking meaning in second adulthood by channeling their need for generativity into their work as midlevel community college administrators.

Unsatisfied with their level of competency in the position they held for several years, for which they never received any training, they enrolled in a continuing professional education program. They left the first week of the continuing professional education program rejuvenated by a community of peers who shared their mission of transforming their community college into a more effective, efficient, responsive, and humane institution. Members of a cohort whose defining historical image is of the halls of higher education as the ramparts of social change, they continued to be motivated by this calling which was rekindled at the continuing professional education program. Embracing their cohort's optimism of the potential of the individual as change agent, they went forth to improve the system.

Stimulated by the continuing professional education program, they spent the greater part of a year attempting to actualize their unrealized potential. They shifted their focus

away from personal interests, family, and friends to accentuate their energies on their work. Accepting the mantle of change agent, they returned to campus to spread the gospel of transformational leadership. As gentle, scholarly heros they bolstered their new tool of critical reflective practice with their long cultivated skills of dedication, tenacity, and hard work.

From their location in the center of the organizational hierarchy, they attempted to transform the institution according to their vision. From where they sat, the middle has a vantage point of being able to scan the faculty members they supervise and the upper administration they report to.

They wanted to bring forth a humanistic change--one which affirms the importance of the individual. As educators, they were committed to the progressive improvement of the individual and through the individual the society. Though the participants had varied disciplinary affiliations, they all seemed to make judgments concerning their own life, and those they influence, according to the same criteria. They did not write about religious conviction, economic efficiency, power principles, or demographic trends. They wrote about how their actions would make the world better, kinder, and more compassionate.

They modeled transformational behavior through their transformational leadership style. Their noble purpose was met with resistance. Faculty wanted the midlevel administrator to unobtrusively fulfill administrative tasks so they would be freed to concentrate on the business of the classroom and their own private concerns. Though some faculty enjoyed the collaborative process of working together with peers, they usually valued their autonomy more. Upper administration preferred midlevel administration to function as unobtrusive technicians. The occasional recognition or inclusion offered by

upper administration gave midlevel administrators hope that they were succeeding. However, the inclusion was always limited in time and depth. The few layers of the community college hierarchy gave midlevel administrators the impression that they were closer to the center of power than they actually were. They were astounded when their vision was ignored by faculty and infuriated when overruled by their superiors.

Since their primary source of information was the solitary process of critical reflective practice, they perceived their shortcomings as change agent as a consequence of their own inadequacies, so they accentuated their efforts. They worked longer hours, tried harder to get others to understand, and increased their effort to build consensus. During their long hours on campus, during weekends, and even on vacations, they thought about ways to actualize their craving to make an impact on the college. The need for achievement became an obsession as they forsook family, friends, exercise, and outside interests. They assumed their family understood that the sacrifice was for the common good.

They often felt caught in the middle between students, faculty, and upper administration conflicts. While they tried to bridge the gaps with a consensual win-win mediation, the warring factions seemed motivated by separate agendas. They were sympathetic to faculty, from whence they came, but their position had expanded their perspective. They attempted to join the upper administration in making policy but were usually ignored. Worst, the upper administration, bombarded by massive budget cuts, dictated sweeping cutbacks, reorganization, and firings.

Their hope for personal transformation was frustrated by a lack of institutional transformation. The recognition by others of their capability, which only occasionally occurred, was fleeting. The advancements did not materialize; in fact, more than a few

participants were voted out of their administrative position. The person in the middle did not fulfill the needs of those they served nor those they serviced. Their dedication was seen as arrogance from those on top or a threat to stability by faculty. Their narrow focus, shallow knowledge of organizational culture and institutional systems, and isolation from others living a similar experience prevented them from seeing the systemic limitation of their vision.

Agency is determined by the little choices made all day long. The participants' lives were made up of choices and their consequences. Therefore, each choice was analyzed according to how it reflected personal values. No choice was insignificant. They were living an existential life, where every moment is a choice between life and death (Kierkegaard).

Although most successful professionals rarely question their actions or the fundamental presumptions which shape their life's work, the participants of this study were open to self-evaluation. And yet, their story is poignant, if not sad. Despite the best of intentions and an enormous expenditure of energy, they have accomplished little. At the end of the year they may be more realistic, but they are also far more tired if not disillusioned. Though bruised, frustrated, and worn from the battle, they continue to fight for the only worthy cause--the perfectability of the human spirit.

A Postmodern, Chaotic View

The existential-phenomenological view is that situated freedom lies somewhere between the continuum of absolute freedom and total determinism. The wise professional

retains the confidence in knowing that an individual can make a difference but only if the pressure point is chosen with great care.

Current management theories borrow from the emerging work on chaos, complexity, and postmodernism. Though much of the growing body of work on chaos is enticing, it is also speculative. The idea of a dedicated and ingenious individual being able to apply small forces at a precise place and time, and nudging a chaotic system into regular, periodic motion, sounds more like wishful thinking than tested practice. This acupuncture model of management is not based on a long history of insight from a precise society with a different paradigm. In contrast, the proposed inclusive operational system, which is based on the fluttering of a butterfly, the formation of clouds, or the suicide patterns of lemmings, is certainly in its infancy.

Nevertheless, the midlevel community college administrator could benefit from additional knowledge of the emerging theories. New management theories provide opportunities for creating patterns out of chaos (Holayter & Sheldon, 1994). Since higher education institutions can only be viewed as open systems with indeterminate boundaries (Birnbaum, 1988), the administrator who is informed and selective, in addition to being dedicated and determined, may be able to pressure the system into totally new directions. Yet change is not a linear process in which the results are in proportion to the effort (Wheatley, 1992). In a system on the verge of chaos, change is a mutually transforming process where organizational members reciprocally shape and are shaped by the system (Rhoads & Tierney, 1992).

If all of the factors offered to explain the search for meaning of midlife professionals seem to be interwoven, well such is postmodernism. The disappointment the

study's participants felt can be explained by the complexity of knowing in the postmodern world. The administrator is attempting to discover how to effectively proceed while being bombarded by vectors of personal development, organizational culture, paradigm shifts, and global economic dynamics. Though solo introspective self-examination is one means to test the ground, it is insufficient to provide the answers to the multitude of questions.

To obtain the integrated thinking that Robert Kegan calls the fifth order requires humans to progress to higher level principles indicating a shifting reality.

> In fact, transforming our epistemologies, liberating ourselves from that in which we were embedded, making what was subject into objects so that we can "have it" rather than "be had" by it--this is the most powerful way I know to conceptualize the growth of the mind. (Kegan, 1994, p. 34)

Yet not only are the growth requirements for the postmodern society substantial, therefore beyond many a person's ability, but they are also painful. The participants in this study may in retrospect discover that the year recorded in their journals was one in which they tinkered on the brink of transformation. Shaken from the stability of their previous perceptions by their introspections, they found themselves propelled by the inertia of their own drive. Slowed down by the friction of conflicting forces, they were discouraged by their lack of progress. When the growth pains of midlife collide with the demands of postmodernism, the torment can be significant. Before one is transformed into the next level of consciousness, the death of the previous stage must be mourned (James, 1902/1958; Kegan, 1980, 1982, 1994; Perry, 1970). One can only hope that on the other side of the death and disillusionment of this transitional year will either be a rediscovery of the joys they denied themselves, or a renewal into a deeper system of meaning. In this midlife phase of the life journey, the participants have begun with a description of the

commencing of the end of confidence cultivated in the first half of their life; they continued to a center of instability and concluded (one can hope) with a beginning of a new stage of competency (Bridges, 1980). One wishes them a second adulthood worthy of their good intentions.

The Meaning of Life

The examined life is swarming with disappointment and with the limitations of one's ability to influence others. Yet the quest paradoxically gains increasing significance as it becomes more difficult. For like the mythical hero you know the worth of your life when you are fulfilling a role that is so painful that no one else would be willing to attempt it.

Humbling, certainly not consciously, they probably view themselves in the tradition of an ancient educator, who though condemned by his countrymen for disrupting the societal order for corrupting the minds of the young, replied:

> Clearly it should be a penalty I deserve, and what do I deserve to suffer or to pay because I have deliberately not led a quiet life but have neglected what occupies most people: wealth, household affairs, the position of general or public orator or the other offices, the political clubs and factions that exist in the city? I thought myself too honest to survive if I occupied myself with those things. I did not follow that path that would have made me of no use either to you or to myself, but I went to each of you privately and conferred upon him what I say is the greatest benefit, by persuading him not to care for any of his belongings before caring that he himself should be as good as wise as possible, not to care for the city's possessions more than for the city itself, and to care for other things in the same way. What do I deserve for being such a man? (Plato, about 400 B.C./1994, p. 267)

Socrates had a student of genius to immortalize the worth of his life across the ages. For millennia noble souls have scoffed at the short-sightedness of the Athenian justice. Yet, Socrates' wife and young son after he drank the hemlock? What is the lesson of Plato's

"The Apology" for the great multitude, who will never leave a lasting impression? And doesn't Socrates' self-righteousness contain an element of arrogance?

Perhaps a whisper of the answer is found in a prayer chanted during the holiest day of the Jewish religious calendar. On this day, believers evaluate the life they lived, and with these insights, decide how to proceed. The day is one of dread because the follies of one's choices must be confronted. The day is also of awe in the realization that rededication to one's values is still possible. Though the options are open to all, they are perhaps most significant to middle-aged persons, who are painfully aware of personal shortcomings, no longer able to deny their own mortality, yet aware of many future opportunities. The acceptance of the ultimate end of choices focuses significance on the choices that remain. At the memorial service, these stirring words awaken the importance of life choices of many a middle-aged person.

> "Alas for those who cannot sing, but die with all their music in them." Let us treasure the time we have, and resolve to use it well, counting each moment precious--a chance to apprehend some truth, to experience some beauty, to conquer some evil, to relieve some suffering, to love and be loved, to achieve something of lasting worth. (Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1984, p. 484)

This the most worthy of quests, to live an authentic and meaningful life, is the desire of the midlife voyagers in this study. Unlike Dante, who descends into the pits of hell, struggles up the steep slopes of purgatory, and returns with a myth of the luminescence of the creator that awaits those who live a meaningful life, the tale of the mortal participants of this study is far less dramatic as told in Stephen Crane's poem "There was Set Before Me A Mighty Hill":

> There was set before me a mighty hill,
> And long days I climbed
> Through regions of snow.

When I had before me the summit view,
It seemed that my labor
Had been to see gardens
Lying at impossible distances. (Crane,1962, p. 227)

Summary of Findings

What these intelligent, insightful, dedicated professionals reveal about themselves and the state of higher education is disturbing. If what they experience is more widespread than the experience of 13 individuals, then much needs to be reassessed on how higher education devalues its field-level commanders. Only in retrospect, would it be possible to know if the unrealized expectations and the shattered hopes of these earnest, yet naive midlife professionals will lead to despair and quiet desperation or a wiser, if bruised, balanced and fruitful second half of the work life.

Conclusions

To encourage the latter more productive (for both individual, organization, and subsequently society) scenario, the following conclusions are offered.

Conclusions for Those in The Role of Midlevel Administrator

For the inquisitive, introspective midlife, professional the quest for meaning seeks authenticity--the ability to truly change society.

For the cohort having experienced their pivotal historical events during the time when the ability to *overcome* was thought possible, the "will to meaning" (Frankl, 1984) manifests itself in transforming the workplace. In those who are consciously orchestrating

their own midlife transition, a rekindling of youthful optimism as a change agent can occur during the youth of second adulthood.

The middle may be the most difficult place to implement change in a community college.

The midlevel administrator has little leverage. Unlike upper administration, the midlevel administrator is unable to allocate resources, rewards, and punishments or determine policy. Unlike the faculty, the midlevel administrator can not create a massive or powerful constituency or a cohesive support system,

The community college presents a hostile environment for its midlevel administrators.

They are expected to fulfill essential, complex, and heavily value-laden tasks with insufficient support, understanding, feedback, information, and preparation.

The organizational culture of the community college has failed to developed a coherent role for the midlevel administrator.

While faculty function in a relatively closed system and upper administration functions in an open system permeable to external feedback, the midlevel manager is caught trying to mediate between the two perceptions.

Continuing professional education programs have an enormous potential to fulfill the need for knowledge and affirmation for midlife, midlevel community college administrators.

Isolated, unprepared, and starved for information, many midlevel administrators want a supportive, informed, and sustaining means to help them work toward realistic

goals. To truly be successful, continuing professional education programs must view participants holistically, as integrated humans, who serve an institutional role while negotiating through life as they search for meaning.

Conclusions Informing Theory

Seven concepts, which have implications for theory, emerge from this study regarding the search for meaning of the community college midlevel administrators. These concepts are:

Each person views life by his or her own set of unique events, but individuals with the same motivation, who are experiencing the same life-experience, report a closely paralleled phenomenon.

"There is no history. There is only Biography. The attempt to perpetuate, to fix a thought or principle, fails continually. You can only live for yourself: Your action is good only whilst it is alive--whilst it is in you." (Emerson, 1833/1994, p. 2358).

At least three forces drive the midlife professional to reflect on practice.

"The challenge of managing change and complexity comes to advanced professionals from two directions--career advancement and a world that daily becomes more complex" (Kolb, 1988, p. 80). A third and perhaps stronger motivator for some midlife professionals is the internal drive for meaning.

The degree of the ability of the individual to co-create a life is influenced by self-perception of placement on the continuum between determinism and situated freedom.

The midlife professional is aspiring to conceive a meaningful life simultaneously with other humans who are searching for their own path within an institutional setting. The ability to negotiate the unique existential life is determined by the ability to choose dynamic behavioral choices while maneuvering through structural constraints. The individual never has more freedom in life choices than self-perception sees, but may have considerably less than imagined.

Solitary critical reflective practice can be detrimental to a sense of personal and professional competency.

When professionals analyze their practice to improve technical decision, a greater sense of competency results. However, critical reflective practice dredges up the sensitive issues of choices, relationships, priorities, assumptions, power, and motivation, which frequently results not in solace but in disequilibrium. Self-disclosure transforms the midlife professional's self-perception from competency to self-doubt. Alone, exposed, and vulnerable, the professional walks deeper into the mire while self-generating the demand for a stance.

When reflection stimulated by disequilibrium occurs, the potential for a learning experience is high. However, re-entrenchment is also a possibility, especially when the opinions of like-minded professionals are not sought and validation of the growth potential of the struggle is not shared.

Connectiveness is necessary for the reflective midlife professional to perceive of the larger issues.

Though solitude is needed for production of insightful reflection, it is detrimental to its implementation. Reflective thinking done in isolation from others, living the parallel experience, leads to a perception of personal inadequacy as opposed to an understanding of systemic limitations.

Solitary heroic determination, dedication, and tenacity are insufficient to succeed in complex postmodern organizations.

The acceptance of agency, perseverance, skill, critical thinking, empathy, and vision are the driving engine in the change process. The route and destination of the charge agent is dependent on structural forces such as economy, politics, history, hierarchy, and organizational culture. Reflective professional journals are less a description of the self-generated engine of change and more a reflection of the system in which they operate.

Generativity is best achieved on many fronts.

The midlife, midlevel professional can not find meaning in life by concentrating on work predominately. Work may not be the best site for displaying one's need to implement humanistic change. The need for achievement is different from the need for affiliation. Since work and love provide different rewards, they should not be confused. A person may receive admiration for inspiring work, but love, friendship, and companionship need to be sought and cultivated elsewhere.

Implications and Recommendations for Practice

Major implications for recommended practice arise from the conclusions and theoretical implications above. Most intrinsically interested in the phenomenon are others who are in similar experiences. The next group concerned with this phenomenology is community college leadership, who are concerned with using their third- and forth-level commanders in a productive manner, and according to much of current management theory meaningful work contributes to productivity. Third, insight into the phenomenology of midcareer professionals is useful in the designing of continuing professional development learning experiences.

Implications for Midlife Middle Managers

Those committed to their own transformation in midlife would benefit by following the advice of their students by "stopping to smell the flowers" and "getting a life." The relative tedium of their work punctuated by moments of heightened expectations, soon followed by crashed hopes, is enough to turn any feeling person into a new recruit for the walking dead.

Albert Camus posed the fundamental philosophical question of whether life has meaning. He explored the question through the ultimate life of seemingly meaningless repetition. In the Greek mythical tale, Sisyphus is doomed to eternally strain to push a boulder up to the top of a mountain where it inevitably slides down. For a moment he stands on the peak, then he descends to recover his boulder, which he will once again push up the mountain, only for it to fall over and over again.

All repetitive, meaningless work is absurd, yet many people toil with the insight of an ox. What makes the individual's fate tragic is the consciousness of his fate. What makes Sisyphus heroic is that the realization of powerlessness is coupled with rebellion. "That revolt is the certainty of a crushing fate, without the resignation that ought to accompany it" (Camus, 1945/1955, p. 40).

Sisyphus is punished because his passion for life caused him to rebel against the arbitrary decrees of the gods. Yet, according to Camus, "The lucidity that was to constitute his torture at the same time crowns his victory. There is no fate that cannot be surmounted by scorn" (Camus, 1945/1955, p. 90). At the moment when the weight of his rock is removed and before he descends to recover the object of his torment, Sisyphus is conscious of his thoughts. "'The Myth of Sisyphus' poses moral problems, it sums itself up for me as a lucid invitation on to live and to create, in the very midst of the desert" (Camus, 1945/1955, p. v).

If the individual is to continue in a system that can not or will not change, then the person must make an existential choice. Does the individual remain in the position or find an alternative? For the participants in this study, all reflective and lucid, the choice should be made with eyes open to how the limitations and opportunities fit into individual needs.

The choices of those experiencing this phenomenon vary according to the degree of belief in the hero. For those who believe in the force of the hero, the individual can choose to continue to rage against injustices. Satisfaction can be found in making small changes in those areas one has some power. Returning to teaching, transferring to a lateral position allowing more control, seeking a higher position where vision and policy-making is expected, or accepting the limitations of the present position are all possibilities. Perhaps

the hero might decide to change to an arena were the effort can make a difference. Generativity might more productively be channeled to family, community, or friends.

A far more radical (meaning what it did in the 1960s) option is learning how the mighty forces work and joining with like minded people in manipulating them.

> In the long run, [educators] would be smarter to try to create public awareness that they themselves were interested in serving the community, and were as worried as everyone else about the problems being faced . . . particularly . . . the decline in ethical standards, and the alienation and loneliness that accompany a society based on individualism and selfishness. (Lerner, 1996, p. 256)

Refusing to acquiesce to their own marginalization and infusing this mission into the educational process would truly be transformational. The midlevel administrator is in the absurd position of attempting to bridge the gap. Only time will tell what sort of bridge building skills are most applicable, but meanwhile the engineer is not having much fun being caught between the construction crew and the bankers.

Camus accepts that we live in a world rife with An Absurd Reasoning, yet that does not deprive the conscious person from finding meaning.

> When Nietzche writes: " in the long run there results something for which it is worth the trouble of living on this earth . . . something that transfigures, something delicate, mad, or divine,". . . [o]beying the flame is both the easiest and the hardest thing to do. However, it is good for man to judge himself occasionally. He is alone in being able to do so. (Camus, 1945/1955, p.48)

Now that these reflective practitioners have evaluated themselves and their organizations, they need to reflect on how to best channel their energies for a fruitful second adulthood. They need to accept that their ability to institute change is limited by their lack of sophistication, the limited power of their positions, the intractability of their organizations, and the strong external forces buffering society. With this insight, they need

to decide how to live a more balanced life--one with laughter, loved ones, friends, passions, and joy. Giving one's self the liberty to following one's passion is a well deserved reward.

Implications for College

At a time when the buzz word is effective use of limited resources, community colleges seem to be encouraging the warming rays of their midlevel administrators to go up the chimney. If the leadership would channel the pent-up energy of their midlevel administrators, much could be achieved for the good of the organization and society.

The irony is that institutions which survive on the principle that higher education is required for obtaining and retaining a job seem to ignore the upgraded skills for their middle management. Very few businesses would ignore the potential of personnel eagerly participating in a year-long skills-implementation phase of a professional continuing education process. Yet though there is some indication in a few journals that leadership did, to a limited extent, take advantage of the freshly trained administrator's skills, no community college used the administrator's enthusiasm and innovative ability as a conduit for change.

The journals indicate a community college hierarchy in which the layers communicate almost exclusively about putting out fires. During the remainder of the time, each layer is diligently working at cross purposes with the others. Faced with preparing the next generation to deal with the momentous forces to be confronted in the next millennium of economic inequality, global competition, diversity, ecological devastation, societal fraying, and general disillusionment, the community college can not be inadvertently

wasting energies on internal squabbles. The problem is not intractable, nor is the solution utopian.

The *community* component of community college must be reinvigorated. Both ordinary individuals and democratic institutions are enriched when participants are encouraged to be part of the decision making process of the institutions that affect their lives. Hostility and wasted destructive feuding decreases when the institutions of the civic society encourage self-worth and self-affirmation.

If the motivated midlevel administrator would be considered, instead of a paper-pushing technician, a source of information and innovation, the institution would benefit. A close observer of midlevel management concluded after years of research that a college could survive for a extended time with an ineffective president but not long with incompetent chairpersons (Tucker, 1992). Yet to effectively perform their roles and responsibilities, midlevel administrators need assistance in finding balance between professional and personal life, networking with professional peers, and keying into long-term trends (Seagren & Miller, 1994). Upper administration should encourage the innovative and motivated midlevel administrators in obtaining these resources.

> Viewing leadership as a dialogic, relational process wherein all interested actors are engaged in shaping the future helps empower individuals, harness the latent potential and tension that diversity brings to the college, and avail the organization of the full talent of the people associated with it. (Gibson-Benninger, Ratcliff, & Rhoads, 1996, p. 65)

Another cause of wasted energy from the meaning-driven midlevel administrator is their limited understanding of the systemic constraints of the system and a clear picture how or why decisions are made. A mechanism for building an understanding of these issues would enable a more efficient and less confused misunderstanding of motivation.

Institutes of learning are by definition heavily value-laden. The development of institutional mission, vision, and values should not be a dry exercise to fulfill a mandate. The explicit commitment to fostering agreed upon core values gives a unity of purpose. The institutional vision serves as a seed by which each participant can layer their own contribution.

The midlevel manager is in a pivotal position to institute change, but not with faculty digging their heels into their tiny turf on the bottom while leadership pulls from the top. The person in the middle can only achieve change with the active support of the college president. Change of practice is only possible if it is woven into every element of the institution's fabric. A shared vision of the institution's direction must be heralded by the president to all reaches of the college. Without this sharing of a common cause, it seems doubtful that those in the middle will be able to institute or maintain any more than limited change. Community college leadership should be willing to consider nurturing those who have the desire and ability to contribute alternative approaches to solving institutional problems. Given the freedom to develop their skills, the support to experiment with innovative approaches, allocation of resources for worthy projects, access to information, and recognition of achievement, the vigor of those with self-generated energy will bring a warm glow throughout the college.

Opportunities in Continuing Professional Education

The issues addressed in critical reflective journals are potential resources for the development of continuing professional education programs. Continuing professional education programs are frequently *how to* training (Palmer & Katsinas, 1996). Instead this

research indicates the need for programs to directly address the concerns of the participants as holistic humans, not just as workers.

The extensive desire to take part in continuing professional education programs indicated by the participants reflects not only a genuine recognition of inadequate preparation for the rigors of the positions, but also a need for community. In continuing professional education programs, participants by definition accept the deficiencies of themselves and their peers. The mask of competency is shed at the door. The classroom is generally the only nontherapeutic setting where sharing of doubts about one's ability to fulfill the task is not only uncritically acceptable, but absolutely necessary for fertile discussion. In the professional development class or conference, the searching professional joins with others of like mind. Together they seek answers to common problems. No longer alone, the professional finds a mutually-supportive community of allies.

Uniformly, continuing professional education programs are highly rated by this study's participants for the opportunity they provide for stimulating informal conversations with peers. Possible solutions to common problems are shared. Peers are truly interested in discussing issues of no interest to others. Where else will a heated half-hour conversation take place over filing techniques? Where else can sensitive issues about by-passing the requests of one's superior be approached?

Continuing professional education programs would be far more helpful if they were willing to be more than a mutual admiration society. Difficult, controversial, potentially explosive issues need to be explored in a forum where the complexity of critical issues is accepted, where pat, comfortable, and therefore faulty answers are rejected. Forums where the difficult questions are confronted are essential so the potentially dynamic energies of

those in midlife, midcareer, middle management, in the transitional stage of education between required schooling and chosen enrichment, are unleashed for the common good.

If critical reflective practice is to be encouraged or even required as part of a lengthy continuing professional education program, then the faculty have the responsibility to build in a mechanism to defuse the dark side of the process. Participants should be forewarned of the stress placed on the change agent. A network of supportive peers should be structured into the experience. Certainly before the participants finally go forth from the program, they should go through a debriefing process so they will gain insight into the experience they went through. "An appreciation of the phenomenography of learning critical reflection is one of the few hedges critical adult educators have against a morale-sapping sense of professional failure when we see learners experiencing the dark side of critical struggle" (Brookfield, 1994, p. 215).

When the insights of reflective practice are perceived as unique to the individual, a heightened sense of self-blame and internal responsibility is felt by the individual. Yet, when the phenomenon is seen as predictable and shared change, most people look at external causation. A community of people who share the same experience enable the participants to view situations not as symptomatic of personal deficiencies but as indicative of systemic failings. The irrational exuberance of the self-anointed change agent should be moderated by those in the continuing professional education program, who should know better.

The participants in these programs can easily become figures of nostalgia. Yet the cultural innocence that things can be made better by the determined revolutionary needs to be tempered in these times of economic and global disorder by a cultural realism of limited

progress. By being able to view individual agency within the context of organizational, societal, and global systems, the individual is able to move into the stage five, postmodernist thinking Robert Kegan espouses. These midlevel administrators need assistance to move from viewing themselves as subject to seeing their actions as one object of the complex dynamic.

By not only encouraging critical reflective practice for their students, but also by incorporating the practice for themselves, continuing professional education programs can discover how practitioners actually question and analyze in their practice. The continuing professional education programs will better understand what is most meaningful to the practitioner by analyzing the participant's self-reflection. "Any program of advanced professional studies should be based on careful study of how integrative judgement is learned from life experience and how this learning is stimulated by the contextual challenges of adult life" (Kolb, 1988, p. 84).

Recommendations for Further Research

This study investigated a one-year snapshot of the midlife search for meaning for individuals in a particular job role. The researcher surmises that since the participants took the unusual step of intensely reflecting on the meaning of their work and their life, this was a pivotal year for them.

Research into what lead up to the decision to partake in a lengthy professional development process, what factors make certain midlife professionals open to transformational change, and the consequences of protracted continuing professional

education on the subsequent professional and personal lives of the participants are fertile fields for further research in the area of meaning.

Some recommendations for further research, which were stimulated from this dissertation, are:

- What happens to individuals who spend extensive time being introspective? How do the insights impact on how they live their lives subsequently? Are their choices different from those in comparable positions who do not take part in introspective experiences?
- Do midlife professionals in other fields who are involved in professional development, which encourages critical reflection, proceed through a parallel experience?
- How is the subsequent midlife quest for meaning shaped for those whose search for generativity has been frustrated in the workplace?
- Are the results of this study applicable to administrators at community colleges or to administrators in higher education; or are they characteristic only of midlevel managers; or unique to this particular cohort?
- Is critical reflective journaling more prevalent with individuals who do not have an institutional support system?
- Does the availability or nonavailability of institutional horizontal support systems make a significant difference in enabling those in middle management to institute more change and give those in middle management a greater feeling of achievement?

- How can a long-term mentoring system be developed for those in middle management?
- Would a role-specific peer support system increase the level of satisfaction of midlevel administrators?
- What can the institution do to increase the effectiveness of its introspective midlevel management?
- What are the critical institutional factors that enable those in midlife to actualize their potential for institutional progress?
- How can a continuing professional education program educate midlevel administrators into the postmodern level thinking skills required for competency in the 21st century?

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APPENDIXES

Appendix A: Statement of Informed Consent

I am grateful to you for agreeing to participate in my dissertation study on the process of change in the community college as experienced by the midlevel academic administrator.

Your participation in the study will consist of:

1. The completion of a short one-page questionnaire;

2. Your reflective response in the first person to a vignette about the experience of being a midlevel academic administrator.

Preservation of Confidentiality

All information will be confidential. No names of individuals, institutions, or locations will be used. The study is concerned with the process of change, not the individual change agent. In my dissertation and in any subsequent publications and presentations, I will not identify you or your college. Furthermore, I will not disclose to any member of your college your responses. The responses will be assigned a code (known only to me) to preserve your anonymity. The results of the research will be reported in the aggregate and not identified with particular individuals.

Agreement to Participate

I voluntarily agree to participate in the dissertation study of Roberta Liebler.

1. _____
   Your present position

2. _____
   Name of instructional unit for which you are responsible

3. _____
   Your Name in Print

4. _____
   Signature Date

Would you like to receive a summary of the study? Yes ___ No __
If yes, where would you like the summary sent? _____

Much thanks,

Roberta Liebler
Humanities and Social Science Division, Chair
Kankakee Community College
P. O. Box 888
Kankakee, Illinois 60901

Appendix B: Survey of Chair Academy Participants

Your answers to the following questions will help in the interpretations of reflective journals and vignette responses. The data will only be reported in the aggregate. You, your institution, and your geographical information will not be divulged. Please fill in the blank or place a check on the line before the answer that most appropriately describes you. If you wish, you may use the back of the paper for additional information. Much thanks for your assistance.

1. Faculty (headcount) in your unit:
Full-time _____ Part-time _____

2. Your age:
___ (a) Under 30
___ (b) 30 - 44
___ (c) 45 - 54
___ (d) 55 - 64
___ (e) 65 or older

3. Your gender: ___ (a) Female ___ (b) Male

4. Your ethnic group: ___ White, European heritage ___ Minority group

5. Resident of:
___ USA ___ Canada ___ Europe ___ Australia ___ Other

6. Prior to assuming your present community college administrative position, what other work experience did you have? Place the number of years of work experience before as many descriptions of jobs you previously held.

___ (a) faculty, community college
___ (b) faculty, vocational/technical college
___ (c) faculty, 4-year college or university
___ (d) faculty, k-12 school
___ (e) administrative, community college
___ (f) administrative, _____
___ (g) business/industry
___ (h) non-profit
___ (I) government
___ (j) military
___ (k) other _____

7. Is your administrative appointment limited to a specific term?
___ Yes ___ No
If yes, is your appointment renewable? ___ Yes ___ No

8. Number of years of your professional experience working in community colleges as a midlevel administrator such as chair, head, dean, or vice president:
___ (a) up to 5 years
___ (b) 6 - 10 years
___ (c) 11 - 15 years
___ (d) 16 - 20 years
___ (e) Over 20 years
___ (f) No experience

9. Your professional plans in the next five years:

___ (a) Stay at the same community college
___ (b) Move to another community college
___ (c) Move to a 4-year college
___ (d) Move to the non-profit, private sector
___ (e) Retire
___ (f) Other_____

10. If you are planning to remain in higher education, within the next five years do you plan to:

___ (a) Remain in present position ___ (b) Move to faculty
___ (c) Move to another administrative position. What is the position to which you aspire?

___ (1) Same level ___ (4) Campus president
___ (2) Dean ___ (5) System chancellor
___ (3) Vice-president ___ (6) Other _____

11. Who lives in your household? (Check all appropriate spaces)

___ (a) I live by myself ___ (e) Partner/spouse
___ (b) Minor children ___ (f) Friend/roommate
___ (c) Adult children ___ (g) Other___-_____
___ (d) Parent/in-law/relative

12. How much does your position encroach on your personal life?

___ (a) Not at all ___ (d) Seriously
___ (b) Only occasionally ___ (e) Almost entirely
___ (c) Frequently

13. How would you rate your job satisfaction during the past year?

___ (a) Extremely satisfied
___ (b) Very satisfied
___ (c) My job is okay
___ (d) Frustrated, but I'm going to keep trying
___ (e) I am so unhappy, I want out

Appendix C: Reflective Journal Participants Demographics

1. Faculty (headcount) in your unit:
   Full-time -range 2 - 85 (chairs 2- 23; associate deans & dean 26 - 85)
   Part-time - range 2 - 150 (chairs 2 - 55; associate deans & deans 85 - 150)

2. Age: 38 to 44 years - 5 45 to 54 years - 5 55 to 64 - 3

3. Female - 7 Male - 6

4. White, European heritage - 12 Minority group - 1

5. Resident of: USA - 11 Canada - 2

6. Work prior to assuming present community college administrative:
Faculty, community college - 9 participants
(4 less than 10 years; 5 between 10 to 20 years)
Faculty, 4-year college/university - 4 participants (between 2 - 6 years)
Faculty, k-12 school - 2 (Less than 4 years)
Administrative, community college - 4 (Between 2 to 5 years)
Administrative, not in community college - 5
Business/industry - 2
non-profit - 3
military- 1
other (practitioner outside of higher education - 2

7. Is your administrative appointment limited to specific terms?
Yes - 6 No - 7

8. Number of years of your professional experience working in community colleges as a midlevel administrator such as chair, head, dean, or vice president:
   up to 5 - 7
   6-10 - 6

9. Professional plans in the next five years:
   Stay at the same community college - 10
   Move to another community college - 1
   Retire - 2

10. If you are planning to remain in higher education, within the next five years do you plan to:
    Remain in present position - 5 (more educational research
    move to faculty - 1
    Move to another administrative position. What is the position to which you aspire?

Dean - 4
Campus president - 1
Other - 1

11. Who lives in your household? (Check all appropriate space)
I live by myself - 1
Minor children - 7
Adult children - 1
Parent/in-law/relative - 1
Partner/spouse - 12

12. How much does your position encroach on your personal life?
Not at all
Only occasionally - 1
Frequently - 9
Seriously - 3
Almost entirely

13. How would you rate your job satisfaction during the past year?
Extremely satisfied - 2
Very satisfied - 4
My job is okay - 4
Frustrated, but I'm going to keep trying - 3
I am so unhappy, I want out

Resume

ROBERTA LIEBLER

708-799-7390

EMPLOYMENT

KANKAKEE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Chair, Humanities and Social Science Division, 1994 - present

ROOSEVELT UNIVERSITY
Director, Nonprofit Management Program, 1990 - 1994

COMMITTEE ON DECENT UNBIASED CAMPAIGN TACTICS (CONDUCT)
Associate Director, 1988 - 1989

CLERGY AND LAITY CONCERNED (CALC)
Associate Director, 1988

HYDE PARK-KENWOOD DEVELOPMENT CORP.
Marketing Director, 1987 - 1988 (half-time)

NUCLEAR TEST BAN REFERENDUM
Campaign Manager, 1987

COMMUNICATIONS AND INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN CONSULTANT
Free Lance, 1977 - 1988

CHICAGO STATE UNIVERSITY, MORAINE VALLEY C. C, OAKTON C. C.
Adjunct Faculty, 1977 - 1986

MORRIS HIGH SCHOOL, BRONX, NEW YORK
Academic Skills Coordinator, 1972-1976
Teacher, English, Journalism, Remedial studies, 1968 - 1972

EDUCATION

WALDEN UNIVERSITY
Ph.D., Education, May 1997

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY
M. A., Specialist in Reading and Psychoeducational Disabilities, 1976

CITY COLLEGE OF CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
M. A., English Education, 1971

STATE UNIVERSITY AT NEW PALTZ, NEW YORK,
B. S., Teaching English in the Secondary School, 1968